



Swaranjali Music School
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Visharad Poorna Theory

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Chapter 4: Various Sangeet Styles

- Ravindra Sangeet, Haveli Sangeet, Swaralipi (Notation methods), Filmy Sangeet, Kaavya Sangeet (Poems and music), Vrundavaadan (Instrumental group), Ancient Essays, Western Notation

1. Ravindra Sangeet

Ravindranath Tagore was the founder of Ravindra Sangeet. A well-known poet, Mr Tagore received Nobel Prize in literature for his collection of poems called “Geetaanjali”. He was very active in the social cause, and was involved in various institutions such as “Prarthana Samaj”, Shanti Niketan”, etc. He was influenced by western and regional music around Kolkata, especially from the “Vishnupur” gharana.

Mr. Tagore was not particularly fond of “Khyaal” or the complex forms of articulations. He believed that the words and thoughts of the song were made less important by these styles. So he created the Ravindra Sangeet that focused on the thought (i.e. words and sentences), and reciting them in a musical form. He used many styles for this purpose: Prayers from different religions (Hindi, Christian), Keertan (Story telling in temples), Opera, Dhrupad, Chorus singing, etc. The style of singing was less complex and the narrative of the song was also interesting.

Ravindra Sangeet started in 1925. One finds many compositions that use paired or mix Raag, e.g. Bhairav-Bhairavi. There are many compositions in Raag Purvi and Malhar as well. To ensure the words and thoughts are not compromised, the songs were composed using Kehrwaa, Teental, Zaptal and Dadra taals. Additional taal were introduced with patterns of 6 (Shashthi), 9 (Nava-panch-taal), 11 (Ekadashi) beats. The movement of the new taal was different from the traditional presentation using the same number of beats.

Ravindra Sangeet also developed songs for social and political occasions, e.g. welcoming guests, patriotism, devotion, etc. These compositions had meaningful words, easy phrasing and good tempo. It made it easy for audience to join in such singing at various gatherings, and give them a sense of participation. The music style is also suited for various dance formats (e.g. Manipuri, Kathakali, etc), where the story progresses via musical narration.

Ravindra Sangeet has 6 themes for compositions

1. Prayers and religious activities
2. Devotion to country
3. Respect for women, their affection for children
4. Nature and its beauty
5. Story telling in dance and music form
6. Variety (social events – House warming, weddings etc.)

Gurudev Tagore also developed a script for written music, called “Guru Lipi” that is quite similar to Bhatkhande style. His poems are published in 3 volumes called “Geet Vitaan”. These are based on Raag. He also provided musical framework for ‘prose’ style compositions.

Ravindra Sangeet compositions had five characteristics.

1. Blend of classical, semi classical, folk music, folk culture, dhrupad, ancient music styles
2. Western music
3. Vishnupur gharaanaa’s influence
4. Blend of acting, dance, drama, musicals, light music, regional languages, Kathak-Kathaakalee-Manipuri dances
5. World peace and comradery, national pride, peace from chaos, solemn thoughts instead of fickleness, eternal bliss instead of temporary pleasure, pleasant sounds instead of loud ones.

Ravindranath Tagore ji passed away in 1941 during a music session.

2. Haveli Sangeet

In the 14th to 16th century, we find a resurgence of of devotional singing. There is a long list of Saint's from all parts of India whose songs are still popular: Meera bai, Guru Nanak, Narsi Mehta, Namdev, Tukaram, Kabir, Tulsida, Soordas and many more. These compositions were written in the regional and local languages and were described as "Keertan", "Bhajan", "Abhanga", etc. The saints believed in a complete focus and attention towards God, and music was necessary to achieve this mental state of concentration. Devotees referred to God with different names and their rituals for worship also differed.

One sect of Lord Krishana devotees is called "PushtiMarg" and their temples are called "Haveli". These are highly ornate and spacious temple that are fit for the omnipresent, mighty and powerful Lord Krishna. His prayers are based on classical music, especially using Dhruvad and Dhamar. The singing style from these temples is called "Haveli".

The devotees believe that there is no difference between the God and devotee when the heart and mind are pure. Such purity is associated with the relation between a mother and a child. Hence, in "PushtiMarg" temples, Lord Krishna is always found as a child. The devotee assumes the place of his mother, Yashoda. In this relationship, the devotee does not ask any favors from the God. The selfless devotion is considered the true form of worship.

The daily life of child Krishna is celebrated via rituals bound by music. This includes activities from waking in the morning till sleeping at night. This is called "Nitya Leela". The compositions are based on Dhruvad Dhamar (Sthayee, Antaraa, Sanchaaree, Aabhog. Dhamaar are songs of Holi festival and also indicate happiness and celebrations.

