

A complex beauty - Dwijavanti Raagam

A raga that brims with bhakti and karuna rasa is Dwijavanti. Dwijavanti is a Carnatic raga that has its roots in Hindustani music where it is called Jayjayvanti. Dwijavanti is a distinctive raga, and ragas such as Kapi and Sahana sound similar to it. It thrives on the strength of its prayogas (phrasings) and not merely on the skeletal scale. In fact, the arohana-avarohana of this raga is a collection of phrases like *RGMNDPS – SNDPMGMRGRS*. In the avarohana, the first occurrence of the gandhara is the antara gandhara and the next, the sadharana gandhara. The kaisiki and kakali nishada-s both occur in this scale. For instance, in the phrase *NSR/N,DP*, the first nishada is the kakali nishada and the second is the kaisiki nishada. The other notes in this heart-warming scale are, *sadja, chatusruti rishabha, suddha madhyama, panchama, and chatusruti dhaivata*.

Important compositions of Muthuswamy Dikshitar in Dwijavanti include 'Akhilandeswari' (the goddess of Thriuvanaikkaval) and 'Chetasri Balakrishnam' (composed on Lord Krishna at Guruvayoor kshetra). Dikshitar propagated this raga in the South. He applies the musical knowledge of Hindustani ragas that he gleaned during his days in North India, to craft these immortal pieces. Purandaradasa's 'Kandu kandu' is usually sung in this raga, and Periasamy Thooran's 'Engu naan selvaen ayya' is a graceful delineation of this raga. 'Kumara gurupara is a well-known thiruppugazh that is usually sung in this raga. Lalgudi Jayaraman's thillana in this raga 'thanom thana thom tha' is a complete guide of this raga. Swati Tirunal's padam 'Tharuni nyaan endu cheyyu' brims with beauty while the popular bhajan in Dwijavanti 'Raghupati raghav rajaram' is on everybody's lips.

In film music Dwijavanti has been used sparsely, and this is because the raga is complex.

In the film *Meera*, M. S. Subbulakshmi renders the song 'Enadhu ullame' with absolute surrender to the divine. The song opens with the antara gandhara, and the subsequent phrase *SRG,RSNDNS – 'inba vellame'* demonstrates the use of the sadharana gandhara. The phrase 'meera prabhu giridhara gopalanai varadanai' brings forth the complete bhava of Dwijavanti. The prayoga *GMRG, R* with the exaggerated gamaka in the gandhara is the signature phrase.

The song 'Poi solla koodathu kadali' from the film *Run* in the music direction of Vidyasagar is fabulous. It is a well-crafted adaptation of the raga for the silver screen, without compromising either its grammar or grace. Hariharan's singing adds the essential classical element and insight to this tune and when we hear 'poi sonnalum neeye en kadhali' – the phrase *RGMPD/GM/RGRS* leaps out. The piece-de-resistance is perhaps 'Unnai Kanathu naan' from *Viswaroopam*. The Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy trio mesmerised us with this semi-classical kathak piece. In 'vidhai illamal vaer illaye' – *SRGPM/G,RSNS*, the raga bhava comes to the fore. Shankar's singing is a treat and when he sings the swaras *GMDNS,NDPMGMRGRS*, a lucid picture of Dwijavanti emerges. Each

swara permutation that he makes in the repeated use of the line 'Unnai kanathu' brings out a different facet of the raga.

In the Malayalam movie *Mr Butler*, the song 'Virahini Radhe' is a Dwijavanti based piece sung melodiously by K. J. Yesudas and Chitra. The interlude consisting of phrases that all culminate, one by one, at the rishabha, is very typical of the raga. The sangati *GRSNDP* where the singer cascades quickly to the panchama in the lower octave, is also characteristic of the raga.

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