



SRUTI NOTES

SRUTI

The India Music & Dance Society

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Volume 1, Issue 4 Fall 1998

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From the Editors

Dear Sruti Friends

As we present this last quarterly issue of Sruti Notes for 1998, we would like to thank all the writers who contributed to the issues during the year. The active participation made it possible for us to make timely presentations of news, views, reviews and other articles. We have also received enthusiastic responses to the *Quiz* and the *Discussion Forum* introduced in the last newsletter, encouraging us to continue these features in the future. We thank all those who sent us their responses.

In addition to the usual reports from Sruti committees, this issue contains information regarding upcoming events in the area, news from the Sruti community, reviews of recent Sruti concerts, responses to the quiz and the discussion forum and an article on music improvisation.

For the remainder of the year, the Library Committee will be working on bringing out the 1998 issue of Sruti Ranjani, Sruti's major publication. Please send your articles related to Indian Classical music and dance to a Library Committee member. In particular, we would very much like to hear from the children and youth and request parents to encourage them to write on any topic related to music and dance. The deadline for sending in the articles is December 15, 1998.

Uma Prabhakar
For the Library Committee



UPCOMING SRUTI CONCERT

Chitravina Recital By Ravi Kiran

November 7, 1998

Time: 6:30 pm

Montgomery County Community College Auditorium

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From The President's Desk

Dear Sruti supporter,

Greetings. We are coming towards the end of the 1998 concert season with one more concert to be presented by Sruti. On November 7th, Sruti will be presenting a Chitravina recital by N. Ravikiran. I hope you will be able to attend the concert and bring to an end yet another successful concert season for Sruti.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who attended the last two programs, the Bharatanatyam dance by Shoba Sharma and the vocal concert by Sudha Raghunathan. The attendance at the two concerts was very good, though I always hope we can do better. Your presence at these events goes a long way in providing encouragement to all the Sruti volunteers for their efforts.

I am glad to inform you that Sruti has received a grant for \$800 from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts as part of their Presenting Organization Program. The funding received will be used for programs to be presented in 1998-99. The Board of Directors of Sruti would like to thank PCA for their continued support.

We have already started working on the schedule for the 1999 concert season. We are looking at some excellent programs coming our way. We hope we will be able to present you a good mix of vocal and instrumental concerts and dance ballets. Your feedback is very important to us. Please e-mail or call us with any questions or suggestions.

We look forward to seeing you at our next concert.

Sudhakar Rao

President
for the Board of Directors

Resource Committee Report

The Resource Committee is pleased to announce the award of \$800 to SRUTI from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts under their Presenting Organization Program. This award would be used for programs presented by SRUTI during the period from September 1, 1998 until August 31, 1999. Pennsylvania Council on the Arts' funding comes primarily through appropriations from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Ramana Kanumalla

For the Resource Committee

Answers to the Quiz in July'98 Sruti Notes

Q1 Patnam Subramanya Iyer's handling of a well known raga was so famous that the name of the raga became a moniker for him. What was this raga?

A: Begada

Q2: Why was the composer/musician Ramanathapuram Srinivasa Iyengar known as Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar?

A: Because his voice sounded like an 'insect flying'. Hence the nickname 'Poochi'

Q3: Who was the composer credited with "creating" the popular raga Hamsadhvani?

A: Ramaswamy Dikshitar, father of Muthuswamy Dikshitar.

Q4: Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavathar has "created" a raga whose arohana/avarohana does not take either Madhyama or Panchama. What is the name of this raga?

A: Raga Niroshtha, a janyam from the raga Karaharapriya .

Q5: Balamurali Krishna has "created" a raga with only three swaras. What is the name of the raga and what are the arohana/avarohana of this raga?

A: Raga Trisakhti, a janyam from Raga Kanakangi.

Arohana: SA MA PA (SA).

Avarohana:(SA) PA MA SA.

