
THE RĀGS OF
NORTH INDIAN MUSIC

Their Structure and Evolution

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Introduction to the Historical Background

Modern North Indian classical music has its roots in ancient Indian music, but appears to have acquired its present form after the 14th or 15th century A.D. Indian musical theory is expounded in considerable detail in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, probably the earliest extant treatise on the dramatic arts, among which music is included. This work, attributed to the sage Bharata, has been dated variously from the 3rd century B.C. to the 5th century A.D. Some of the technical terms in present-day musical theory and practice derive from this ancient source. Nevertheless, internal evidence shows that the musical system of ancient India as described in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* differed considerably from that of today.

The ancient melodic system was based on modes (*jāti*), each with its characteristic features, which were constructed on heptatonic series of notes (*mūrccchanā*), beginning on the successive degrees of two parent scales, *Ṣaḍjagrāma* and *Madhyama-grāma*. These scales were composed of intervals of three different sizes, comparable in some respects to the major whole-tone, minor whole-tone and semitone of Just Intonation, which were expressed very approximately in terms of their highest common factor—about a quarter-tone—called *śruti*.¹ The musical intervals in the two parent scales are described as being of four, three and two *śrutis*, and since there were in both parent scales three of the large intervals and two each of the medium and small intervals, the octave comprised a total of twenty-two *śrutis*. An interval of one *śruti* was not considered musically satisfactory. The only difference between the two parent scales was in the location of one single note which was one *śruti* flatter in the second parent scale. In this period the *śruti* was a functional element since it was the only distinguishing feature between the two parent scales.

Rāg, which is the present basis of melody in Indian music, was not yet a technical term in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. It was apparently evolved during the centuries following for it is first discussed in detail in Mātanga's *Bṛhaddēśi* (c. 9th century A.D.) and later expanded in Śārṅgadeva's *Saṅgītaratnākara* (first half of the 13th century A.D.). This latter work is particularly interesting as it was written at the court of the Yādava dynasty in the Deccan shortly before the Muslim conquest of this area and is, to a large extent, free from Islamic influence. New conventions had evidently already entered Indian music and *rāgas* had proliferated, for Śārṅgadeva mentions 264 of them.² It is difficult to assess positively, however, whether the ancient music

¹ Many scholars have given precise values for these *śrutis*. Fox Strangways in *Music of Hindostan*, Oxford 1914, pp. 115–17, concludes that *śrutis* are of three different sizes: 22, 70 and 90 cents.

² *Saṅgītaratnākara*, 'Adyar Library Series', II (2), 19. However, many of these are described as 'ancient' and were probably not current in Śārṅgadeva's time.

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based on the *jātis* and the two parent scales was also in existence at this time, for the *Saṅgītaratnākara*, like many other Indian musical treatises, does not always distinguish clearly between current practice and antiquated theory.

The conquering Muslims encountered in India a musical system which was highly developed and probably quite similar to their own. Their reaction to it was clearly favourable.¹ The poet Amīr Khusrāw, who was expert in both Indian and Persian music at the court of 'Ala' al-Dīn Khiljī, Sultān of Delhi (1296–1316), is unsparing in his praise of Indian music,² and his attitude is one which probably prevailed in the Islamic world, for both al-Djāhīz³ in the 9th century A.D. and al-Mas'ūdī⁴ in the 10th had commented favourably on it.

Music flourished in Islamic India in spite of the puritan faction, supported by the Muslim legal schools, which believed that music was unlawful in Islam.⁵ However, the gathering momentum of the Sūfī movement with its unorthodox doctrines based on the practices of ascetic and mystic groups, who found in music a means to the realisation of God, more than compensated for the restrictions imposed by orthodox Islam.

