Part 2 Issues and Processes

Page Image

The world of South Asian music and dance expresses the diverse cultures, societies, economies, religions, history, and politics of this geographical area. To penetrate this world, to gain an understanding of South Asia's performing arts, we must ask questions not only about the music itself but about the musicians, the audiences, the performance contexts, the modes of learning, the impact of modern technology and communications, and much more. The issues and processes addressed here, grouped within broad areas such as music in religion and ritual or music learning and transmission, reflect questions asked by scholars, students, and performers, as well as the topics they consider important. These discussions open up for us the world of music and dance in South Asia; they also remind us that other topics remain unexplored and other questions unanswered.

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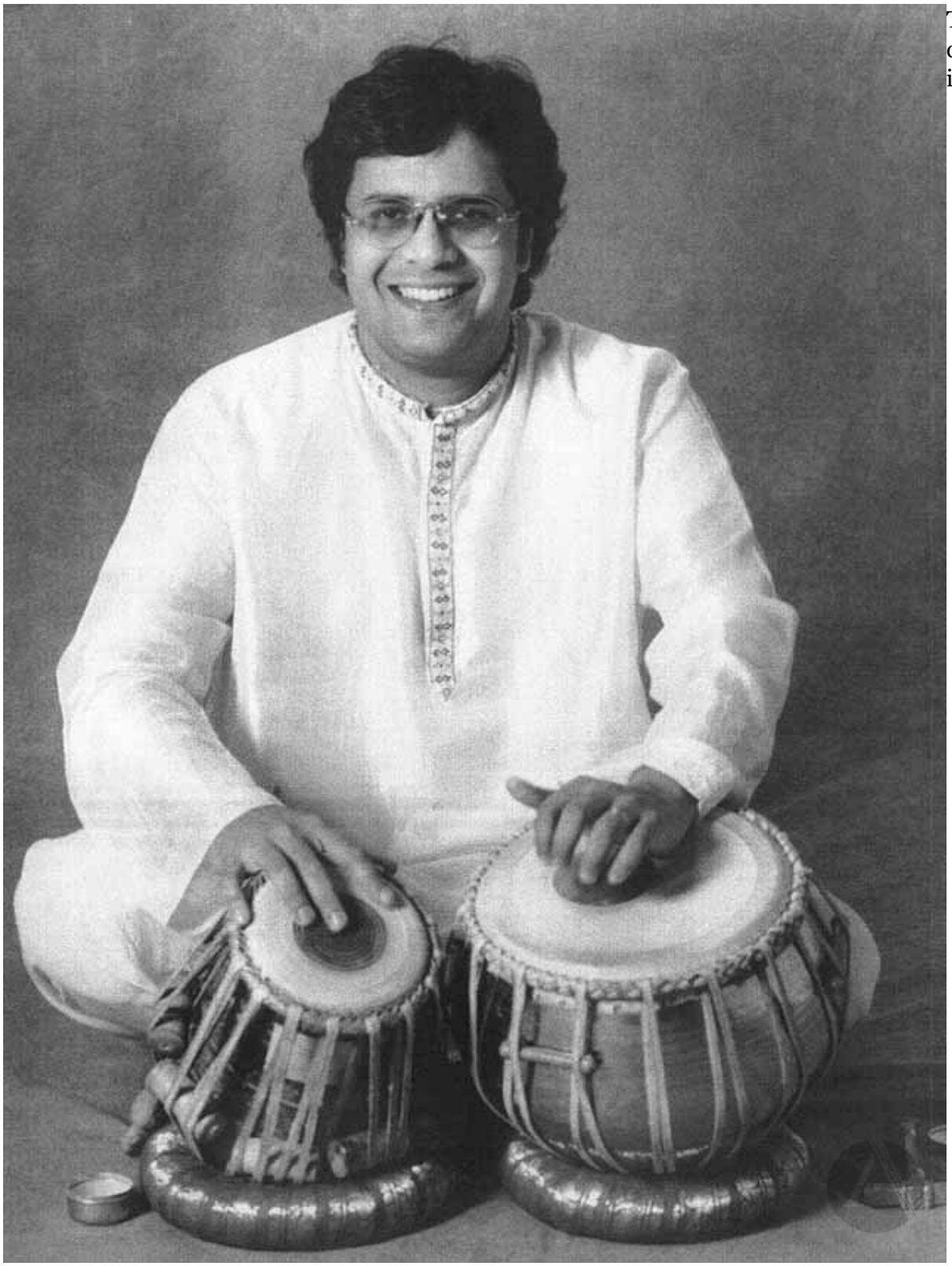

The t
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fundamental component of most Hindustani vocal and instrumental music ensembles. The tabla
player Bikram Ghosh of Calcutta, who studied with his father and guru. Pandit Shankar Ghosh,
performs regularly as a soloist and as an accompanist for major Hindustani artists, including Pa
Ravi Shankar and Ustad Ali Akhbar Khan. Photo by Greg Plachta, courtesy Music of the World.

