

MUSIC OF INDIA

SSEAS-N113

Chatterjee/Reddy

POST –VEDIC PERIOD FROM 600 B.C. TO 800 A.D

The Epic Period – circa 700 B.C.E. to 150 C.E.

RAMAYANA: composed in Sanskrit by the poet called Valmiki – circa 200 B.C.E. During this period the whole science of Gandharva music had come into existence. Singing of Jatis was in vogue. Music was used in religious service, war, festivals, in the courts of kings, in dramas and in daily life of people.

References to *VENU(FLUTE), SANKHA(CONCH), BHERI, DUNDUBHI, MRIDANGAM(PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS)* are there and technical terms such as *kala, matra, samya, pramana, laya, tala* were used.

MAHABHARATA: Not many references to music due to the fact that it was an age of conflict and war and music thrives when there is peace. There are references to percussion instruments that were used during the war.

Music in the Buddhist and Jain sources

LALITAVISTARA - gives an account of Buddha's life and says that as a prince he was trained to play the Vina. Buddha was not against music as such but he was only against sensual music, against the society in which people exulted in drunken revelry. In one JATAKA story it is said that the Bodhisattva was an excellent musician in his previous life and his name was Guttala. Songs were sung with the accompaniment of a seven stringed Vina. There are also references to Bheri (Drum), Sankhya (Conch). Music also had an honored place amongst the Jains and the name of all the seven notes are attested to in the Sthananga Sutra, an important Jain scripture.

Ancient music in Tamil source

Tamil books – *PURANANURU* and *PATTUPPATTU* refer to three kinds of drums – the battle drum, the judgement drum and the sacrificial drum. *PARIPADAL* mentions seven Palai which were the ancient Dravidian modes. *YALA* (lute) was the most important instrument of the south. Some had a thousand strings. *SILAPPADIKARAM* – a Tamil epic refers to four varieties of *Pans* or Ragas, five types of flutes-bamboo, sandalwood, bronze, red catechu and ebony. The pure scale of ancient Tamils was like *Hirakamboji* of Karnatic music or *Khamaj* of Hindustani music.

The NATYASHASTRA OF BHARATA- THE DEVELOPMENT OF GANDHARVA MUSIC.

circa 200 B.C.E.

The main theme here is dramaturgy but certain fundamental principles of applied music are also discussed. BHARATA is believed to be an acrostic word and a name . BHA stood for Bhava or emotion, RA stood for Raga or musical delineation and TA stood for Tala or time cycle. He discussed two fundamental TONAL SYSTEMS - *sadja-grama and madhyama-grama* which were the foundation of all scales. By an experiment he demonstrates the interval of various notes from one another measured by microtones intervening between them. He also gives Murchhana – scales obtained by the transposition of the key-note.

Contributions of Bharata: Bharata classifies all instruments into four classes: (1) TATA- stringed instruments- Vina (2) SUSIRA- instruments with holes or wind instruments- flute (3) AVANADDHA- instruments covered with skin or hide- Mridangam (4) GHANA- instruments made of brass or wood used to keep time- cymbals.

Bharat mentions KUTAPA – ensemble of musical instruments – both stringed and membranophonic. This formed the ancient Indian 'orchestra'. Bharata gives detailed description of Vina and Flute and playing techniques. He also gives description of seven kinds of complex Talas and a comprehensive treatment of DHRUVA song.

Music in Kalidas' works:

There are references to *sangita (music), gana (song), gandharva (classical music) murchhana(tonal shift), muraja (a kind of drum) and vina* in many places of his dramas. In "Uttar-Meghaduttam" he wrote about a Yakshini keen on playing on vina to tone down the intensity of her feeling of sadness owing to the separation from her lord Yaksha. She wants to tune her vina to a particular scale- Murchhana(modal shift executed for getting particular notes). In "Kumarshambhaba" Kalidasa writes about Kinnaras awakening Shiva by singing *Gita-Mangala* in *kaisika* set in a particular murchhana. In "Malavikangimitra" there are references to *kriti* – musical composition and *madhyalaya-* medium tempo and *chatuspada* – means compositions with four parts. Also *chalika* performance which was a highly developed form of classical dance accompanied by vina, venu and mridanga in which a song was sung in six- grama-ragas. Interesting to note that Kalidas writes about *mayuri marjana (a kind of drum set with three heads)-* left side tuned to gandhar, right side to sadja and the upper drum was tuned to madhyam.

