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A TALE OF INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC

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PROLOGUE

Music is a form of art. It organizes sounds to create a pleasing experience with the help of melody, rhythm and harmony. Music is created through vocals, instruments and / or a combination of the two and conveys emotions and ideas. It is a universal language and permeates every human culture and society. Music is a kaleidoscopic art and very smoothly aligns with words (as in song) and with physical movements (as in dance). Music has been a companion to rituals and dramas expressing human emotions through civilizations. Contemporary modern culture has invariably utilized these possibilities by way of radio, film, television, theatre and Internet etc.

The Indian music system looks for its origin in myths and divinity disregarding its historicity. Western mind set does not accept that God transmitted this knowledge to men but this is the only truth under doctrinal ideology. Brahma, God of creation taught Shiva, God of destruction arts and crafts of music who passed this art to Saraswati, Goddess of knowledge. Later Narad was taught this art who invented the instrument named Veena who taught this divine art to the Gandharvas (Celestial Singers), Kinnar (Celestial Instrumentalists) and Apsaras (Celestial Dancers). Ultimately, Hanuman and Narada gave this knowledge to the whole earth. Lord Shiva is believed to have developed five Ragas, namely, Bhairava, Hindol, Megh, Deepak and Shri and a sixth, Kaishik, is considered to be developed by Parvati, Shiva's companion. Some theory holds that all music arose from the sacred sound of AUM. Regardless of myths, legends and religious dogmas, different genres and styles of music find roots in the Indus Valley civilization. Representations of dancers and musicians came out from the excavations done by the Archaeological Department of India at Indus Valley sites of Harappa and Mohenjodaro and we can comfortably conclude that such intellectual attributes had reached a high level even before Vedic era.

The word 'music' finds its roots in the French word ***'musique'*** from 12th century onwards and the old English word ***'musike'*** from mid-13th century while both of these words look for their origin in Latin word ***'musica'***. The Latin word itself originates from the archaic Greek word ***'mousiké'***, meaning the ***'art of the muses'***. The muses were nine goddesses and were sources and knowledge of all literature, science and the arts according to Greek mythology. The nine muses were the ***Calliope*** (epic poetry), ***Clio*** (history), ***Euterpe*** (double-pipes and music), ***Erato*** (love poetry and lyric poetry), ***Melpomene*** (tragedy), ***Polyhymnia*** (hymns and sacred poetry), ***Terpsichore*** (dance), ***Thalia*** (comedy and pastoral poetry) and ***Urania*** (astronomy). It appears that the Greek word for music was a generic and all-encompassing in meaning as compared to its contemporary understanding which associated it exclusively to sound.

INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC IN ARCHAIC TIMES

Indian classical music originated during

the Vedic era where we find the reference of **Nadabrahma**. Vedic scriptures over 6000 years ago houses chants and associated system of musical notes along with rhythmic cycles. The fourth Veda, namely, the Samveda contains organized music. The Samveda is the primordial source of music and provides the foundation for Indian music. The Samveda contains hymns of the Rigveda and these hymns were sung during Vedic rituals using three to seven musical notes. The Rigveda also immerses the musical meter. The Samveda is credited with the origin of the earliest 'ragas'. In the later Vedic period music was purely chanting of the verses in musical patterns.

Two musical genre prevailed during this period, namely, the Gandharva and the Gana. The Gandharva referred to the formally composed music performed during the ceremonies and was considered celestial and divine whereas the Gana was the informal and improvised music performed for entertainment performances. **Prabandh Sangeet** was very popular during the 2nd to 7th century CE and the origin of Dhruvapad lies in Prabandh Sangeet as is believed.

The first reference to music is credited to **Panini** in 500 BCE and the first reference to the musical theory to **'Rikpratisakhya'** in 400 BCE. The **'Natyashastra'**, by Bharat Muni is the foundation of classical music and dance traditions of India. The Natyashastra is the first written musical work which divides music into octaves and 22 keys. The **'Dathilan'**, another work on classical music talks about 22 '***srutis***' per octave. Two more important works on music are **'Brihaddesi'** by Matanga in the 9th century where Matanga defined Raag and **'Sangeeta Makarand'** by Narada written in the 11th century described 93 raags and classified them into feminine and masculine catetories.