The Classical Traditions

Page Image

As in the West, classical art music in South Asia has been passed down through many generations of performers, and has become a music based on ancient practices yet encompassing modern ideas. Unlike its Western counterpart, classical music in India gradually diverged into two separate streams from the thirteenth century on, resulting in today's Hindustani musical tradition in the north and Karnatak tradition in the south. Both these Indian musical systems have highly developed theories, musical forms, performance contexts, and stylistic lineages that pass on practical knowledge orally. Musicians from the two traditions occasionally perform together, integrating performance styles and genres; for the most part, however, the two classical traditions remain separate, cultivated by artists and students devoted to maintaining their musical heritage.

Hindustani Raga

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The essence of what is meant by the term *rāga* (a Sanskrit word) in Indian music is latent in much of the rest of the world's music. In its broadest sense, the word refers to the "color," and more specifically the emotion or mood produced by a particular combination or sequence of pitches. Etymologically, the word is related to *ran.ga* 'color'; a Sanskrit saying from classical times is often quoted: *rañjayati iti ragaḥ* 'that which tinges the mind with color is a raga'. Throughout history and in most cultures musical experience has been clearly tied to emotional meaning and affect. From the earliest writers on music to those of the present day, discussion of mood and color and the production of emotion in music has often been a starting point. The ancient Greeks related states of mind to their modal theory; the Chinese connected music with Confucian ideals of serene harmony with nature; the Indonesians refer to the unique color of each gamelan's sound; the West Asians to their multicolored *maqām;* Western medieval composers talked of melodic color, and Baroque composers thought in terms of *Affektion;* the early twentieth-century Russian composers Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov and Alexander Skryabin had their famous color theories; and in modern music we have "the blues" at the same time that computer microchips are transforming sound instantly into color patterns.

WHAT IS A RAGA?

In a technical sense, raga can be described as lying on the continuum between a scale and a mode, encompassing both straight, emotionally neutral lines of ascent and descent and a fixed song or melody full of feeling. In their abstract form, most ragas lie somewhere between these two extremes: in terms of the scale, the performer is permitted to move freely between the raga notes without the rigors of following tune patterns; in fixed compositions, however, the performer must keep to the

rigid confines of a melodic grid. Most musicians spend their time in the midground fulfilling the ecstatic possibilities of compositions and dealing with the restrictions of a raga, for in this middle area they can find and exploit most of the tonal possibilities that are typical of all ragas. Tonal characteristics include transilience in the scale (ascending or descending patterns of five, six, or seven tones); observing tonal centers as well as strong and weak notes (*vādī-samvādī* and *alpatva-bahutva* relationships; see

Page Image "Theoretical Terms" below); controlling the microtonal tuning; concentrating on the emotional effect; remaining within a given range; starting and ending sections on the correct note; resting at the correct places; and, perhaps most important of all, observing the subtle melodic ornaments and features of the raga that traditionally characterize it. (If the various restrictions are glided over or ignored, mature artists consider the "picture of the raga" faulty and carelessly executed.)

We still face the question, What is a raga? Simply, it is "some combination of notes which charms the mind and produces the moods of love, joy, pathos, heroism, and peace" (Ali Akbar Khan, personal communication). Such a definition actually belongs to no particular culture. However, a North Indian classical raga is a musical complex with a great history and significant spiritual implications, with extramusical associations regarding time, personality, and mood, and which, as it is iterated again and again, runs the gamut of tonal structure from simple scale to fully formed composition. A raga performance may be a huge structure, permitting large-scale expansions in time and melodic variation; or it may be quite small and confining, with no more than a short exposition of its delicate miniaturism. The realization of a raga through performance reveals the nature of the balances of pitch and mood inherent in it. Any single performance may or may nor faithfully portray its character and potential affect. Even in the hands of a master musician, one raga may take repeated renderings to reveal its seemingly endless charm and developmental possibilities. For a less experienced musician, singing or playing any raga is fraught with pitfalls as one attempts to avoid such errors as bringing in other ragas of similar pitch content, introducing wrong balances or tunings, neutralizing or destroying the mood, or blurring the differences among ragas by subjecting them all to the same sort of development. The understanding of the movement of a raga is gained through years of association with a teacher, and the student practices hundreds of compositions in order to develop the discernment and understanding of how ragas differ one from another as well as the ability to realize all the possibilities within a single one.

