

## **Lyrical Milieu of Jorasanko Thakur Bari**

**And**

## **Rabindranath's Musical Awakening**

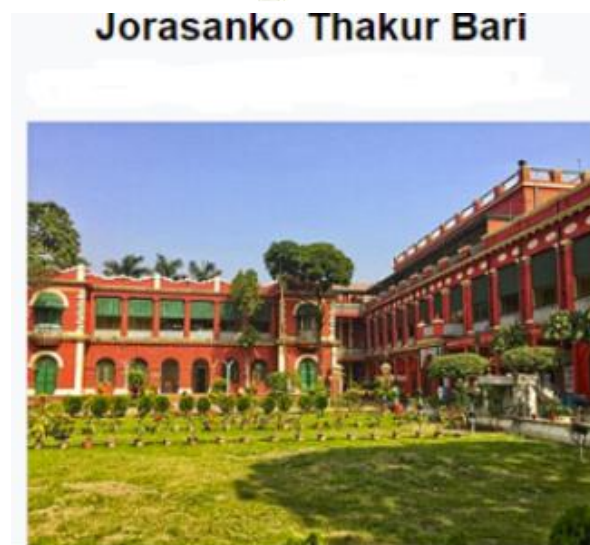
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### **Abstract**

Jorasanko Thakur Bari, the ancestral residence of the Tagore family who were the essential figures of the socio-cultural map of Bengal, as well as with the Brahmo Samaj, the Bengal Renaissance, and the Bengal School of Art. Jorasanko Thakur Bari was built in 1784 by Nilmani Thakur in Jorasanko in north of Kolkata. The legacy of this princely estate was carried forward by Prince Dwarkanath Tagore who was a legal descendant of Tagore's family and great-grandfather of Rabindranath Tagore. The house has been the testimony to many veterans who stood as maestros to variant art forms. Tagore's house was not a mere family residence but a hub of cultural and intellectual activity.



**Image 1: Jorasanko Thakur Bari**

## Keywords

Jorasanko Thakur Bari, Rabindranath Tagore (Rabi), Dwijendranath Tagore, Satyendranath Tagore, Hemendranath Tagore, Soumyandranath Tagore, Jyotirindranath Tagore

## Introduction

The spiritual inclination of Maharshi Debendranath Tagore( father of Rabindranath Tagore) not only enabled him to practice spiritualism but also helped him to promenade the plenary universe. He beheld cosmic luster and divinity amidst conventional life and corny existence. He discovered music to be the prime diffraction of cosmic energy. So in spite of not being a veteran in this field, he never flinched to be a high-spirited connoisseur and admirer of Indian classical music.

He always discerned for a musical atmosphere to prevail in every nooks and curves of Jorasanko Thakur Bari. He sent invitations to stalwarts of music and eventually appointed them as music teachers for his children. At one point, pivotal singers like Jadubhatta made his entry as mentor for Debendranath's sons on his request. He was well known as the second Tansen of India and was conferred with a number of prestigious titles by then maharajas. Thus Jorasanko Thakur Bari became a destination of musical pilgrimage. Music embellished the principal aristocracy of Jorasanko Thakur Bari's internal cultural affairs.