The early Indian music developed in two directions, namely, **Vedic** or religious music and **Loukik** or secular music. Vedic music was exclusively religious in nature. **Loukik** music was again of two types, namely, **Gandharv Loukik** and **Deshi Loukik** wherein the former was the Margi Sangeet and the latter was the Deshi Sangeet. Margi Sangeet was practiced by the Bhugandharv class of people in the temples and the Deshi Sangeet was the non-temple music during those days. Deshi Sangeet was different from the Margi Sangeet on different counts. Margi Sangeet was either by Gandharvas or by others under supervision of the Gandharvas who were well versed in the arts whereas the Deshi Sangeet was practiced by ordinary people. Margi Sangeet was temple music whereas Deshi Sangeet was related to life outside temples. Margi Sangeet had strict song forms, rigid melodic and rhythmic rules and other formalized grammatical norms. Deshi Sangeet was initially free of such rules but later came under the framework of the Gandharvic rules to a great extent but not completely. Margi Sangeet influenced the Deshi Sangeet and gave rise to the institution of the Raag in Indian Classical music. Margi Sangeet was used for different religious purposes including mystic practices and the theatre both. The theatre was a formalized classical art with strict rules of predetermined appropriate music at appropriate places. It included the use of an orchestra, called Kutap. Deshi Sangeet did not follow the restrictions of the Margi Sangeet. Mari Sangeet followed two types of melodic structures, namely, **Jati** and **Raag** practiced by Bharat sect and Narad sect

respectively. These Raags were different from the Raags of the Deshi tradition. Raags of the Margi tradition were used to sing in the religious ceremonies or dramatic productions and are now obsolete. The Deshi Raag traditions continue to contemporary times undergoing multiple influences and modifications in the journey and did incorporated the Raags and rules of the Margi tradition. Margi Sangeet used the logic of different rhythm structures that were in use at the time. These structures related to the tempo of the music and went by names like Dakshin Margi, Chitra Margi, Vartik Margi, etc. Deshi music was not bound by these requirements.

The two parallel streams of Indian music, namely, the Margi sangeet and the Deshi sangeet having common origin did not remain independent of each other. As a small priestly class over time monopolized the temple ceremonies and rituals, the Margi sangeet shrinked to the walls of the religious places distancing itself from the rank and file and came to be known as classical whereas its counterpart, so to speak the Deshi sangeet remained in the public domain and assumed tremendous popularity in multiple forms in different parts of India. Contemporarily the musical styles like **Dhrupad** and **Khayal** can be seen as Margi sangeet and that of **Ghazals** and **Thumari** may be put under the Deshi sangeet category. The two genres of music have benefitted each other thoroughly wherein the Margi sangeet continually received new and fresh elements from the Deshi genre such as **ragas** and **raginis**, associated musical instruments and other forms of arts like dance to make the classical genre a living and soulful tradition. For example, some of the classical forms of Indian music find their origin in specific regional styles in vogue like **Khayal** during times of **Dhrupad** used to be seen as a form of semi-classical or even non-classical in style, over time got elevated to the status of classical music genre or **Margi sangeet**. Similarly, **Ghazals** and **Thumari & Dadra** are enjoying greater acceptability among serious practioners of classical genre artists. These artists freely perform some of the most popular forms like **Chaiti, Kajri** and **Rasiya** along with **Dhrupad** and **Khayal** numbers. This continuous interaction between two genres of music helped the **Margi sangeet** to survive and flourish. This is also seen in the inclusion of ragas like **Khamaj, Khambhavati, Kafi, Piloo, Maand, Malavi or Sarang** in the classical music system. This exchange being a two way process, popular form or **Deshi genre** heavily borrowed from classical or **Margi sangeet** to sustain and exist and for this very reason a serious grammatical codification of Deshi sangeet did not take place and film music presents a fine mix of both classical and popular styles of music.