When we hear the term *rāga*, several visual images may come to mind: a sitar player and a tabla player sitting on an oriental carpet in the concert hall, blazing away at a breakneck tempo; a detailed medieval miniature painting in the Persian style depicting a prince and his lady in a flowery garden; a solitary vocalist, accompanying himself on a stringed drone instrument, humbly going about his daily meditative music practice. Each image conveys an important facet of the elusive musical pattern called a raga—a kind of personal musical inquiry into pitch and rhythm that has come to be enhanced with courtly refinements and which has gathered to itself important extramusical and spiritual associations. It is also a devotional yoga nurtured on Indian soil and at the same time the musical substance of public concerts and recordings produced for the entertainment of audiences worldwide. It is a vehicle for the beautiful expression of breathtaking virtuosity, intoxicated flights of fancy, and profound feeling. And there are no perfect models, for ragas are never rendered twice the same way.

To restate the musical parameters, a raga is an abstract, tonally centered combination of pitches, often as simple as a scale but more often a series of melodic motives within a scale; in a few cases, these can add up to a complete composition—a song, for example—with fixed melodic contours and rhythmic implications. Some ragas use a series of motives that may span a range of from three to ten

notes, while others are conceived of as full-blown melodies. In the former case (by far the most prevalent) the performer combines and rearranges the motives when rendering the raga; in the latter case (more common in folk melodies and in certain ragas of the classical tradition) a larger contiguous melody is fragmented in the rendering. In general, the word *rāga* implies a set of performance practices by which these abstract melodic kernels

Page Image are revealed in formulaic patterns. In this sense, a raga is a map a musician follows in his or her creation of a musical performance: a catalog of melodic movements that the artist unfolds, details, and expands while following a traditional performance format that has been passed down orally from teacher to student.

Musical practice has been evolving in India for more than three thousand years, and the origins of raga date back to the chanting of the Vedas, the scriptures of the Aryans, who settled in modern India's Ganges River plain, probably moving from original settlements in the Indus Valley, in about 1500 B.C. The four Vedas (the Ṛgveda, Sāmaveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda) form an oral tradition maintained and performed by specialists, the priests of the Brahmin caste. The hymns that make up the Sāmaveda were chanted on the seven notes of the diatonic scale, later named Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, and Ni. Scholars suggest that the Vedas may also have absorbed melodies of pre-Aryan origin (Tarlekar 1985). Classical Indian music inherited many features of these Vedic foundations: it is an oral tradition largely of monophony with spiritual dimensions whose theory and practice have been maintained and developed by specialists over the centuries. A central part of the theoretical evolution has been the grammatization of the melodic concepts collectively known as raga.

The pool of musical theory and melodies, eventually classified under the raga system, is immense in terms of diversity both of character and context, having developed over such a great time span and containing vastly differing cultural admixtures. Because of the wide variety of sources, it remains difficult to come up with a simple and satisfactory definition of raga. When direct description becomes elusive, metaphors of water recur continually in the speech of musicians describing ragas: "This raga is a swift-moving stream; that one a deep lake; another a majestic river; and overall, the music is a vast ocean." Besides the Vedic systems of musical thought, the music of the dance and theater played a central role in the formation of early melodic theorizing. Regional musical styles, including what we might now term folk songs, have always teemed with great variety in India and have been sung in the hundreds of languages and dialects. Ever since the fifth-century treatise of Matanga, the *Bṛhaddeśī*, this vast literature of regional music has been acknowledged as vital to the classical traditions, and has continued to inform them. To make sense of this very profusion of melodic types was at the heart of the early theoretical systems.

There are four broadly based areas from which the ancient and modern ideas and practices of raga must be discussed. First, there are the many extramusical associations that have always been germane to the spiritual and cosmic understanding of music in India. These include the religious bases, as well as time and mood associations, natural cosmologies, and poetic and visual images suggested by the music. Second, there is a vast theory of raga pitch configurations that details the scales, tonal centers, and principal movements in a terminology that has much in common with both early Greek and Western medieval theory. Third, there are the more pragmatic dimensions of raga, which result from the observation of practice throughout the centuries—in short, raga seen through performance styles. And fourth—though for a trained musician primarily—is the tradition of passing on the technique and literature of raga through the *guru-śiṣya paramparā* (teacher-student teaching tradition), a grasp of which is essential to understanding the ethos and balance of the first three. In this article reference is made to two ragas in particular, *jaunpurī* and *darbārī kānaḍā*, to show how these components interrelate. Preceding these sections is a general introduction to the terms used in

Hindustani raga theory.