Congratulations to the following Sruti Notes readers who enthusiastically sent in their responses.

K.S. Ramachandran correctly answered Questions 1, 2, 4 and 5; Indira Rajan sent correct answers to questions 1, 2 and 3. Kamala and Srinivasan Rajan correctly answered question 3. They also provided the following informative account.

"Poochi" Srinivasa Iyengar was always very active, vigilant and possessed the personality of a "fly" or a "bee" which moves through the air rapidly using wings. In his young age, thus, he got the nick name and the name "poochi" became a permanent part of this greatest composer/musician. In Tamil "Poochi" means a common household fly or a bee.

Other data of interest on "Poochi" Srinivasa Iyengar: He was born on 16 August 1860 in a place known as "Parpaan Kulam" in Ramanathapuram District, Tamilnadu, India. Mother's name: Srimathi Laxmi, Father's name: Sri Ananthanarayana Iyengar.

Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar, Sethu Samasthana asthana music Vidwan, was a contemporary of my great grand father Sethu Samathana Mahavidwan R. Raghava Iyengar, a great Tamil Scholar & Sethu Kingdom "pulavar" (1870 -1946). The Sethu Kingdom in Ramanathapuram profoundly supported good music and great tamil & sanskrit literature. Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar passed away in 1919.

Poochi Iyengar's original compositions include: Varnams (8); Kirtanas (33); Javalis (7); Thillanas (12); Ragamalikas (1) & Kavadihindu (1);

Reference: Compositions of Ramanathapuram Asthana Vidwan Sriman "Poochi" Srinivasa Iyengar in Tamil Script, Edited by Sri Salem D. Chellam Iyengar, Pub: Higginbothams Ltd, Madras (July 1982).

Bharathanatyam Performance of Shoba Sharma

Vasantha Narayanan

Shoba Sharma captivated the audience with her brilliant dance performance for Sruti on 19 September 1998. The longing for oneness with God is expressed in many ways in the classical dance form of Bharathanatyam. Indisputably expressive, Shoba took the audience through the emotional cycle of the familiar duos: Lord and his Devotee, Mother and Child, Lover and the Beloved.

Shoba began her recital with *Kaali Kauthuvam* in ragam Hamsadhvani. This piece glorified the majesty of Kaali. It is unusual because it presents feminine divinity in a role of belligerence rather than the traditional one of beauty and tranquility. Shoba showed her astonishing range of expressions from the fierce Kaali to the triumphant One. This was followed by *Shanmukha Sabdam* in Ragamalika. She skillfully displayed the various exploits of Muruga in getting Valli to marry to him, including the one in which Muruga goes to Valli in the form of an old man. The Telugu varnam,

Manavi Chekona in Shankarabharanam, set to Adi Talam was the center piece of the evening. *Enna Thavam Seythane* in Kaapi is always a favorite for the people because of both the lyrics and the charm of little Krishna. Shoba successfully created the mood and touched everybody's heart reminding them of their own child indulging in this kind of mischief and bring forth an outpouring of emotions, anger, love and tenderness. This was followed by a padam, *Praana Naathan* in Abhogi and an Ashtapadi, *Nibrutha Nikunja* in Ragasri. In all these pieces Shoba displayed tremendous stage presence and a sense of drama which comes only when a dancer is relaxed enough to enjoy the experience of the character being played.

The finale was a beautifully rendered, Swathi Thirunal's Tillana, *Geetha Dhuni Kuthaka* in ragam Dhanasri. This rhythmically very challenging piece was choreographed by Pushkala Gopal. It had intricate pancha-nadai patterns and the 5 *nadais* (3,4,5,7 & 9) used in cyclical patterns. Babu Paramesvaran had a majestic voice and was able to provide good vocal and nattuvangam support. Swathi Bala, one of Shoba's senior students did a good job with lighting.