From Amīr Khusrāw's time until well into the Mughal period, foreign music, particularly from Iran, was commonly heard at the Indian courts together with Indian music. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that Indian music was subjected to new influences. Amīr Khusrāw, in spite of his dedication to traditional Indian music, was a great innovator and is credited with the introduction of a number of Persian and Arabic elements into Indian music: new vocal forms as well as new *rāgs*, *tāls*, and musical instruments including the *sitār* and *tablā* which are so prominent today. Of the vocal forms two are particularly important: *Qaul*, which is said to be the origin of *Qawwālī*, a form of Muslim religious song, and *Tarānā* (or *Tarāna*), a song composed of meaningless syllables, both of which are still common today.⁶

During the reign of Sultān Muḥammad b. Tughluq (1325–1351), music was apparently encouraged on a grand scale, although he was a ruler with strong religious convictions. The traveller, Ibn Baṭūṭa, reports that the Sultān kept 1,200 musicians in his service and had, in addition, 1,000 slave musicians.⁷ Similarly, Ibrāhīm Shāh

¹ Music apparently flourished in the Deccan under the Yādava kings to such an extent that, after the Muslim conquest led by Malik Kafur (c. 1310), all the musicians and their Hindu preceptors were taken with the royal armies and settled in the North. V. N. Bhātkhaṇḍe, *A Short Historical Survey of the Music of Upper India*, Bombay 1934, p. 11.

² 'Indian music, the fire that burns heart and soul, is superior to the music of any other country. Foreigners, even after a stay of 30 or 40 years in India, cannot play a single Indian tune correctly.'

M. W. Mirza, *Life and Works of Amir Khusrāw*, Calcutta 1935, p. 184.

³ M. Z. Siddiqi, *Studies in Arabic and Persian Medical Literature*, Calcutta 1959, p. 32.

⁴ A. Sprenger, *El Mas'ūdī's historical encyclopaedia, 'Meadows of Gold...'*, London 1841, p. 186.

⁵ H. G. Farmer, *A History of Arabian Music*, London 1929, p. 20, discusses music in Islam. See also M. L. Roychoudhury, 'Music in Islam', *Journal of Asiatic Society, Letters*, Vol. XXIII, No. 2, 1957.

⁶ *Khyāl*, which is the most prominent type of song in classical music today, is also sometimes said to have been invented by Amīr Khusrāw, but the evidence for this is inconclusive. Similarly, M. W. Mirza, *ibid.*, p. 239, draws attention to the fact that there is no mention of the *sitār* in Amīr Khusrāw's own writings, nor for that matter in any Indian treatises until much later.

⁷ Mahdi Hussain, *Rehla of Ibn Baṭūṭa*, Baroda 1953, pp. 50–1.

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Sharqī of Jaunpur (1401–1440) and Sultān Zain-ul-‘Ābidīn of Kashmir (1416–1467) were both renowned for their patronage of the arts. A musical treatise (in Sanskrit), *Śaṅgītaśiromaṇi*, was dedicated to Ibrāhīm Shāh in 1428¹ and Zain-ul-‘Ābidīn is said to have been responsible for the composition of a treatise named *Mamak* (?) which is, unfortunately, not extant.²

In the following years music received further impetus from rulers, some of whom were excellent musicians themselves. One of these was the Hindu Rājā, Mān Singh Tomwar of Gwalior (1486–1516). His principal contribution was the rejuvenation of the traditional form of song, *Dhrupad* (Sanskrit *Dhruwapada*), by his compositions in Hindi,³ some of which are still said to exist today. Mān Singh was also responsible for the formulation of a progressive treatise in Hindi entitled *Mān Kautūhal*, a work which was compiled by the leading musicians of his court and incorporated many of the innovations that had been introduced into Indian music since Amīr Khusrāw's time.

