

Vidya Rao



Vidya Rao is one of the leading exponents of the delicate style of singing. She trained in khayal singing under Prof B.N.Datta and Pandit Mani Prasad. Her training in thumri singing started with the late Smt Naina Devi, proceeded with Smt Shanti Hiranand, and continues today with Smt Girija Devi.

The very word thumri is considered to derive from thumak ke rijhaana, meaning to delight the audience with a graceful movement. So until about 50 years ago, thumri performers danced as they sang, moving gracefully about the concert space, expressing the words of the song through gestures and facial expressions. Today, though thumri singers do not dance as they sing, their performances retain a dancerly quality

through the expressive gaayaki or singing style.

Specialising in thumri-dadra and the allied folk derived forms such as chaiti, hori, kajri etc, Vidya also sings ghazal in the traditional thumri-ang style, as well as the devotional poetry of the medieval bhakti and sufi mystic poet-saints. Her repertoire includes Sanskrit verses from the Hindu and Buddhist texts, as well as the elegiac forms of soz and marsiya and praise-forms like naat etc.

Vidya Rao is one of the few singers who combines the delicate shringaar (adornment) of thumri gaayaki with the stark shoonyata (emptiness) of Kabir, and through her singing brings her listeners to a recognition of the divine in the everyday world.