THEORETICAL TERMS AND CONCEPTS IN THE HINDUSTANI RAGA TRADITION

Despite the number of theoretical works available, a definitive statement of raga theory

Page Image in the Hindustani tradition does not exist. Of course the practice is definitive, but this varies in detail from one *gharānā* 'stylistic school' to another; attempts to encapsulate or conceptualize the practice in words are a secondary phenomenon. Nevertheless, a number of generally accepted basic concepts can be identified. Terms for these concepts have generally been adapted from the Sanskrit theoretical tradition, often with some modification of meaning to reflect changes in both system and practice since ancient or medieval times.

Śruti and *svara*

Fundamental to raga theory is the distinction between *śruti*, the infinite gradations of pitch that the voice (and most Indian melodic instruments) can produce, and *svara*, the selected pitches from which scales, ragas, and melodies arc constructed. *Śruti* means that which is audible, in the sense of the smallest perceptible increment of pitch. The earliest treatises (the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and the *Dattilam*) laid down the number of *śruti* in the octave, or rather, "heptad" (*saptak*) as twenty-two. This number is still accepted in principle, although it is of doubtful relevance to modern practice. Infinite gradations of pitch are employed in the decorative or expressive inflection of each *svara*, and in different ragas the same *svara* may be given a microtonally higher or lower intonation (*uccār* 'pronunciation'). Such inflections and intonations may help to distinguish one raga from another, but cannot be reduced to a rigid system.

As in Karnatak music, there are seven scale degrees (*svara*) to the octave; they have Sanskrit names (see figure 1), of which the abbreviations (Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni) are used as a solmization or "oral notation." Sa is the tonic (*kharaj*), and Pa is always a perfect fifth above the tonic, if it is present in the raga; both pitches may be included in the drone, but if Pa is not present in the raga, it may be replaced in the drone by Ma or Ni. The other pitches are movable. In their basic (*śuddh*) positions, the *svara* approximate the Western major scale; in addition Re, Ga, Dha, and Ni may be flatted by a half tone (more or less, depending on context), and Ma may be similarly sharped, to give twelve notationally equally spaced positions (*svara-sthān*) in the octave. (See "A sampling of Hindustani ragas in letter notation" below for a description of the Hindustani notation system.)

Ṭhāṭ and *raga*

Different selections of the twelve *svara-sthān* provide the basic scales (*ṭhāṭ*) of Hindustani music. Theoretical systems have almost always been based on seven-note scales; Bhatkhande's system of ten heptatonic *ṭhāṭ* is the most successful such system for Hindustani music, but it is important to remember that such systems are derived from the ragas as performed in practice, not the reverse. Thus individual ragas may diverge from the *ṭhāṭ* to which they are theoretically assigned by taking fewer than seven pitches or by taking both positions of the same pitch (*śuddh* 'natural' and *komal* 'flatted' or *tīvra* 'sharped'). The scale of a raga is often stated theoretically in both ascending (*āroh*) and descending (*avaroh*) forms, since different pitches may appear in ascending and descending contexts; the order of pitches may deviate from strict scale order, in which case they are *vakra* 'crooked'.

A raga is a mode, as that term is currently understood in ethnomusicology: a concept operating between the domains of "scale" and "tune." It is not a tune, because an infinite number of tunes can be based on the same raga; it is not a scale, because numerous ragas can be based on the same scale. A raga is distinguished from a scale, and from other ragas based on the same scale, by its unique

array of melodic features, which give rise to a unique aesthetic sentiment (*rasa*). Whereas the analyst might define a raga in terms of a basic scale and the different functions of its constituent degrees, to the performer it is an aesthetic whole, identified mainly by its melodic motifs or phrases.

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Vādī and *samvādī*

From an analytical perspective, an important feature of many ragas is the relative degree of importance or emphasis given to different pitches. Normally at least two pitches in any one raga are made prominent by being sounded deafly and frequently, whereas other pitches will be passed over more lightly or occur only in limited contexts. In many ragas, two prominent pitches are found a perfect fourth or fifth apart, balancing one another in the lower and upper halves of the scale. One pitch of such a consonant pair may be more prominent than the other, in which case it will be regarded as the *vādī* 'speaker', while the other is termed the *samvādī* 'co-speaker, consonant'. Other relatively strong pitches may be termed *anuvādī* 'assonant', while *vivādī* 'dissonant' refers to a note foreign to the basic scale that is used judiciously in certain phrases. Related terms are *alpatva* and *bahutva*, denoting the "weakness" and "strength" of particular pitches. Even a relatively weak (*alpa*) pitch, one that is not prolonged or otherwise emphasized and that appears only in limited contexts, may be essential to the character and identity of the raga. Thus, two ragas may be identical in scalar material, but the different disposition of *vādī, samvādī*, and other emphasized and nonemphasized pitches will give rise to (or result from) different melodic phrases and distinct tonal and aesthetic identities.

