



Swaranjali Music School

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1. Classical Music's Place in Fine Arts
2. Importance of Bandish in Indian Classical Music
3. Effect of Classical Music on Film songs
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1. Classical Music's Place in Fine Arts (Lalit Kalaa)

Let us first find out what should be called fine arts (or Lalit Kalaa)? A creation that is beautiful or made beautiful is called an art form. Raveendranaath Tagore said: "In Art we see the artist himself and not the Art itself". Hence it can be defined that an artist's beautiful creation, which reveals beauty is called Art.

In an ancient book 'Kaamasootra' (a book about sensual pleasures which include all senses like sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch), author Vatsyaayan wrote information about sixty four art forms. Out of these, only six are described as 'Fine Arts'. These six fine arts are: 1. Drama, 2. Poetry, 3. Music (vocal, instrumental and dance), 4. Literature, and 5. Sculpture (Statue and Buildings). If you take Statue and Building as separate sculptures, then there are six fine arts, otherwise there are five. There are other arts like cooking, decorating, but they are more for day to day use rather than something that transcends time.

Let us talk about specialties of fine arts. Famous actor from Hindi films, Pruthviraaj Kapoor said: "Work that is done simply using your hands and feet is called physical labor. When you add some thought into it, it becomes a craft. Only after adding your heart and soul into above two things, you create an art form." A German poet Goethe called it "Magic of soul". In short, when some fact is expressed through a talent of an artist, it is called 'Fine Art'. It may be a poem, a play, singing – playing instrument, dance, painting or a sculpture. If it has some innovation, beauty and superhuman quality, it will be called Fine

Arts (or Lalit Kalaa). The word 'Lalit' itself include shades of meaning like beauty, refinement, gracefulness, elegance, delicateness etc. Fine Arts exist at a much higher level than the material world. Toils people undergo in day to day life do not fall into the category "Fine Arts or Lalit Kalaa". Realization of the exceptional beauty of the soul is acquired through Fine Arts. This principle exists in a great poem "Shaakuntal" written by Kaalidaas. The aforementioned German poet Goethe raised it on his head and danced with it. The phenomenal element is also present in paintings by Raja Ravivarmaa, in sculptures of Kahjuraaho - Ajantaa - Elloraa, Sitaar playing of Pandit Ravishankar, Singing of Surashree Kesarbai Kerkar, fingers dancing on Tablaa by Ustaad Ahamadjaan Thirakavaa. Any place, where there is extraordinary, heavenly presentation of painting, sculpture, drama, poetry, singing, dance, instrument playing, Fine Arts are being exhibited.

Paintings and sculptures are enjoyed by eyes (sight). Literature and poetry is also read by eyes. Singing and instrument playing is enjoyed by the ears. Drama and dance are experienced by using both eyes and ears. Hence they are both visual and auditory art forms. Out of all these Fine Arts, music (Vocal, Instrumental and Dance) are the only ones that are performing arts. Drama or plays can also be included in performing arts, although you can also read a play in solitude. Literature is read alone in solitude, sculpture or painting is enjoyed by looking at it by yourself.

Now let us examine special characteristics of Music in Fine Arts. Literature has a story, it is developed and has a climactic ending. Paintings and sculptures have a subject that is depicted, may it be a deity, king, leader, scene from mythology, object from nature etc. Plays or dramas fall under literature, hence literature's rules apply to drama. However, music is not performed by developing a story. It is solely for the pleasure of listening to swar by ears. Pure dance is also performed with the same principles. However, dance does have representation of emotions.

Hence we can say that in the field of 'Fine Arts', singing and instrument playing has a rather special place. It only give pure auditory pleasure. It does not exist to tell a story about any hero or heroine. When you are enjoying singing and instrument playing, you forget about your daily grind and immerse yourself in the world of swar. This is the unique place of Music in Fine Arts.

2. Importance of Bandish in Indian Classical Music

Since we are talking about Bandish (composition) in classical music, it is obvious we mean vocal music. Instrumental playing in classical music uses technical terms like Maseetkhaanee Gat (Vilambit or slow composition) and Rajaakhaanee Gat (Drut or fast composition resp.).

In classical vocal music, vilambit and drut Bandish have their own special and important place. Raag sangeet is 'Aparampaar (infinite)'. In many bandishes we find lines like 'Naad saagar aparampaar (Ocean of notes is infinite)'. A special creation adorned with Swar, Taal, Laya, Varna that entertains people is called Raag. Raag's scope is limitless and the one that provides some boundaries to a raag is a bandish. Bandish is a composition that has swar, taal and lyrics and all characteristics of a raag.

