OMU-001

Introduction to Hindustani Music

Understanding Indian Music
"Education is a liberating force, and in our age it is also a democratising force, cutting across the barriers of caste and class, smoothing out inequalities imposed by birth and other circumstances."

- Indira Gandhi
UNDERSTANDING INDIAN MUSIC

UNIT 1
Brief History of Indian Music

UNIT 2
Music through Ages

UNIT 3
Contributions of Scholars
BLOCK 1 INTRODUCTION

This Block relates to the History of Indian Music. You have studied in detail about dance, music and theatre in previous Blocks. All of them belong to Performing Arts group. Similarly, painting, sculpture and architecture are grouped under Visual Arts. The study of Indian music is not complete without studying the elements and concepts of these fine arts. In India both performing and visual evolved depending on each other.

The first unit in this Block is related to the history of Indian Music.

The second unit in this Block is related to the history and gradual development of music in ancient times.

The third unit in this Block is related about the contribution of scholars to Hindustani music.
UNIT 1 BRIEF HISTORY OF INDIAN MUSIC

Structure
1.1 Introduction
   Objectives
1.2 Music and its Origin
1.3 Concept of Music
1.4 Vedic Period
1.5 Summary
1.6 Self Assessment Questions
1.7 True or False Questions
1.8 Terminal Questions
1.9 Answers

1.1 INTRODUCTION
From the dawn of human history, man realized that he was dependent upon a superhuman power and he established his relationship with God. In order to define his attitude towards the superior power, he chose the medium of music. He firmly believed that the intoned word called ‘mantra’ was more effective than plain spoken words and the Vedas are the best example of this. The association of the Vedas with music can be considered as the beginning of progress in the direction of music.

Objectives
After studying this block you should be able to:

a) realize the purity of music in ancient times.

b) understand the relation of music with the universe.

c) know the basic concepts of Hindustani music.

1.2 MUSIC AND ITS ORIGIN
Music plays an important role in the religious, social and artistic lives of human beings. It is an integral part of man’s life. Music is as old in the history of civilisation as human speech. It existed even before human existence. It is a spontaneous outcome of the basic human emotions in a melodious manner. All that which mere words fail to convey, music successfully and convincingly conveys.

Music in its definition is a phenomenon which is as vast as the Universe. Nature depicts itself through music. We find various sounds in Nature that are musical. The falling of rain, the waves of the ocean, the sweet chirping of birds are the fine examples of the universal rhythm. All these spell music. Nature is the fountain source of all music. Primitive man realised that the various sounds that fill the nature are musical before he realized the fact that even his body could be a musical instrument. So slowly, as the human race evolved and progressed, man learnt to imitate or reproduce, in a modest way, the sounds around him. He either used his own vocal chords- his voice - for this purpose or
made use of the natural things round him to create instruments which he gradually came
to use for a variety of purposes. All the primitive instruments eventually were improved
upon over long periods to result in today’s sophisticated drums, strings and wind
instruments; but the ideas and fundamentals remain the same over the millennia.

1.3 CONCEPT OF MUSIC

Sangeet is used for the combination of three arts — vocal music, instrumental music
and dance. The cultural conditions in India remained important determinants in shaping
its music. Music being a performing art, is an indispensable part of the life of the Indians.
It binds all the diverse elements like social, cultural, patriotic and religious ethos into
one solid mass.

Music existed even before the birth of human beings. Man has always chosen music as
a medium to communicate with God. Music can create spell even without words. It is
a powerful medium to convey feelings like joy, love, hate, sorrow, victory, hope, defeat
etc. These are universal feelings which are felt in the same way in every human heart.
Man is a creature of these universal feelings and thus becomes a part of the music that
expresses them.

1.4 VEDIC PERIOD

The earliest chanting was the Rig Vedic hymns (3000 B.C. to 1500 B.C.). The scientist
art form of today’s music has its birth in the Vedic period only. The literary and music
traditions starts from this period. Hindu tradition says that the text of the four Vedas
namely Rig, Saama, Yaj, Artharva were imparted to the sages by God Brahma, the
creator of the universe in the form of spoken words and have been handed down from
generation to generation in oral tradition. The Vedic scholars enjoyed reciting spiritual
verse of the Vedas in groups which required a disciplined way of chanting.

