



Delhi

‘Technology or fanbase can't replace taalim or riyaz’: Pandit Ulhas Kashalkar

A conversation with Pandit Ulhas Kashalkar on tradition, learning from the gurus, the purity of art, and the need to forge one's artistic path



Pandit Ulhas Kashalkar

Srestha Sarkar

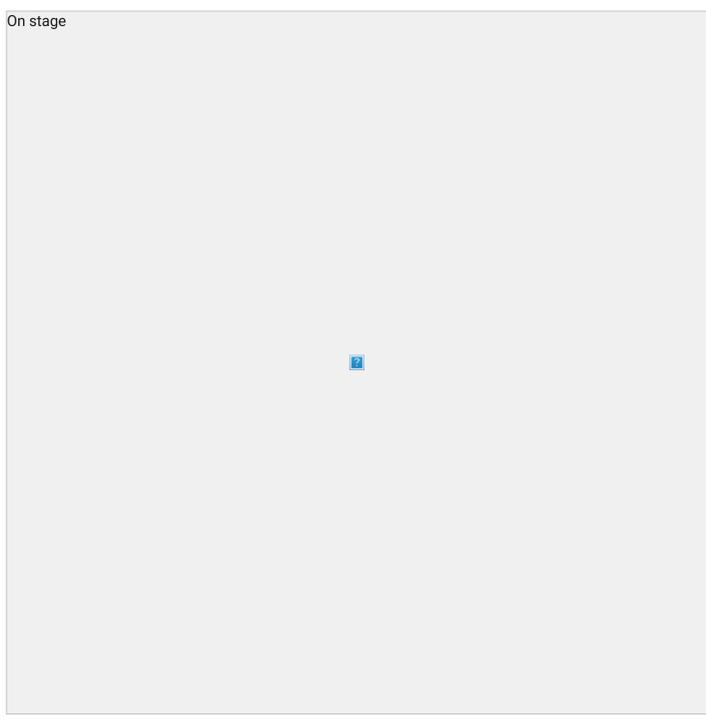
Updated on: 09 Feb 2026, 8:00 am · 3 min read

[Add TNIE As A Trusted Source](#) [Add as a preferred source on Google](#)

“Grammar alone can’t make one an artist; art is beyond technique,” said Pandit Ulhas Kashalkar in an interview after the Sangeet Nritya Mahotsav held recently in the city. “Your thoughts should reflect in your art. An artist goes above the technicalities to find a greater form. If one is stuck with the grammar, he can be a teacher, not an artist,” he said.

Trained in the Gwalior, Jaipur, and Agra gharanas, Kashalkar is often described as an embodiment of all three streams of Hindustani classical music. His journey into the world of ragas began early under the guidance of his father, Nagesh Dattatreya Kashalkar.

His other gurus were Pt Rajabhau Kogje and Prof Prabhakar Rao Khardenavis; his musical vision was further refined through rigorous taalim under stalwarts of Hindustani music—Pt Ram Marathe and Pt Gajanan Rao Joshi. It is from them that Kashalkar imbibed the distinctive nuances of the three gharanas, a rare synthesis that would later become a defining feature of his music.



On stage

Learning from others

“Every artist is inspired by other artists; taking from multiple gharanas isn’t a new phenomenon or wrong. My guruji too was trained in multiple gharanas; my learning was shaped by him,” he said.

It’s not about the purity of gharanas, it’s about one’s perception of art, he added. “Ek gharane ke sab ek jaisa gayenge, toh unko kaun sunega (if everybody from the same gharana sings alike, who would listen to them),” said Kashalkar, adding that artists make art after being inspired by multiple things to bring novelty and give their art a unique identity.

The role of a teacher

Kashalkar has mentored generations of students, many of whom are now acclaimed performers in their own right, carrying forward the legacy of Hindustani classical music across the world. Talking about the shift in the perception of art, he says, nothing can replace taalim and riyaz. “If one thinks social media will help them to be an artist, they must know nothing. No technology or fan base replaces riyaz,” he said.

AI, he said, cannot be ‘expressive’. “The bhaav of a thumri can’t be depicted through AI. In time, we will get to know in what manner AI will shape classical music and redefine its legacy—if at all.”

Kashalkar’s contribution to Indian music has been recognised through numerous honours, including the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award and the Padma Shri. In addition, he has received titles such as Swar-Ratna, Raag Rishi, and Gaan Tapasvi, bestowed by Jagat Guru Shankaracharya.

His recital at the programme was an invitation into the depths of raga, the subtleties of bhaav, and the ecstatic possibilities of sound, making his music not merely an experience, but a journey. Stating that imitation is not the end goal, he said, “The real pursuit lies in slowly developing a style that reflects one’s sensibility, emotional depth, and personal understanding of music. An artist’s style emerges not from imitation of what was taught, but from thinking through it, living with it, and allowing it to mature. To expect an artiste to simply reproduce their guru’s music, or music from a gharana only, is to overlook the long, introspective process that truly defines art.”

[Follow The New Indian Express channel on WhatsApp.](#)

[Download the TNIE app to stay with us and follow the latest](#)



Related Stories

- [The Adventures of Satish Gujral](#)
Pankil Jhajhria · 20 Jan 2026
- [Mahesh Kale: Honouring classical music is my default state](#)
Tejal Sinha · 17 Jan 2026
- [‘The audience must feel one with your song’](#)
Srestha Sarkar · 16 Jan 2026
- [AI as an artist? It’s too big a leap for machine learning systems](#)
Deepa Bhashti · 01 Jan 2026



[Classical music](#) [Hindustani Classical Music](#) [Pandit Ulhas Kashalkar](#)

