



# Swaranjali Music School

## स्वरांजली संगीत शाला

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## Visharad Poorna Theory

2006 Syllabus: Akhil Bharatiya Gandharva Mahavidyalay Mandal – India

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### Theory: Written Exam Paper # 2:

### Chapter 3: Writers'/Scholars' Contribution

- The Writings of Master Teachers (Acharya)

## 1. Aachaarya (master teacher) Bharat: Naatyashastra (Science of Drama)

Although the 'Sama Veda' are considered the start of Music, we find the chronological and logical origin of music in 'Natya Shastra' (Science of Drama) by Acharya Bharat. Although the title of this treatise refers to Drama, Acharya Bharat has also discussed the contemporary dance, song, instruments and music.

### 1. Acharya Bharat – Biography

Very little is known about this scholar who is the writer of Natya-Shasta. Some scholars think that 'Bharat' is synonym with 'Actor/Actress'. His writings provide guidance for the art of drama. Some scholars believe that this work is not the work of a single individual. Rather, it is a compilation of works by many authors over a longer time period.

There is a debate about the time of these writings, but it is believed to be authored between 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC to 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. In its preface it states that Lord Brahma Dev created the fifth Veda to entertain people of varied backgrounds. He presented this Veda to Acharya Bharat and Apsara (Devine entertainers).

### 2. Natya Shastra

Today, Natya Shastra reveals 36 chapters and roughly 6000 verses.

Chapters 1-27 cover topics such as design of the auditorium, "Poorva Ranga", description of 'Tandav' dance, acting, stage management, moods and emotions, etc.

Chapters 27-34 describe music in considerable details. Acharya Bharat considered music to be an important part of drama.

As example, some verses state "Just as a painting will not be interesting without colors, so will a drama fail to appeal without music".

Another verse states that “Music should be the part of drama from its very beginning because music is one of its cornerstones”.

Natya Shastra finds discussion of many components of drama and theatre, e.g. the opening song of the drama, rhythm, tempo, virtues and fault of singers, etc. In addition the text describes:

- Naatyashastra uses today’s music terminology
- Bharat’s music has ascending notes like today’s ‘Aaroha’
- Principles of swar-saunvaad (interaction of swar)
- Relation between 22 shruti and swar
- Vocal music with 18 jaati
- Detailed description of ‘Kutap’ – Group of instrument players
- Ten characteristics of ‘Jaati’, which are similar to today’s raag characteristics
- Use of Shadja-Graam, Madhyam-Graam (Two methods of placing 7 swar on 22 shruti)

Hence evolution of music had reached pretty high levels in time of Bharat

## **2. Achaarya Maatang and his book ‘Bruhad Deshi ‘**

Little is known about the life and times of Acharya Maatang. It is believed he lived between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> century AD. Some scholars believe that he was a resident of the southern India. A summary of ‘Natya Shastra’ appears in “Bruhad Deshi’ that he authored. It contains the description of evolution and changes of drama and music in 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century.

There are 15 chapters in his writing, but the full text is not available. It describes the contemporary indigenous and traditional music of his times and discusses their difference. Acharya Matang defined the ‘Deshi’ Indigenous music as “appreciated and sung by ordinary citizens (women, children, milk maids, cow boys) of all ages as well as royalty. They are sung in their own region and by their own accord and will”. This is defined as “Deshi Sangeet”.

In Bharat’s time, “Jaati Gaayan” was popular. During Achaarya Matang’s time “Raag” based music had taken root. He provides the definition of Raag as “Notes arranged in ascending and descending pattern that provide pleasure and entertainment to listeners”. He has described over 60 Ragas in considerable details along with compositions based on them. Many writers of subsequent centuries have made extensive references to Achaarya Matang’s book “Bruhad Deshi”.

