

On Appreciation of Indian Classical Music

Ravi Shankar

Ravi Shankar is one of the famous musicians of India. In this text he has highlighted the origin, development, form, types and value of Indian classical music.

Indian classical music is different from Western classical music.

Its origin goes back to the Vedic hymns of two thousand years ago.

Its root is religion; music is a vehicle to achieve the true meaning of the universe. The very heart of Indian music is the raga, the melodic form. The raga gives colour to the listener's mind.

The performing arts in India- music, dance, drama and poetry are based on the concept of Nava Rasa a or nine sentiments.(see para 7) Each raga is principally dominated by one of the nine rasas. Each raga is also closely connected to a particular time of day or season. (see para9) There are over 6,000 ragas and 72 melas in Indian music. Melas are parent scales upon which ragas are based. Raga has a very great artistic role in the articulation of music. (See para10)

A musician needs a long 'sadhana' (dedicated practice and discipline) under the guidance of a true guru to achieve mastery over this form of art.

Other important aspects of music are talas or rhythmic cycles of raga. In music a drummer accompanies a singer. Indian classical music requires the artist to consider the setting, time and feeling and mood of the audience before playing.

Indian music is appreciated and respected in the west and it has influenced many composers and musicians.

(See the table at the end of the text for ragas.)