The theory of *vādī* and *samvādī* is problematic, however, in that there are often more than two emphasized pitches in a raga, and hence more than two pitches that could theoretically be identified as the *vādī-samvādī* pair. For example, the tonic and fifth (Sa and Pa) may be important points of repose, while other pitches (such as Ga and Ni) ate emphasized during the course of the melody. There is no infallible rule by which the *vādī* may be identified, unless it is given overwhelming prominence by the performer. More commonly, there is an interplay of emphases on different pitches in different phrases or stages of improvisation. Practice is thus considerably more flexible than the theory that has been derived from it (or imposed on it).

The theoretical *vādī* nevertheless has an important role in relation to the time of performance of the raga (see below).

Motives and phrases

From the performer's perspective, a raga is identified less by scale and individual features such as emphasized tones than by the phrases and motives that belong to it and from which all melodies or improvisations are constructed. A basic outline of the raga is called *calan* 'way of moving'; *pakad* 'catch' means a particular motive or phrase that encapsulates the identity of the raga. A distinction is sometimes made between phrases that emphasize the lower part of the scale (*pūrvāng*) and those that emphasize the upper part (*uttarāng*). Some motifs may be common to a group or "family" (*kula*) of ragas, although the members of such a family need not all use the same basic scale; thus the motive Sa re ga re Sa (C-D ♭ -E ♭ -D ♭ -C) occurs in both *miyān. kī ṭoḍī* and *bilāskhānī ṭoḍī*, but the scales of these ragas are respectively C-D ♭ -E ♭ -F♯-G-A ♭ -B-C

Page Image and C-D ♭ -E ♭ -F-G-A ♭ -B ♭ -C. Some ragas include an "echo" or "shadow" (*chāyā*), a phrase reminiscent of a different raga, and some are composite ragas that combine phrases from two or more independent ragas; however, as noted above, the inadvertent introduction of a phrase from a different raga is regarded as a gross error. The practitioner must learn to distinguish each raga from similar ragas with which it might be unintentionally confused: the aesthetic impact of each raga

depends on the preservation of its unique melodic identity (*svarūp*).

Other features

Many other features might be cited as distinctive to particular ragas. A particular *svara* may be ornamented in a particular manner or given an especially high or low intonation. One raga may be suitable for fast, vigorous melodies emphasizing the upper register, and another for slow, contemplative melodies emphasizing the low register. Some ragas are considered to be serious (*gambhīr*) in character and therefore suitable for *ālāp, dhrupad,* or *khyāl;* others are light (*halkā*) and suitable for *ṭhumrī* and other semiclassical genres.

The quasi-emotional effect of a raga on the listener is sometimes defined with reference to the classical theory of *rasa* (literally 'juice', 'flavor', or 'essence'), according to which the connoisseur (*rasika*) derives enjoyment from savoring the mood (*bhāva*) portrayed by the performer. Nine aesthetic "flavors" are traditionally identified: love (*śṛn.gāra*), heroism (*vīra*), disgust (*vībhatsa*), anger (*raudra*), mirth (*hāsya*), terror (*bhayānaka*), compassion (*karuṇa*), wonder (*adbhuta*) and peace (*śānta*); a tenth, devotion (*bhakti*), is sometimes added (see figure 2). Theorists or musicians may describe a particular raga as evoking one or more of these "flavors," but such descriptions are subjective, not systematized; in any case the aesthetic effect of each raga is unique and cannot be completely defined in such terms.

Traditionally, ragas were believed to have magical or therapeutic powers, and to exist as divine beings whose presence or blessings were invoked by their performance. Still important to musicians today is the "time theory": each raga is to be sung at a specific time, in one of the eight divisions (*pahar*) of the day and night, or one of the six seasons (*ṛtu*) of the year. According to Bhatkhande and other theorists, the daily cycle of ragas is correlated with scale type and with the position of the *vādī*. The latter is in the lower half of the scale in evening ragas, in the upper half in morning ragas. A progression of scale types can be seen in both morning and evening ragas; and ragas for dawn or dusk (*sandhiprakāś* ragas) often reflect the transition between day and night by using both *śuddh* 'natural' and *tīvra* 'sharped' forms of the fourth degree (Ma, that is, F and F♯). In practice, there are exceptions to these theoretical correlations; but musicians tend to observe the traditional timings at least approximately, and in the correct sequence. One rarely hears a morning raga in the evening or vice versa—or even an early evening raga after a late evening raga.