HINDUSTANI AND CARNATIC STYLES

The distinction between Margi Sangeet and Deshi sangeet was based on the content, however, there exists yet another bases of classification, namely, North Indian or Hindustani and Carnatic styles primarily based on local variations in both styles. Classic text **Brihaddeshi** by **Matang Muni** mentions regional varieties under heads of North and South styles. The North Indian and Carnatic styles have similar origin and the difference between the two is due to regional colour. Evolutionary perspective on music reveals that multiple regional variations started surfacing from 7th century onwards. From 7th century to 13th

century AD, Indian music met with musical styles of the invading countries. However, this cultural onslaught resulted in enrichment of Indian music tradition. For example, Irani music had tremendous impact on Indian musical tradition especially distinctive styles of Hindustani and Carnatic music.

The distinctive features of the two genre of music lie in the application of different Raags, Srutis, Thaats and the instruments. Another major difference is the purity of Srutis in Carnatic music in comparison to the Hindustani or North Indian music where Srutis merge into each other while rendering a Raag. Purity of Srutis refer to rendering the minutest sound associated with a swara in its purest form. Whereas practioners in Hindustani or North Indian music tend to shift to lower or upper contours of these pure Swaras which are called as Komal (soft) or teevra (shrill) respectively.

In both the genre of music we notice differences in the composition of Raagas wherein the Carnatic style follows purity of Swaras and Hindustani style practices the merger of Raaga. Hence in some cases there are common names for Raagas in both the genre and in some cases Raagas have different names though they are similar in their rendering. For example, Hindol, Sohani and Shree have similar names but different rendering whereas some Raagas have different names in both the genre but similar rendering such as Mohanam, Malkauns and Durga in Carnatic music and Bhupali, Hindolam and Sowari in Hindustani music respectively.

Another point of difference lies their main forms of music. **Dhrupad, Khayal, Thumri and Tarana** etc. are part of Hindustani genre and Carnatic genre include **Kirtanam, Kruti and Tillana.** Moreover, in Carnatic style performers puts equal importance to **Swara** and **Shabd** and in Hindustani style puts primacy of **Swara** over **Shabd.**

However, over time both genre of music have close interaction which resulted in adoption of Raag compositions of each other with suitable adjustments. Hindustani music now freely use some of the Carnatic Raagas such as Hamsdhwani, Shreeranjani, Aabhogi, Kinvani, and Saraswati. Ustad Abdul Karim Khan's ***sargam*** was influenced by similar features found in Carnatic music.

EPILOGUE

Man on this planet since earliest times depended on nature or superhuman power for their survival and tried to establish its relationship with natural forces or super human being or God. He adopted music as a medium to communicate with God or superior power. They believed that intoned words known as 'mantras' were more effective than simple and plain spoken words. Classic texts Vedas are the unique illustration of this belief. Association of the Vedas with music reflects the progress of music.

Indian classical music developed over millennia into a nuanced and glorious art form. It endeavours to unite the performer and the listeners through the experience of ***bhava*** or emotions by way of raagas, ornamentation of notes and rhythmic patterns. Indian classical music is a part of Indian culture. Music has been an inseparable part of daily life in India and is considered as the soothing entertainer for the common man on the one hand and spiritual experience and a means to God realization by the wise Rishis on the other.