To be able to dance is difficult enough. But knowing what is being danced is even more laudable because it is then that we see the expression of the heart and soul in the face, in the gestures and the speed. The swiftness with which Shoba's face changed expression with the nuances of the song both in verse and melody made it a treat to watch. A dancer of skill and beauty can nevertheless fail to impress if the attire and adornments are not equally riveting. Shoba showed her attention to detail and taste in this department as well. The Parsi community in Bombay fondly referred to Zubin Mehta as Apro Zubin (our Zubin), a tribute to the successes of one of their own. It is fair to say that in that gathering of dance aficionados that night everyone felt the same way about Shoba.

[Vasantha Narayanan, Bryn Mawr, PA, is a Computer Scientist, a music and dance enthusiast].

Raga Ataana's Peculiarity

K.S. Ramachandran

Some scholars give an ingenious interpretation to the name of this raga. They say, 'A-thana' to mean Bondage of Samsara (family burden; *Thaana* to mean 'Jail'). Whether this interpretation makes sense or not, there are noteworthy points about this raga as shown below:

1. Sri Purandaradasa composed his first kriti *Mosahodenallo* in Ataana Raga.

2. Sri Tyagaraja swamigal composed after completing his Japa Avarthi of Rama Nama of 96 crores, a krithi, *Ela Ni-daya radhu* in Ataana raga.

3. Sri Muthuswami Dikshithar composed his first krithi in his bunch of Navagraha Krithis in raga Ataana.

[Sri Ramachandran is a retired Chief Inspector of UCO Bank. He is also a musician who studied vocal and instrumental music under the tutelage of illustrious masters such as, Sangeetha Vidhwan late Sri Lalgudi Gopala Iyer, Sri A.S. Ananthagopala, late Sri Kittamani Iyer, Sri Trichur Sankara Menon and Sri Tanjoor Jagadesa Iyer.]



Did You Know?

At the basis of the *mridangam* drummer's art are between fifteen and seventeen drum-strokes - distinctive individual tones produced on different parts of the drumheads by different finger combinations or parts of the hands. These strokes, individually and when put together into rhythmic patterns, can be expressed in *solkattu*, spoken syllables that imitate the sound of the drum-stroke and precisely duplicate each rhythmic pattern. Normally, spoken *solkattus* are used only in learning and practice, but there is also a tradition in South India to recite *solkattu* as part of a concert performance (*konakkal*).



Improvisation in Carnatic Music

Sumanth Swaminathan

The classical music of India - north and south - has two facets: *kalpita sangeeta* or precomposed music, and *manodharma sangeeta*, improvised music. As a junior student of classical music (both Carnatic and Western) during the last few years, I have learnt a lot of music which fall under the former category. I have also learnt that improvisation in Carnatic music is not easily "learnt" from a teacher. A musician's improvisation works through the exploration of his/her own creative skill and imagination, within the limits of a kind of 'musical tool-kit' handed by tradition. I have attempted to understand and appreciate this aspect of Carnatic music through listening to a number of very talented musicians and reading about Carnatic music. I have scanned through many books on the theoretical aspects of Carnatic music in order to find some (not too technical) descriptions which a beginner can understand. I wish somebody had written a primer on Carnatic music improvisation! (I have indeed come across a primer on improvisation in jazz, which describes many techniques similar to those of Carnatic music.)

The following is a brief description in general terms, of the different aspects of improvisation in Carnatic music. I have taken excerpts from an article by Prof. David Beck of Wesleyan University in *Worlds of Music* (Schirmer Books, Simon and Schuster Macmillan). The book describes the music of many other cultures around the world in terms one can easily understand. The article on South Indian music provides a very good introductory course.

There are four major types of improvisation found in Carnatic music - *Alapana*, *Tanam*, *Niraval*, and *Svara Kalpana*.

Alapana is a free-flowing gradual exposition and exploration of the raga, its facets, characteristic *gamaka* (orna-

ments), and its moods, cycles, and its phrases evolve in prose-like "breath rhythms." It is improvised before a composition and introduces the *raga* mode of the composition.