Kudumiyamalai inscription:

The inscription was composed in 7th century C.E. and the author is believed to be Mahendra Vikrama Varman I of the Pallavas. It was discovered in 1904. It was engraved in saregama or solfege notation

Characteristics of Music in Post-Vedic age up to 800 A.D. (up to Natayshastra)

Complex rules evolved for composition of songs. There was very **little scope for the imagination** of the performer.

There were very few pieces for instrumental music which was entirely dependant on vocal music.

There was a trend towards **group music** both in vocal and instrumental pieces.

Only two important **classical talas** – *cancatputa & cacaputa* were used. Elaborate rules were laid down for performance of these talas.

Vina among stringed **instruments** (Tala Vadya), Mrdanga membranophonic(avanaddha vadya) instruments and Venu (flute) among aerophonic(susira) instruments were the main instruments that were played.

Stage-music had been highly developed. Definite kinds of music were fixed, played and sung behind the curtain. *Kutapa sangita (group music)* was used on the stage. Vocal music was sung with instrumental accompaniment and dance and *grama-ragas* in which they were to be sung were fixed for various acts of the drama. The language used for the songs was generally *Prakrit*.

Determination of Srutis(pitch and microtone) & gramas:The first important contribution of Bharat was his discovery about the music prevalent in this country being based on **two tones systems called grama**. **They were not scales but tone-systems**. By a practical demonstration known as **sarana catustaya** he proved that the interval of notes in the gramas were as follows:

Sadjagrama: 4 S, 3 R, 2 G, 4 M, 4 P, 3 D, 2 N = 22 SRUTIS

Madhyama-Grama: 4 M, 3 P, 4 D, 2 N, 4 S, 3 R, 2 G = 22 SRUTIS

According to Bharat notes of two srutis (G & N), notes of three srutis (R & D) and notes of four srutis(S, M & P) were alone independent notes. There could be no musical note with one or five srutis. Bharat recognised two more notes- *anatra gandhar on the 11th sruti & kakali nishad 2nd sruti* – thus **nine notes – seven suddha notes and two vikrita notes**. He did not recognise komal rishav, komal dhaibat and tivra madhyam as independent notes.

DHRUVA – The main composition of importance was DHRUVA which means “fixed”. These fixed compositions were set to a definite Tal and Laya in which there was a beautiful fusion of svara (notes), pada (words), and Tala.

According to Bharata, all songs which had set compositions and were sung by Narada were Dhruvas. They were used for dramatic purposes. They were sung in grama-ragas. They were of five kinds: *PRABESHIKI*-dealing with the main sentiment of the play at the time of entry of actors on the stage and *NAISHKRAMIKI* at the time of exit of actors at the end of the act. Another kind of songs different from the main sentiment called *AKSIPIKI* occurred in between the acts and were sung in fast tempo. A song liberating the mind of spectators from distraction and bringing it back to the main sentiment were known as *PRASADIKI*. A song sung to remove or mollify morbid affections of the audience caused by scenes of swooning, poisoning etc were called *ANTARA DRUVA*.

POST-VEDIC PERIOD CAN BE MARKED FROM THE 1000 B.C. TO 1000 A.D

from Bharat to Jayadeva, the supposed Golden Age of Hindu music.

Music from 5th century to the 14th century: Gradual decline of Gandharva music and dominance of Desi Music:

Tracing the evolution of formalized music we find that *Samvedic* music was the initial formalized music that was evolved out of folk music. The next step was Gandharva music as described in Bharata's *Natyashastra*. It adopted the Samvedic scales, *murchhna*, *Grama*, etc. and created a new kind of musical system called *Jatis*. It laid down 10 important characteristics of *Jatis*, systematized and classified *Jatis*.