Krishna Leela descriptions are narrated in various music forms such as "Ghol", "Garbi", "Gopika Geet", "Venu Geet", "Bhramar Geet" etc. Many festivals related to incarnations of Lord Vishnu are also celebrated at Haveli: Ram, Vaman, Narasinha. Other festivals are called Dolotsav, Jhulotsav, Raasotsav, Govardhanleela etc.

The Haveli compositions are written in "Braj" language. There is a softness to the words and richness of devotion. Complex lyrics or phrases are avoided. Unfortunately, some of the original form of Haveli Sangeet has been lost due to social changes over last centuries.

3. Notation system's gradual evolution

(plus its merits – demerits)

The concept of writing notations dates back to many centuries. In “RigVeda”, three notes ‘u’, ‘a’ and ‘Swa’ were placed below the “Udatta”, ‘Anudatta” and “Swarup” notes of the melody to aid its rendition. In “SaamVeda” numbers replaced the above characters. Furthermore, the number of notes increased to 7. Post Vedic era we find no development for the written form of music. This concept was revisited by Maulabaksh in 19th century, but failed to gain popularity and approval due to its complexity.

Dr Nikhil Ghosh created a scheme using English alphabet. Lower case letters were used for komal and teevra swar (r g m d n for Ṛ G̣ Ṃ Ḍ Ṇ) and upper case letters indicated shuddha swar (S R G M P D N for S̄ R̄ Ḡ M̄ P̄ D̄ N̄). This notation is also not very popular.

In 1901, Pt Vishnu Digambar Paluskar (from Maharashtra) created a scheme that was partially derived from the notations and music theory of western music. It had almost 50 symbols that indicated various aspects such as use of short and soft notes, low versus, loud sound, etc. His goal was to provide a complete description and interpretation of the melody. His style was further modified by his disciple Pt Vinayrao Patwardhan and Pt Narayanrao Vyas. This notation is still in use.

Gurudev Ravindranath Tagore (from Bengal) created his version of notation that was used for his famous collection of poems, “Geetanjali”. This scheme did not develop following due to its complexity.

There is a need for a unified scheme that can be used in all parts of the world. Furthermore, it should not have excessive number of symbols, and it should be easy to comprehend. Pt Bhakhande developed a scheme with 10-12 notation symbols that is based descriptions found in Naatya-Shaastra and Sangeet Ratnaakar. Bhatkhande notation system is used most extensively in current music scripts.

Dr Anjali Nandedkar has developed TTF fonts to facilitate tying notations using Paluskar and Bhatkhande style. This facilitates writing, storing and sharing music in electronic format and desktop computers.

Merits and demerits of Swarlipi (notation system)

A comprehensive method of providing notations is required for exact rendition of a melody.

When this was not available, a student had to listen and memorize the singing lessons. Any mistakes or variations were propagated to subsequent generation of students.

On the other hand, an artist can make his or her own interpretation of a melody.

Every subtle aspect of his singing cannot be documented using a limited set of symbols.

In the last century we have seen affordable technology to record and share sound via many forms of technology: internet, phone, tapes, etc. Textbooks are provided with audio CDs.

This supplements the written material and provides a better understanding of the music.

4. Movies and Music

Music is essential to any form of story-telling. It is found in Bhajan & Keertan (Stories of Gods and Goddesses), Dance and Drama. Movies were a natural medium for music as an art form. In the era of silent movies, local live musicians performed a live rendition of the score provided with the film as the film was being shown in theaters. Thus it had limited scope and variety. With 'talkies' the role of spoken words and music increased significantly. The songs provided a way to create a mood, and to convey thoughts of the characters. It helped development of the storyline. It involved the audience in the lives of the characters on screen.

Dadasaheb Falke is the founder of Indian movies. His initial productions were based on religious themes and characters. When other storylines were investigated, music became as important as the story. The lead actors and actresses were trained musicians, e.g. K.L.Saigal, Suraiya. The composers also had extensive training in classical music and were musicians themselves. That changed with the concept of 'playback singer'. Now the movie did not have to depend upon a single individual with multiple talents. Instead, talents of multiple individuals could be presented via a single character on the screen. The lead female singers were the Mangeshkar sisters (Lata and Asha) while male singing was dominated by Mohammad Rafi, Mannaday, Hemant Kumar and other stalwarts.

Music directors added melodies based on western music along with classical Indian scores. This broadened the appeal to movie-goers. It has made music directors like Shankar-Jaikishan, Sachin Dev Burman, Madan Mohan and many others a legend to movie-goers. A large orchestra became essential for the music directors.

Many consider the 1940's to 1970's as the golden period of Indian movie music. The selection of music director and song writer was just as important as the casting lead actors and actresses. The number of songs was equally important. While very early movies had a dozen or more songs, the movies in late 20th century demanded half a dozen songs, even more. The style of filming a song also changed. In early days, the resources were limited. The movie had to be shot with minimal number of re-takes. The camera movements were less and often focused on the principal character. With availability of the film and color, the viewers demanded more 'action'. Thus dance numbers became more important. Movies like "Teesri Manzil" have become a cult for their dance sequences, choreography, music and lyrics. It is not unusual for people to proudly announce that they have seen such musicals more than a dozen times.

