

Ustad Allah Rakha — Master Of Hindustani Classical Music

Ustad Allarakha Qureshi (29 April 1919 - 3 February 2000), popularly known as Alla Rakha, was an Indian Tabla player specialised in Hindustani Classical music. He was a frequent accompanist of Sitar player Ravi Shankar. Alla Rakha was born in Ghagwal, Jammu and Kashmir, in then British India. His mother tongue was Dogri. He became fascinated with the sound and rhythm of the Tabla at the age of 12, while staying with his uncle in Gurdaspur. Finding little chances for grooming and appreciation, the student disciple of Tabla playing and began studying it with Mian Kader Baksh of the Punjab Gharana of Tabla players. Sabir Rakha, a brother, also played Tabla.

He studied voice and Raag Vidya under Ashiq Ali Khan of the Patiala Gharana. His regimen of practice and dedication were legendary: hours upon hours of hard, disciplined practice, that would later pay off.

He was married to Bavi Begum and their marriage produced three sons, Zakir Hussain, Fazal Qureshi and Taufiq Qureshi; two daughters, Khurshid Aulia née Qureshi and Razia; and nine grandchildren. They all survived him except Razia; it was the news of her death the day before that is thought to have caused his fatal heart attack.

Allah Rakha began his career as an accompanist in Lahore and then as an All India Radio staffer in Bombay in 1940, playing the station's first ever Tabla solo and elevating the instrument's position in the process. Soon after, he composed music for a couple of Hindi films from 1943-48. An October 1967 concert by Shankar and Rakha, held four months after their performance at the Monterey Pop Festival. However, he still played as an accompanist, for soloists like Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, Allaoudin Khan, Vilayat Khan, Vasant Rai, Ali Akbar Khan and Ravi Shankar. The venerable master became world renown as Shankar's chief accompanist during his performance in the 1960s, delighting audiences in the West with his percussive wizardry, not only as an uncanny accompanist with flawless timing and sensitivity but also as a soloist where he was a master of improvisation, a prolific composer and an electric showman.

The partnership was particularly successful, and his legendary and spellbinding performances with Shankar at the Monterey Pop Festival in 1967 and the Woodstock Festival in 1969 served to introduce classical Indian music to general Western audiences.

He became a Ustad (teacher) to Shankha Chatterjee (in 1962), Yogesh Sami, Pravilla Athalye, Aditya Kalyanpur, Anuradha Pal, Nishikant Barodekar, Uday Ramdas, Shyam Kane and his sons Taufiq Qureshi and Fazal Qureshi. His eldest son, Zakir Hussain is also an accomplished Tabla virtuoso.

Global influence

Rakha popularised the art of Tabla, playing across the globe, elevating the status and respect of his instrument. "Abba" (as he was affectionately known by his disciples) also bridged the gap between Carnatic music and Hindustani music by playing with both renowned Carnatic musicians and other Hindustani stalwarts.

Leading American percussionists in rock n' roll, such as the Grateful Dead's Mickey Hart, admired him and studied his technique, benefiting greatly even from single meetings.

Hart, a published authority on percussion in world music, said: "Allah Rakha is the Einstein, the Picasso; he is the highest form of rhythmic development on this planet." Rakha also collaborated with jazz drummer Buddy Rich on their 1968 album Rich à la Rakha.

Rakha was part of the ensemble accompanying Ravi Shankar during George Harrison's Concert for Bangladesh shows, held in New York City in August 1971.

The success of the live album and concert film from this event presented Indian classical music to a wide audience in the West. He was also featured in a Google doodle on 29 April 2014 on the occasion of his 95th birthday.

Death

Alla Rakha died on 3 February 2000 at his Simla House residence on Nepean Sea Road following a heart attack, which he suffered on learning of the death of his daughter, Razia, the previous evening. Ustad Allah Rakha had established the Alla Rakha Institute of Music in Bombay in 1986 and imparted his knowledge of the instrument to all his disciples in the institute. Allah Rakha and Sitar maestro Pandit Ravi Shankar brought classical Hindustani music to Western audiences as well. He was honoured with the Padma Shri Award by the Government of India in 1977 for his contributions to elevate the reach of Tabla playing as an art form across the globe.

Later on, Sangeet Natak Akademi also honoured him with an award in 1982.



