

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.<sup>38</sup>

The ancient ancestor of Bilaval was called Vilavali.<sup>39</sup> 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-<sup>M</sup>RGP. Flat Ni is used only in the descent, and always in an oblique manner, such as in D-<sup>N</sup>DP. 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.

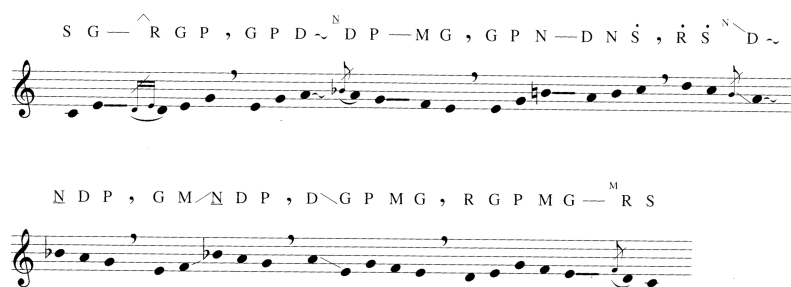
There are several other varieties of Bilaval, such as Shuddh bilaval, Kakubh bilaval, Shukla bilaval and Devgiri bilaval. Even though songs in Alhaiya bilaval are often taught to beginners, it is a complex and serious raga.

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

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.

Now Shruti starts to sing longer *tanās*. The type of *gamak* (shaking) ornamentation which she uses in the *tanās* starts to become more pronounced. From **cycle 23** to **cycle 24** she sings a *gamak tāna* over 18 counts, reaching up to the third, Ga, above the high tonic. Three more pieces of *gamak tāna* 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 .

### Text translation

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

**Introduction**

S — SG R — G — , G — M R G P — ,

a

GP D N S — D — D N P M G — MG R G —

a

**Composition**

M R — S — — M — G — M — N — D P P —

(a)

ka - va - na ba - ta - ri - ya

a

GPM DPM P M M — G — G M — G — MR G — M — G — M — N D — P — P —

a

gai - lo ma - i ka - va - na ba - ta - ri - ya

a

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

2 *gpn dppp* M M — G — G M — *gn* *gppp* P *mp* G — *MR-G P M*  
*gnd* - *lo* *mu - i* *de* *hu hu*

3 G — .M R S — N S , — N *g* R *g* S S S D N  
*mu - i* *mu - i* *gu - ru - vu* *gu - ru - vu*

4 *nsnp* *g* S D P P *md* P M G — *MR* G .M .G .M .N . D P P —  
*chu - ru - vu* *gu - i - lu - vu* *ku - ru - mu hu - ru - ri - vu*

5 *gpn dppp* M M — G — *mp* *nd* M N N *gnd* - *lo*

6 *mp* *nd* M N N *gnd* - *lo* *mp* *nd* M N N *gnd* - *lo*

7 *g* P N *nd* N S *g* *dsn* *rsn* *g* *ns* D N D P  
*chu* *a* - *re hu - lu - vu* *re*

8 *mp* *nd* P D *mp* *nd* P D *mp* *nd* P D *mp* *nd* P D  
*i* - *lu - ni* *gu - i* *men* *gu - i* - *lo*

9 *g* D N S N *g* D N M G *MR* G .M .G .M .N . D P P —  
*ku* *mu - i* *ku - ru - mu hu - ru - ri - vu*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

2 *gpn dppp* M M — G — *gnd* - *lo* *mu - i* *de* *hu hu*

3 *g* — .M R S — N S , — N *g* R *g* S S S D N  
*mu - i* *mu - i* *gu - ru - vu* *gu - ru - vu*

4 *nsnp* *g* S D P P *md* P M G — *MR* G .M .G .M .N . D P P —  
*chu - ru - vu* *gu - i - lu - vu* *ku - ru - mu hu - ru - ri - vu*

5 *gpn dppp* M M — G — *mp* *nd* M N N *gnd* - *lo*

6 *mp* *nd* M N N *gnd* - *lo* *mp* *nd* M N N *gnd* - *lo*

7 *g* P N *nd* N S *g* *dsn* *rsn* *g* *ns* D N D P  
*chu* *a* - *re hu - lu - vu* *re*

8 *mp* *nd* P D *mp* *nd* P D *mp* *nd* P D *mp* *nd* P D  
*i* - *lu - ni* *gu - i* *men* *gu - i* - *lo*

9 *g* D N S N *g* D N M G *MR* G .M .G .M .N . D P P —  
*ku* *mu - i* *ku - ru - mu hu - ru - ri - vu*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

