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MUSIC TRADITIONS OF THE NORTH AND SOUTH INDIA

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Abstract

The post-Vedic era historical literature relating to Indian classical music has been extensive. The ancient and medieval texts are primarily in Sanskrit (Hinduism), but major reviews of music theory, instruments and practice were also composed in regional languages such as Braj, Kannada, Odia, Pali (Buddhism), Prakrit (Jainism), Tamil and Telugu. While numerous manuscripts have survived into the modern era, many original works on Indian music are believed to be lost, and are known to have existed only because they are quoted and discussed in other manuscripts on classical Indian music. Many of the encyclopedic Puranas contain large chapters on music theory and instruments, such as the *Bhagavata Purana*, the *Markandeya Purana*, the *Vayu Purana*, the *Linga Purana*, and the *Visnudharmottara Purana*

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INTRODUCTION

Sruti presented two concerts that explored the influence of native and folk traditions upon Carnatic (South Indian classical) music. The first program, "Spirit—The Indian Music Experience," was presented at the Painted Bride Art Center and highlighted the creative integration of melodies from South India and the north western state of Rajasthan. Shashank Subrahmanyam, a well-known Carnatic flutist, played with Rajasthan's traditional Manganiyar folk musicians, who made their debut tour of the United States.

CLASSICAL MUSIC CULTURE

Karnatak music is to be distinguished from Hindustani music, the latter forming the North Indian Classical tradition. The term Karnatak also has strong connections with the state of Karnataka from where the chief Karnatak composer, Purandaradasa, came. Purandaradasa was responsible for systematizing the basic lessons from simple notes to gitams (short easily memorizable verses) and kirtanas (more elaborate compositions with at least three verses) and he provided the basis for the efflorescence in South Indian music which took place in the nineteenth century. So the concert proper is a modern variation or avatar of the larger and longer musical feats of an earlier day. It is also a modulation from the Bhajana (devotional group singing) tradition which is still alive and vigorous and which is known for its accelerating rhythms, naming of the Lord and devotion tending towards enthusiasm and frenzy.

INFLUENCES AND INTEGRATION OF FOLK MELODIES IN CARNATIC MUSIC

This type of collaborative performance, which stepped outside of the traditional bounds of Indian classical music, was a first for Sruti. The second concert explored the influence of South Indian folk traditions on Carnatic music, and featured leading vocalist S. Sowmya and emerging vocalist Bharat Sundar. This pairing was also unique, as Carnatic duets usually occur between siblings or artists of similar status.

The two artists performed solo in other American cities, but the Sruti concert, presented as part of Montgomery County Community College's Lively Arts Series, was their only collaborative endeavor. With these concerts, SRUTI became the first United States organization to showcase these types of experimental concerts, which have become increasingly popular in the world of Indian classical music.



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PERSIAN AND ARAB INFLUENCES

Hindustani music has had Arab and Persian music influences, including the creation of new ragas and the development of instruments such as the sitar and sarod. The nature of these influences are unclear. Scholars have attempted to study Arabic *maqam* (also spelled *makam*) of Arabian peninsula, Turkey and northern Africa, and *dastgah* of Iran, to discern the nature and extent. Through the colonial era and until the 1960s, the attempt was to theoretically study *ragas* and *maqams* and suggested commonalities. Later comparative musicology studies, states Bruno Nettl – a professor of Music, have found the similarities between classical Indian music and European music as well, raising the question about the point of similarities and of departures between the different world music systems.

HINDUSTANI MUSIC

It is unclear when the process of differentiation of Hindustani music started. The process may have started in the 14th century courts of the Delhi Sultans. However, according to Jairazbhoy, the North Indian tradition likely acquired its modern form after the 14th or after the 15th century. The development of Hindustani music reached a peak during the reign of Akbar. During this 16th century period, Tansen studied music and introduced musical innovations, for about the first sixty years of his life with patronage of the Hindu king Ram Chand of Gwalior, and thereafter performed at the Muslim court of Akbar. Many musicians consider Tansen as the founder of Hindustani music.