THE FACT CORNER



More than 43,000 spider species are known, and at least that many remain undiscovered



Frogs can be frozen with no heartbeat for long periods and then come back to life



A hungry pig will eat almost anything they can chew. Pigs are omnivores and can eat a whole human body except for the teeth and hairs



This baby rabbit looks like Old Kung-Fu Master

BRAIN TEASERS

1 Q. Which word does NOT belong with the others?

A. parsley B. basil
C. dill D. mayonnaise

2 Q. Which word does NOT belong with the others?

A. tulip B. rose
C. bud D. daisy

3 Q. Which word does NOT belong with the others?

A. guitar B. flute
C. violin D. cello

4 Q. Which word does NOT belong with the

others?

A. heading B. body
C. letter D. closing

5 Q. Which word does NOT belong with the others?

A. tape B. twine
C. cord D. yarn

6 Q. Odometer is to mileage as compass is to

A. speed B. hiking
C. needle D. direction

7 Q. Marathon is to race as hibernation is to

A. winter B. bear
C. dream D. sleep

SOLUTIONS:

5. Tape

2. Bud.

7. Sleep

6. direction

3. Flute

4. Letter

1. Mayonnaise.

2. Bud.

5. Tape

4. Letter

1. Mayonnaise.

2. Bud.

7. Sleep

6. direction

English Proverbs and Meanings

* Facts speak louder than words.

People show what they are really like by what they do, rather than by what they say.

* Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

Inexperienced people act in situations that more intelligent people would avoid.

* Half a loaf is better than none.

You should be grateful for something, even if it's not as much as you wanted.

* Honey catches more flies than vinegar.

You can obtain more coopera

tion from others by being nice.

* It takes all sorts to make a world.

People vary in character and abilities, and this is a good thing.

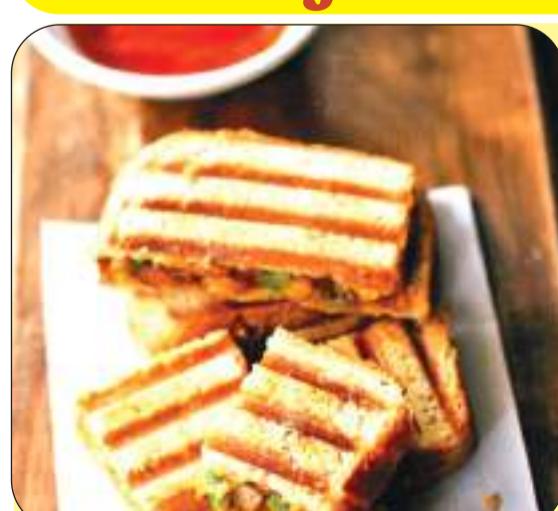
* Kill the goose that lays the golden egg.

Destroy something that would be a source of wealth or success.

* Losers weepers, finders keepers.

If you lose something you weep, if you find something you keep it.

Rajma Sandwich



Ingredients
Brown bread - 6, Onion - 1
Ginger - 1/2 inch piece finely chopped
Green chilli - 1 finely chopped or chilli powder - 1/2 tsp

Rajma /kidney beans - 1/2 cup cooked
Pepper powder to taste, Salt
Butter for toasting the bread
For the seasoning
Oil - 2 tsp, Cumin seeds - 3/4 tsp
Preparation
Wash and soak rajma overnight or for 6-7 hours and pressure cook until soft. After it cools, grind it to a coarse paste.
Method -
Heat 2 tsp of oil, add cumin seeds, when it splutters, add finely chopped onions, green chillies, ginger and saute until onions turn transparent. If it is for kids, you can add 1/2 tsp chilli powder instead of green chillies. Add the ground rajma, needed salt, pepper powder and mix it well.
How to prepare sandwich toast
Butter both sides of the bread, place 1-2 tbsp of the rajma filling and cover it with another buttered bread. Place it in a sandwich toaster and toast until golden brown. If you do not have a sandwich toaster, use a tawa to toast the bread. Cut diagonally and serve hot with tomato ketchup or tomato chutney.

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Chilli Dosa



Ingredients needed
Thick spongy dosas -3
Cheese
Onion -2, Tomato -2
Green chilli - 1 finely chopped (optional)
Ginger - a small bit finely chopped
Capsicum - 1 medium
Red chilli powder - 3/4 -1 tsp
Turmeric powder -1/4 tsp
Kitchen king masala or garam masala powder - 1/4 tsp
Salt as required
Oil - 1 1/2 tbsp
Method
Heat oil, add onions, green chilli, ginger and saute till onions turn translucent. Then add Cheese, tomatoes, chilli powder, turmeric powder and cook till tomatoes become mushy. Now add capsicum, kitchen king masala and cook for a few more minutes. Do not overcook the capsicum. The capsicum should retain its crunchiness. Add salt needed. Now add the dosa bits and mix well till the dosa gets coated with the masala. Serve warm. Enjoy it with tomato Ketchup.