Debendranath Tagore

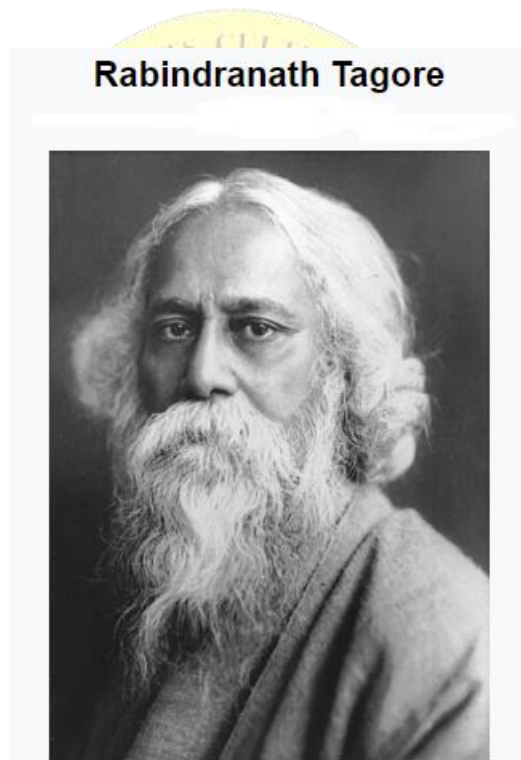


Dwarakanath Tagore

**Image 2: Debendranath Tagore and Dwarakanath Tagore**

## **The musical environment amidst which Rabindranath Tagore's childhood was nurtured**

Amidst musical atmosphere of Thakur Bari, the World Poet Rabindranath Tagore was born in 1861. Because of father Debendranath Tagore's musical affinity some of Rabi's elderly siblings were already groomed into dexterous musicians before he touched his adolescent, like Dwijendranath, Satyendranath, Hemendranath, Jyotirindranath --- all were religiously devoted in their respective musical sphere. In such a musical ambit Rabi's childhood and youth flourished and his creative talent culminated to it's full potential. Standing on the mellifluous shore of melody he commuted his vision with the iridescent world of symphony. Thus, he was able to raise a new dimension in Bengal's music tradition popularly termed as Rabindra Sangeet.

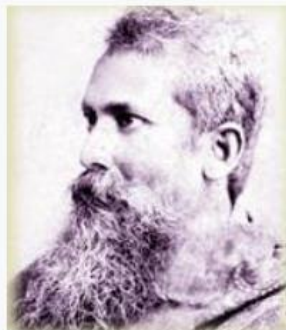


**Image 3: Rabindranath Tagore**

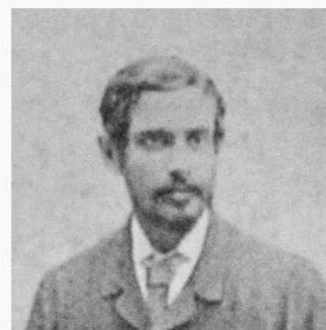
## Reminiscences of Rabindranath Tagore's childhood and his lyrical Odyssey

In trying to recollect about his childhood, Rabi mentioned that his elder brother Dwijendranath was an adroit player of western flute and with that he measured the algorithm of classical music. He was also an efficient player of organ. Rabi's next elder brother Satyendranath was an expert Hindustani classical singer. He was the only brother who trained himself in classical music from an expert and renowned guru of his time. Again he has seen his elder brother Hemandranath Tagore practicing Hindustani classical music by balancing his tanpura on his shoulder. But Rabi's childhood was greatly influenced by his elder brother Jyotirindranath Tagore, his favorite Jyotida. Not only music, he touched Rabi's soul with his depth in arenas of art and literature. He was the first to ascertain Rabi's profound and unfathomable talent for creative art and discerned him to be new rising sun in the horizons of literature and music. He played different notes in organ and infant Rabi seated beside him would meditatively weave words to befit every tune. Jyotirindranath was the trailblazer for devising and publishing, 'Akar Matrik' format of notation. It unfurled a new facet in notation pattern to enable artists sing more accurately. Later Rabi adopted this method of notation permanently for all his songs composed.

Rabi's seventh elder brother Soumendranath Tagore was an extreme devotee of music and he earned fame as a vocalist with a mellifluous voice. In Jorasanko mansion both streams of music - Oriental and Occidental were practiced with poised eminence. In his memoir Soumendranath mentioned ---- the music entourage of Thakur Bari had all facets of music unbolted and confluence of both Hindustani and Western music were solicited with equal priority.

