From Suvarmalata Rao, Wim van der Meer and Jane Harvey, *The Raga Guide, A Survey of 72 Hindustani Ragas*, ed. Joep Bor, Nimbus Records and Rotterdam Conservatory, 1999.

Alhaiya bilaval अल्हैया बिलावल

Alhaiya bilaval is the most commonly performed variety of the large Bilaval group, which mainly includes ragas based on the major scale. it is often simply referred to as Bilaval although in the 17th century Alhaiya and Bilaval may have been separate ragas.³⁸

The ancient ancestor of Bilaval was called Vilavali.³⁹ By the end of the 16th century it acquired its present scale, which was first defined as the general basic scale of Hindustani music by Muhammad Raza in c.1792. In ragamala paintings Bilaval is usually portrayed as a lady looking in the mirror, putting on her earrings. She is anxiously waiting for her lover (plate 8).

Ma is omitted from the ascent, but it can be used in an oblique manner, as in G-MRGP. Flat Ni is used only in the descent, and always in an oblique manner, such as in D-NDP. There can be a slight oscillation on Dha in conjunction with flat Ni. Ga and natural Ni are the important notes in this raga, but Pa and Sa are sustained as well. As can be clearly heard in the present recording, the emphasis is often on the upper tetrachord.

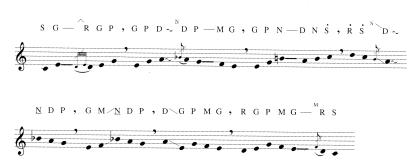
There are several other varieties of Bilaval, such as Shuddh bilaval, Kakubh bilaval, Shukla bilaval and Devgiri bilaval. Even though songs in Alhaiya bilaval are often taught to beginners, it is a complex and serious raga.

Time: Late morning, 9–12.

Ascent-descent



Melodic outline



A performance in miniature

This section is followed by a transcription of raga Alhaiya bilaval (CD 1.4), a *khyal* sung by Shruti Sadolikar-Katkar in fast *tintal* (sixteen counts). It serves as an example of the way a raga can be presented in a performance. Although this recording is only a few minutes long, some of the improvisation techniques of a longer *khyal* performance are included. The following is a description of what is sung, which can be compared with the transcription and followed by listening. The rhythm cycles are numbered in the transcription and referred to by number in the text.

First, Shruti sings an *auchar*, a few phrases to introduce the raga. This is followed by the first line of the composition, *kavana batariya gailo mai*, and the *tabla* player joins in when the first beat of the rhythm cycle comes round. The numbering in the transcription starts from here. One rhythm cycle of *tintal* is given in one line of staff notation, subdivided into four sections of four counts. The numbers from left to right along the bottom of the page are counts one to sixteen for each cycle.

In **cycles 1-10** the vocalist sings through the fixed composition and then starts the improvisation. From here on, phrases are sung to elaborate on the raga, and the improvisation sections are interspersed with a refrain, usually

taken from the first line of the song — in this case *kavana batariya*, and sometimes the third word, *gailo*. During the first phrase, sung with the long vowel 'a,' and starting at the end of **cycle 10**, the fifth, Pa, is sustained for ten counts of cycle 11. Shruti lets the beginning of the next rhythm cycle go by (count 1 of **cycle 12**), then sings another phrase in long 'a' to lead up to the refrain.

The next improvisation starts from the eighth count of **cycle 13** with the word *batariya*; this way of singing is known as *bol alap*. Shruti sustains the final 'a' of the word to sing a phrase, pauses, and continues the next phrase again with 'a.' This section lasts just over two cycles (13-15), followed by the refrain, up to the end of **cycle 15**. In **cycle 16** the vocalist starts a short *tana*, a fast melodic pattern, which progresses from the third, Ga, to the natural seventh, Ni. The natural seventh is sustained, leading to an improvisation in **cycle 17** which includes the melodic movement DNDP, showing the use of the flat seventh in this raga.

Towards the end of **cycle 17**, Shruti sings a short *tana* followed by a slower-pace phrase, leading back to the refrain in **cycle 18**. The *sarangi* player fills in the theme for a few beats and the vocalist again starts a phrase with a *tana* from the end of **cycle 19**. In this, Shruti reaches the high tonic, Sa, but continues by sustaining the seventh, Ni, in **cycle 20**. A further *tana* is sung up to high Sa, which is sustained this time in **cycle 21**; in one breath she continues the phrase down the scale to lead into the refrain in **cycle 22**.

