

Modern Music, Revival, Western Influence, Contemporary Developments

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Modern Indian music represents a dynamic blend of tradition and innovation. From the late 19th century revival of classical forms to the influence of Western music and globalization, Indian music has evolved significantly. Today, it reflects both deep-rooted cultural heritage and modern artistic experimentation, making it relevant to global audiences.

Revival of Indian Music in the Late 19th and Early 20th Century

A major revival in Indian music took place during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This period witnessed efforts to preserve, reform, and popularize Indian classical music, which had earlier been limited to royal courts and traditional **gharanas**.

One of the most influential figures of this era was **Rabindranath Tagore**, who created a unique genre of music known as **Rabindra Sangeet**. His compositions combined classical Indian elements with lyrical depth and emotional expression.

The freedom movement also played a crucial role in shaping music. Many musicians used their art as a tool for nationalism and social awakening. Notable contributors included:

- Kazi Nazrul Islam – Known for revolutionary songs and poems
- Vishnu Digambar Paluskar – Promoted music education and accessibility
- Subramania Bharati – Composed patriotic songs

Institutional Developments in Modern Indian Music

To revive and systematize Indian music, several important institutions were established:

- In 1901, Vishnu Digambar Paluskar founded the **Gandharva Mahavidyalaya** in Lahore to reduce the dominance of gharanas and make music education accessible to the masses.
- In 1926, Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande established the **Marris College of Music** in Lucknow, which later became a major center for structured music education.
- In 1919, an **All-India Music Academy** was set up to promote research and deeper understanding of Indian music traditions.
- In 1928, the Madras Music Academy was established to revive and promote Carnatic music.

Cross-Cultural Collaborations

One of the most significant features of modern Indian music is its interaction with global music traditions.

- In the early 1960s, artists like John Coltrane and George Harrison collaborated with Indian musicians and incorporated instruments like the sitar into Western compositions.
- Indian classical music began influencing global music trends, especially in jazz and rock.
- During the late 1970s and early 1980s, Indo-Western fusion music gained popularity in Europe and **North America**.

These collaborations helped Indian music gain international recognition and created new hybrid musical forms.

Impact of Western Music on Indian Musical Traditions

Globalization and technological advancement have significantly influenced Indian music. Western music has both enriched and challenged traditional Indian musical systems.

Positive Impacts

- **Global Recognition:** Artists like Pandit Ravi Shankar, Zakir Hussain, and A. R. Rahman have gained worldwide acclaim.
- **Revival of Interest:** International artists such as Shankar Tucker have shown interest in Indian classical music.
- **New Opportunities:** Increased global exposure has created better career opportunities for musicians.
- **Fusion and Innovation:** Genres like Indie-pop and fusion music have enriched Indian music traditions.

Negative Impacts

- **Decline in Traditional Learning:** Many students prefer Western music due to better economic prospects.
- **Changing Audience Preferences:** Western music is becoming more popular among the masses.
- **Resource Gap:** Traditional artists often lack access to modern tools and marketing compared to Western musicians.
- **Rural Impact:** Westernization is affecting local folk traditions and livelihoods.
- **Cinema Trends:** Popular films increasingly favor Western styles over traditional Indian music.

Way Forward for Indian Music

To preserve and promote Indian musical heritage in the modern era, several steps are necessary:

- **Financial Support:** Provide funding and scholarships for classical musicians.
- **Education and Awareness:** Introduce music appreciation and training at the school level.
- **Employment Opportunities:** Create sustainable livelihood options for traditional artists.
- **Institutional Strengthening:** Organizations like the Sangeet Natak Akademi should be strengthened with resources for research and promotion.
- **Digital Promotion:** Use technology and online platforms to showcase Indian music globally.

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