

Purandara Dasa was born in 1484 (d.1564) in Karnataka. After renouncing his former life as a greedy merchant, he became a wandering singer-saint at the age of thirty. It is believed that Purandara Dasa was responsible for establishing the basic scale of modern Carnatic music (raga Mayamalavagowla) and formalizing a series of graded lessons that are still used to this day, as well as composing numerous compositions in many raga-s of both classical and folk origin. He is regarded as the “Sangeeta Pitamaha” or “Grandfather of Carnatic Music,” and passed his music on to Swami Haridas.

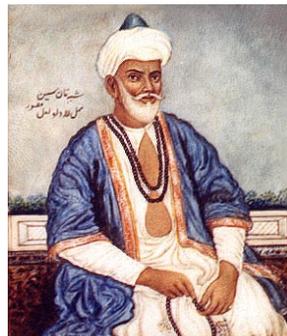
Swami Haridas is a legendary figure of North Indian music, due in no small part to the influence of his most prominent disciple, Mian Tansen. Swami Haridas was born in 1480/1512 (d.1575/1607) and spent a good portion of his life in Vrindavan, the homeland of Lord Krishna. He was a learned musician in the old Dhruvapada style, as well as a spiritual devotee of Radha and Krishna, and had a profound influence on both the classical music of North India and the Bhakti devotional movement.



Swami Haridas

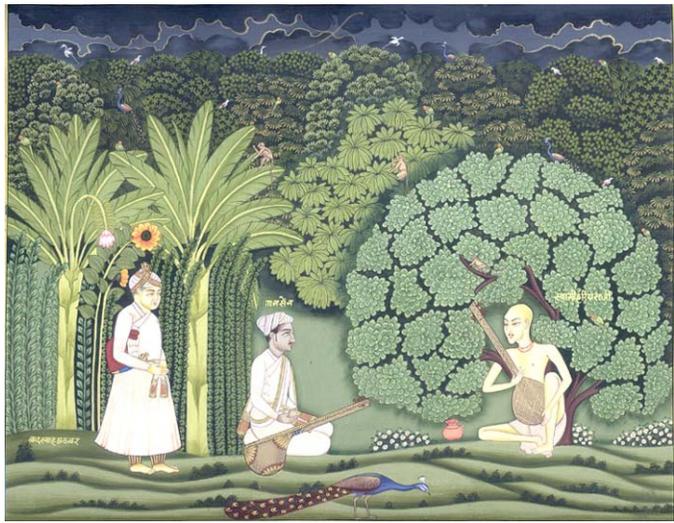
Mohammed Ghaus was a Sufi saint born in approximately 1500 whose lineage extends back to the prophet Mohammed. His mentorship is believed to have inspired Tansen to incorporate elements of Persian and Sufi music into his own practice, and thus into the entirety of North Indian classical music.

Mian Tansen is the seminal figure of North Indian music. Born in 1493/1506 (d.1586/1589), Tansen became known as the single greatest musician in the court of the Mughal Emperor Akbar “the Great,” and subsequently of all time. Considered to be one of the “9 jewels” of Akbar's court, the title Mian, or “learned man,” was personally bestowed upon him by the emperor himself. Many of the prominent lineages of Indian music trace their origins back to Tansen. A prolific composer, Tansen created numerous melodies that are still heard on the concert stage today, usually prefaced with “Mian ki” in



Mian Tansen

the title. Some believe he could bring rain by singing raga Megh Malhar, that he could call, tame or calm animals with his music, and that he died consumed in the flames produced by singing raga Dipak.



Akbar the Great (left), Mian Tansen (center), Swami Haridas (right)

Tansen's daughter, **Saraswati Devi** married Misri Singh (Sammokhan Singh) who was awarded the title of **Naubat Khan** by Jahangir (ruled 1605-1627) when he was granted stewardship of the imperial orchestra. Both Saraswati and Naubat Khan have been credited with being gifted veena players and having propagated the Senia beenkar gharana through their descendants.



Naubat Khan

Niamat Khan, also known as **Shah Sadarang** (another honorific title bestowed by Mohammed Shah), was one of those descendants, and he is sometimes considered to be the second greatest musician of North India after Tansen. He was born in 1670 (d.1748) and was part of Mohammed Shah's court from

1712-1745. He is particularly well known for having created the modern vocal style called khayal and founding the Kawal gharana which specialized in this new form of music. Many surviving khayal compositions are attributed to Sadarang.



Sadarang's grandson was named **Nirmalshah**, who was one of the most gifted veena players of his era. A family member and contemporary of his, **Jafer Khan**, was the inventor of the sursingar, a nearly extinct bass version of the modern sarod. These two musicians were based out of the Kabir Choura Malhalla in Varanasi, but were affiliated with the court of Lucknow.

After Nirmalshah's death, his nephew and the great-great grandson of Sadarang, **Umrao Khan**, became recognized as the greatest living veena player. Though there are conflicting scholarly opinions, it was most likely Umrao Khan who invented the bass sitar known as surbahar, another nearly extinct instrument. With the intention of creating an instrument on which he could teach the complete classical repertoire to students outside of his bloodline, he instructed Ghulam Mohammed in it's technique. The latter went on to become the first prominent exponent of surbahar, while Umrao Khan reserved the family secrets of veena technique for his family members.

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These secrets were passed on to his grandson, **Wazir Khan**, the famous veena player of Rampur who would go on to train **Allauddin Khan**, one of the foremost musicians of India in the 20th century. Wazir Khan also learned sursingar (created by his uncle, Jafer Khan) from **Bahadur Hussain Khan**, who was himself a descendant of Tansen's son **Bilas Khan** (creator of raga Bilaskhani Todi).



Wazir Khan

Allauddin Khan (b.1862 - d.1972) was a sarode player, though it is said to that he played over one hundred different instruments, including many of his own creation. He is most famous for training numerous world class artists including his son **Ali Akbar Khan** (sarode), his nephew **Bahadur Khan** (sarode), his daughter **Annapurna Devi** (surbahar), his grandson **Aashish Khan**, as well as Ravi **Shankar** (sitar), and **Nikhil Banerjee** (sitar), to name only a few. This new group, though based on the history and lineage of the Senia Beenkar style, became known as the Maihar gharana, and remains one of the most prominent and influential styles of North Indian classical music around the world.



Ustad Allauddin Khan