A contemporary of Mān Singh, Husayn Shāh Sharqī (1458–1528), initially Sultān of Jaunpur, was also an excellent performer and an innovator, in importance perhaps second only to Khusrāw. He is credited with the introduction into North Indian music of a new form of song, *Khyāl* (*kḥayāl*), which gave greater scope for improvisation and technical virtuosity than did the traditional and austere *Dhrupad*. The rivalry between the advocates of these two forms of song and their respective styles of performance continued until the beginning of the 19th century when *Khyāl* finally gained supremacy.⁴

Sultān Sikandar Lodī of Delhi (1489–1517) was a bigot and in most respects a strict follower of Quranic law. Yet he was himself a poet of considerable merit and keenly interested in music. Under his patronage probably the first treatise on Indian music in Persian, the *Lahjat-i Sikandar Shāhī*, was written. This was a traditional work based on existing Sanskrit treatises.⁵

Before the efforts of Mān Singh and Sikandar Lodī, musical treatises had always been written in Sanskrit, a scholarly language which was beyond the comprehension of most musicians, Hindu as well as Muslim. There was now a growing interest in musical theory and especially in the systems of aesthetics with which it was associated—the relationship of sound with sentiment or emotion (*rasa*), colour, the Hindu deities, etc., as well as the visual representation of *rāgs*. This interest was particularly notable during the reign of Ibrāhīm ‘Ādil Shāh II of Bijapur in the Deccan (1580–1626), who by his patronage and enthusiasm for the arts attracted poets, musicians,

¹ Abdul Halim, *Essays on History of Indo-Pak Music*, Dacca 1962, p. 15.

² *Ibid.*, p. 18.

³ N. Augustus Willard, *Music of India*, Calcutta 1962, p. 67. Writing in the first half of the 19th century, Captain Willard states that this kind of composition has its origin from the time of Rājā Mān Singh, who is considered as the 'father' of *Dhrupad* singers.

⁴ Captain Willard says that in his time *Dhrupad* was not generally understood or relished and its use seemed about to be superseded by 'lighter compositions' (*ibid.*, p. 81).

⁵ The *Lahjat-i Sikandar Shāhī* is discussed in some detail by Dr. Nazir Ahmad in *Islamic Culture*, Vol. 28, 1954, pp. 410 ff.

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artists and architects to his court. He was himself a renowned poet and musician and the *Kitāb-i Nauras* (Sanskrit *nava rasa*—the nine emotions) contains a collection of his poems intended to be sung in different *rāgs*.¹ His reign is characterised by his liberal views and his earnest attempts to integrate the opposing elements in Islamic and Hindu philosophy.

The patronage of music reached its peak under the Mughal Emperors, Akbar (1555–1605), Jahangir (1605–1627) and Shahjahan (1628–1658). Much of Akbar's reign was devoted to the expansion and the consolidation of the Mughal Empire. Nevertheless, he maintained a magnificent court at which literature, philosophy and the arts occupied a prominent place. Music was presented on a lavish scale,² and Akbar himself is said to have been a prolific composer.³

The most famous musician of this period was undoubtedly Mīyā Tānsen, around whom so many legends have grown that it is now difficult to separate fact from fiction. He was unquestionably a great musician as well as a composer. Several *rāgs* still bear his name, *Mīyā Malhār* for example, and many of his songs are still sung today. Another prominent musician at Akbar's court was Bāz Bahādūr, the last Muslim ruler of the state of Malwa, whose tragic affair with Rūpmatī, a singer and dancing girl, has also become legendary.⁴ In the later part of his life, after he had lost his empire, he became one of the leading musicians in Akbar's retinue.

The *Dhrupad* style of singing was pre-eminent in Akbar's time and the majority of vocalists came from Gwalior, presumably following the tradition initiated by Rājā Mān Singh, and it is in this city that Tānsen is buried. Many of the instrumentalists, however, were foreigners who came from as far as Mashhad and Tabriz in Iran and from Herat in modern Afghanistan.⁵

Jahangir's court was perhaps even more opulent and ostentatious than Akbar's had been. As he too was a great patron of the arts (being himself skilled at painting),⁶ music continued to flourish. One of the principal musicians of his court was Bilās Khan, the son of Tānsen, whose compositions are occasionally heard today.

