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Context to the nugget

Jayashri discusses how she splits time during practice. This includes building stamina and preparing your mind to think faster when you perform with other musicians. She also talks about practicing new songs for at least a period of 3-4 months before the music begins to “flow” out of her.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Going back to some of the things that you said practicing from 4 am to 7 am, I am curious about this notion of excellence, how do people who are already at the pinnacle of excellence keep pushing to higher and higher, so give us an insight into how they practice? How does he spend 3 hours and how is that different from, sometimes people often use this term deliberate practice where you are sort of mindful about what you are doing, maybe give us an insight into the nature of practice that some of these people do and you do?

Bombay Jayashri (BJ): So it could be three hours, it could be four it could be two sometimes, but it is mindful there is a schedule how you split your practice? You have warm up exercises for your voice, there are small compositions that help you build up your stamina to be able to ultimately render three or four hour concert and there are compositions to help you to set your mind to think faster because a concert like the word is the concerted effort with many musicians on the stage three four sometimes five so it means that everyone should have one voice in the end in my case it could be the vocal with the violin and Mridangam or a Kanjira or Ghatam in that case but we have to sound like one beautiful voice there is a lot going there in terms of giving space to each other letting your ideas pace forth but allowing another person's to idea, idea to come in so in the end it sounds beautiful it sounds spontaneous because it finally about communication, music is about how well you communicate to your audience but it has a lot of emotion a lot of feeling because Carnatic music is like that so it's a combination of the heart the mind the soul all coming together and a unified beautiful way in a language that can reach immediately.

DJ: If I may come back to that three hour ritual you spoke about, Warm up, having a set of things you do for you to prepare for the concert, again if I were to use a term syllabus, early journeys people have syllabuses that's available but at that rarefied level you created own syllabus, how do you fill the time apart from the...

BJ: I could start with warming up with familiar compositions, familiar territory and then move on to learning something new which I wish to sing, for which I believe I need about three or four months practice, because I don't want to learn something now and sing it tomorrow, because I haven't internalised it so much, I wanted to be second nature and it should just flow through me and I just to be a conduit at that point, I would think ideally for something to soak in and for me to be able to for

it to flow out of me ideally it should take that, it should be given that much time so I would move on to practicing something new after that and maybe I try go back to something old and look how much I can better it, there are compositions I may have sang 200 times but I remember feeling that, I still not got this part right or if I heard a greater version of it from a legend, I want to get there at that point so there is always so much to do with I have learnt and rendered many times there's yet so much want to do that I haven't learnt at all, sometimes three or four hours doesn't seem enough at all.

DJ: How do you get feedback as a musician? When I say feedback, when you are sitting in that room alone three hours, let's say you starting out with the new song that you want to master or you want to sort of feel and sing at the end of three four months and I am curious music the way you hear it is actually quite different from the way others hear it, so how does the feedback process work for you to get better over time?

BJ: The passage of time and having given a lot of time to internalization, concert singing is one thing but internalization happens only when you are alone just me and my very beautifully tuned Tambura sometimes I can get lost just enjoying the beauty of the music at that time I tend to forget that I am a subject there, that has to improve then I have to tell myself ok stop enjoying and swimming in the music work at how that can be achieved in my voice which is another segment or another world so there is always this agony of that world and this world, which is being, someone who loves it a Rasika and someone who has to internalize it to bring it out of you but it's a beautiful process and I am always like jumping the court, this side and this side but I have to be very aware and conscious that I want the music that beauty and that epitome of perfection to flow through me, it's not easy but it's not difficult either.

DJ: As you practice, what's the point you hit when you say this is concert ready is there a certain click that goes around your head that makes you say its concert ready?

BJ: Not exactly concert ready, I feel yes now I must try it and then it further gets readied as I sing it in the concert because that seems to me another version altogether because when I am signing at home, it's just me my voice and my thought, my creativity but in the concert it also has others participating and embellishing the music, others who possibly you may be distracted or attracted in terms of their way of playing the music so that's another process where the music undergoes a lot of tuning reshaping, shaping.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: It was interesting to hear Jayashri talk a range of objectives during practice. Building stamina, making your mind think faster on stage especially when you perform with others, fine tuning the past pieces and learning new songs.

Couple of takeaways here for me.

First is that one needs to be holistic in how we think about our development. Are we reflecting on the past pieces of work and learning from what went well and what didn't and are we equipping ourselves for the future by staying on top of the latest developments. Just being mindful of being well-rounded in our development is one.

The second thing that struck me was the point she makes about practicing a song for 3-4 months before she can perform it on stage where it "flows" out of her. I want to relate that back to the

habits we build that lead to behaviours flowing out of us. While I see a lot of people placing emphasis on skills and tools, not many give adequate mind space to baking in habits in a systematic way over 3-4 month period so that appropriate behaviours flow out of us as if it is second nature. And this can only happen if we give it the time and space daily till it becomes second nature.

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End of nugget transcription

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Bombay Jayashri - Nuggets

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About Deepak Jayaraman

Deepak seeks to unlock human potential of senior executive's / leadership teams by working with them as an Executive Coach / Sounding Board / Transition Advisor. You can know more about his work [here](#).

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