The *alapana* follows a general plan set both by the tradition as a whole and by the individual improvisational habits of the musician. Both combine to make the musician's tool kit. *Alapanas* are often shaped by a centering on "pillar tones" that are progressively higher and by a gradual climb to the highest range of the instrument or voice. There is then a quick descent back down to the middle register with an ending on the tonal center. The slower phrases are occasionally broken by quick virtuoso bursts of fast notes called *brikkas*.

Tanam is a more rhythmic exposition of the raga, a lively and strongly articulated working through permutations and combinations of note-groups. Although *tanam* is not restricted by the cycles of any tala, it does have a strong "beat sense." Its highly rhythmic phrases tend to fall within constantly changing patterns of twos and threes, setting up melodic/rhythmic units of asymmetrical length. *Tanam* is shaped like an *alapana*, moving from low phrases to a high peak, followed by a descent. *Tanam* occurs after the *alapana* and before the composition.

Niraval is an improvised variation on one melody line, or phrase, of the song. It takes the words and their rhythmic setting as a basis, spinning out gradually more and more elaborate and virtuosic melodic variations. (In an instrumental performance, the words are thought of by the performer though they are not, of course, "heard" by the audience.) Since the same words appear over and over again in different *melodic* contexts, an almost mystical transformation occurs: new meanings take shape and disappear, hidden associations emerge, and subtle nuances come into focus.

Niraval occurs within the composition- following the melody line upon which it is based. It fits within the tala

cycle of the piece (as well as the raga mode).

Svara kalpana ("imaginary notes") occurs after *niraval* - that is, in the middle of composition - or after a complete run-through of the song. It fits into both the raga and the tala of the composition. *Svara kalpana* is without a text; instead, it is sung to the names of the notes: *sa*, *ri*, *ga*, *ma*, and so on. The improvised sections return again and again to the "island" of a theme taken from the composition. *Svara kalpana* improvisations increase in length gradually from being a few notes (before the theme) to being extended passages many cycles in length and full of complicated rhythmic and melodic invention and clever calculation. In some respects *svara kalpana*, especially when sung, is similar in sound to the "scat singing" of jazz.

The phrase in a specific *kriti* around which *svara kalpana* are woven is called the *idam*, a tamil word meaning the "place". This place has two aspects: 1. the *raga* note on which the phrase starts, and 2. the portion of the *tala* cycle in which it begins. The musician must shape his improvisation so that the *svaras* lead smoothly back to the *idam*. *Svara kalpana* may also occur in two degrees of speed, with two articulated notes per beat (there may also be some notes held longer), or a double-time of four articulated notes per beat.

[Sumanth, a tenth grader, learns Carnatic music (vocal and saxophone). He plays Jazz on the saxophone at school]



Please send your feedback and contributions to Uma Prabhakar, 135 Brochant Drive, BlueBell, PA 19422 [email:U_Prabhakar@hotmail.com.]

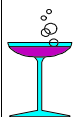
Upcoming Events

Telugu Association of Greater Delaware Valley (TAGDV) will present a Classical Music Vocal Concert by Dr. Nookala Chinna Satyanarayana accompanied by Madhuri Devi on Veena and Ravindra Tejasvi on Mridangam on Saturday, December 5, 1998 at 7 P.M. at Pennfield Middle School Auditorium, Hatfield, PA. For more information please call Sunanda Gandham at 610-321-0487.

Triveni, the Kannada Association, will celebrate Deepavali and Children's Day on November 14, 1998 at Kresson Middle School, Voorhees, NJ, at 5 PM. A highlight of the evening will be Bharathanatyam presentations by students of the Natya School of Dance. For more information, please contact Bharathi Sena at 609-778-0278.



Community News



Wedding Bells: Sheila, daughter of Jeya and S. Sankaran of Blue Bell, was married to Lane Koenig on October 3, 1998. Jeya and Sankaran are very active life members of Sruti. Our congratulations and best wishes to the newlyweds.

