

Sangeetkar by Ayub Aulia contains sketches on distinguished musicians from IndoPak subcontinent based on their lives and works. The book opens with a brief note on the music of subcontinent, compiled in condensed manner. It follows the timeline faithfully highlighting the transitional phases and important works on Indian music. A very brief note on the evolution of various genres from Dhrupad to semi classical forms has been added to facilitate further reading. The unmatched artistry of Ustad Ashiq Ali Khan has been described in an interesting manner. The anecdotes provided are authentic as the writer himself obtained information from the artists who were witness to the incidents. Being a resident of Patiala, I have been listening to the stories and incidents related to the philanthropic nature of Ustad Ashiq Ali Khan. His utmost devotion towards music and masterly style had won the hearts of many people. The genius like Ustad Bade Gulam Ali Khan has multiple dimensions to his musical profile. These have been portrayed through very interesting anecdotes narrated by other great renowned musicians to the author. How the musicians shared a great camaraderie among them is a matter of great delight for the readers as the author quotes statements full of admiration and affection for each other. His son Munawar Ali Khan had to live under the shadow of his father's image but he imbibed a lot from him. Ustad Barkat Ali Khan was the younger brother of Bade Gulam Ali but his uniqueness lies in the utmost 'Sureelapan' in rendering Thumri and Ghazal as if he embraces the notes with tremendous love. The book also provides an authentic and relevant information about the musicians of Punjab as Mr. Aulia himself has spent his formative years in Punjab which is now a part of Pakistan. His association with musicians, artists and litterateurs has provided him a deep insight into these art forms. Inclusion of master Jhande Khan among the other Sangeetkars is the special highlight of the book as not much has been written about him. He was a pioneer figure in the field of theatre-music and Hindi film music. Among the jewels of Hindustani classical music Ustad Allah Rakha, Pandit Ravi Shankar, Ustad Amir Khan, Ustad Nathu Khan, Ustad Nazakat Salamat Ali, Ustad Sultan Khan have been included and the author has shed light on various aspects of their musical prowess. The icing on the cake is the literary piece on one of the most celebrated musicians Ustad Zakir Hussain. It contains the personal touch by the author who has witnessed his rise and fame, not only as a Tabla wizard but a percussionist and composer class apart. The book provides fresh insights into the lives of these great stalwarts. Written in a lucid yet simple manner, it persuades the reader to step on to the next one, after reading a life sketch. There is no exaggeration and the reader finds the stories very engrossing. Also, it is very relevant as a source material for the research scholars and academicians. Great singers Rasoolan Bai, Roshan Ara Begum, Mukhtar Begum, Farida Khanum have witnessed the transition from undivided and colonial India to independent but divided nation. The transition was not that smooth and it

affected their musicianship. The author has very aptly brought the best of the characteristics out of these personalities. He has underlined their personal traits that have added to their musicianship. K.L. Saigal, Mehdi Hassan, Rafiq Ghazni, Noor Jehan, Nahid Niazi, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan are the names to reckon with in the field of semi classical and light music and their contribution is multidimensional. The author has provided very relevant information about them. The book rekindles a spark in the minds of the music lovers of Indo-Pak to look into the tradition of the music further in collaborative manner. Much has been lost due to the partition of Punjab and the political splits. It is high time to understand and appreciate the strong bonds between the music of Punjab on both sides in order to preserve and propagate it in an efficacious manner and this book is an important step towards it.

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