Shahjahan's reign marks the culmination of the Mughal dynasty. The wealth of his extensive empire, coupled with the conditions of comparative peace, permitted him to maintain a magnificent court and to devote a great deal of attention to the arts. While this does not appear to have been a period notable for innovation, the art of

¹ This work has appeared in print with introduction and notes by Nazir Ahmad, published by Bharatiya Kala Kendra, New Delhi 1956. It is interesting that the *rāgs* are referred to as *maqāms*, a fact which suggests the similarity between the Indian and Arabic or Persian systems even at this time.

² According to Abu'l-Fazl 'Allāmī, *Ā'in-i Akbarī*, tr. H. Blochmann, Calcutta 1873, i, pp. 50–1, for instance, the orchestra which played at the gateway of the Royal palace (*naqqārakhāna*) had more than sixty members.

³ *Akbarnāma*, Beveridge, i, p. 50, quoted by O. C. Gangoly, *Rāgas and Rāginīs*, Bombay 1958, p. 54.

⁴ This legend is the subject of a Persian manuscript by Aḥmad-ul-Umri, written in 1599, which has been translated by L. M. Crump under the title of *The Lady of the Lotus*, London 1926.

⁵ Abu'l-Fazl 'Allāmī, *op. cit.*, i, pp. 611–13.

⁶ Vincent A. Smith, *The Oxford History of India*, Oxford 1958, p. 373.

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music is said to have reached a polish and grace unprecedented in the past.¹ The leading musician of the period was Lāl Khan, pupil and son-in-law of Bilās Khan who, presumably, continued the tradition of Miyā Tāsen. He was a matchless *Dhrupad* singer, and was frequently presented with large gifts by Shahjahan. Although foreign musicians were still imported, their numbers had decreased since Akbar's time.²

The 16th and 17th centuries are of great importance for the musical literature of India. Written in 1550, the *Svaramelakalanidhi* of Rāmāmātya—a minister of Rāma Rājā, prince of Vijayanagar³—focuses attention on the fact that the music of South India, which had experienced relatively little Islamic influence, was evolving in its own way and was beginning to acquire an independent character. This is corroborated by the *Rāgavibodha* of Somanātha (1609), although there is some evidence of his contact with North India—for example, the occurrence of Muslim *rāg* names in his work. One of the most important treatises on the South Indian system was the *Caturdaṇḍiprakāśikā* of Veṅkaṭamakhi written in 1660, in which the classification of *rāgas* in terms of 72 basic scales (*mela*) was first advocated. This system still prevails in South India.

Several important North Indian treatises were also composed during this period. Of these the *Rāgatarāṅgiṇī* by Locana Kavī (of uncertain date),⁴ *Sadrāgacandrodaya* and other works of Puṇḍarika Viṭṭhala (end of 16th century), *Hṛidayakautaka* and *Hṛidayaprakāśa* by Hṛidaya Nārāyaṇa (c. 1660), and *Saṅgītapārijāta* by Ahobala (c. 1665) have considerable bearing on the history of present-day classical music.⁵

These works, with the exception of the *Saṅgītapārijāta*, also follow the classification of *rāgas* in terms of basic scales (*mela*), and for this reason can be more clearly comprehended than the ancient system based on *mūrccanā* (which is followed in the *Saṅgītaratnākara*), where the tonic or ground-note of the mode is not explicitly stated. Thus there is some confusion as to whether the base note of the *mūrccanā*, the important note (*aṁśa*)⁶ or the final note of the mode (*nyāsa*) should be considered as the tonic.

¹ Abdul Halim, *op. cit.*, p. 38, quoting Faqirullah (Faqr Allāh), *Rāg Darpan*. Muslim University Ms. f., 16a, dated 1661–1665.