Arangetrams: Vani Siva, a disciple of Smt. Shoba Sharma at the Natya School of Dance, presented her dance debut on September 12, 1998 at the Raritan High School in New Jersey.

Harini Kumar, daughter of Drs. Chandra and Chandrika Kumar, had her arangetram on Oct 4, 1998 at the Hightstown High School in New Jersey. Harini is the student of Smt. Ambika Sukumaran. Harini's parents are members of SRUTI.

Ph.D. Award: Praveen Dala was re-

cently awarded a doctorate degree in Electrical Engineering by Drexel University. A lover of Carnatic Music, Praveen assists Sruti in managing the sound system during concerts. Our congratulations and best wishes to him.

Obituary: Our condolences to Mrs. Chitra Chandran and Mr. P.K. Prabhakar and their families on the demise of their mother Mrs. Mythili Krishnaswamy.

Our condolences to Dr. A.R. Srinivasan and his family on the demise of his father.

The Trimurthy

A South Indian proverb compares the music of the *trimurthy*, the "big three". Dikshitar is said to have written music that is like a cocanut: the "hard shell" of his brilliantly intellectual musical structures and complex, scholarly, and sometimes esoteric texts "must be broken to taste the sweet nut and milk inside." By contrast, Syama Sastri's music is said to be like a banana: "the fruit is not so difficult to get to, but still one must peel off the bitter skin" - Sastri's complicated rhythms and *talas* (cycles) of five and seven beats - "before enjoying its flavor." But Thyagaraja's songs are said to be like fresh, ripe grapes; both poetry and melody are immediately accessible: "to enjoy it one needs merely to bite into it. Even the skin is soft and sweet."

*Music without gamaka
Is like a moonless night
A river without water,
A vine without flowers,
And a lady without jewelry.*

[After P. Sambamurthy]

SRUTI Concert Tapes

The following recorded music tapes are available for distribution among the patrons of SRUTI. To receive any of these tapes, please contact Viji Swaminathan at (215)-643-2145. The year of the concert and the number of cassettes (within parentheses) are given. Prices for Sruti members (unless noted otherwise) are: \$10 for a two-cassette set and \$15 for a three-cassette set. Non-members should add \$2 to the cost of each set. Please add \$2.00 per set for shipping & handling.

1. Dr. M. Balamuralikrishna (Vocal) 1989 (2) Purna Chandar (violin), B. Bala-sai (flute), Dara Appala Srinivas (mridangam).
2. Dr. M. Balamuralikrishna (Vocal) & 1990 (3) Pandit Bhimsen Joshi (Vocal) Solo & Jugalbandi
3. Dr. M. Balamurali Krishna (vocal) 1991 (3) Raghavendra Rao (violin) Solo & Jugalbandi, Dara Appala Srinivas (Mridangam), Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia (flute), Anuradha Chaurasia (tanpura), Madan Misra (tabla)
4. Lalgudi G. Jayaraman (Violin), 1993 (2) G.J.R. Krishnan & J. Vijaylakshmi Trichy Sankaran (Mridangam) inayakaram (Ghatam), V. Nagarajan (Khanjira)
5. N. Ramani (Flute), 1989 (2) N. Muralidharan (Violin), S. Raja Rao (Mridangam)
6. N. Ramani (Flute), 1992 (2) Kanyakumari (Violin), Guruvayor Dorai (Mridangam)
7. Dr. C. Chittibabu (Veena), 1994 (2) N. Somayajulu (Mridangam), U.K. Narayanaswamy (Ghatam)
8. U. Srinivas (Mandolin), 1990 (2) Sikkil Bhaskaran (Violin), Palghat Raghu (Mridangam)
9. U. Srinivas, 1993 (2) P. S. Ramamurthy (Violin), K. V. Prasad (Mridangam)
10. Sudha Raghunathan (Vocal), 1992 (3) V. V. Ravi (Violin), T. Vaidyanathan (Mridangam)

