

Indian Classical Music

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Abstract

The Indian classical music is a rich and diverse tradition that spans thousands of years, with two main classification; Hindustani classical music prevalent in North India and Carnatic Classical music is prevalent in south India. Indian classical music has its roots in the Vedic age, with the Samaveda being an ancient source of Indian music. The Bhakti movement had a significant influence or impact on Indian Classical music, with many compositions dedicated to deities and spiritual themes. Indian classical music flourished under the patronage of royal musicians and composers emerging during this period. Tyagaraja, Tansen, Pandit Ravishankar and others were the notable composers and musicians of Indian Classical Music.

Keywords: 'Samaveda, Hindustani, Carnatic, Bhakti Movement, Tyagaraja, Tansen, Classical Music. Gazal, Quawali, Brijji, Sarangadeva, Tarana',

Introduction:

The music of India is one of the oldest musical traditions in the world. The origins of this system go back to the Vedas. Many different legends have grown up concerning the origins and development of Indian classical music. The earliest tradition of Indian music may be traced to Samaveda, which contained the slokas that who put to music.. Chanting of Vedic hymns with prescribed pitch and accent still form a part of religions rituals. The earliest text dealing exclusively with performing arts in Bharatha's Natyashashtra which has six chapter on music.

Another major text in Matanag's Brihaddesi compiled between eight and ninth century AD. In this work ragas were first named and discussed at great length.

Sangeet Ratnakara written by Sarangadeva in the 13th century mentions 264 Ragas. A variety of instruments were invented over the period of time. In ancient texts references have been made to flutes, Veena and cymbals. Many rulers such as Samudragupta, king Bhoja and King Someshwara of Kalyana were patronized music. The Gupta monarch Samudra gupta was himself an accomplished musician. In some of his coins, he is shown playing on the veena. Music was also associated with the worship of gods and Goddess in the temples. In the 12th century, Jayadeva of Orissa produced the most brilliant Ragakavya, the Gita Govinda.

Abhinavagupta's Abhinavabharati provides useful information about music. Similarly in the medieval period the sufi and Bhakti saints encouraged music. Qawwalis were sung in Sufi Khanqhas and devotional music like Kirtan and Bhajan became popular with the Bhakti Saints. Names of Kabir Meerabai, Surdasa, Chandidasa, Tulsidasa, Vidyapati are closely associated with religious music. One of the most significant milestones in the development of Indian music was the life of Amir Khusru (1253-1325AD). He was poet musician who served at the court of sultan Allauddin Khilji (1296-1316AD). The legendary ruler of Malwa, Baz Bahadur and his wife Rupmati introduced new ragas.

‘Kitabee Navaras’ Written by Ibrahim Adil Shah II during the 17th century is a collection of songs in praise of Hindu deities as well as Muslim saints. The most famous musician of Akbar’s court was Tansen and there was nobody to match him. Tansen was the landmark in the development of Indian music. He was called one of the Nine Jewels in his court. Baiju Bawra was also a well known musician during Akbar’s time. It is generally believed that the music of India was more or less uniform before the 13th – 14th century. Later it bifurcated into the two musical systems. The course of the evolution of Indian music saw the emergence of two different subsystems as Hindustani and Carnatic music.

Both the terms emerged for the first time in Haripada’s Sangeeta Sudhakara’ Written in the 14th Century AD. Carnatic music is confined to Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The classical music of the rest of the country goes under the name, Hindustani classical music. Of course, there are some areas in Karnataka and Andhra where the Hindustani music is also practiced.

Hindustani Classical Music:

Hindustani classical music can be traced back to Delhi sultanate and Amir Khusru (1253-1325) who encouraged musical performance with specific Instruments.

He was credited with inventing the sitar and tabla, as well as introducing new ragas. Tansen was the ancestor of the majority of Hindustani musicians.

Instruments:

Musical instruments used in Hindustani music in different types, they are Amongst the stringed instruments the most famous are Sitar, Sarod, Sitar and Sarangi. Pakhawaj Tabla and Mridangam and procession or tal giving instruments. Likewise, Flute Shehani and Nadaswaram are some of the chief wind instruments.

Ragas:

Some of the popular ragas are Bahar, Bhairani, Sindhu Bairavi, Bhim Palasi, Darbari, Desh, Hamsadhwani, Jai jayanthi Megha, Malhar, Todi, Yaman, Shyam Kalyan, Piulu and Khambaj

Major Styles:

There are many styles of singing in Hindustani music, they are

1) Dhrupad:

One of the oldest and grandest forms of Hindustani music, finds mention even in Natyashastra. Dhrupad became a major form of singing in the medieval period but fell in the state of decline in the 18th century. Dhrupad reached its zenith in the court of emperor Akbar. He employed and patronized musical masters like Baba gopal Das, Swami Haridas and Tansen. Dhrupad singing can be further divided into four forms, they are

1. Dagari Gharana,
2. Dhadrbhanga Gharana
3. c) Bettiah Gharana and
4. d) Talwandi Gharana

2) Khayal:

Khayal or Khyal is a major form of Hindustani classical music in the Indian sub continent. Its name comes from a Persian / Arabic word meaning imagination. Origin of this style was attributed to Amir

Khusru. Texts of this style of music mainly include praise of Kings, Description of seasons, pranks of lord Krishna, Divine love and sorrow of separation. Major gharanas in Khayal are Gwalior, Kirana, Patiala, Agra and Bhendibazaar Gharana.

3) Tarana:

In this style the rhythm plays a very crucial role. The structure consists of melody. It uses many words that are sung at a fast tempo. It focuses on producing rhythmic matters and hence the singers need specialized training and skills in rhythmic manipulation. Ratan Mohan Sharma of the Mewati gharana is famous singer.