1. The phylogeny of Indian music under a divine theory posits that its origins are rooted in the Vedic hymns, particularly the Sama Veda, where sound is considered divine and the source of creation. This perspective views Indian music as a spiritual and divine expression, with musicians striving to connect with the divine through their performances. The Sama Veda, with its melodic chanting, is seen as the foundation upon which Indian musical traditions evolved. In essence, the divine theory of Indian music's phylogeny suggests that the music is not just an art form but a spiritual practice, with its origins and development deeply intertwined with religious beliefs and practices.
2. https://www.classicfm.com/discover-music-meaning-of-word/
3. Naad Brahma refers to the primordial sound or vibration of the universe and is associated with the sacred syllable OM. It is essentially the Divine Sound or Cosmic Music from which all creation emanates. In essence, Naad Brahma is the belief that the universe is fundamentally a vibration or a sound. he Supreme Being is manifested through this primordial sound.
4. "Prabandh Sangeet," is a traditional Indian musical form that was prevalent during the ancient period. It is characterized by four "dhatus" (parts) and six "angas" (elements) that define the structure and style of a musical composition. In essence, Prabandh is a musical form where these four Dhatus and six Angas are combined to create a structured and organized vocal or instrumental composition. Modern compositions like Khayal and Thumri can be seen as a development of the Prabandh form.
5. Indian grammarian Panini is renowned for his comprehensive work on Sanskrit grammar, the Ashtadhyayi. Though he is not directly associated with music like a composer. His focus was on the systematic analysis and standardization of the Sanskrit language, phonetics, phonology and morphology. While Panini himself may not have been a musician, his work laid the foundation for the study and understanding of Sanskrit, which was essential for the development of Indian classical music and its associated texts. However, in Astadhyayi, Panini shows a full acquaintance of the various branches of the musical art. Besides referring to vocalists and instrumentalists, the Astadhyayi also mentions orchestral bonds including singers to the accompaniment of Vina, one of the most popular instruments of ancient Indian music.
6. Rik Pratisakhya" (ऋक्प्रातिशाख्य) refers to a specific Pratisakhya work, a grammatical treatise that provides rules for the pronunciation and phonetic changes of words in the Rigveda. Pratisakhyas are essentially phonetic manuals for Vedic scriptures and the Rik Pratisakhya deals specifically with the Rigveda. In essence, "Rik Pratisakhya" is a specialized manual within the larger category of Pratisakhyas, dedicated to the Rigveda and its phonetic characteristics.
7. The Nāṭyaśāstra (Science of Drama) is the earliest and most authoritative Indian text on the performing arts. Written in Sanskrit, mainly in epic ślokas with some prose fragments, it is dated by scholars from the 5th century BCE to the 7th –8th century CE. The Natyashastra mentions two different dance styles. They are **lasya and tandava**. Tandava is related to the powerful creative and destructive cosmic dance of God Shiva, while lasya is said to have been created by Shiva's spouse, Goddess Parvati.
8. The "Dathilan" text (or "Dattilam") is an ancient Indian musical treatise. It is believed to have been composed shortly after the Natya Shastra of Bharata, and is dated between the 1st and 4th century AD. The text discusses fundamental musical concepts like swaras (notes), srutis (microtones), and grama (scales). It also explores various arrangements of notes, note sequences, and musical elaboration (alankara).

9. The Brihaddeshi by Matanga Muni, is a major work in Indian classical music theory, especially for its introduction of the concept of Raga and the Sa Re Ga Ma notation system. It is also known for classifying Indian music as North and South regional variants and distinguishing between **marga** (classical) and **desi** (folk) music.
10. "Sangeeta Makarand" is a Sanskrit text on Indian classical music, specifically on music theory and practice. It is a collection of definitions, descriptions, and comments on various aspects of music, and it is attributed to Narada, a figure in Indian mythology. The text categorizes ragas (melodies) as male, female, and neuter.
11. In ancient Indian music, "Gandharva Loukik" (sometimes referred to as Margi Sangeet) and "Deshi Loukik" (Deshi Sangeet) represent two distinct styles of music. Gandharva Loukik was a more formal, rule-bound style with emphasis on melody, rhythm, and articulation, while Deshi Loukik was more regional and expressive, with greater freedom in musical elements.
12. In the context of Indian music, "margi" and "desi" refer to distinct styles or traditions of music. Margi, often associated with classical music, emphasizes strict rules and a focus on spiritual and ritualistic aspects. Desi, on the other hand, represents the more regional and folk-inspired music, characterized by its emotional appeal and diversity across different regions.
13. Carnatic music tends to be more structured and formulaic, relying on a fixed pattern of melody and rhythm. Hindustani music, on the other hand, is more improvisational, allowing for greater flexibility and creative expression.