

# Celebrating Dhrupad

## In concert with Pelva Naik

Compiled by Nupur Sampat

Pelva Naik has been trained in the Dhrupad style of vocal music under the Dagar School of Indian Classical Music. She is a disciple of legendary Dhrupad maestro Ustad Zia Fariduddin Dagar and is a teacher of Art, Music and Humanities. She has performed in festivals and concerts in India and abroad.

New Acropolis Culture Circle hosted a musical evening with Pelva Naik, where, accompanied by Shri Jayant Naidu on the tanpura, she enthralled the audience with a rendition of *Raag Puriya Dhanashree*. The audience soaked in the raag as she went from *vilambhit laya* (slow elaborate tempo) to *madhya laya* (middle tempo) to *dhrut laya* (fast tempo). The performance was followed by a discussion about her journey with music and her process of learning. The following is an extract of the same:



Pelva was exposed to classical music from early childhood, though not trained formally. On meeting Guru, Ustad Zia Fariduddin Dagar, she immediately knew she had found her teacher.

## ***Ultimately, it's Love and Love is Difficult.***

**~ Pelva Naik**

She feels that she didn't 'choose Dhrupad', rather she organically got drawn to an ecosystem where the ideal teacher and music were present. The meaning of *taleem*, for her, is a unique exchange, which is not just training but rather a process of giving and receiving. When this exchange is channelled effectively, something remarkable happens. It is, of course, a mix of technique and ways of *riyaz* or practice, but also other nuances like exchange of the emotive, and the building of a relationship between the teacher and disciple. It's almost like what happens with a child in a household and how the child grows up in an ecosystem. It's not just the classical Guru-shishya Parampara of the Indian musical tradition, it also depends on how you are in touch with life. So, *taleem* takes place, in that sense, with life, with how you perceive life. And here, she considers herself fortunate, that when she was younger, she had the masters and teachers around her to guide her perception of life.

Dhrupad is termed as one of the most 'difficult' forms of Indian Classical music. In her opinion, it is considered so because Dhrupad has more tools in the form of syllables that have evolved and been refined through so many generations, that it is an extremely fine-tuned device. In that sense it can be tedious to understand and demanding to achieve the technicalities. But ultimately, it's love, and love is difficult.





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Pelva gave an analogy for Dhrupad, saying it's like agriculture. You know you want to eat and so you have to farm. You have to dig the land and do the hard work and so at that time you don't complain about it being difficult. You just involve yourself and become one with it. She considers Dhrupad 'intricate' and not 'difficult' because when you love something, you drop the term 'difficult'.

Pelva spoke of the quest she is on - the quest to find purity, to understand what music is trying to reveal to us, its position in our life and in our happiness. When she practises an *alaap*, it is much beyond pleasure for her, it takes the form of a quest, navigating through the flux and contradictions of life. She strives to explore the mysteries of Dhrupad through her practice. This form of music, which is centuries old, has been accorded a very special place but this also makes it aloof. To her each *raag* is like a person with whom one defines a relationship. Through her *alaap*, she tries to unravel this relationship and its role in our emotions, suffering and happiness.

As human beings we have the remarkable vehicle of 'the voice'. Birds and animals have it too, but while birds can sing, they're not singing Dhrupad. We have evolved this language. And it is remarkable that it allows one to use it as a vehicle 'to unveil and be naked, to be true'. Pelva said, 'I think the act of singing itself is something where, it just makes you shed a lot of layers'... 'but whether you do that or not is up to you. And it shows when one sings.'

For Pelva, Dhrupad is a vehicle to go deeper into a complex, inward journey to discover and unveil the part of oneself that is honest, essential, and true. ☺☺