

## **Evolution of Music** **P.Padmanabha Sarma**

It was the great scientist *Einstein* who said to the world on hearing the British violinist, “Yehudi, you have proven to me again there is a God in the heaven”. We all know the sanskrit saying, “Pasurvethi sisurvethi vethi ganarasam phani” On hearing Krishna’s flute, the deer stopped eating grass, the calves stopped sucking milk, the lion intent on springing on o the elephants head, stopped midway and even the mountain rocks melted. Such is the power of divine music. The tamil saying “patta maramum pal soriyum” – emphasising the power of music in making a dry tree to come to life with secreting its milk. By the charm of his lute, *Orpheus* made his dead wife back to life. Saint *Tyagaraja* is said to have brought a dead man back to life by his devotional music. The great musical Savant *Muthuswami Deekshithar* is said to have brought rain to a drought stricken district by composing and singing a song in the raga *Amridavarshini*. Such powerful music has its rich propensities, which are immense and indefinite. Some say it is a like with God-some say it is a vehicle of Bhakthi; other opines it is sabda brahman-it is nada brahman. Kalidasa acknowledges the power of music as it is all pervading. Man’s vague longings after the unseen, the eternal, have found expression in various forms of arts and music is the most immaterial of them and has greater emotional appeal to more people than any of them. You will be convinced of this, for example, if you listen to a good raga alap, it definitely conveys the impression of an evocation of the divine - the divine form of the raga. In the main the substratum of our music is ancient tracing its origin to the sama veda which is recited in the same raga (Kharahara priya) through out the country.

Music was the vehicle through which the vedas have been recited for centuries and has been responsible for the cultured expansion and devotional fervour, which helped people in refining their passions and emotions.

Simple, homely, catchy and impressive folk music is attune with the universe-has various forms- moral, philosophical, ceremonial and labour oriented, cradle lullabies, devotional, tribal, historical, epic and puranic.

Indians are essentially a musical race. Every important event has its appropriate song. Every hour of the day and every season of the year have their own melody. Some of the forms with which we Tamilians are familiar are sindu, kummi, Oonjal, Nalungu, Oodam,

Devaram, Arutpa, Kuravanchi, prabbhandam (opera), etc. These survive because they are the faithful reflection and an overflow of the emotions of the people at large and have been the basis for the so-called classical music.

Music is an international language though its idioms differ from age to age, place to place and race to race. Though a superb form of art, its superiority would not have stood the test of time if it had not had a scientific basis. As a written science Indian music is perhaps the oldest in the world and many unbiased westerners have acclaimed it as such.

Ancient Tamil inscriptions of the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD- period of Narasimha Varma- at Kudumiyandanmalai (near Trichy) reveal that an exquisite system of music existed independently in south India in those days. We may divide the entire past into several musical eras.

The first was the vedic period which may be considered to have lasted about 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. Alexander the Great admired the Indian music for its seven notes per *sthayi* (octave). The ancient Greeks had only four notes. He took home with him two Indian musicians. The sage Bharata is considered to be the pioneer in Indian music as well as dance. In what we call pure music –absolute music-Raga is the basis for melody. The name Raga is not used by Bharata but Matanga referred to in his Brhaddesi (2<sup>nd</sup> century BC).

The next is the historic period, which lasted till 800 A.D. Behram Ghor, Caliph of Baghdad requested King Shankol (of Hind) to send him a few popular musicians and the latter sent 10000 of them and they are said to have settled in Arabia, Persia, Greece and Spain. Even today, Spanish music has many melodies similar to ours.

We do not know much about the third stage which lasted till 1000A.D. During the next few centuries, North Indian music started to evolve and develop a new style that has now come to be known as *Hindustani* style. A Chalukya king named Someswara who reigned over Karnataka from 1116-1127 AD refers to Karnata and Andhra schools of music, the former being the more original one. Thus the name Karnatic music came into being.

In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Sarngadeva wrote Ratnakara- a classic considered as authority by both *Karnatic* and *Hindustani* schools of music.

Amir Khusru is a famous Hindustani musician who is credited with the invention of Sitar which has 12 notes similar to Vina for an Octave and it was he who founded the type of composition called Khyal. *Hindustani* musicians had a more liberal outlook and laid greater stress on voice culture than *Karnatic* musicians.

Akbar was a great patriot of arts. The "In I Akbari" refers to 36 musicians in his court. OF them 5 were Hindu musicians. Mira Bai, Tansen and Tulsi Das were Akbar's contemporaries. It is held by some people that Tansen was originally a Hindu musician name Tanappacharya. One of his disciples was a southerner named Somanatha who wrote and published Raga vibodha (1609) and adorned Akbar's court and tried to propagate Karnatic music there. Another southerner, Purandara Vitala wrote several books on Hindustani music.