In a dictionary, Bandish is defined as follows: To Bind, Process of binding, Composition, Management, arrangement etc. In classical music terms, Bandish (vilambit or drut khyaal) is a composition constructed and bound by swar, taal, raag rules and lyrics. Bandish is also called 'Cheej' in colloquial language. **Raag's concise form is a Bandish.** Bandish bounds a raag. Bandish are always associated with a raag, and hence it is appropriate to look for raag characteristics in a Bandish. A combination of form with swar and emotional disposition makes a raag. Raag becomes entertaining because of this form.

A saag has a vast field and it has many swar clusters that articulate the raag's form. A composer picks certain swar clusters that appeal to him/her. As a result, one bandish may not present a raag in its full form. Hence many old teachers often insist that a student should learn several bandishes from a same raag to understand a raag's full scope. Face to face instruction from a scholarly teacher is necessary to understand a raag properly.

A bandish where raag's full scope is clearly visible in its' Sthaayee is called a good bandish.

Examples: 1. Use of Dhaivat in raag Hameer's Bandish 'Dheeta langaravaa', 2. Swar cluster in raag Maroo Bihaag's bandish 'Kala naa pare', 3. Meend on swar in raag Shuddha Kalyaan's vilambit khyaal 'Bolana laagee'. Famous bandish in raag Shankaraa by Pandit Kumar Gandharva 'Sarape dhari ganga' brings out raag shankaraa's swar and emotional form in a very beautiful manner.

Raag's musical form is made up of swar-taal-laya. When it is combined with a Bandish, it becomes a symbol of raag's musical and literary form. Music is called poetry of swar and literature is called music made by words. When swar from raag are combined skillfully with words of a Bandish, it gives a raag a certain personality. Elderly artists used to say that a singer's wealth is the size of collection of his Bandishes. Raag itself is formless or abstract, but Bandish gives it a certain full personality. This form makes the raag come alive through Bandish which is adorned with lyrics-swar-taal-laya.

Using the swar available in raag has its own methodology. It becomes clearer in Bandish. From ancient times teachers always say '**Look at the bandish when you sing**'. What they mean is a bandish that starts in Mandra saptak, or has a 'Sam' in Madhya or Taar saptak will need to have different methods during expansion of raag. Each bandish will not be developed in an identical manner even in the same raag. Depending upon the bandish, aalaap, taan, boltaan will have different styles, swar clusters and laya in the same raag. That is why it is essential to collect several bandishes in the same raag to portray full form of the raag. A popular raag 'Yaman' has many vilambit khyaal ('Bana re Balaiya', 'Harvaa moraa re', Kaha sakhee

kaise ke', 'Moraa mana baandh') and madhyalay khyaal (Langar too kara jina cchuo', 'Avaguna na keejiye', 'Piyaa ki najariyaa') and they all have different singing styles, but raag is still Yaman. This specialty emphasizes importance of Bandish in vocal classical music.

While composing new bandishes, it is very important to listen to old bandishes and analyze them. When you fully understand the age old traditions, then new thoughts will grow properly. Hence creativity and traditionalism support each other. There is nothing that is completely new. Older item is decorated in a new form. Many times a singer composes bandishes that suit his/her own voice. Example: Ustaad Ameerkhan saaheb gave preference to Mandra saptak in a khyaal in raag Maarvaa and other compositions.

Sometimes a bandish is composed with a certain purpose, like presentation of taan or show a certain element like 'Tihaai (singing same line or word three times and then landing on 'Sam'). In raag Ramdaasee Malhaar, Pandit Vinaayakbua Patwardhan ('Baadaravaa gahar aaye') and Pandit S. N. Raatanjankar ('Maadho Mukund') composed two different bandishes with different form of the same raag, although they both obey the raag's rules accurately.

Hence it will need to be stressed that a singer should learn many bandishes in same raag. That way he/she will learn full scope of the raag and have bandishes that specialize in presenting varied specific aspects of raag like taan or sargam or serious aalaap or creative bol taan or taal or laya.

In order to become a successful artist, it is vitally important to collect various bandishes and construct new bandishes as best you can.

3. Effect of Classical Music on Film songs

Era of movies or motion pictures started around 1931 – 1932. One early Bengali film 'Indrasabhaa' had 71 songs.

In general you can say that the main object of a motion picture was to tell, or show, a story. From age old times, story-telling or presenting is a very popular art form. Before 1931, stories were told or presented through plays, keertan, noutankee etc. All of these presentations of stories incorporated music and songs.