11. Maharajapuram Santhanam & Srinivasan (Vocal), 1989 (2)
Nagai Muralidharan (Violin), Vellore Ramabhadran (Mridangam)
12. T.N.Seshagopalan (Vocal), 1992 (2)
G. Chandramouli (Violin), Neyveli Narayanan (Mridangam)
13. Nedunuri Krishnamurthi, 1991 (2)
Thiruparkadal S. Veeraraghavan, Padmasri Umayalpuram K. Sivaraman
14. Saroja & Lalitha (Bombay Sisters) (Vocal), 1989 (3)
M. Narasimhamurthi (Violin), T. Narendran (Mridangam), M. Govindarajan (Ghatam)
15. Ravi Kiran (Chitra Veena), 1994 (2)
P. Sunder Rajan (Violin), Vellore Ramabhadran (Mridangam)
16. K.V.Narayanaswamy (Vocal), 1993 (2)
Nagai Muralidharan (Violin), Vellore Ramabhadran (Mridangam)
17. Kadri Gopalnath (Saxophone), 1987 (2)
T.S. Srinivasan (Violin), T.R. Ramakrishnan (Mridangam)
18. T.V. Sankaranarayanan (Vocal), 1994 (2)
T.K.V. Ramanujacharyulu (Violin), B. Harikumar (Mridangam)
19. Trichur V. Ramachandran (Vocal), 1992 (2)
V. V. Ravi (Violin), S. V. Raja Rao (Mridangam)
20. Lalgudi Srimathi Brahmanandam (Violin), 1990 (2)
Prakash Rao (Mridangam)
21. Rudrapatnam Brothers (Vocal), 1991 (2)
R.N. Thyagarajan (Violin), R.N. Tharanathan (Mridangam)
22. T.K. Govinda Rao (Vocal), 1990 (2)
N. Shashidhar (Violin), Satish Pathakota (Mridangam)
23. T. R. Subramanyam (Vocal), 1988 (3)
Vasantha Kannan (Violin), Trichur Mohan (Mridangam)
24. T. N. Bala (Vocal), 1994 (2)
Sashidhar (Violin), Balachander & Murali (Mridangam)
25. S.P. Ramh (Vocal), 1994 (2)
Shashidhar (Violin), Satish Pathakota (Mridangam)
26. Vijay Siva (Vocal), 1993 (2)
Shriram Kumar (Violin), J. Vaidhyathan (mridangam)
27. Smt. Sheela Ramaswamy (Vocal), 1987 (2)
K.S. Mani (Violin), M.S. Venkatesh (Mridangam)
28. Charumathi Ramachandran (Vocal), 1994 (2)
M.S. Anantharaman (Violin), Skandaprasad (Mridangam)
29. Bombay Jayashri (Vocal), 1995 (2)
Vittal Ramamurthy (Violin), Palani Chakravarthy (Mridangam)
30. Sowmya (Vocal), 1995 (2)
Narmada (Violin), Balaji (Mridangam)
31. Sanjay Subramaniam (Vocal), 1995 (2)

