

Dr Kalyani Bondre: Hindustani Classical Vocalist

Dr Kalyani Bondre is a new generation classical vocalist with a vibrant, youthful, and original style of singing. Kalyani's first musical impressions were formed in her own home, as both her parents have been exponents of Indian Classical Music. Her mother, Dr Meera Bondre, is the student of well-known sitarist, *Ustad Usman Khansaheb* of the *Beenkar Gharana*. Her father, Anvind Bondre, is the disciple of *Ustad Mohammad Hussain Khansaheb* of the *Gwalior Gharana*, from whom he learnt vocal music. *Khansaheb* was the sarangi accompanist of none other than the legendary *Natasamrat* Baalgandharva, the stalwart of musical theatre in Maharashtra, and hence, Kalyani got authentic Marathi *Natyasangeet* as a legacy, along with pure Hindustani Classical Music.



Dr Kalyani started training in Kathak dance under *Guru* Manisha Sathe, disciple of *Natraj Pandit* Gopi Krishnaji, at the tender age of six. Simultaneously, she also started taking her first lessons in vocal classical music from Ranjana Bhide, a disciple of the well-known *guru*, *Pandit* Gangadharbuwa Pimpalkhare of Pune. Following her natural bent of mind, Kalyani later on exclusively devoted herself to vocal music. However, eight years of disciplined and rigorous training in classical dance gave her a thorough grip on the intricacies of *Taal* (Rhythm) and that went on to become one of the highlights of her singing.



Dr Kalyani has trained in vocal classical music mainly under *Guru* Manisha Shrikhande of the *Mewati Gharana*, who earlier learnt from Leelatai and Vilasrao Khandekar of the *Kirana Gharana*, and later became a student of *Pandit* Krishnakant Parekh and Dr. Shobha Abhyankar, both disciples of *Padmavibhushan Pandit* Jasraj. Kalyani has also received guidance in advanced music from *Ustad* Faiyaz Hussain *Khansaheb* and *Ustad* Usman *Khansaheb*. Not confining herself to the rigid barriers of any one *Gharana*, her *gayaki* encompasses the nuances of different schools of music. She has created her own individual style, blending elements from a variety of sources. She has also learnt the basics of the Sitar.

Kalyani has already started establishing her mark as an outstanding talent and has performed at prestigious platforms in India and abroad. Atelier 21: Produzentengalerie für globale Kunst, Art Gallery, Aachen, Germany, Asia Plateau, Moral Re-armament Centre, Kito, Germany, Sanskar Bharati, Baalgandharva Sangeet Rasik Mandal, Pandit Appasaheb Jalgaonkar Harmonium Foundation, Shri Ganesh Jayanti Mahotsav, Shri Siddhivinayak Mandir, Sarasbag, Khalwayan, Ratnagiri (162nd Sangeet Sabha), Pune-Bremen Cooperation Society, Rangat Sangat Pratishthan, Naad, Anahat Sangeet Academy, University Women's Association (affiliated to the International Federation of University Women), Maharashtra State Forest Department, Bharat Scouts and Guides, Shri Dutta Jayanti Mahotsav, Naad-Brahma, Chinchwad Devasthan and Moraya Gosavi Trust, Senior Citizen's Association, Sangeet Kala Mandal, Vanjari Vitthal Mandir, Snehsamwardhan, are some of the platforms on which she has presented her art.



Kalyani's vocal recital was broadcast worldwide on Surtarang, Wolverhampton City Radio, UK on 13th October 2010 along with a sarangi recital by Aftaab-e-Sarangi Padmabhushan Ustad Sabri Khan and sarod recital by Aman Ali Bangash.

Gifted with a rich, melodious voice, which freely flows in all the three octaves, an effortless command of rhythm, clarity of diction, originality, and versatility, she captivates audiences wherever she performs. In addition to pure classical music and *natyasangeet*, she presents other light forms of music like *bhakti sangeet* (*bhajans*, *abhangas*), *bhaav sangeet*, *ghazals* and other forms of contemporary music with equal aplomb. Her speciality lies in her detailed and intricate *alaaps*, which slowly unfold the structure of the *Raga*, forceful *taans*, imaginative *taan* patterns, and electrifying *sargams*. Her special interest and extensive study of the *Tarana*, as a separate genre of music, culminated in her developing her original style of presenting this form. She beautifully weaves together the *Gayan* and *Vaadan Shaili* (vocal and instrumental styles) of Hindustani classical music in her presentation.



Dr Kalyani's debut album of Hindustani classical music was released in Pune in 2006 at the hands of noted film and television actor, Shri Vikram Gokhale, at a function presided over by *Padmashree* Dr S. B. Mujumdar, Founder-Director, Symbiosis Society.

She has received the prestigious *Rashtriya Gaurav Award* for Outstanding Performance, Meritorious Services and Remarkable Role from IIFS, New Delhi in 2010 and the N. K. Firodia Memorial Award for excellence in Hindustani Classical Music in 2001. As a student, Dr Kalyani had participated in many music competitions and won several prizes for her school and college. These prizes include prize in Classical Music at Swaramadhuri, prize in Classical Music at Oorja, and prize in Classical Music at the Brig. Ganesh Shankar Kale Pratishthan. She has also won the prizes at the competitions at Pune Gayan Samaj for *Natyasangeet*, at St. Mira's college for Devotional Music. In her tenure as a faculty member at Fergusson College, she took active interest in the cultural activities, auditions, and performances of the college and helped the students win prizes at intercollegiate events.