² *Ibid.*, p. 43.

³ O. C. Gangoly, *op. cit.*, p. 51. Rāmāmātya is said to be a descendant of Kallinātha who wrote a commentary on the *Saṅgītaratnākara* in the 15th century.

⁴ The date of this work is discussed by O. C. Gangoly, *op. cit.*, p. 41, f.n. 3. The argument is as follows: The colophon in the work itself gives the date of 1082 of the *Śaka* era, i.e. 1160 A.D. The occurrence in this work of Indo-Persian *rāgs*, some of which are said to have been invented by Amīr Khusrāw, indicates that this date is too early. Further, there is a reference in the work to a poet, Vidyāpati, which could refer to the well-known poet who lived 1395–1440. The evidence suggests that the earliest date of this work could be the second half of the 15th century. Bhātkhaṇḍe, *A Comparative Study of some of the Leading Music Systems of the 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th centuries*, p. 22, states that Hṛidaya Nārāyaṇa has borrowed a whole section from the *Rāgatarāṅgiṇī*, and as the date of Hṛidaya Nārāyaṇa's works is in little doubt the middle 17th century would appear to be the latest possible date for the *Rāgatarāṅgiṇī*.

⁵ The *Saṅgītadarpaṇa* by Dāmodara Miśra is another well-known work of this period written in 1625 A.D. Bhātkhaṇḍe, *A Short Historical Survey of the Music of Upper India*, Bombay 1934, p. 26, describes it as being as unintelligible and mysterious as the *Saṅgītaratnākara*.

⁶ See p. 44.

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By the second half of the 17th century we can be sure that the ancient musical system as conveyed in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* was no longer in existence, and that the prevailing system was very similar to that which pertains at the present time. The treatises begin with the traditional description of the scale in terms of twenty-two *śrutis*. The *śrutis* are, however, no longer functional as one of the two ancient parent scales, the *Madhyamagrāma*, is no longer in use.¹ In spite of the mention of twenty-two *śrutis*, the octave seems to have been composed of twelve basic semitones.² In the *Sadrāgacandrodaya*, for instance, the octave is said to contain fourteen notes, but in his description of the fretting of the *viṇā* (stick zither) Puṇḍarika locates only twelve frets, because, he says, the frets for the other two notes would be too close to their adjacent frets on the fingerboard. He adds that if these two frets should be needed in any *rāga*, the adjacent higher frets would be quite acceptable, as the difference of one *śruti* will not make much of a difference in the general effect of the *rāga*.³

A large number of musical treatises were concerned primarily with the iconography of *rāgas* and were devoted to establishing familial relationships between *rāgas* on some extra-musical basis. In this very brief survey, we are necessarily obliged to forego any mention of these.⁴

Shahjahan's reign was followed by that of Aurangzeb (1658–1707). The latter was fond of music and skilled in its theory, but he chose a life of asceticism in keeping with the tenets of Islam, relinquished all pleasure and withdrew his patronage of the arts. Musicians were obliged to leave the Mughal court and seek their livelihood at the lesser provincial courts. It was only with the later Mughals, Bahadur Shah (1707–1712) and Muhammad Shah (1719–1748), that music regained some of its former glory. Although the reign of Muhammad Shah was beset with troubles and the Mughal Empire was rapidly declining, he was keenly interested in music and was an accomplished singer and composer. Largely as a result of Muhammad Shah's own endeavours and the compositions of his two leading musicians, Sadāraṅg and Adāraṅg, *Khyāl* finally came to the fore, and a large proportion of the modern repertoire stems from this source.

This was not a fruitful period for musical literature. Bhāva Bhaṭṭa wrote three works at the end of the 17th century, but these are said to be largely in imitation of *Saṅgītaratnākara*.⁵ In the second half of the 17th century Faqr Allāh wrote two works in Persian, *Rāg Darpan* and *Mān Kautūhal*, the latter being to a large extent a translation of the 16th-century Hindi treatise, *Mān Kautūhal*, by Rājā Mān Siṅgh.⁶

¹ Bhātkhaṇḍe, *A Short Historical Survey*, p. 25.