4) Thumbri:

Originated in eastern Uttar Pradesh, mainly in Lucknow and Banaras around 18th century. Compositions are mostly on love, separation and devotion, lyrics are typically in Brij Bhasha. Three main gharanas of Thumri are Banaras, Lucknow and Patiala. Begum Akhtar is one of the most popular singers of Thumri style.

5) Tappa:

In this style the rhythm plays a very important role as the compositions are based on fast, subtle and knotty constructions. It was developed in the late 18th century from the folk songs of camel riders of north west India. Some of the expounders of this style- Mian Soid, Pandit Laxman Rao of Gwalior gharana.

6) Ghazal:

It was originated in Iran in the 10th century AD. Spread in south Asia in the 12th century due to the influence of Sufi mystics and the courts of the new Islamic sultanate. Reached its zenith in the Mughal period. A ghazal never exceeds the 12 ashaar or couplets.

A poetic expression of both the pain of loss of separation and the beauty of love in spite of that pain. Amir Khusru was one of the first expounders of the art of making Ghazal. Mohd Iqbal, Mirza Ghalib, Rumi Hafez, Kazi Nazrul Islam are the other famous persons who were associated with Ghazal.

Carnatic Music

Carnatic music owes its name to the Sanskrit term 'Karnataka Sangitam' which denotes traditional or codified music. Carnatic Sangeet has developed in the South Indian States of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. These States are known for their strong presentation of Dravidian culture. Carnatic music compositions can be attributed to three composers who lived between 1700 and 1850 AD. They were Tyagaraja, Shyama Shastri and Muttuswami Dikshitar, They were together known as the 'Trinity' (Trimoorthy) of Carnatic music. Purandaradasa (1484-1564) was considered to be the father of Carnatic music (Carnatic Sangeeta Pitamaha) Venkatamakhi is regarded as the grand theorist of Carnatic music. In 17th century he developed 'Melakarta' the system for classifying south Indian ragas. There are 72 Melakartas at present. These creator ragas are also called Janaka ragas and Thai (Mother) ragas.

The Elements of Carnatic Music.

Three essential elements of Carnatic music are Shruti, Raaga and Taala of which Shruti and Taala are given greater importance. 'Shrutir Maata Layah Pitah' – which means shruti or pitch is the mother and Laya / Taala is the father for the musical system, which goes on to show the importance of these two aspects.

Shruti:

Shruti is the smallest interval of pitch that the human ear can perceive.

Raaga:

Raaga or melodic framework is the structure with a series of notes / swaras in a particular sequence.

Taala:

Taala refers to the physical representation of time.

Musical Forms of Carnatic Music:

1. **Gitam:** It is the simplest type of composition with an easy and melodious flow of raaga.
2. **Suladi:** The suladi is a talamalika, the sections being in different taalas.
3. **Swarajati:** It consists of three sections, called pallavi, Anupallavi and charavam. The theme is either devotional, heroic or amorous.
4. **Jatswaram:** It is noted for the use of rhythmical excellence and the Jati pattern.
5. **Varnam:** It is the only form which does not find in Hindustani music.
This form is called a varnam because many of the swara group patterns called varnas in ancient music are interwoven in its texture.
6. **Kirtanam:** it is valued for the devotional contest or Bhakti Bhava of the sahitya.
7. **Kriti:** It developed from the Kirtanam. It is a highly evolved musical form.
8. **Pallavi:** This is the most important branch of creative music. It allows improvisation.

Difference between Hindustani and Carnatic Music:

- 1) **H.M** – This style of music is popular in north India. It is originated from the Delhi Sultanate.
C.M – This style of music is popular in South India. Purandara Dasa was considered as the founder of this music.
- 2) **H.M** – It has emerged as a distinct form of music due to Islamic and Persian influences:
C.M– Carnatic music is a purer form of music that was evolved from ancient Hindu traditions. It was developed during the Bhakti movement in the 15th and 16th Century.
- 3) **H.M** – The main instruments are Sarangi, Tabla, Santoor, Sitar, Guitar, Keyboard and Flute etc.
C.M – The main instruments used are Mridangam, Veena, Mandolin, Morsing Nadaswaram etc.
- 4) **H.M** - It is raga based. There are 6 major ragas.
C.M – It is Kriti based. There are 72 Sampoorana raags.
- 5) **H.M** – This music style has several sub styles.
C.M – It has only one particular prescribed style of singing.
- 6) **H.M** – The concept of upapakkavadyam does not exist.
C.M – The concept of Upapakkavadyam exists
- 7) **H.M** – The Sarangi is its major accompaniment.
C.M – The violin is its major accompaniment.
- 8) **H.M** – It has various gharanas like Lucknow, Jaipur, Kirana, Agra etc.
C.M – It has no such gharanas found.

Similarities:

1. Both styles of music are greatly associated with religion.
2. Every raaga in both styles of music has one leading swara or vadiswara.
3. Both evolved Sanskrit language scripts and though vedic traditions.
4. Both the Carnatic and Hindustani styles give principal prominence to the melody.

Conclusion:

Music is the brightest gem adorning the crown of India's culture. Music was systematized and Raag Gayan emerged. Aesthetic aspects of music mentioned by Matang and Sarangadeva came into existence. Mughal culture added some new languages like Hindi, Brij, Punjabi etc to music. New ragas, new Taalas, New music forms like Gazal, Quawali, Tarana, Khamsa, Khyal etc were introduced. Institution music education spread largely in modern age globalization had changed the lifestyle of Indian people. Changes in culture audiences taste, changes in platform of music. Print and visual media helped content of Indian classical music to be documented. All these efforts have to be combined and streamlined to promote the classical music of India.

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