A rare combination of intellect and creativity, Kalyani follows a dual profession as a classical vocalist and an economist. In addition to her musical excellence, Kalyani has pursued an equally bright academic career. She has completed her Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Pune with an outstanding remark.

This is what the stalwarts say about Kalyani:

"Kalyani has carefully studied the styles of the three major *gharanas* of music and has created her own individual style of singing and I find it extremely commendable. I am amazed at the varied range of her activities at such a young age. I am truly satisfied to see youngsters like her carrying the classical music tradition forward in such a dedicated and effective manner. I am so happy that my friend's daughter has reached this level in music. I can also see the efforts and values of her parents, which have helped her in



attaining her goals. I thank Arwind and Meera for creating such a lovely child. I am sure that Kalyani will make a mark for herself, not only on the national, but also on the international music scene. I wholeheartedly give her my blessings and best wishes." – Actor Vikram Gokhale at Kalyani's CD Release Function.



"I really appreciate Kalyani's talent and efforts and that she has come so far as to release her first music album. What appeals to me even more is the fact that she has not done this at the cost of sacrificing her education, and she has managed both her careers so effectively. I wish her all the best for her music and her academics and all the other activities in which she takes such a keen interest." - Padmashree Dr S. B. Mujumdar, Founder-Director, Symbiosis Society at Kalyani's CD Release Function.

"Mehfils in today's time are a package deal, which need to include various forms of music, like *bada khayal*, *drut bandish*, *taraana*, *thumri*, *bhajan*, *abhang*, *natyageet*, and a *bhairavi* at the end, and I think, Kalyani's *mehfil* is the right mix of all these forms which showcase her versatility as a singer. She has a thorough grip on *sur* and *taal*, and she effortlessly reaches the *taar pancham*, which highlights her singing. I wish her all the best for a very bright future." - Noted Musicologist and Music Critic, Late Dr Shrirang Sangoram



"I have seen Kalyani right from her birth. She has been brought up in a musical atmosphere. Be it her father, Arwindji, or her mother, Meeratai, or even her grandfather, the well-known Shri C. R. Bondre, there has always been discussions at their home on music, musicians, styles and forms of music, and this knowingly or unknowingly has an impact on the minds of children, and this has exactly happened in Kalyani's case too. This is the reason why she can present today a *Raga* like *Madhuwanti* so convincingly and so effortlessly. Of course another reason for her phenomenal progress is the fact that she has proved herself to be a very good *shishya* (student). That a *Guru* is very important in music, is the half truth. What is more important is that one should be a good learner, otherwise even the best of teachers cannot bring about any change. Kalyani has proved her *shishyatva*, because teaching ends after a point, but learning never stops. It is only because of youngsters like Kalyani that the tradition of Classical Music is alive." - Internationally acclaimed sitarist, Ustad Usman Khansaheb.

"In spite of having great knowledge, Kalyani's father Arwindji kept himself aloof from the professional musical scene, but I am very happy that he has very wonderfully inculcated his values, his thoughts, and his knowledge in his daughter. This is the reason that I get to hear her so often on stage. She is very sincere, dedicated and hardworking. When I heard her first at her home when she was a child, I was very pleased, but now when I see her perform in solo concerts so often, my happiness knows no bounds. I have had the opportunity of listening to legends of Marathi musical theatre like Master Krishnarao, Vinayakrao Patwardhan, and Baalgandharva. When I heard Kalyani sing *natyasangeet* today, I recalled those magical moments when I listened to these stalwarts." - Well-known Classical Violinist and Ghazal Composer, Ustad Faiyaz Hussain Khansaheb.



"I am here today only because of the Bondre family. I am glad that Kalyani has achieved so much success in music and I am sure she is going to be in the headlines soon for her musical achievements, and not only in India, but across the world. My heartfelt best wishes to her." - Shri Prataprao Pawar, Chairman, Sakal Media Group at the launch of Kalyani's website.

"Today's life has become very complex and as a result, pursuing only one thing in life is not going to be sufficient. Kalyani has had a journey through many spheres in life which makes her a complete individual. She is a thinking singer. Many people wonder whether classical music will survive in today's times or not. The answer is, of course it will! When I saw Kalyani's achievements, I felt classical music is safe in the hands of such artistes of this new generation!" - Famous Flautist, Musicologist and Composer, Pandit Arvind Gajendragadkar.



"I have known Kalyani since the time I gave her a prize in one of the inter-collegiate music competitions in which she had participated. At that time, she sang so well that I really felt re-assured about the future of our rich classical tradition. Today, she has built such a fine musical career, and a doctorate in Economics in addition to it, is simply outstanding." - Renowned Flautist and Creator of the "Keshav Venu", Pandit Keshav Ginde.

