

About Pt. Ajay Pohankar

Pandit Ajay Pohankar was born in the respected and educated family in Jabalpur on 24th February 1947. He started his training at the age of 5 under the guidance of his mother Dr. Susheela Pohankar, renowned scholar, musicologist & Kirana Gharana vocalist.

He was introduced to the North Indian classical world as a star child prodigy at the age of 10 by none other than USTAD AMIR KHAN SAHEB in 1958. He went on to sing some of the most prestigious classical festivals at that tender age, namely Sawai Gandharva Music Festival, Calcutta Conference and many more prestigious festivals of India and was claimed as one of the most amazing child prodigies of the era by veterans like Ustad Amir Khan Sahib, Ustad Salamat-Nazakat Ali Khan, Hirabai Badodekar, Beghum Akhtar and Pandit Bhimsen Joshi and other legends of that era.

Ajayji continued his journey as a versatile artist of the Kirana Gharana who also could sing the Patiala and Gwalior Gharana very efficiently. He went on to become one of the most sort after artists in all the major festivals of India.

Released his first solo album in 1980 by Surshree Music. Went on to record almost 30 albums in his career spanning 5 decades and more.

He is one of the rare artists to sing most of the genres of Indian music like Khayal, Thumri, Ghazal, devotional and now fusion and new age music. Recorded one of the most famous albums of all times in the history of Indian music called PIYA BAVARI along with his keyboardist son Abhijit Pohankar which went on to international compilations like the esteemed Buddha Bar and became the all time hits in the annals of Indian recording industry.

He was the professor of music in the Mumbai University from 1988-2001. He was also in the panel of the selectors of the SANGEET NATAK ACADEMY.

International concerts & Performances spanning 3 decades in some of the most prestigious venues, festivals and exotic locations.

Venues include Baxter concert hall-South Africa, Cambridge University Auditorium, Harvard-Boston (U.S.A), Embassy in Dubai, Kenya. Auditoriums in Jakarta & Los Angeles.

Teaching assignments in Learn Quest Music Academy in Boston and also disciples from the Berkley Music School, world music organizations in England and many others.

Besides performing music career spanning 5 decades internationally, Ajayji has been a teacher to some of the top ranking music professionals of the country of all genres. His teaching styles are a mix of voice cultures, theory and Indian music applications in chords and western harmony. Scale changes and improvisations. Application of Indian classical music in film music and semi classical styles like Thumri, Ghazal and also fusion.

A legend in his own right Ajayji is the perfect combination of world class vocals, experience, purity and also mixing of world cultures through his music.

HISTORY till today

1950s

- Debut at the age of 9 at the prestigious Nagpur Conference along with legendary musicians of Indian classical music like Pt. Bhimsen Joshi, Ustad Salamat Nazakat, Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan and Hirabai Badodekar.
- Invited by Akashwani Radio, Bhopal along with Smt. Hirabai Badodekar.
- Introduced in Mumbai by none other than Legend Ustad AMIR KHAN SAHEB at the age of 10.
- Pandit Bhimsen Joshi introduces Ajayji as a child prodigy in the prestigious Sawai Gandharva festival Pune in 1959.

1960s

- Acclaimed and accepted as the next big artist in the Indian classical world by all the veterans.
- Made almost 250 music appearances all over India in major festivals.
- The legendary Beghum Akhtarji heard him and blessed him after listening to his rendition of *Ae Mohabbat Tere Anjam Pe Rona Aaya*, a famous Ghazal of hers.
- Awarded the Sangeet Praveer and becomes one of the youngest artists ever to receive the award in Pune.

1970s

- Completed a double Masters degree in English and Music.
- Popularity soared and sang major festivals as a young artist.
- Awarded the prestigious SURMANI Puraskar in Mumbai.
- Became a regular featured artist on All India Radio and T.V.

1980s

- Released his first album by Swarashree and then by Alurkar Music.
- Awarded the Swar Kaustubh award by Madhya Pradesh State.
- Sang for the epic serial Akbar the Great under the music of Legendary Naushad Ali.
- Sang at the prestigious SPIRIT OF UNITY concert along with a plethora of legendary artists like Pt. Ravi Shankar.

1990s

- Toured internationally in various countries like United Kingdom and Africa.
- Offered to sing for the character of Baiju Bawara in an epic T.V serial by music director Naushad Ali.
- Ventured in to fusion music by his collaboration album DEEPERZONE along with his son.

2000s

- Sang for the epic album PIYA BAWARI which went to become an international hit and he becomes the first Indian classical vocalist to be featured in the prestigious BUDDHA BAR of France.
- Recorded almost 20 albums and went on to become one of the most sought after artists for the recording industry.
- Awarded the Maharashtra Ratna Puraskar by the Chief Minister.
- Performed collaboration concerts on a magnum scale with legendary artists like Ustad Ghulam Ali, Padmavibhushan Dr. Sonal Mansingh and the queen of Kathak Smt. Sitara Devi.
- Started a new trend of presenting traditional music in a new way with his son and acclaimed new age music producer & keyboardist Abhijit Pohankar

AWARDS

- Sangeet Praveer- (By Gopal Gayan Samaj Pune) 1959
- Surmani (Mumbai) 1970
- Maharashtra Rajya Sanskritik Puraskar(Mumbai)- 2006
- Narayan Sanman at the hands of Legend Dr. Gangubai Hangal (Hubli) 2008
- Manik Ratna Puraskar (Pune) 2008
- Tansen Sanmaan (Madhya Pradesh) 2010
- Lakshmidivi Sangeet Ratna (Lakshmidivi Lalit Kala Academy, Kanpur)2011
- Smt Vatsalabai Bhimsen Joshi Puraskar (Sawai Gandharva Bhimsen Festival Pune) 2012
- Sangeet Natak Akademi Award : 2012 (National Award from the President of India)
- Manad Sangeetacharya (Doctorate in Music) by Akhil Bharatiya Gandharva Mahamandal : 2015

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