

Profile of Dr. Gurinder Harnam Singh

Growing up in a family where music was 'bhakti' and devotion to God and the Guru, Gurinder Harnam Singh chose to transform her youthful interest into a lifelong commitment to her art. Her parents were her initial inspiration. Imbibing Hindustani Classical Music was a natural consequence, as she grew up hearing her mother learn from Ustad Abdul Shakoor Khan of Agra. Along with her father, Brigadier Harnam Singh, AVSM, her mother's profound knowledge and understanding of the raga based Gurbani music was a source of constant encouragement and inspiration.

While still at school, Gurinder began training under Rekha Chatterjee of Allahabad and later from Dr. Prof. Ajit Singh Paintal and Shri. Vasant Thakaar at Delhi. She went on to complete her Masters and M.Phil degree in Hindustani Classical Music from the University of Delhi, winning popular acclaim besides several awards (Raman Munjal Award for contribution to Hindustani Classical Music in 1997) and National scholarships (All India cultural scholarship from the Ministry of Education, 1981-83) She has a Doctorate in Music from Delhi University. She has been a disciple of Padma Vibhushan Smt. Kishori Amonkar since several years.

Gurinder loves to teach and compose music and presently heads the Department of Music at Janaki Devi Memorial College at the Delhi University and has set up 'Swararanjani'- A Centre for Hindustani Classical Music where she trains students in the classical tradition.

She has performed both in India and abroad (Middle East, USA, Europe) and is an acknowledged artiste at government institutions like the All India Radio, Doordarshan and ICCR. She has recorded music for leading music companies, her albums holding their own in an overcrowded market place. Her renditions of passages from the Guru Granth Sahib have been especially acclaimed. She was awarded the Punjabi Academy Award by the Chief Minister of Delhi for the year 2000-2001 for classical music. She has served as an Executive Member of the Art Council Punjab. At present, she is the Executive Member of the Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan.

In a world that is being shaken to its very foundations by contrarian and competitive strains, she is among a handful of younger artistes who has remained true to the classical tradition. From the richness of this tradition, Guri seeks her own passage in the world of music.

Hindustani Classical Concerts

- Gurinder has performed in several Hindustani Classical Vocal Concerts in leading cities in India and abroad (USA, UK, Middle East) which have been much appreciated by music connoisseurs. She sings Hindustani Classical as well as Devotional (Bhajans, Shabads - Gurbani, Abhangs - Marathi)
- Sang Natyasangeet (Marathi) based on Hindustani Classical for Vasant Kala Vilas, New Delhi

Classical Gurbani Kirtan Performances

- Only female singer to perform Kirtan at the spiritual durbar at Anandpur Sahib during the 300 years of Khalsa celebration
- Classical Kirtan performance at the World Sikh Conference at Amritsar
- Raga based Kirtan at the Advitiya Sangeet Sammelan at Jwadi Kala Ludhiana (in the years 1992, 1993, 1997, 1999, 2001)
- Regular performances of classical Gurbani at various Gurupurab celebrations at Delhi at Shri Rakabganj Sahib, Shri Bangla Sahib and other leading Gurudwaras
- Also given Gurbani performances in the leading Gurudwaras in Europe, USA and the Middle East
- Performed classical Gurbani Kirtan at the Kumar Gandharva festival 'Guru Parva' organized by Sahitya Kala Parishad, New Delhi along with leading classical vocalists of the country
- Sang verses from the Siri Guru Granth Sahib with Sufi Kalam for 'Suramya' at the India Habitat Center, New Delhi
- Hosted programme for traditional classical music of Punjab for CPC, Doordarshan

Albums (Cassettes & CD's) - Devotionals

- **Shri Durga Saptashati**, (Music Today), Verses in **traditional Sanskrit** rendered in different ragas along with Pt. Rajan and Sajan Mishra
- **Ram Japoji Aise Aise**, (HMV), Verses from Siri Guru Granth Sahib, Music composed by Gurinder Harnam Singh and Mrs. Hardev Harnam Singh
- **Baramaha Maajh**, (Magnasound), Verses from Siri Guru Granth Sahib by the fifth Guru, Guru Arjun Dev, Music composed by Prof. S.D. Battu
- **Abhilasha**, (Advanced Audio Productions), Devotional music containing verses of Saint Kabir and others sung in various ragas, Music composed by Prof. S.D. Battu and Gurinder Harnam Singh
- **Shraddha**, (Advanced Audio productions), Soulful devotional music containing verses of great saints composed in various ragas by Prof. S.D. Battu
- **Life a Celebration**, (Advanced Audio Productions), Album of assorted devotional compositions sung along with Kavita Krishnamurty and Sadhana Sargam
- **Jhoole Sawan Ke**, (Produced by Rekha Choudhary), Rain songs for the Teej festival composed by Shri. Sonikomi, the reputed music directors of the Bombay film industry
- **Geet Govindam**, Music ballet (private collection), Verses by Jaidev sung in various ragas

What critics have to say....

Classical Performances

Hindustan Times

'Gurinder is one of the finest young vocalists from Delhi showed sensitivity as well as precision in her presentation'

'Crystal clear enunciation, a honeyed voice and years of sweat and toil. Put these together and you have Gurinder Harnam Singh'

Pioneer

'What impressed most in her recital was the distinct identity that the artiste was able to carve out for herself rather than merely aping her gurus. But in all fairness to this young and highly proficient vocalist one must give her credit for rendering all the numbers with feeling and devotional fervor making the concert a memorable one'

'In what was a highly polished performance, Gurinder was able to release many a succinct and soothing melodic refrains with utmost ease'

'Each of her intricately conceived taans, besides being tight on the rhythm was forceful'

Indian Express

'The most remarkable feature of her evening's recital was the rich melodic appeal and the clarity of her enunciations and the good emotional fervors besides the erudite handling of the ragas inner folds'

'Her raga was delineated with judicious deployment of the embellishments of the Jaipur Atrauli idiom'

Financial Express

'Her music is marked by sincere preparation, unstinted effort and basic talent. While she is not a facsimile of her guru shades of her chaste training at the hands of one of the leading artistes of this era were visible behind her singing veneer'

Economic Times

`Gurinder's ability to generate ideas within the framework of the raag was indeed refreshing'

`It was evident that much effort has gone into acquiring the level of fluency she displayed in the taans. Gurinder's complicated patterns usually in batches of three's and four's were a treat to the ears'

Devotional Performances

Hindustan Times

`Gurinder's traditional Meera bhajan was sung soulfully with the devotional element uppermost'

Tribune

`Her voice is rich and well suited for bhajans. She rendered them with a deep understanding of its composition and text. There were no unnecessary vocal flourishes which distracted the attention from the devotional mode'

Indian Express

`The soulful shabads from Adi Granth were rendered with a tremendous amount of patience and skill'

India Today

`Passages from the Guru Granth Sahib have been outstandingly muted in their passionate evocation of the godhead'

`Verses from the Guru Granth sung by Gurinder reflect not only the piety of its subject matter but also the beauty of her voice and her bhakti to music'