

# MUSIC

The origin of Indian classical music can be traced back to the Vedic age. In the Vedic literature, particularly in the Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishads, we find references to different types of musical instruments such wind, drums and stringed and their variants. These instruments were played in special social and cultural events, for example, the traditional musical instrument of the subcontinent ‘veena’ was played in the Ashvamedh sacrifice. We find references to dance and music jointly as ‘nrita- gita’ and their placement in the category of art ( Shilpa).

During the Vedic age sacred singing had become intrinsic part of almost all sacrifices and this became the task of a special priest called Udgatir. It all started with the Sam Veda in which we find ,mainly, the reproduction of the Rig Vedic hymns with musical notes. For this reason, at times, the origin of the Indian classical music is traced back to the Sam Veda. There emerged a practice of Saman ( literally means music) singing and Saman- singers also called Talavakaras came to occupy a prominent position in sacrifices and society with increasing realisation of the great spiritual efficacy of the Saman- singing.

It is generally accepted that all later music developed from the Saman- singing. A later work, called Gandharva Veda dealing with the science of music is also associated with the same traditions of Saman- singing and is an Upvedas of the Sam Veda. The music find reflection even in the epics ( the Ramayana and Mahabharata) and we find references to the minstrels called ‘Suta’ and ‘Magadha’ who independently or associated with the royal courts preserved heroic ballads, rhapsodies and epics by singing them to the ‘veena’. They were in demand even at sacrificial sessions. The art has been dealt with in some of the Puranas such as the Vayu purana, Markandeya purana, and Vishnudharmottar purana.

Moving beyond the religious traditions the most important surviving ancient work on the subject the ‘Natya Shastra’ of Bharatamuni chronologically placed to the early Christian centuries. The main theme of the work is drama( Mime) but it also deals with music and dance which accompanied dramatic performances. This is suggestive of the 'inter-related' development of the Indian art forms. The work is still used at the most authentic work for the knowledge of the Indian classical music, which is suggestive of the cultural continuity of the Indian civilisation. In this work ancient ‘marga’ form of music is discussed.

The music is also mentioned in the famous work of Vatsayayan, the Kamasutra, attributed to the Gupta Age. It has been included in the list of those art forms in which a ‘ganika’ (a dancer or a courtesan) was supposed to master herself. It has also been considered as essential for a Nagrak (a civilised city dweller).

In the medieval age the famous work of Jayadeva, Geet Govinda, written in the 12th Century in Bengal, is supposed to be the first work in the nature of a Geet Kavya. The work deals with most of the legends of the Krishna-Radha traditions, with music as an integral part of the same. This highlights the role of the Bhakti movement in enreaching the musical

traditions of the country. In due course of the time the Sufi musical gatherings known as 'Saman' also came to enrich the musical traditions of the subcontinent.

In the medieval age the most important musical treatise was 'Sangita-Ratnakara' of Sarangdeva, who is supposed to have lived in the court of the Yadava rulers of the Devgiri, in the 13th Century. In this work, we find a detailed discussion on different types of Ragas (melodies), their derivatives, called the Reginis, and compositions based on them. The work is still used for the authentic knowledge of the Indian classical music

representing the cultural continuity of the Indian civilisation.

In both types of music the vocal and the instrumental, the basic units are the seven musical notes called 'svara' or 'sur'. The combination of these musical notes creates various melodies which are known as the Ragas and Reginis. Still bigger units made by combination of ragas and reginis are known as Thats. Some basic 'ragas'

(melodies) associated with the Indian classical music along with their timings and major emotions/sentiments (rasas) are mentioned below:

1. Bhairava: Time - Dawn; Emotions- awe, fear, sadness and seriousness
2. Megh: Time -Morning; Emotions-peace and calm
3. Dipak: Time - Afternoon; Emotions-love
4. Shriraga: Time-Afternoon; Emotions- love
5. Kaushik: Time - Evening/Night; Emotions- joy and laughter
6. Hindola: Time-Night; Emotions-Love

After 'Sangeeta-Ratnakara' of Sarangdeva, the Indian classical music witnessed emergence of two major streams, called the Hindustani and the Carnatic. Though the basic Ragas remained the same, yet differences can be seen in terms of their derivatives and compositions based on them. Some important differences between the two are mentioned below

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1. The Hindustani music developed in the North, after the establishment of Delhi Sultanate, as a part of the composite culture of the Medieval Age. It came to witness influences of some foreign musical traditions, particularly related to the Central Asian and West Asian traditions. Thus it developed a synthetic character. In this context, the famous Sufi poet and the author, Amir Khusrau is supposed to be the first musician, who started combining the elements of Indian musical traditions with elements of foreign musical traditions. Relying upon this synthesis, he also developed some new ragas(melodies)such as Sanam and Ghurra/Ghurrey. In order to meet the new requirements of the emerging Hindustani music, he also developed some new musical instruments like - Tabla and Sitar. He is also known for giving birth to a new form of Hindustani music, called Qawwali, mainly as a part of the Sufi musical traditions of Saman.The Carnatic Music developed in the South, in relative isolation. And so did not witness the influence of foreign musical traditions. It is for this reason, it is considered as a relatively pure form of Indian classical music, largely based on traditional instruments like, Veena. This is explained not only in terms of the late arrival of the Delhi Sultanate in the South and its extremely

brief stint, but also in terms of deliberate efforts to maintain the pure nature of the Carnatic music by giving it a codified form.

2. Hindustani music is supposed to be open, liberal and experimental, and so, known for its dynamism. But the Carnatic music is relatively closed, orthodox, and so developed a relatively rigid and static character.

3. Hindustani music is supposed to be emotional, but the Carnatic music is intellectual and philosophical, which requires precise and exact rendition of the norms.

4. Hindustani music is popular whereas Carnatic music is known for its elite audience.

5. Hindustani music witnessed emergence of different forms (i.e. diversity), like, Dhrupad, Dhamar, Kajri, Tappa, Thumri, Ghazal, Qawwali, Tarana, Khyal, etc. Such diversity is not notice in the Carnatic music

6. In Hindustani music, we find a very strong tradition of mentors and disciples,giving birth to different Gharanas, like, Gwalior, Jaipur, Lucknow, Benaras, etc.In the Carnatic music, we do not notice such Gharanas and it largely developed in the Royal courts.