The sacred sound “Om” was considered as the basic note of music. The Saama–Veda
was mainly connected with Soma sacrifices and Somayaaga. The verses of the Saama
– Veda served the purpose of musical notes.

The musical notes emerged from the accents employed to sing the hymns. The Saama
Saptaka was in the descending order, this primumol scale is the starting point of the
evaluation of the musical scales. In fact, the transition from chanting to singing was a slow
process. The intervals of the saama notes were tuned to suit singing.

The beginning of Indian musicogy is traced to Vedic chants which used certain
symbols to note the rise and fall of the voice during the chant. Measuring the rhythm
with finger count in Indian music and Western Staff notation must have originated from
Saama hasta. It is surprising to note that it was only in the tenth century A.D. that the
“Musical” hand was used by Guido d’Arezzo for the first time in the west.

The origin of musical composition is traced to the Saama Vedic chant. The syllables
which did not carry any meaning called Stobha must have given the idea of vowel
extensions in songs, rhythmic syllabus. The idea of improvisation and elaboration phrase
of music must have come from the Saama Veda itself.

The emergence of the solfa terms is said to be that, Sa and Ma are taken from Saama
Veda, Ri, Ga from Rig Veda. Pa, Ni, Dha from Upanishads. The concept of Sa, Ri,
Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni as the solfa syllables is considered as an important and major
turning point in the history of music in the Post Vedic Period and these Sapta Svaras
are mentioned in the Narada Parivrajaka Upanishadas. These syllables made the music
writing an easy task with the use of symbols. The Solfa names with vowel changes are found in the seventh century Kudumiyamalai inscription. The European solfa syllables Do, Ri, Mi, Fa, So, La, Ti were introduced only in the tenth century by Guido d'Arezzo. By the time of Sankaracharya in the 8th century A.D. the saptasvaras were popular and Shankaracharya himself has written in his Shyamaalaa Navaratna shloka as "Sarigamapadha niratam tam vinasankranta hastam". Another important reference is found in the sixteenth century work Kala Purnodaya of Pingali Surana. The creative music called manodharma sangita was possible because of the emergence of seven solfa syllables. This scientific melodic development is of great importance in the growth of the art of music.

1.5 SUMMARY

It is a matter of common knowledge to all music lovers that Indian classical music has its origin in the Saama Veda. Saama Veda is the selected collection of hymns from Rig Veda. The rules for chanting the Vedas are laid down in Saama Sootra. Fourteen kinds of poetical metres were used in chanting the Vedas. The actual form of Vedic music is now untraceable.

1.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Self Assessment Questions

1. Fill in the blank spaces with the appropriate words given below:

(song, sanskrit, vocal, vedic, Samveda, instrumental, nada, dance)

a) The ancient Vedas were written in __________.  
b) The literary and music traditions starts from __________ period.  
c) Sangeet, is used for the three-fold arts of __________ music, __________ music and __________.  
d) The sacred sound __________ was considered as the basic note of music.  
e) According to the solfa terms, Sa and Ma are taken from __________.

1.7 TRUE OR FALSE QUESTIONS

2. According to Hindu religion there are five Vedas.  
3. Samveda is related to music.  
4. Sama saptaka was in decending order.  
5. Music existed even before the birth of humans.

1.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Explain the relation of music with nature in brief.  
2. Write a short note on samveda.  
3. Music is an expression of human emotions. Write a short note about it.
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1.9 ANSWERS

1. a) Sanskrit
   b) vedic
   c) vocal, instrumental, dance
   d) om
   e) Samveda


Terminal Questions

1. It is obvious that music is as old in the history of civilisation as human speech. It is a spontaneous outburst of the basic human emotions in a melodious manner. Nature is the fountain source of all music. It existed even before human existence. The buzzing bee, the waves of ocean, the whistling wind, the roaring sea, the chirping birds – are some of the organs in nature’s glorious symphony.

2. The Saama-Veda was mainly connected with Soma sacrifices and Somayaaga. The verses of the Saama – Veda served the purpose of musical notes. The musical notes emerged from the accents employed to sing the hymns. The Sama Saptaka was in the descending order, this primodial scale is the starting point of the evolution of the musical scales. The idea of improvisation and elaboration phrase of music must have come from the Saama Veda itself.