On Marathi stage, sangeet naatak (musical plays) had lovely semi classical songs that were based on various raag. They were immensely popular. Keertan also included bhajan, mythological songs based on raag. Noutankees used more folk songs than classical songs. Hence it followed that when story presentation acquired a new medium – motion pictures, it borrowed ideas from earlier forms, like plays, keertans and noutankees. It often borrowed actors and actresses from stage too. The directors and producers of motion pictures were well aware of power of music to enhance certain aspect of a story. To show a scene with happiness, sadness, horror etc., back ground music is very effective. To reduce the monotony of prose dialogues, music and songs are used and songs also add to the entertainment value of a motion picture. Indeed many people go see a hindi movie because they like the songs.

Before 1940, music directors were few and far between. Natyasangeet (songs from musical plays) were based on raag, so that tradition continued in motion pictures. Based upon the emotion of the scene, it was decided that a certain raag supports these emotions, so a song from that raag will be used. In those days, New Theaters in Bangal, and in Maharashtra, 'Prabhaat', 'Imperial', 'Ranjeet', 'Minerva Movietone', 'Saagar' were main motion picture producers. Music directors were: R. C. Boral, Pankaj Malik, Govindarao Tembe, Master Krushnarao, Dada Chaandekar, B. R. Deodhar, Keshavrao Bhole. The music mostly used Indian instruments. The orchestras had Organ, Tabla, Taaltarang, Sitaar, Saarangee etc. Typical songs were based on raag sangeet. Bangali music was soft and Maharashrian music was also mild. Marathi plays had simple songs based on raag Bheempalaasee, Pilu, Maand, Bhairavee, Deskaar. Motion pictures has similar songs. Until 1935 all actors sang their own songs. Nitin Bose started playback singing in 1935. Now actors just acted and good vocalists with sweet voices sang songs. Singers started getting jobs because of play back singing.

After 1940, films like 'Khajaanchi' were produced. Music directors like Gulaam Haidar used Panjaabi style taal and Dholak instead of Tabla. Songs started using words like 'lalala' and 'hahaha'. Era of light music and simple colloquial lyrics started. 'Khaandaan' is a movie from this time. Noorjahaan started singing.

After this, music directors like Naushaad, Anil Biswaas, Khemchand Prakaash, Shyamsundar had considerable influence from Gulam Haidar's songs. Before 1940, music directors were musical creators. After 1940 they became music arrangers. Before 1940 the effect of music on movie goers and their appreciation was different. After 1940, movie songs slowly gave up taking support from classical music. By association theory, before 1940 raag sangeet received some good response, but as the music scholars' opinions changed, the audience's taste also changed. The film songs started reflecting the change in popular culture. A tune from 1936 movie 'Janmabhoomi' became a signature tune of B.B.C.

Realism, colloquial language, rural rustic story lines, conduct and characters all together were responsible for slowly reducing the effect of creative classical music on film songs. Songs were no longer a part of a story line to carry the story forward. Music directors started paying attention to the songs as independent entities that should become famous on their own unconnected to the story line.

After 1950, light playful music, big orchestras, tunes that were borrowed from western music, lyrics that were full of meaningless words, including prose in songs, strong use of heavy percussion instruments and high pitch instruments and voices started prevailing in film music.

Movies like *Basant Bahaar*, *Anaarkali*, *Mugale Aazam*, *Goonj Uthi Shahanaai*, *Zanak Zanak Paayal baaje* had songs based on classical music. C. Ramchandra made many songs taking inspiration from western music, but he also made beautiful song like 'Ye Jindagi useeki hai' which is very much Indian music style song. In a movie 'Pahali Najar', music director Anil Biswas made a lovely serious song 'Dil jalataa hai to jalane de' based on raag Darbaaree Kaanadaa. 'Manamohana bade jhote' is based on raag Jayjayvantee. Madan mohan directed songs like 'Bainyaa naa dharo', 'o Sajanaa barakhaa bahaar aai' and these songs became truly beautiful because they are based on classical music. In modern music directors, R. D. Burman created some loud percussion based music, but in film 'Amar Prem' he created some songs like 'Rainaa beeti jaay' which is a lovely song on classical music methods. His other films 'Mahaboobaa' (song Meethe Bol Bole, Bole Paayaliyaa') and 'Khoobsoorat' (song 'Piya Baavare') also have tuneful sweet songs that show his knowledge of Indian Classical music.

C. Ramchandra studied classical music in Gandharva Mahavidyalay under Pandit Vinaayakrao Patwardhan. In a movie 'Meri soorat teri aankhe', renowned classical Tabla player, Pandit Saamta Prasaad played table for a song 'Naache mana mora magan'.

Hence, in today's film industry, most music directors, singers who sing the songs and instrumentalists who play in these big orchestras usually have some training and taaleem (practice) in Indian classical music.