Gandharva declined a great deal by the 10th century but had still survived through the 11th century and by the 13th century it was slowly converted into Raga music.

Reasons : (a) It became too intellectual without much emotional appeal (b) It became bound up with too many rigid rules and hardly left any scope of imagination of the artiste.

EMERGENCE OF RAGA MUSIC: gandharva or marga + desi music= Raga Music

The concern of Gandharva music was pleasant appeal to Gods where as the concern of Raga music was charming appeal to human beings. " From *svaras* arose *Grama*, from *Grama Jati* and from *Jati* came *Ragas*" The *grama ragas* with varieties and sub-varieties were called by *Sarangadev* as '*marga or margi-raga*'

Desi music was the music prevalent in different regions and sung by women-folk, children, cow-herds and kings according to their fancy. **Matanga** says that *Desi* was modelled on *marga music* in the sense that both had two parts: (a) *Nibaddha* and (b) *anibaddha*- fixed compositions and free *alap* or meandering movement of notes within the scale. *Marga* or classical ragas were ten (1) *grama-raga* (2) *Uparaga* (3) *Ragas* (4) *Bhasas* (5) *Vibhasas* (6) *Antarbhasas* (7) *Ragangas* (8) *Bhasasanga* (9) *Upagans* (10) *Kriyanganas* (the last four were called **Desi raga**) **Kallinath** in his commentary explains that some liberty was taken with the rules of *marga raga* but it did not have total disregard of the rules of *margi-raga*. The idea that *Desi ragas* were born out of foreign influence, particularly Muslim, seems unfounded (T.J.Singh). They were only the outcome of an inner development. The best definition of *raga* I found in *SANGITA-SAMAYASARA*

Svara barna bishishthe na dhvani veden ba poona

Rajaya te jena sanchitam sa raga shamatah shatam (translated as)

"That which is a particular kind of sound qualified by *svara* and *varna* and by which the mind of discerning listeners is pleasantly affected is considered to be *raga* by the wise".

TREATIES & MUSICOLOGISTS OF THIS PERIOD:

Brhaddsi of MATANGA: BETWEEN 700 AND 800 A.D OR 400 A.D. ?

This treaties provides connecting link between *marga* and *desi* ragas. It draws largely upon previous sources such as Bharata only adds chapter dealing with the Ragas.

Abhinabbharati of ABHINABAGUPTA- 1000 A.D ?

It is a commentary on Natyashastra displaying wonderful grasp on dramatics and music. He crossed swords with Matanga in respect of latter's 12 svar murchhana.

It is a commentary on Bharat's Natyashastra, without which perhaps Natyashastra would have been unintelligible.

Sangeetratnakar of SARANGADEVA- 1230 A.D

It has seven chapters. (1)svraddhaya treats on musical notes and scales *(2) ragaddhaya* contains definition and illustration of various ragas *(3)prakirnaddhya* explains various technical terms *(4) prabandhhya* describes musical compositions and its varieties *(5) talayaddhya* treats on tala *(6) vadyaddhya* deals with musical instruments *(7) nrityaddhya* explains dancing and acting.

Sangeetmakaranda of NARADA / MANTRAGUPTA & OTHERS- 7TH century onwards compilation upto 14th and 15th century in its present form.

Gitagovinda of JAYADEVA : about 1150 A.D

Jaydeva was the court-poet of King Laxshman Sena of Bengal. He was a Krishna-devotee. Here Radha is the symbol of the human soul who pours forth in her song the pangs of separation from Krishna – the symbol of the divine. They are composed in PRABANDHA style and raga and tala for each song is indicated. He mentions 12 ragas – Bharabi, Basant, Karnat, Bibhas, Pondrakiri, Ramkiri, Malab, Gurjar, Khambaj, Gandhar, Deshabarri and Malabgaur and 5 talas- Rupak, Ektal, Jati, Aashtatal and Neeshar.