3. Man has always chosen music as a medium to communicate with God. Music is also a powerful medium to convey universal feelings like love, sorrow, victory, hope, anger etc. Man is a creature of these universal feelings and thus becomes a part of the music that expresses them.
UNIT 2  MUSIC THROUGH AGES

Structure
2.1 Introduction
   Objectives
2.2 Shikshaa Literature
2.3 Puraanic Period
2.4 Epic Period
2.5 Summary
2.6 Self Assessment Questions
2.7 Answers

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The music tradition starts from the Vedic period. Music has its origin in the Saamveda, which is a collection of hymns from the Rigveda. We find gradual development of music through ages. In this context we are putting forth here the valuable contribution of the composer.

Objectives

After studying this Block you should be able to:

a) understand the history and gradual development of music in ancient times.

b) know the basics of Hindustani music.

2.2 SHIKSHAA LITERATURE

The Shikshaa literature plays an important role in defining the highly developed form of music. The most important Shikshaas are the Naradi Shikshaa, Panini Shikshaa and Yagnavalkya Shikshaa which provide abundant information regarding the origin of svaras, vedic svaras, svaras of laukika gaana – the secular music. The Aranyakas and Upanishads practiced meditation on the Vinaa. The human body created by God was called as Gatra Vinaa and the man made Vinaa was called as Maanushi Vinaa.

2.3 PURAANIC PERIOD

Next appears the Puraanic period where music became both devotional and secular in character. A distinctive improvement upon the vedic music was evident. The Puraanas were supposed to have been composed by the sage Vyas. Almost all the Mahaapuraanaas and Upapuraanaas contain plenty of material and references to the art of music and dance. The most important Puraanas is the Vaayu Puraana since it deals with technical aspects of music like graamas, murchanaas, taanas, alankaaras, varnas etc.

2.4 EPIC PERIOD

The next important period falls under the Epic Age. The great epic Ramayana of sage Valmiki in Sanskrit language is a poem set to music which is the oldest next to Saama
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2.5 SUMMARY

Veda. The art and the science of music had attained high standard during this period. The fact that Lava and Kusha, sons of King Rama, sang together in unison proves verses were set to particular melodies and rhythmic patterns. The musical composition was called by the name Geetee. Music and dancing enjoyed a prominent place in the life of common people. Valmiki had a definite idea of aesthetic appeal of musical composition: a composition was expected to sound pleasant and sweet, whether it was recited or sung, capable of arousing the recognised sentiments, at least one or two out of the rasas, and should be sung in three speeds along with the accompaniment of a stringed instrument.

2.5 SUMMARY

The origin of Indian music is traced to the Sama Vedic chants. In the post Vedantic period we see its development are found in the Shiksha and Puranic literature. In the Epic age music became devotional in character. As Hindu culture had its roots in spirituality, so music became a powerful medium to get Moksha which means liberation from the bondage of birth and death.

2.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Fill in the blank spaces with the appropriate words given below:

(sanskrit, devotional, Naradi, vedic, Samveda, secular, geetee, taan, Panini, alankar Yagnavalkya)

   a) The ancient grantha Ramayana was written in ______.
   b) In Puranic period music became both ______ and ______ in character.
   c) The three most important Shikshaa are the ______ Shikshaa, ______ Shikshaa and ______ Shikshaa.
   d) ______ and ______ were mentioned in Vayu Puraan.
   e) In Epic period the musical composition was called by the name ______.

2. The veena created by human being is called gatra veena.
3. The Puraans were supposed to have been composed by sage Valmiki.
4. Panini was associated with Shikshaa literature.
5. Gram and Murchana were discussed in Vayu Puraana.

Terminal Questions

1. Write 5 to 6 lines on the evolution of music in ancient India.
2. Light upon the music culture in Ramayana by sage Valmiki.
3. Describe briefly three most important shikskas.