EXTRAMUSICAL ASSOCIATIONS OF RAGAS

To refer to the cosmic and natural imagery associated with Indian musical traditions as extramusical is to at once betray an outsider's orientation. Those familiar with Indian scholarship know the predilection of early Indian philosophical writers for classifying and organizing their knowledge with endless taxonomic lists that included intricately worked cosmologies covering the remotest corners of theology, philosophy, and natural science. For example, a recent edition of the beacon thirteenth-century musical treatise *San.gītaratnākara* (Shringy and Sharma 1978) begins with no less than a hundred pages explaining the relationships of sound, celestial sources, and the human body. Lewis Rowell, in his essential study of Sanskrit writings on music, refers to this in condensed fashion (Rowell 1992:6):

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The most powerful and generally accepted ontological conception of music is rooted in a profound cultural metaphor, in which the emanation of vocal sound from deep within the human body has been linked with a process of creation as a "bringing forth" of the divine substance that lies at the heart of our innermost being.

Modern Indian musicians and theorists tend to suspend comment on the practical importance of this type of metaphysical elaboration; however, far from a refutation, such silence usually only hides great reverence for the infinite possibilities of music and a profound respect for the forefathers of the tradition, even if the specifics of the ancient and detailed lists mystify most modern musicians and music lovers. Contemporary practitioners' more casual inquiry into the past does not invalidate their veneration: at the vety heart of the tradition lies a reverential sense of the sanctity of antiquity. In music, as in other areas of Indian tradition, old is infinite. Old is good. Old is true.

A second aspect of the larger, more cosmic idea of raga is the notion that the rendering itself is considered a spiritual practice, the practitioner a yogi whose discipline consists of meditatively managing a devotional musical process. The unfolding of the raga is often likened to that of a flower opening or seed awakening and growing. Although this dimension of raga belongs properly to the discussion of performance practice below, it should be noted that the ultimate nature of this musical practice is considered by many to have the lofty personal goal of *mokṣa*—liberation, salvation, and release. Hence the musician practices a multifaceted role: beyond his or her worldly duties as a performer and entertainer, he or she is on a very personal spiritual path, in which the ragas are the mantras, the sacred formulae of meditation. The musician has taken a role of priest and *guni* 'learned one', who maintains a sacred literature and storehouse of technique, as suggested in the words of the legendary instrumentalist Allauddin Khan (Dhar-Chowdhury 1982:41):

Do you know what true music is? To a musician, music should be the Supreme Deity who will be worshipped with the eagerness of an undivided mind, and tears shall be his ritual ingredients.

A central idea in the cosmology is the sacredness of sound itself (a concept that derives from Vedic thought); *sruti* 'hearing' the scriptures was considered as important as actually understanding them. Indeed, due to the archaic language, poetic constructions, and formulaic permutations of the verses, the meaning of any given Vedic recitation could easily be lost on everyone but its professional reciter. From ancient times, sound (*nāda*) itself has been looked on as a manifestation of the divine, and has been regarded as *Nāda-brahman* 'the language of God'. A recital of a raga still begins with this principle in mind (Shringy and Sharma 1978:108-109):

We worship *Nāda-brahman*, that incomparable bliss, which is immanent in all the creatures as intelligence and is manifest in the phenomenon of this universe.

Thus was the learning of the ancient writers summarized in the famous thirteenth-century treatise *San.gītaratnākara*. Sarngadeva, its author, drew on a written theoretical tradition, already at least a thousand years old, that provided him with detail in its descriptions and, more important, flexibility in its guidelines, thus enabling the tradition to accommodate future additions to the literature and practice of music.

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Name of Note	Color	Source	Patron
Ṣaḍja (Sa)	lotus colored	six parts of the body	Brahma
Ṛṣabha (Re)	parrot colored	bull	Agni
Gāndhāra (Ga)	golden	goat	Soma
Madhyama (Ma)	jasmine colored	curlew	Vishnu
Pañcama (Pa)	black	cuckoo	Brahma
Dhaivata (Dha)	yellow	horse	Kshatriyas (warriors)
Niṣāda (Ni)	all the above	deer	Yakshas (demons)

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One of the earliest pieces of writing devoted to music was the first-century *Nāradīyaśikṣā* (Banerji 1983), a short treatise on the chanting of the Sāmaveda that associates the seven pitches (generally accepted as a diatonic scale, probably the medieval Dorian mode) with colors, animal sounds, and gods (or other patrons) (figure 1).

