

sings those compositions in the *mudh lai* that was probably the standard practice of singing the kheyal.

It is difficult to say who initiated the kheyal galki in the extremely slow tempo, the *vilampat lai*. Some say it was Abdul Karim Khan, who dropped the tempo so much as to give the singer the opportunity to elaborate on the raag with full freedom. Some ustadhs probably did not relish singing in such

a slow lai. However, it is said that Allah Dia Khan

concert

rate upon the raag in *mudh lai*. His celebrated *shagirds* Kesar Bai Kekar and Malik Arjun Mansoor too maintained that tradition and sang mostly in the *mudh lai*.

Fareeda Khanum too must have had her initial training in singing in the *mudh lai* and if her singing now is a reflection of her singing of the formative period then one can say that she had a very good control of the essentials of singing within the limitation imposed by the raag.

It was a treat to listen to the compositions of Mian Meharbaan being sung by Fareeda Khanum. She only authenticated her credentials as being the shagird of the Patiala Gharana.

Mian Meharbaan was the shagird of Ustad Fateh Ali Khan, the founder of the Patiala gharana and most of the compositions which the



Fareeda Khanum: Singing pure classical compositions in music. Photo: Rahat Dar.

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taans for which Ustad Ashiq Ali Khan was much applauded. The musical value of these *taans* lay in the fact that these were extreme examples of virtuosity.

The first great exponent of the ghazal in recent times was Gohar Jan, the leading singer of her times in Calcutta. She also has the distinction of being the first singer to have lent her voice to the new technology of recording. Her discs were the first to come out in an age when the more respected gurus and ustadhs refused to have their voices recorded for the fear of becoming commonplace.

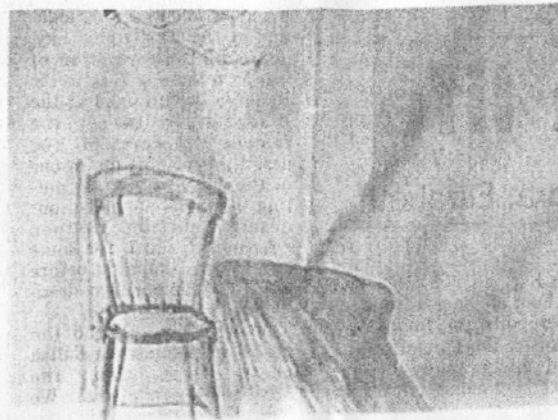
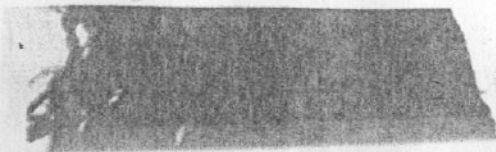
Ghazal was also given a facelift by the popularisation of film music. Since the films were mass manufactured for a cross-section of the population, the ghazal being a happy combination of word and the note, assumed a special place for itself. The mass

Hair and there

Naiza Khan laid emphasis on the sensual and sinuous aspect of human body in her latest work shown in London

By Quddus Mirza

Human hair signifies two paradoxical concepts. It is associated with beauty, charm and youth.



through the latex, with drawings of the same things on the one end of the paper.

Probably this body of work by Naiza Khan was related to the subject of sexuality — its fear existing in a girl and social restrictions attached to it. Apart from the obvious and explicit image of chastity belt drawn in a sensitive manner on visually activated surfaces, there were other components of her work as well which were linked to a woman's body.

According to Naiza, "The sieve represents femininity."

years, and has been applying it on her text pieces. But it was only in the recent show that the preference for this material and its specific usage unfolded other meanings — because the works of an artist created in a particular span of time may have different appearances, forms and mediums, but are based on the common concerns of an individual. Thus being aware of the objects/images in its immediate environment, the latex may be taken as a simile for other concepts and realities. It signified the adaptation

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Pakistan. It was thought that the ghazal represented a cultural continuum that was closer to the Muslim identity. In poetry, since ghazal had grown from the interaction between the Persian and local traditions, and since most of the practitioners were Muslims, it was owned by the establishment of the new state as the foremost musical expression of Pakistan. Ghazal was patronised and it basked in its appeal to the middle-class urban audience.

Now the future of ghazal is also in jeopardy as the taste in music has become totally eclectic. The use of technology, computer generated sounds and the onslaught of the music video has lessened the importance of a musically trained voice. Great exponents like Fareeda Khanum may be the last in the line of singers who have continued to believe in the centrality of human voice in music.

including sieves — with this thin film of transparent rubber, hence transforming every object into a significant and loaded entity.

Naiza Khan has been utilising the images of body, hair and text, and other materials like latex. If her earlier work revealed a more straightforward method with details of body, hair and words, open for direct comprehension, the new pieces contained a separate approach: In these she selected similar mediums and visuals but treated them in

such a manner that they blea