2.7 ANSWERS

Self Assessment Questions

1. a) Sanskrit
   b) devotional, recular
c) Naradi, Panini, Yagvalkya

d) taan, alankar

e) geetee

2. F
3. F
4. T
5. T

Terminal Questions

1. The origin of Indian music is traced to the Saama vedic chants. In the post vedic period we see the most important emergence of the sapta swaras- sa, re, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni. Next important points in the development are found in the Shiksha and Puranic literature. But the most significant contributions in the development of come from Bharata in 5 and Matang in 6 century. Bharata s greatest contribution is to link music to rasas and by Matang s time the art of raga singing was well established.

2. In epic period the musical composition was called by the name Geetee. Music and dancing enjoyed a prominent place in the life of common people. Valmiki had a definite idea of aesthetic appeal of musical composition: a composition was expected to sound pleasant and sweet, whether it was recited or sung, capable of arousing the recognised sentiments, at least one or two out of the rasas, and should be sung in three speeds along with the accompaniment of a stringed instrument.

3. The Shiksha literature plays an important role in defining the highly developed form of music. The most important Shikshas are the Naradi Shiksha, Panini Shiksha and Yagnavalkya Shiksha which provide abundant information regarding the origin of svaras, vedic svaras, svaras of laukika gaana – the secular music.
UNIT 3 CONTRIBUTIONS OF SCHOLARS

Structure
3.1 Introduction
   Objectives
3.2 Contributions of Bharata and Matanga
3.3 Bharata Munis Natyashashtra
3.4 Matanga’s Brihaddeshi
3.5 Summary
3.6 Self Assessment Questions
3.7 Answers

3.1 INTRODUCTION
Indian music has had a continuous development from the dawn of history in the sphere of practice and science. The art of music never remained static; especially the classical form always welcomed new theories, new concepts, and new methods of practice but only within the prescribed framework and never crossed the boundary line. Indian music even accommodated the foreign traits which are imbibed in the system without disturbing the basic indigenous features. The development passed through several stages during its long history. The contribution of the practitioners and theoreticians is of great value. In this context we are putting forth here the valuable contributions of two great scholars—Bharata and Matanga.

Objectives
After studying this block you should be able to:
a) know about the contribution of scholars to Hindustani music.
b) develop the awareness about the theories of music.
c) appreciate the tremendous importance of music in our lives.

3.2 CONTRIBUTIONS OF BHARATA AND MATANGA
The contribution of great scholars is of great value. The ancient theoreticians were experts not only in the theoretical aspects but also in addition of the twin art of music and dance. The ancient literary works on naatya treated dance as the main subject and a marginal treatment was allotted to music. In the medieval works the naatya was treated as the combination of geeta-music-vocal; vaadya-instrumental music-nritya-dance. The modern literature gave prominence to geeta-music and devoted only few chapters to dance.

History of music can be studied under the categories of: chronological survey of different periods, development in those particular periods in all aspects; study of the Lakshangranthas which provide the theoretical aspects; analyzing the musical compositions, composers’ contribution; and the contribution of the teachers and their disciples.
The ancient comprises pre-historic period down to the period of Matanga, the author of the Sanskrit work named Brihaddeshi. This period witnessed the invaluable contribution of Bharata Muni who authored the great treatise Natyashastra.

## 3.3 BHARATA MUNI'S NATYASHASTRA

Invaluable is contribution of Bharata Muni who authored the great treatise Natyashastra in Sanskrit in fifth century which was made him the first and foremost expert on Dramaturgy. Actually there is no knowledge, no craft, no technique, no activity which is not found in the Natyashastra.

Many treatise have been inspired and influenced by the Natyashastra over the centuries. Bharata’s music was associated with theatrical performance. Melodies were derived from the modes jaatis which have been derived from the hepta tonic progressions named murchhanaas.

By this time the concept of Vaadi, samvaadi, vivaadi and Anuvaadi became clear. Vaadi is the dominant note in a musical phrase or a melody. Vaadi-note is compared to a king in the melody; Samvaadi is a note having harmonious relationship with the note Vaadi or the tonic note. Vivaadi is a dissonant note which creates a discordant effect, an enemy of the melody, Anuvaadi is an assonant note subordinate in nature like a servant.

Bharata explained the relationship of svaras and jaatis. He also explained the rasas—sentiments—emanating from the sapta svaras as well as jaatis. He gives a detailed account of Aarohi, Avrohi, Sthaayi and Sanchaari. Aarohi is the ascending of phrase of notes, Avrohi is the decending way of notes, Sthaayi is the repetition of the same note, Sanchaari is the combination of notes from different ranges.