Tansen's style and innovations inspired many, and many modern *gharanas* (Hindustani music teaching houses) link themselves to his lineage. The Muslim courts discouraged Sanskrit, and encouraged technical music. Such constraints led Hindustani music to evolve in a different way than Carnatic music.

Hindustani music style is mainly found in North India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. It exists in four major forms: Dhrupad, Khyal (or Khayal), Tarana, and the semi-classical Thumri. Dhrupad is ancient, Khyal evolved from it, Thumri evolved from Khyal. There are three major schools of Thumri: Lucknow gharana, Banaras gharana and Punjabi gharana. These weave in folk music innovations. Tappa is the most folksy, one which likely existed in Rajasthan and Punjab region before it was systematized and integrated into classical music structure. It became popular, with the Bengali musicians developing their own Tappa.

Khyal is the modern form of Hindustani music, and the term literally means "imagination". It is significant because it was the template for Sufi musicians among the Islamic community of India, and *Qawwals* sang their folk songs in the Khyal format.

Dhrupad (or Dhruvpad), the ancient form described in the Hindu text *Natyashastra*, is one of the core forms of classical music found all over the Indian subcontinent. The word comes from *Dhruva* which means immovable and permanent. A Dhrupad has at least four stanzas, called Sthayi (or Asthayi), Antara, Sanchari and Abhoga. The Sthayi part is a melody that uses the middle octave's first tetrachord and the lower octave notes. The Antara part uses the middle octave's second tetrachord and the higher octave notes. The Sanchari part is the development phase, which builds using parts of Sthayi and Antara already played, and it uses melodic material built with all the three octave notes. The Abhoga is the concluding section, that brings the listener back to the familiar starting point of Sthayi, albeit with rhythmic variations, with diminished notes like a gentle goodbye, that are ideally mathematical fractions such as *dagun* (half), *tigun* (third) or *chaugun* (fourth). Sometimes a fifth stanza called Bhoga is included. Though usually related to philosophical or Bhakti (emotional devotion to a god or goddess) themes, some Dhrupads were composed to praise kings.

Improvisation is of central importance to Hindustani music, and each *gharana* (school tradition) has developed its own techniques. At its core, it starts with a standard composition (bandish), then expands it in a process called *vistar*. The improvisation methods have ancient roots, and one of the more common techniques is called *Alap*, which is followed by the *Jor* and *Jhala*.



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The *Alap* explores possible tonal combinations among other things, *Jor* explores speed or tempo (faster), while *Jhala* explores complex combinations like a fishnet of strokes while keeping the beat patterns. As with Carnatic music, Hindustani music has assimilated various folk tunes. For example, ragas such as Kafi and Jaijaiwanti are based on folk tunes.

The classical music tradition of the ancient and medieval Indian subcontinent (modern Bangladesh, India, Pakistan) were a generally integrated system through the 14th century, after which the socio-political turmoil of the Delhi Sultanate era isolated the north from the south.

The music traditions of the North and South India were not considered distinct until about the 16th century, but after that the traditions acquired distinct forms. North Indian classical music is called *Hindustani*, while the South Indian expression is called *Carnatic* (sometimes spelled as *Karnatic*).

RECEPTION OUTSIDE INDIA

According to Yukteshwar Kumar, elements of Indian music arrived in China in the 3rd century, such as in the works of Chinese lyricist Li Yannian. In the 1980s, 1990s and particularly the 2000s onwards, Indian Classical Music has seen rapid growth in reception and development around the globe, particularly in North America, where immigrant communities have preserved and passed on classical music traditions to subsequent generations through the establishment of local festivals and music schools.

Numerous musicians of American origin, including Ramakrishnan Murthy, Sandeep Narayan, Abby V, and Mahesh Kale have taken professionally to Indian Classical Music with great success. In his 2020 released video, Canadian singer Abby V demonstrated 73 different Indian Classical ragas in a live rendering, which went viral on the internet; further establishing the growing prominence of Indian Classical Music around the globe.

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