- R.K. Sriramkumar (Violin), K. Arun Prakash (Mridangam)
32. Vani Satish (Vocal), 1995 (2)
Satish (Violin), Mahesh Krishnamurthy (Mridangam)
33. Nithyasree (Vocal), 1996 (2)
Embar Kannan (Violin), Siva Kumar (Mridangam)
34. M.S. Sheela (Vocal), 1996 (3)
Nalina Mohan (Violin), Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma (Mridangam), Sukanya Ramgopal (Ghatam)
35. Jayanthi & Padmavathi (Veena Duet), 1996 (2)
36. Shashank (Flute), 1996 (2)
Gopinath (Violin), Satish Kumar (Mridangam), Tripunithira Radhakrishnan (Ghatam)
38. O.S. Thyagarajan (Vocal), 1997 (3)
Srikanth Venkataraman (Violin), Srimushnam Raja Rao (Mridangam)
39. Balaji Shankar, 1997 (2)
Ganesh Prasad (Violin), Poongulam Subramaniam (Mridangam)
40. T.N. Krishnan & Viji Krishnan Natarajan (Violin), 1997 (2)
B. Harikumar (Mridangam), Vaikkom R. Gopalakrishnan (Ghatam)
41. Kadri Gopalanath (Saxophone), 1997 (2)
Kanyakumari (Violin), Guruvayur Durai (Mridangam)
42. N. Ramani (Flute) 1998(2) Srikant Venkataraman (Violin)
Srimushnam Rajarao (Mridangam).
43. Sanjay Subramanian (Vocal), 1998 (2) A. Anantha Krishnan -
Violin, Padmasri Palghat R. Raghu- Mridangam.
44. G.J.R. Krishnan (Violin), 1998 (2) Vellore ramabhadran -
Mridangam, Nagarajan - Kanjira.
45. T.M. Krishna (Vocal), 1998 (2) Bombay Gayathri - Violin,
K. Arun Prakash - Mridangam.

Home Page Addresses of Some Artists

- M.Balamuralikrishna:
<http://www.balamuralikrishna.com/>
- K. V. Narayanaswamy
: <http://server.exo.com/~sri/kvn.html>
- P. S. Narayanaswamy
: <http://www.geocities.com/Vienna/Strasse/7358/home.html>
- L. Shankar :
<http://www.geocities.com/BourbonStreet/6789/shankar.html>
- K. Govinda Rao:
<http://www.webindia.com/ganamandir/>
- Karaiyadi Mani:
<http://www.webindia.com/kmani/>
- Sudha Ragunathan:
<http://www.webindia.com/sudha/>

SRUTI DISCUSSION FORUM

"For sometime now, I have been trying to understand what musical characteristics make up a raga. While the arohana and avarohana as well as the constituent notes are definitive of any raga, it is apparently true that there is more that distinguishes one raga from another. Can someone tell me what precisely these other attributes may be?"

Here are some responses to the above question posed by Prabhakar Chitrapu in the last Newsletter.

Music, Carnatic music in particular, has of its own divine nature from the days of yore. Those God-blessed musicians/composers in those days composed songs instantaneously during their day-to-day life in their spiritual sequences, in a tune confined to the said sequences. That tune was called the "Raga", which has the appropriate Swaras under the "Sapthaswara Scheme" which has the variations of Swaras creating different kinds of tunes, otherwise called "Raga" according to "Nava-rasa Bhawas".

The Divine nature of the Music is confirmed and proved of its divinity for its exceptional nature, taking into consideration the following examples:-

There are ingredients (Pulses) which have the six kinds of tastes, called "Aru Suvai" Viz, (1) Salty, (2) spicy hot (3) Sweetness, (4) Sourness, (5) Tartness and (6) Bitterness (in Tamil, Uppu, Uraippu, Inippuu, Kasappu, Pulippu and Thuvarppu). Those ingredients (Pulses) have their own quality of taste. For example, the salty character of the "Salt" won't be changed when it is used by us in more or less quantity or level. Similarly all the other ingredients are always having the same nature without any change or modification in their character or taste when they are utilized or used in any capacity by people in their foods, but it can be said "little high in

the level of Sweetness or Sourness or little low as the case may be. But the characters of Sapthaswaras Viz:- Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni (Seven swaras in an Octave) will have their immediate change of tones if they are moved even to a little extent, this side or that side, creating some pleasant or unpleasant or varied tunes creating a chain of the tones of the Sapthaswaras, which may be taken as "ragas" according to the minds of the composers who are utilizing the Sapthaswaras in various kinds in their creative minds. Thus Ragas are created. Music is divine in nature and it is obvious these ragas have to emanate from the singer out of divine inspiration.----- by K.S. Ramachandran