In conclusion, Indian film music is like a bush, its' beautiful flowers are the sweet attractive film songs, the branches and leaves are the music directors, singers and instrument players, but the roots of this bush are firmly attached to classical music which provides musical nourishment to the whole bush and these beautiful flowers will continue to bloom as long as classical music is nourishing them.

4. Classical Music (Shaastriya Sangeet): Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

Classical music (Shaastriya Sangeet in Hindi) is the music that has a foundation of academic theory. Indian classical music is primarily governed by swar. It is also called 'Raag – Sangeet'. Indian classical music and its' theoretical foundation has existed and evolved for several thousand years. It has a well-organized structure. It is significant to note that Indian music as an art form is a lot older than the academic or theoretical interpretation of it. Generally, the music is in practice from about 3500 BC. To create beautiful art forms and exquisite music one requires a quiet, secure, organized, relaxed atmosphere. Music is a mercurial, flowing, graceful art form. Just as there are changes in nature and human lives, the music also evolves over the centuries.

In ancient times, sages (Rushis and Munis) who created music, lived daily lives with austerity, strict discipline and pure (chaste, moral) conduct. That is how the divine Indian music was created. Music and nature got intertwined. Vedic literature was also created by these sages in the same environment. The naad that originated from the heart was called 'Anaahat naad'. Day to day life was also peaceful and had relaxed pace.

In Vedic literature, there is detailed analysis of people's faiths, virtues, philosophy, knowledge and art forms. One of the Vedas, 'Rugveda' is older than 10,000 BC. Hence Indian music is also as old as Rigveda. Vedic literature's purpose was to promote sacrificial doctrine or Yadnya Dharma. Music evolved and was nourished through these 'Yadnya' institutes (Yadnya Sansthaa) with chanting of Mantras.

Mantra literature (or Vedic Literature) has four divisions: Rugveda, Yajurveda, Saamaveda, and Atharvaveda. This literature is in the form of verses and poems. It was learnt and taught by singing the verses or mantras with aalaap. One of them is a Saamagaayan.

Ancient yadnya procedures were performed to please gods and achieve nirvaanaa or moksha. Rugveda and Saamaved evolved to include seven swar in mantra chanting. Musicians scholars like Bharatmuni, Sharngadev over time developed jaati gaayan, Gaandharva music, drama styles etc. These art forms included Lakshan rules, three Graams, twenty one Moorcchanaa, Dhruvad, Prabandha, acting, dancing, singing. Compositions started having four parts: sthaayee, antaraa, sanchaar, aabhog. Layakaaree of Dhruvad was a bit tedious for people's taste and slowly khyaal singing emerged from Drupad and became popular. The changes occurred slowly. Dhruvad's initial random free flowing 'nom tom' evolved into rhythmic aalaap for khyaal. Khyaal became singers' preferred mode of presenting raag. Even now, older musicians/scholars refer to Dhruvad when it comes to studying accurate form of a raag.

These days performers receive help from electronic machines, PA systems (microphones, amplifiers, speakers), recorders etc.. These are very new inventions which did not exist just 100 years ago. By deep thinking, listening to teachers and other performers and practicing, the students learnt this ancient form of music by oral tradition. In older days scholars measured swar by number of shrutis. These days one can record and accurately count the frequency of swar using modern technology. The shruti theory is still very important since the result of shruti theory and the actual measurement of swar frequency are very similar. Shadja-Pancham and Sahdja-Madhyam aspects should really be called heart's aspects or emotions. This combination aspects gave rise to seven swar.

Over time (several thousand years) Lalit sangeet (as part of fine arts), Dhruva geet, Jaati geet, Prabandha, Dhrupad style of singing emerged and developed. Older music was mainly for praising and worshiping the gods. Modern music is more oriented towards pleasing and entertaining people. As people's lives changed, classical music started including semi-classical compositions like Thumree, Daadraa, Raas etc. Now even 'Gajal' have found a place in classical music concerts. There is fusion with western music. Western instruments like Violin, Harmonium are now regularly used for accompaniment of singers, instead of Saarang (although Saarang is more accurate than Harmonium and Harmonium is in fact a bit off tune because it usually uses temperate scale). Karnatik (south Indian) singers use Violin for accompaniment which is more accurate than Harmonium.

Older lifestyle were more austere, pure and discipline. Now fusion is admired. Aachaarya Bruhaspati believed Sitaar (created by Amir Khusro) was inspired by Rudraveena. It remains to be seen what happened to Sitaar during Taansen era? Many questions still remain and can perhaps be solved by modern scientific techniques like carbon dating.

One thing I ascertain: Music was different a few thousand years ago, it has evolved to what it is today and will be even diverse tomorrow.