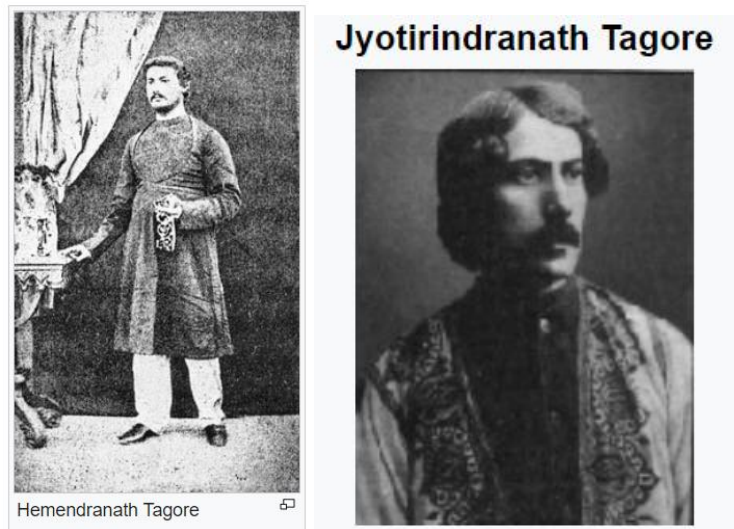


Portrait of Dwijendranath Tagore



Satyendranath Tagore

**Image 4: Dwijendranath Tagore and Satyendranath Tagore**



**Image 5: Hemendranath Tagore and Jyotirindranath Tagore**

### **Lyrical Ambience of Thakur Bari**

Thakur Bari had the custom of organising musical concerts. The music stalwarts of the era were invited to perform at such concerts. Again some mere homely concerts were arranged with ingenious and spirited members of Thakur Bari only. The junior artists performed dhruwad tunes composed by the elderly and efficient members of the house. Infant Rabi wasn't permitted to partake in such concerts. So an intrigued young boy would hide behind the shroud of trellis to catch glimpses of such concerts. Pre-eminently more of classical songs were staged on such occasions. So the basic structures of classical singing gradually evolved in young Rabi.

In his memoir Rabindranath has mentioned about Thakur Bari's Lyrical ambience were his metrical and euphonious awakening has happened. His childhood was shaped amidst practice of music and he can't remember a time when he didn't sing. Once he conveyed to Dilip Kumar Roy (an eminent singer and son of Dwijendralal Roy) that whatever tunes he overheard from behind window panes or while crossing the vestibule in a jiffy, even those faint timbers kept pirouetting in his mind which later became the inspiration for his musical penchant. Such profound was the musical aura of Thakur Bari.

## **The Mentors or Gurus who enlightened Rabindranath's path for lyrical quest**

Young Rabindranath was fortunate enough to come in close proximity with some of the music luminaries of the era and who have been his mentors and gurus as well. His first guru was the renowned dhrupad singer Bishnu Chakraborty and then eventually his learning was shifted to Jadubhatta who was conferred the title of Second Tansen of Hindustan by the then Maharajas. In Rabi's early stage he was greatly influenced by Jadubhatta's musical lore. His next music guru was Srikantha Singha who occupied a deep status of reverence in Rabi's heart with his musical expertise and personality. His gurus have always aimed to initiate a strong alliance between him and his propensity for musical pursuits. When reminiscing about his gurus he has mentioned them with obeisance and how they impacted his life.

### **Conclusion**

From the time Rabi's conscious mind conjoined creative dimensions he started composing tunes for songs. His father Maharshi Debendranath Tagore often addressed him as 'Bulbul' (nightingale) of Bengal. Hearing about Rabi's creative prowess from his associates, he would invigilate him from close quarters. Sometimes he would send for him and applaud his talent as well. The iridescent shades of life have always enhanced Rabi's creative inclinations. His opus of poetries, songs and dramas invoked a holistic renaissance in Bengali art and culture giving birth to a new genre of his musical genius popularly termed as 'Rabindrik'. Thus it is evident from this lyrical account how his upbringing amidst an affluent musical environment has sculpted him into a replete musician whose love and devotion for his country's heritage and culture is like torrid exudation from a lambent stream.

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- Images from Wikipedia



## About the Author

Ms. Indrani Chatterjee is from Kolkata, West Bengal. She is a self-motivated writer and a published author and has coauthored several anthologies of poetry. She has also appeared for several online writing contests from eminent platforms and has been a winner for a number of times. She is also a vocalist of classical and Rabindra Sangeet and has currently completed her graduation in Bachelor of Music from Rabindra Bharati University. She has profound inclination for art and is an emotive person.