The radio and TV medium also helped movie music. It was now accessible without having to see a movie. Radio programs were dedicated to movie songs and their popularity was judged. Commercially sponsored programs like "Binaca Geetmaalaa" were heard by millions. Movie industry started presenting awards for best music director, playback singer and song writers.

Today, music is still a part of the movies. However, it is sometimes disconnected with the theme of the movie. The concept of 'item song' is used for its visual presentation. Songs are designed for highly choreographed dance sequences. Hence the emphasis is much more on the rhythm than the lyrics or the tune itself. The variety in songs is also reduced considerably. It has become a common practice to 're-mix' old classics. The results are often disappointing. Orchestration is managed using synthesizers and re-mixing various tracks digitally.

Songs are available via download on computers and phone. One does not have to anxiously await to hear a favorite song. Perhaps it has taken away some charm from the experience of movie magic. But that will not deter the movie producers from eliminating songs from movies. As I stated in the first line, songs are an essential part of the story telling.

5. Lyrics (Poems) and Music

Any art form is a channel that connects the artist to the audience. A painter does this via masterful strokes and colors. A dancer does this through movements and gestures. In music, the melody and lyrics will touch (or turn off) the listener. It is important to note that lyrics must be selected according to the music, and vice versa.

In classical styles the notes have greater importance. The song (or *Bandish*) is short and made of just a few lines. Hence the words are considered less important. Sometimes they may be replaced by *Aalap*. Nevertheless, words must be used in the song. The lyrics must use words that will blend easily with notes and yet have maximal emotional impact on the listener. This is also dependent on the time of rendition. Some *Raag* are enjoyed most in the morning. On the other hand, a Lullaby in *Raga Jayajayawanti* is most melodious at night. It requires shorter and softer words that are suitable for a child's ear. They should communicate a concept of happiness and peace. In such a setting the boundary between classical and folk songs becomes blurred. Feelings of devotion, loneliness, love, sadness or romance are best created in classical music "*bandish*". But other emotions may be difficult to present, e.g. anger and cruelty, and words are more effective than notes.

Vocal music is most effective in communicating emotions. Accompanying instruments like harmonium can also invoke them via association with a vocal rendition. It is a very common experience to hear a few introductory notes of a song, recognize its melody and lyrics. It draws the audience in to the performance. This technique was mastered by artists like Pt. Ravi Shankar, Pannalal Ghosh. Percussion instruments are most limited in terms of gentle emotions. But they can be very effective to create emotions of anger and rage, as example when a dance presents *Taandav* dance.

Lyrics can be dominant when the melody repeats and the words are changed with each stanza. This certainly occurs in popular forms such as '*Gazal*' or in movies. Same pattern is also seen in motivational songs (e.g. national anthems) or religious prayers. In these settings the words are the primary message while the melody is its carrier.

6. Orchastra (Group of Instrument Players)

The concept of orchestration or group performance has been described in Naatya-Shaastra from Vedic era. Such activity will occur in religious settings, drama and dance recitals. In the book 'Naatyashastra' by Bharat, a group of instrumentalists playing their instruments is named 'Kutap'. 'Kutap' is a collective instrument playing group. Kutap was classified in three groups: 'Tatakutap', 'Aanaddhakutap', 'Naatyaashray kutap'. Conductor of 'Kutap' was called 'Kusheelava'.

In time of 'Panini', orchestra was called 'Turya' and the artists were called 'Turyaanga'.

In southern part of India, group of instrument players were called 'Taalakaccheri' and in western part of the world, they are called orchestra.

In Shaarnagadev's book 'Sangeet Ratnaakar', he described three types of orchestras: 'Uttam or Best', 'Madhyam or medium' and 'Kanishthha or junior'.

It is obvious from these descriptions that art of orchestra arrangement is entirely Indian.