### 3. Achaarya Shaarnga Dev and his book 'Sangeet Ratnaakar'

Achaarya Shaarnga Dev has given many details about himself in the preface of Sangeet Ratnaakar. His lineage goes to Rishi 'Vrishagana' from Kashmir region. The descendants of this family were known for their scholarly achievements and knowledge of Vedas and religion. One descendent and scholar, Bhaskara, migrated to southern India. His son Sodhal received patronage King Bhillam of Yadav dynasty. Acharya Shaarnga Dev was Sodhal's son. He received assistance from king Sindhan (King Bhillam's grandson) who ruled from 1210 – 1247 AD. King Sindhan was not only a wise king and a warrior but also a music lover. He respected scholars and provides them patronage. This generosity allowed Shaarnga Dev to master many forms of art.

Having studied previous writings, Acharya Shaarnga Dev created Sangeet Ratnaakar.

This is divided in 7 chapters

1: Swara: Definition of music: vocal + instrumental + dance. Descriptions of shruti, vaadi, bandish, naad, graam, moorchhanaa, taan, varna-alankaar, jaati type, geeti.

2: Raag (264): Shuddhaa, Bhinnaa, Goudee, Vegasvaraa, Saadhaarane, Bhaashaa-Vibhaashaa, Antar Bhaashaa,

3: Prakeernak (Miscellaneous): Characterisitcs of Vaaggeyakaar, vocalist (gaayak), original talent; lyrics and gamak

4: Prabandha (Management): Two types of geet – Gaandharve and gaan. Vitues and faults of geet

5: Taal: Description of 120 local taal

6: Instruments: Several types of instruments, virtues and faults of instruments and instrumentalists

7: Dance: Drama, dance, acting,

His writings describe the finer aspects of music. Acharya Shaarnga Dev united the traditional music style with contemporary music. By adding the songs, styles, musical instruments from folk music he widened the scope and popularity of music. His ideas and concepts of music are applicable to even today's music development. He developed an instrument called "Nih-shanka Veena". His writing has significantly influenced the development of northern and southern Indian music styles.

He had the handsome looks of his Kashmir race, and describes himself as the image of 'Madan' (the most handsome male in mythology – 'God of Romance'). He was a follower of lord Shiva. He lived in a town called "Yadnyapur", but there is no modern city by that name. Besides music, Achaarya Shaarnga Dev wrote about grammar, science, medicine, literature and mathematics.

Reviews and commentaries on Sangeet Ratnakar are available in texts "Sangeet Sudhakar" and "Kala Nidhi".

## 4. Pt Raamaamatya and his book “Swaramel Kalaanidhi”

Pt Ramamatya received patronage from King Rama of Vijaynagar. He published his writings, at the request of king, in 1550. The “Swaramel Kalaanidhi” has 5 chapters. In the chapter on “Swar” or “Note”, he described a new scale. Shaarnga Dev, a scholar from 12<sup>th</sup> century had described a scale with 12 notes that did not contain sharper Gandhaar and sharper Nishaad (Teevratar Gandhar and teevratar Nishad). By adding these two notes, Pt Raamaamatya described a scale with 14 notes. He named the two new notes.

He described in great details about the “Veena” instrument. This includes methods of tuning the strings and automatic generation of shadja, madhyam and pancham swar.

He described 20 different forms of “Mel (thaat)”. It includes a mel “Hijuji” of Iranian origin. The shuddha saptak Mel is called “Mukhaari” ( Sa Ṛe R̄e Ma Pa Dha<sup>1</sup>Dha<sup>1</sup> Sa<sup>1</sup>). This is still used extensively in Karnatak music (South Indian Music). He divided 63 raag in 20 Mel.

## 5. Pt. Ahobal and his book “Sangeet Paarijaat”

Pt. Ahobal was born in a Dravid Brahmin family. His father, Krishna Pandit, was a well-known Sanskrit scholar. Family’s original town was ‘Dhanvad’ in southern part of India. Later, Ahobal resided in north India.

