

# The “Sitar” and its preservation in modern contemporary society.

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## Abstract

Sitar music is considered to be emotional and should play in a heartfelt manner. The Sitar stringed, plucked instrument of India has transformed into an instrument beloved by millions in its country of origin as well as all over the world. The Journey of the Sitar in Indian Classical Music details the origin, history, and playing styles of this unique stringed instrument. Indian classical music from its commencement till date has gone through numerous phases of transformations and transitions so the sitar music is. Ravi Shankar is one of the most famous sitar players familiar to the western world. He taught George Harrison of the Beatles how to play the sitar and Harrison played the instrument in at least three Beatles songs including Norwegian Wood. Other rock groups such as the Rolling Stones and Metallica have sitar music in several of their songs. The present article is based on secondary sources said were collected by the author on behalf of his own hard work. Different books and articles were chosen for relevant data. In this article author has tried to evaluate the present scenario of Sitar in Indian context.

**Keywords :-** Sitar, music, Musicians, songs, preservation, development.

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## Introduction

The word “sitar” is derived from the Persian word “*sehtar*”, meaning “three-stringed.” The instrument appears to have descended from long-necked lutes taken to India from Central Asia. The sitar flourished in the 16th and 17th centuries and arrived at its present form in the 18th century. Today it is the dominant instrument in Hindustani music. It is used as a solo instrument with tambura (drone-lute) and tabla (drums) and in ensembles, as well as for northern Indian Kathak (dance-dramas). Two modern schools of sitar playing in India are the Ravi Shankar and Vilayat Khan schools, each with its own playing style, type of sitar (varying in size, shape, number of strings, etc.), and tuning system.

Sitar, stringed instrument of the lute family that is popular in northern India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Typically measuring about 1.2 metres (4 feet) in length, the sitar has a deep pear-shaped gourd body; a long, wide, hollow wooden neck; both front and side tuning pegs; and 20 arched movable frets. Its strings are metal; there are usually five melody strings, one or two drone strings used to accentuate the rhythm or pulse, and as many as 13 sympathetic strings beneath the frets in the neck that are tuned to the notes of the raga (melodic framework of the performance). The convex metal frets are tied along the neck, which enables them to be moved as needed. The sitar often has a resonating gourd under the peg-box end of the neck; this balances the weight of the instrument and helps support it when it is not being played. Musicians hold the sitar at a 45° angle on their laps while seated. They pluck the strings with a wire plectrum worn on the right forefinger while the left hand manipulates the strings with subtle pressure on or between the frets and with sideways pulls of the strings.

## Methodology

The author has used Qualitative methods of the data collection for present preservation of Sitar in India. The author collected primary data and the focus was on personal interviews as well as author uses few Questionnaires to collect data from different famous Sitar artists. Different libraries, journals, Websites, Musical archives, Music from the sources like You Tube and personal collections were accessed and analyzed.

Table 1. Names of different artists and their views regarding the preservation of Sitar in modern India.

Serial No./	Name of the respondent	What do you say about the Preservation of Sitar in present India?	When you sit down to practice every day, what routine do you follow?
1	Shri Mohd. Yousuf Bhat (Instructor of institute of Music and fine arts. University of Kashmir)	Tradition can be an excess baggage sometimes. In my opinion, Indian music is great but to elevate it to a level where you exclude young children from it is not right. You have to take a child slowly to a level where he/she can appreciate music.	It is most imperative to practice the Sitar regularly, then the composition. Build on what you do from your long practice. Even with lesser practice but the right way of practice, you can progress a lot.
2	Shahid Parvaiz A well-known sitar performer from the Imdad khani gharana.	There are tremendous musicians who belong to different musical instruments. Everyone has his own importance in their respective field. But being a Sitar famous classical instrument for every Indian it means a lot.	Music is a performing art. If I am sitting in front of an audience, I have come to share an experience. And my practice is my strength.
3	Proff. Saroj Gosh Professor at Punjab University Chandigarh. Department of Music	Practice and practice and the sequence of the Alan-Kars of Rags are must for musician. Sitar is the Heart of all Indian music.	When you do lot of practice means 4 to 5 hours in a day will make you clear crystal in playing the “Sitar” instrument.
4	Shri Aijaz Ahmad Wani. (Instructor of institute of Music and fine arts. University of Kashmir)	Sitar is music for mature people. Today we witness new modern music in our youth but the importance of Sitar for our Adult generation is something different. It works as a soul music for the people who love sitar.	I usually sit for hours for my practice because practice makes a man perfect so I am trying to become not the master but a good student.

### Popular musicians in Sitar

Some famous sitar players are Ustad Vilayat Khan, Ustad Shahid Parvaiz, Ustad Imrat Khan, Ustad Abdul Halim Zaffar Khan, Pt. Ravi Shankar and Ustad Rais Khan. Musical instruments of Indian sub-continent are divided into two categories: Hindustani classical music which comprises of musical instruments that are influenced by Persian culture and belong to North Indian classical music. Among them are the sarod, tambura, sahnai, sarangi, tabla and sitar.

Worldwide, the instrument has become the best known of the South Asian lutes. In the 1960s the sounds of South Asian instruments, especially the sitar, influenced a number of rock performers. George Harrison, the lead guitarist of the Beatles, studied the sitar and played the instrument on several songs, beginning with “Norwegian Wood” (1965). Other musicians of the period imitated sitar sounds on the guitar; some used an electric “sitar” that modified the instrument for ease of performance but preserved its primary tone colour. In the early 21st century Shankar’s daughter Anoushka Shankar became a prominent sitar player who joined with musicians from around the world to perform and record original music based on Hindustani principles.

Even in contemporary India when we saw lot of modern musical instrumental mingle like, piano, Guitar, and newly added “Evolano” and so on, are having their presence in the minds of common people but sarod, tambura, sahnai, sarangi, and especially the Sitar are most popular within the hearts of mature people. world of globalization with the course of economic flexibility and advancement in technology, society leads to the Incorporation of western values, ideas, technologies and institutions and commoditization of art and music. But the importance of Sitar is different from the Indian context.

## Conclusion

“SITAR” is a versatile, non-robotic tool that can be used to appliance a range of relaxing exercises and assessment for different types of patients, which is particularly well-suited for task-oriented training. All artists are human being and very much part of the society; they can't be free from other social influences in the humane society they live in. One can't afford to think that Music is above society and if we accept music more particularly classical music as part of the society, may be learning about the future will be much better. In the modern trend the music scholar are blessed with the technical advancement. They have the easy scope of listing to the persons whom they want be dead or alive, big archives and libraries. But the generation badly lack is the proper training (taleem). It is said that music itself is always in a process of transition. Often we come across a tendency in musical circles that classical music is an autonomous activity which has nothing to do with what is happening around it. History advocates that classical music has perceived changes within it. Can we dream of something which essentially doesn't exist. We like it or not we can't deny the unavoidable reality of Change. “Change is the only ultimate truth”. Like any other art classical music also has to develop with the changing time. Be it in a different form than it used to be the music will exist as it has been through ages. The effort is to make the music long live and the will continue in the future too.

I began this paper with introduction of Sitar in Indian Classical music and further put the relevant data about few most famous Sitar Scholars who are presently doing their best in preserving of Sitar from the context of Indian music. As you can see from this overview, there has been a remarkable explosion of research on and teaching of Indian music since Harold Power's 1965 article and the variety of papers till date. This paper will dig the importance of Sitar as a most listenable music in India.

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