## 3.4 MATANGA’S BRIHADDESHI

In the ancient history of Indian music Bharata Muni’s Natyashastra and Matanga’s Brihaddeshi are the two important works. In the post-Bharata period the concept of raga developed steadily and reached perfection in the hands of Matanga. The first musicologist who defined the classification of ragas into Shuddha, Chaayalaga and Sankiran was Matanga. The style of the Sanskrit language and the contents reveal that the work belonged to the sixth century A.D. Bhrihaddeshi is considered to be the successor of Natyashastra.

Matanga defines his work as a treatise on sound-Naada. He says that the Naada is the most important aspect of music, there is no song, no svara, no dance without Naada. He discusses svara in detail; he defines svaara:- “that sound which is pleasing to the ear” and states that svaras descend from the gods.

Matanga followed Bharata as his guide to present his Brihaddeshi which has become a favourite treatise referred to by musicians, music lovers and critics. It is only in the Brihaddeshi that the term “Raaga” is found for the first time, and the aesthetic treatment of a raaga is discussed in detail. This work is also important because it deals solely with the theory of music. Some of the ragas of Matanga are found in the Shilapppadikaram also.

The art of singing ragas had developed very well and Matanga had given the guidelines to be followed while elaborating a raaga i.e. Raaga Aalaapa. He has mentioned the Sapta Geetees or styles of singing songs. He has used the term Gamaka while describing ragas and jaatis.
3.5 SUMMARY

In this unit we have learnt that basically there was only one music in our country. After undergoing through many changes it converted into two distinct types of music. Now there are two mainstreams of classical music in India-Hindustani music and Karnatak music. Yet both systems have some common factors due to the common origins that they share. Describing historical evolution of music we have also focused upon the invaluable contributions of Bharata and Matanga whose works have been an inspiring source for musicians over the centuries.

3.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Self Assessment Questions

1. Fill in the blank spaces with the appropriate words given below:
(vadi, swara, song, sanskrit, samvadi, sacred, Natyashastra, anuvadi, Matang muni, raga, vivadi, sound, nada, dance)

a) The ancient grantha Brihaddeshi was written in ______.

b) The grantha ______ was written by Bharat Muni.

c) By Bharata’s times the concept of ______,_______ and ______ became clear.

d) Brihaddeshi was written by ________.

e) According to Matanga there is no ______ no____ no ______ without ________.

State True or False

2. The grantha Natyashastra is written in Sanskrit.

3. Samveda is related to music.

4. Brihaddeshi is related to dance.

5. The grantha Brihaddeshi is related to the theory of naada.

Terminal Questions

1. Write 5 to 6 lines on the contribution of music scholars in ancient India.

2. Write briefly a note on Bharata’s Natyashastra.

3. In ‘Brihaddeshi’ for the first time the theory of raga has been discussed, express in brief.

3.7 ANSWERS

1. a) Sanskrit

   b) Natyashastra

   c) Vadi, samvadi, anuvadi, vivadi

   d) Matang Muni

   e) swara, song, dance, naada
1. The contribution of great scholars is of great value. The ancient theoreticians were experts not only in the theoretical aspects but also in addition of the twin arts of music and dance. In the ancient history of Indian music Bharata Muni’s Natyashastra and Matanga’s Brihaddeshi are the two important works. Bharata associated music with natya and in the period of Matanga the concept of raaga developed steadily and reached to the point of perfection.

2. The Natyashastra creation of Bharat Muni, has its invaluable contribution to Indian music. His music was associated with theatrical performance. The Natyashastra written in Sanskrit has thirty three chapters in it. The last six chapters depict about music. In the great treatise Natyashastra for the first time the ras-theory is introduced. Bharata’s greatest contribution is to link music to rasas. His work made him the first and foremost on Dramaturgy.

3. Matanga, the author of Brihaddeshi, was the first musicologist to discuss about raga for the first time. He classified raga into three categories- shudha, chayalaga and sankeerna. He has also given the guidelines to elaborate a raga. In the sixth century Matanga developed the concept of raga and elevated it to perfection.
# OMU-001

## Introduction to Hindustani Music

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