By the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Melakarta scheme had been fully developed. A melakarta is a basic scale in which all the notes of the Octave occur and are in the proper order both in the ascent and the descent. The Tamils called it "Pann". A scale formed from it is called a Janya Raga ( for Tamil it is Thiram). Tramamatya of Vijayanagar who wrote Dwaramelakalidhi (1550) proposed 20 melakartas –12 swaras and 22 srutis.

Venkatamaki the famous author of Chathurdandi Prakasika (1660) was the first to speak of the 2 melas. In another book Ragalakshana (author unknown) there is a reference to 72 melas. Although Venkatamaki suggested 72 melas, he used only 19 of them. Ten of them were being used by Hindustani musicians also then. Since then, there has been a lot of intermingling between the two styles of music. The common features between the two styles are:

- 22 sruthis
- 12 swaras
- several common ragas
- common method of Arohana and avarohana
- certain tals
- similar type of musical composition

A few common ragas are:

Hindustani

Boop

Bilaval

Malkhons

Bhairavam

Carnatic

Mohanam

Sankarabharanam

Hindolam

Mayamalava Gowla

Hindustani	Carnatic
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Dhrupad with its Asthayi, Ankara and abhog us very similar to</li><li>2. Tillana and Javali are common to both the styles of Indian music.</li><li>3. Vilambith and Dhrud are the slow and fast tempo of Hindustani style</li><li>4. It is interesting to note that certain ragas in Hindustani have somewhat similar ragas in carnatic with little modification. Eg. What is Bageswari for Hindustani is.</li><li>5. So also raga Yaman is an equivalent of</li><li>6. Voice culture is stressed more by Hindustani music thus more time is spent by a Hindustani vocalist in unfolding the raga.</li><li>7. Hindustani music is a blend of ancient Indian music and Persian style, which penetrated during the Moghul invasion.</li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The kriti with Pallavi, Anupallavi and Charanam.</li><li>• Tillana and Javali are common to both the styles of Indian music.</li><li>• which are also prevalent in Karnatic as Chauka and Madhyama Kala.</li><li>• SriRanjani for Carnatic. <i>These ragas have nowadays penetrated to carnatic as new ragas in the category called <b>Bhashanga</b> Ragas. This raga is different from the Bageswari by its stress more on komal and tivra swaras thus giving a completely new picture.</i></li><li>• Kalyani raga of Karnatic music. As Yaman has a different colour, the composers of present day carnatic music are using these for setting their pieces in a nice way.</li><li>• On the other hand, the dexterous tals culture has now become prominent in Karnatic. <i>This is not to say that Hindustani is inferior in laya to Karnatic.- the larger rhythm.</i></li><li>• Karnatic music claims to have preserved its pristine purity of style of the ancient music of India, yet it has been continuously undergoing changes.</li></ul>

Actually the exchange and interchange of ragas has been leading to the fusion and synthesis of the two styles of music. The music of BalMurali Krishna or MSG testifies to this.

Let us have a look at Western music too. It lays greater emphasis on harmony than melody. The difference between one style and theirs is not a mere matter of melody versus harmony but one on emphasis. Theirs is a tempered scale with notes on fixed pitch while ours is called chromatic scale. They have fixed pitch for all stringed instruments. Their harmonical system has led to a well developed instrumental music with a range of 7½ octaves in some. But our vina has only 3½.

Harmony music is a universe itself. There are very long passages in it. Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup> symphony takes 80 minutes. These are not more than 20 scales in western music. There is the ubiquitous monhanam. Russian Scriabine uses Vachaspathi. In Western Europe, they use mainly sankarabharanam- the foundation scale- called major diatonic scale- keeravani, Gowri Manohari and Natabhairavi.

In Eastern Europe, they use Simhendramadhyamam. It is said that Chinese use Sudda Saveri. There is no doubt that Beethoven would have composed kritis and varnams and Tyagaraja would have symphonies and sonnets had they been born in India and Europe respectively.

Even in Indian music there is an element of harmony. D(ri) and A(dha), D(ri) and G(pa), F(ma) and C(sa) and F(ma) and B(ni). There is a constant return to the keynote.

Corresponding to the term principal note, harmonising note subordinate note and discordant note we have the terms Vadi, samvadi and anuvadi respectively. Some of our musical instruments with three strings for talas, lend themselves easily to harmonisation.

There are some similarities between Indian and Western music in Tala structure too:

<i>Carnatic</i>	<i>Western</i>	<i>Tala period</i>
Laghu	Crochet	1
Druta	Quaver	½
Anudruta	Semi-quaver	¼
Anuanudruta	semi-semi-Quaver	1/8
Guru	Minim	2
Chatur	semibreve	4

However, there are only trisra and chatura gatis in the laghus and not more than 15 tals altogether in W music.

In conclusion, it can be said that the evolution of music is unavoidable and that is what we have seen over the centuries. However, the preservation of standards in classical Music is important. The problem of Indian music is more than a technical matter. It is a cultural renaissance in itself. Although other forms of music come into our ways of life as a sign of progressivism, we have to preserve the traditional music, which has been keeping us one.