The arohana and avarohana as well as the constituent notes are definitive of any raga. However, beyond these tech-

nical characteristics, a raga has its own "musical personality" or its own *swarupa* or image. The meaning of the word *raga* in Sanskrit is "coloring, dyeing, tingeing" and raga is defined in ancient music texts as "that which colors the mind". A *raga* is a mystical expressive force that can bring out a variety of imagery and create emotional response in both the singer and the listener. The power of ragas has been glorified in many ancient stories: *Deepak* (lamp) raga can light up lamps, or can cause heat and fire, raga *Vasantha* (spring) can bring a cooling breeze, *Megha* (cloud) can bring rain, *Nagavarali* (snake) can charm cobras (when the performer is really exceptional, of course!).

Ancient works on the theory of Indian music have assigned ragas to different times of the day, seasons and to specific emotions. Ragas assigned to be most appropriate to be performed at particular times of the day include *Bauli*, the raga of dawn or early morning and *Neelambari*, the raga of lullaby or night. One can find many examples of these in the *Uthsava Sampradaya krithis* of Thyagaraja, and the devotional compositions of Dikshitar and Purandaradasa.

Ragas have also been assigned to the six seasons of the Indian climate: winter, spring, summer, rainy season, autumn and early winter. *Vasantha* is associated with spring (the season of renewal), with images of blossoming trees, the buzzing of bees and the flight of birds, while *Megha* (cloud), assigned to rainy season, is connected with "storms" of passion and love.

A third attribute of ragas is their association with specific human emotions - the *navarasa*, or the nine sentiments - love, sadness, strength, peace, wonder, horror, the comic, disgust and anger. *Bhakti* (religious devotion) and *ganarasa* (abstract aesthetic enjoyment) are two other important moods believed to be expressed in music (readers are welcome to provide examples of ragas associated with these specific emotions).

Thus, in addition to its technical characteristics, one can assign to a raga a certain "psychoacoustical property" of mood, time of day, season, etc., depending on its expressive personality.

Sruti Staff

[excerpts have been taken from the *Worlds of Music*, Schirmer Books, Simon and Schuster Macmillan, NY]

For our next Discussion Forum.....

There is a common perception that a majority of South Indian Classical Music and Dance lovers resist change in these art forms. It appears that innovation is not really appreciated and en-

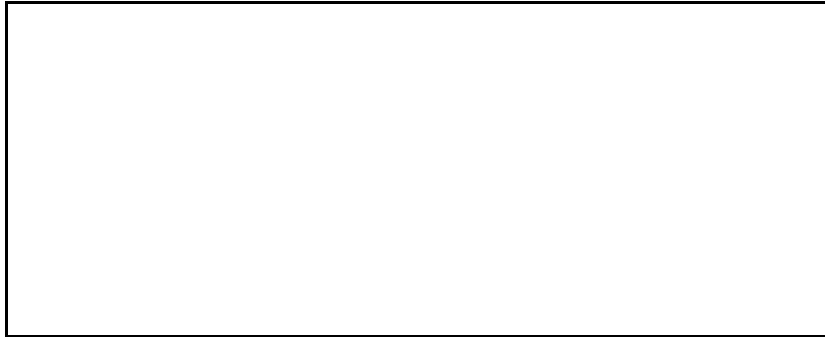
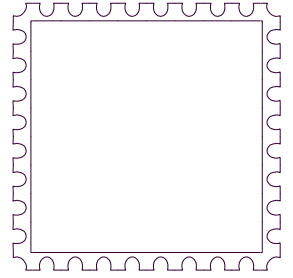
couraged. It will be of great interest to understand whether or not this perception is true and if so, what the reasons behind this may be.

Sruti Notes Staff.

We look forward to hearing your views and to a lively discussion on this subject!



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