Since there was no necessity to develop the concept of absolute pitch at this time, exemplified by such later notions as the Western A = 440 cycles per second, these relationships must be understood as relative pitches. The natural associations of pitches in the *Nāradīyaśikṣā* was a tradition that was greatly augmented by later writers. By A.D. 1500, there were several such systematic cosmologies in circulation, often with contradictory color and natural associations. (For a comparative chart, see te Nijenhuis 1993:6)

Mood: The theory of rasa

The most important of the early treatises that include discussions of music is the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, which is attributed to a scholar named Bharata who lived during the early centuries of the Christian era. Though dealing primarily with the dramatic arts, it included chapters on the combined arts of singing, instrumental music, and movement (dance and drama), calling them *san.gīt*, a word used by later authors to refer to music alone. In the course of trying to correct perceived excesses in sacred-drama performance practice, Bharata described the dramatic and musical arts in great detail. In chapter 6 of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, he codified the aesthetic nature of the arts of *san.gīt* into a theory of *rasa* (Sanskrit, 'juice', 'sap'), which is essentially a list of eight primary moods (Rangacharya 1986:39) (figure 2).

The similarities between figure 1 and figure 2 are striking, in associating pitch with colors and deities on the one hand, and moods on the other. Abhinavagupta, a later commentator (eleventh century), added a ninth *rasa: śānta* 'peace', stating that a dramatic performance would be complete if it included the eight *rasa* and left the audience with the feeling of peace. The concept of the *nava rasa*, the classical "nine moods," has been a central aesthetic feature of the performing arts ever since.

Rasa	Translation	Color	Deity
śṛṅgāra	love	dark blue	Vishnu
hāsya	humor	white	Pramatha
raudra	anger	red	Rudra
karuṇa	compassion	pigeon color	Yama
vīra	valor	yellowish	Mahendra
adbhuta	wonder	yellow	Brahma
vībhatsa	disgust	blue	Mahakala
bhayānaka	fear	dark	Kala

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But the moods of Bharata and Abhinavagupta were designed to describe dramatic arts and dance; musicians used only a portion of this list to identify the moods of a raga. Thus one finds no angry ragas, or disgusting, fearful, or wondrous ones (or rather, every raga is filled with wonder). The dramatic effect of performance in one of the latter *rasa* can certainly be enhanced by music, but there are no specific ragas that embody them. Love, compassion, laughter, valor, and peace: these are the moods the classical sources use to describe raga affect.

Musicians today also normally use several other words to describe raga moods. Among these are *bhakti* 'devotion', the more pietistic aspect of the *śṛn.gāra* 'love' mood. The link between bhakti and *śṛn.gāra* is age old in Indian philosophy, personified in the love-play (*līlā*) of Lord Krishna and the milkmaids of Vrindavan, a favorite metaphor of the bhakti poets of the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries. Their poetry is frequently used in song texts, and this playful ambiguity of mood, a union of divine and erotic love, is a favorite of musicians.

Tyāga 'renunciation' is used to describe those ragas suited to personal devotions. Often a musician will suggest that only certain compositions within a raga convey strong elements of bhakti and/or *tyāga;* they may also maintain that the sincere feelings of these two moods cannot be conveyed in concert situations, owing to the conflict of private devotion with public entertainment. The word *chamatkāri* 'marvelousness' describes the effect of wonder or surprise achieved by a raga rendition in which a certain note or phrase is delayed and then presented with special care as a sudden revelation. In addition, ragas are described in terms of their basic nature (*prakrit*): either *gambhīr* 'solemn' or *chanchal* 'restless'. Of our chosen examples, *rāg darbārī kānaḍā* is considered to be a *gambhīr* raga; it is played in the late evening, and its moods are those of devotion, peace, pathos, and heroism. A regal quality, here spoken of as "heroism," can be inferred from the name *darbārī kānaḍā* 'Southern court'; the raga was said to have been a composition of the famous Tansen of the grand court of the sixteenth-century Mughal Akbar the Great. *Jaunpurī* is less grand, although it is still devotional, and is rendered in the late morning. Its moods are pathos and love.

In their personal vocabularies, most musicians no doubt use many recurring terms to explicate the emotional content of particular ragas. Figure 3 presents an overview of ancient and modern words that give a general feeling for the way modern musicians categorize the emotional content of the ragas.