Principles of ideal orchestra:

- While this is a group performance, the individuals participating must be well proficient in their own art, regardless of their age.
- Group should include various pleasant sounding instruments of Indian origin.
- Their various instruments should be properly tuned to one basic swar so that their notes blend to create a rich musical sound.
- The players should maintain a common tempo that is suitable to all players. (One swar, one taal, one laya)
- The tune being played should include all instruments, should be entertaining and pleasant
- All artists, producer, director, conductor should get along well together, that is when orchestra will be popular

Requirements about building the orchestra: conductor, instruments, artists, compositions:

- All types of instruments should be included: String, wind, percussion etc.
- Artists should be skilled and well prepared
- Artists should inspect their instruments and have thorough knowledge of repairing and maintaining the instrument, science, art, tuning, volume, saptak, naad
- The conductor should be proficient in the range and limitations of individuals and their instruments. He/She should also be able to coach the individual players and build collaborative team work between all players. Whole performance depends upon the conductor. He/she should be versatile, curious, alert, skilled and kind.
- Compositions are important and valuable art forms. Classical Raag, light music, folk tunes, mixed raag, local songs should all have good resonance, variety and entertaining capabilities.
- Main anchor line should be played on all instruments. Each performer should get an opportunity to present his/her skill. Everyone should practice diligently and know where to stop, start, play solo, mix it up etc.
- Teamwork is essential. Everyone must pay full attention to conductor's instructions. Individual egos, influences should not play apart in bringing a whole team playing together seamlessly. Everyone should memorize full composition and play flawlessly and seamlessly. Players should be punctual
- Copy of a detailed written notation of the composition should be available to all players
- Composition should be creative with a lot of innovative attractive entertaining features. It should have a good title, story, ideas, events. For example, if the composition is about the rain, it should include sounds of rain drops, thunder clap, children playing in water, farmers dancing with joy etc. should be indicated by the musical sounds and naad.
- All players should be visible to audience.
- When a sound system is used, instruments like violins will need a microphone next to the player.
- Drums should be away from recording device.
- Whole musical arrangement should proceed with proper tempo without a glitch with some instruments seamlessly joining in and stopping as planned to make the composition exhilarating.

7. Ancient Thesis (Prabandha)

Prabandha means building something beautiful in a robust all round fashion. In classical music, today's 'bandish' is one form of 'prabandha'.

A composition created and performed with swar, taal is called bandish. In Bharat's naatyashastra, there are concepts like 'Dhruva geet', 'Shuddha geet' that have 14 sections, which can be included in prabandha later.

Detailed description of Prabandha can be found in Matanga Muni's book Bruhaddeshee and Shaarngadev's book 'Sangeet Ratnaakar'.

	Geet	
Gaandhrava		Gaan
	Nibaddha (Prabandha)	Anibaddha

Prabandh's parts: 'Dhaatu' and 'Anga': Example is that of human form. Human body is made up of flesh on our bones, prabandha is made from 4 or 5 Dhaatu and 6 Anga.

Prabandh's Dhaatu are like today's dhrupad: Sthaayee, Antaraa, Sanchaaree, Aabhog. Today's khyaal has only shtaayee and antaraa. Dhaatu have reduced to dwidhaatu, tridhaatu, chaturdhaatu.

Six 'Anga' of prabandha

- swar is the foundation
- Birud: Praising the king
- Pad: other than birud
- Taal: Just as important as swar
- Tena: Auspicious words (Om Tatsat)
- Paat: Sounds or words originating from instruments (Like in Chatarang)

8. Western notation system

Score or notation is very important in western music. Any tune is played or sung according to written music score. There are four systems in western notation.

1. Solfa Notation

Do Re Mi Fa So La Ti (ᳵa Rᳵ Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni)

This system disappeared when the staff notation was developed.

2. Neumes Notation

It was developed mainly for the chants in churches in Rome. It did not have fixed symbols or rules and hence it merged into staff notation.

3. Cheev notation

In 18th century France, a mathematician called Cheev developed a mathematical notation system. Swar were shown as numbers, as 1, 2, 3, 4. Mandra swar numbers had a dot under the swar-number, taar saptak swar had a dot on top of swar-number. This system is still in use in France. Dots are also used in Indian notation system.

4. Staff Notation

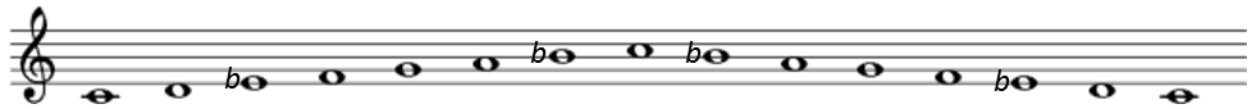
Five parallel lines are drawn. Below is a way to write shuddha swar in staff notation. (Bilaaval thaat)
This 'Sa' is a C note.



Sa	Re	Ga	Ma	Pa	Dha	Ni
C	D	E	F	G	A	B






To show a komal swar, a symbol **b** is written before the elliptical symbol on the parallel lines.

Teevra swar is shown with **#** symbol before the elliptical symbol for swar on the parallel lines.



Sa	Re	Ga	Ma	Pa	Dha	Ni	Sa	Ni	Dha	Pa	Ma	Ga	Re	Sa
C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C	B	A	G	F	E	D	C

Above is aaroha avaroha for raag Kaafee.

Symbol	Note Name
	Whole Note
	Half Note
	Quarter Note
	Eighth Note
	Sixteenth Note