Now Shruti starts to sing longer *tanas*. The type of *gamak* (shaking) ornamentation which she ues in the *tanas* starts to become more pronounced. From **cycle 23** to **cycle 24** she sings a *gamak tana* over 18 counts, reaching up to the third, Ga, above the high tonic. Three more pieces of *gamak tana* improvisations interspersed by the refrain are sung, from **cycles 25** to **29**. The first line of the composition is repeated almost three times, each time slightly . varying the set melody, in **cycles 29** to **32**. The performance comes to a conclusion in **cycle 32** with the word *gailo*, the melody ending on the third tone, Ga .

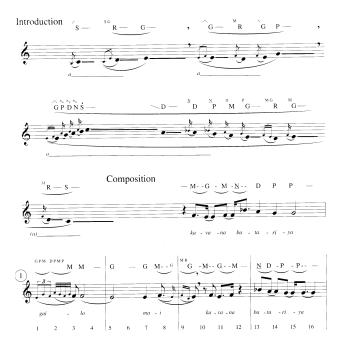
Inaddition to *gamak tanas*, other kinds of fast passages such as *sargam tanas*, singing the names of the notes, and *bol tanas*, using the words of the composition, are used by vocalists for a *khyal* performance. They may be found on some of the other recordings by Shruti Sadolikar-Katkar and Vidyadhar Vyas.

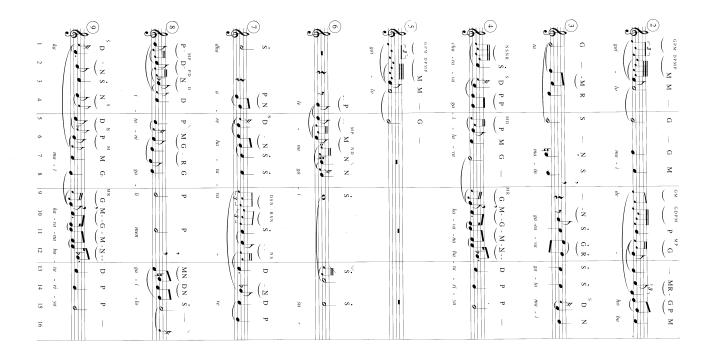
Text translation

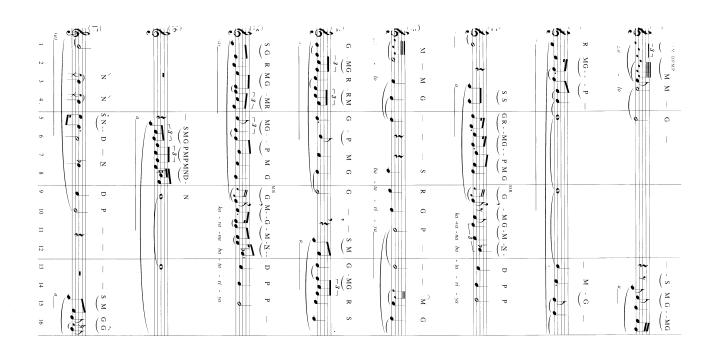
Which way has he gone
Hey friend, tell me
He embraced me and crept away
He took my soul to the market place
Then vanished down the lane, friend.

The heroine's friend is an important character in song texts and poetry, as she is often the mediator between the lovers.

Transcription of raga Alhaiya bilaval







S M G R S S G P D N	S. N. D. P. M. N. D. P.	P . M M . G	S. S		on (b) (b) (c) (c) (d) (d) (d) (d) (d) (d) (d) (d) (d) (d	(a) RSGPDNS.
S. D. R. S. D. P. M. G. M G. M G. M W D. P. P. — M W ma. ba m ri ya. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16.	NDPMMPMGMG R G MG. M.N D P P	G — S M GGR SGP D N S D S G R-SN D NSNR T37 / 37	P-MPNDPMG ME		G G D D C C C D D C C C D D C C C D D C C C D D C C C D D C C C D D C C D C D C C D C	NS D ND MP ND P M G M G M G M - N - N - D P P — M G M G M G M - N - N - N - N - N - N - N - N - N -

GPM DPM P Q Q Q Q Q Q Q Q Q Q Q Q Q Q Q Q Q Q	NS NS PERSON	EST OF M DPMP M M M	72- 72- 73- 73- 73- 73- 73- 73- 73- 73- 73- 73		DPNGRGPDS R	S MGR S GPD
5 · 6 7 8	lo D M P D G P M	0 - 0 M	(G? G? (D? Z? V.	S MG G R G P	0 N N N N N N N N N N N N N N N N N N N	NS. NO DRIVERS
9 10 11 12	G MR G M. G -M. G	G MR G - M - G - M -3	MG R G - M - G - M	MG - MR - M GR S N S	R G M - G - M - N	D 2 2 3 3 3 3 3 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5
13 14 15 16	. <u>N</u> D P P	N.D.P.PGPD	N- D P P	GR. MG. MRS NS N	D P P	D. P. P. N. N. N. P. N.