Gender and time associations

From a group of treatises written between the seventh and eleventh centuries (the

Sangītmakaranda, Panchamasārasamhitā, Nātyalochana, and *Sarasvatīhṛdayālan.kāra*), we can see that writers had started to classify ragas according to male and female qualities, to assign them to particular times of day, and to give them specific ritual functions (Gangoly 1989:21-31). A great number of the melodies listed are simply so many names to modern musicians—it is important to note that the

Mood	Translation
gambhīr	serious, solemn
chanchal	restless, flighty
bhaktī	devotion, devotional love
śṛṅgāra	romantic love, eroticism
karuṇa	compassion, sadness
śānta	peace
hāsya	comical, laughter
vīra	heroism, valor
tyāga	renunciation, sacrifice
chamatkāri	marvelousness, surprise

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Page Image ancients did not supply us with the pitch content. Nevertheless, from this time period we do begin to hear the names of the ragas still current today: *bhairav, bilāval, bhupāla, shri, sāranga, kāmbhōjī*, and the like.

Perhaps for ease of classification, these writers assigned relationships to the ragas according to their male and female aesthetic qualities, grouping them into families with husbands, wives, sons, and

grandsons. These came to be called *parivār* 'family' groupings and were quite popular in the early medieval period. Six primary male melodies (ragas) were each paired with five or six wives (*rāgiṇī*), making up a core group of thirty to thirty-six melodies that could be related to times of day, different seasons of the year, and festive functions, as well as to moods and colors. These raga personifications often became quite elaborately symbolic in character. Poetic descriptions (*dhyāna*) were written about such ragas, as for example the following regal sixteenth-century description of *rāg mālkaun.s*, from Rajasthan (Ebeling 1973:118):

A golden crest is on his head; various sorts of ornaments glitter (on him); an auspicious lion-throne has been arranged (for him); in front of him stands a woman like gold, who has taken *pān* [betel leaf] from a most elegant *pān*-box and felicitates him with it. Behind him a female friend waves a fly-whisk. He is in a house of gold; everything is covered with gold. Happily he eats betel. His body is said to be like gold. His mind is happy—the *Malakosa rāg*.

We have no medieval descriptions specifically mentioning *rāg darbārī kānaḍā* or *rāg jaunpuri*. The following is one for a variant, *rāg kanada*, which captures some of the royal quality of *darbārī kānaḍā* (Kaufman 1968:500):

Kanada is an impressive regal figure holding a sword in one hand and a tusk of an elephant in the other. The gods and a host of bards are always singing his praises.

By the end of the medieval period, the tradition of associating particular extra-musical ideas with particular ragas had become systematized, though the system also encompassed many local variations; many painters produced visual images of ragas grouped in family series called *rāgmālā* 'garlands of ragas', which could comprise as many as a hundred miniature paintings [see R AGMALA P AINTING]. These delightful visual raga associations have always fascinated music lovers, but in the process of their elaboration during this period practical musicians seem to have been left quite far behind. Today many who become enchanted by the magic of these often exquisite miniatures are disappointed when they find that modern musicians have difficulty understanding the aesthetics and associated visual representations of earlier music.

ANCIENT WRITERS AND PITCH THEORY

The *Nāradīyaśikṣā*, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (first to second centuries, mentioned above in connection with *rasa* theory) and a companion treatise, the *Dattilam*, also provide us with our first extensive look at early "pure" music theory (Banerji 1983; Rangacharya 1986; Lath 1978). In them, the word *rāga* is not used to describe melodic formats; in fact, the word does not even appear in a musical treatise until the *Bṛhaddeśī*, possibly of the ninth century. Nevertheless, the characteristics of a number of melodic types (*jāti*) are expounded on, and these clearly are prototypical of the scale varieties later identified as ragas. Bharata, the legendary author of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, illustrated his two basic scale classes (*grāma*) by comparing the precise tuning of two arched harps (*vina*); he noted the relationships of the fifth intervals when he induced slight

Page Image changes in one of the tunings. His experiment has resulted in volumes of controversial literature over the centuries, both on the exact nature of these early scales and the significance of his microtonal tunings (*śruti*).

The fact that Bharata used a harp to explain his theory helps us understand how musicians of his era thought. In playing a harp, which has strings tuned in diatonic pitch sequence, the importance of the interlocking scales (*murchhana*) is quite important: any string may be taken as the starting point for a new scale in which the order of whole and half steps is thus changed. In the same way as the Western medieval modes are successive permutations of each other, interlocking scales have continued to play an important role in the generation and interrelationships of ragas. Furthermore,