Pandit Bhatkhande ji dates Sangeet Parijat to 1650 AD. It contains descriptions of many Raag from southern India. Hence many scholars consider him a resident of southern India. However, his style of analysis is distinctly from northern India. His writings are just as important as “Naatya Shaastra” and “Sangeet Ratnaakar” for two reasons. He has provided a definitive explanation of classical theories. In addition, he provided the description in contemporary terminology. Here are some examples:

1. Shruti and swar are identical
2. All shruti acquire a particular swar according to given raag
3. There are unlimited number of shruti
4. In a saptak, shruti are connected with Shadja-Pancham Bhaav and there are 22 shruti in one saptak
5. One swar can be expressed in various forms by singing it with different action
6. A swar that originates from a shruti is smooth, pleasant to ear and easy to sing
7. Vivaadi swar may harm pleasant or entertaining aspect of a raag
8. A swar that is used again and again in a raag is called a vaadi swar
9. A swar that is a lifeblood of a raag is called ‘Ansha swar’.
9. Pandit Ahobal is the first music scientist who determined places of swar based on the length of a string on Veena
10. Definition of Mel or Thaata: Mel is a swar cluster that has the power to produce a raag
11. Pt. Ahobal classified raag based on number of swar used in raag and time of singing a raag
12. Theory: Frequencies of Swar from upper half of saptak are 1.5 times the swar from lower half respectively.

This is now proven with physics by measurement of frequencies.

Examples: Sa-Pa have frequencies 240:360 Hz, Re:Dha frequencies are 270:405 Hz

Assume Sa at 240 Hz. Hz = Vibrations per second

## 6. Thakur Jaidev Singh

Thakur Jaidev Singh received education in Gorakhpur and later in Banaras. He studied Sanskrit and Philosophy. After graduating with first class, he studied music. Unfortunately, he had to give up singing due to diseases affecting his throat. He set up the “Kanpur Sangeet Samaj”, an institute that organized a convention on music for 17 years. Many reputed and influential artists performed at these gatherings.

He became the Principal of Yuvraj Dutta Vidyalay. His efforts led to introduction of graduate (Master) level educational courses. Later he became a producer of radio shows on “Aakaash Waani” of All India Radio (AIR). There, he created a museum with tape recordings and instruments. He introduced a variety of different programs such as “Early morning music”, “Classical Music”, “Concerts for Diwali”, etc. Many artists were enthusiastic to present their skills to him.

He developed the dictionary of music related terms. He also wrote about the history of Indian music and Darshan Shashtra. He was frequently a guest speaker at many conferences where he promoted music. He was also a linguist.

He started “Tansen” music festival in Gwalior for which he was honored by the Madhya Pradesh state. In 1974, the President bestowed upon him the high civil honor of “Padma Bhushan”.

## 7. Acharya Brihaspati

Acharya Brihaspati lost his father at an early age. He received guidance from his scholar mother. Even at a young age, he had memorized many verses from scholarly text books. At the age of 11 he started composing in “Savaiya” style. He was given a title of “Kavya Manishi” and “Sahitya Suri” in a poetry convention. He was only 14 years old! He later became proficient in “Braja” and Sanskrit languages. He received training in music from Mirza Nawab Hussain, and learnt the knowledge of rhythm from Pakhawaj player Pt Ayodhya Prasad.

His knowledge of Sanskrit allowed him a detailed study of “Naatya Shashtra” by Bharat, and “Sangeet Ratnaakar” by Acharya ShangDev. He created “Brihaspati Veena” that he used to present the 22 Shruti from Acharya Bharat’s ‘Chatuh Saaranaa’. He wanted to restore the lost knowledge from older texts. He believed that the southern “Mel” style was different from that described by Acharya Bharat.

In his playing style, he tuned Rishabh and Gandhar as ‘achala’ or immovable swar. These Re-Ga were different than the ones used by Vyankatmakhi’s 72 Mel or Pandit Bhatkhande ji’s 10 Thaats.

He was appointed on the Central Advisory Board of All India Radio. His research on “Shruti Mandal” and shruti’s saaranaa siddha quantity is highly valued by musicians.

He presided on the board of many organization, and also lectured at Gandharva Mahavidyalaya and other prestigious institutions. He contributed many valuable projects to music and passed away in 1979.