² Locana uses only twelve notes in describing his *rāgas* (see Bhātkhaṇḍe, *A Short Historical Survey*, p. 9). Similarly, Ahobala only uses twelve notes in describing his *rāgas* although he gives the names of nineteen altered (*vikṛit*) notes (*ibid.*, p. 27).

³ Bhātkhaṇḍe, *A Comparative Study*, pp. 47–8. If Puṇḍarika had indicated the lower adjacent frets as a substitute, it could have been argued that the desired notes could have been achieved by the technique of deflecting the playing string in order to raise its pitch, a technique which is commonly used today.

⁴ Many of these are discussed in O. C. Gangoly, *op. cit.*

⁵ Bhātkhaṇḍe, *A Comparative Study*, p. 69.

⁶ Halim, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

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In 1724 the *Saṅgītapārijāta* was translated into Persian by Pandit Dinānāth.¹ These translations were very necessary, for, while the Muslims took readily to Indian music, the treatises and the words of the traditional songs were in Sanskrit and the Indian vernacular languages, and were generally quite meaningless to Muslim musicians. In addition, they were frequently based on Hindu religious and mythological subjects. These must all have proved formidable barriers to the Muslims. While many songs were composed in Persian, it is very likely that Muslim musicians were required to sing traditional Indian songs, particularly at the courts of the more broad-minded rulers such as Akbar and Ibrāhīm 'Ādil Shāh II. It is equally probable too that Hindu musicians were sometimes required to sing Muslim compositions in Persian, some of which were based on religious Islamic themes. In either case the words can have been of little significance to the musicians,² and in practice the voice came to be used more and more as a musical instrument, with words serving primarily to lend colour and timbre to the music.

In the second half of the 18th century India was divided into several conflicting factions, the most important of which were the Marathas, Mughals, Afghans and a coalition headed by the Nizam of Hyderabad. It was just at this time too that the British began to assert themselves in Indian politics. Musicians were dispersed to the various courts and palaces of noblemen throughout the country, their fortunes, as always, depending on the affluence of their patrons.

There was little sign of British interest in Indian music, except for a treatise written by the Oriental scholar, Sir William Jones, entitled *On the Musical Modes of the Hindus*, which appeared in 1799. Two important treatises were written at the beginning of the 19th century: the Hindi *Saṅgīt-sār* (c. 1800), compiled as a result of a conference of leading musicians in the court of the Jaipur Maharājā, Pratāp Simh Dev; and the Persian *Naghmāt-i-Āsafī* (1813), written by Muḥammad Rezā, a nobleman of Patna. The latter has received considerable attention because it is said to be the first 'reliable' authority in which *Bilāval thāt* is referred to as the natural (*śuddh*) scale.³ The fact remains that until about the 19th century the natural scale described in North Indian texts was based on the ancient *Ṣaḍjagrāma*, comparable to the D mode (the ecclesiastic Dorian). Today *Bilāval thāt*, comparable to the Western major scale or the C mode (the ecclesiastic Ionian), is generally accepted as the natural scale.⁴

¹ Bhātkhaṇḍe, *A Comparative Study*, p. 31.

² Some of Ibrāhīm 'Ādil Shāh's songs in the *Kitāb-i-Nauras*, composed in the Dakhani language, are dedicated to the Hindu deities (mainly Sarasvatī and Gaṇeś), others to Muslim saints (Sayyad Muḥammad Husayn-i-Gesū Darāz). Musicians of his court, whether Hindu or Muslim, would presumably have been expected to sing all of them.

³ Bhātkhaṇḍe, *A Short Historical Survey*, p. 35. However, G. H. Ranade, *Hindustani Music*, Poona, 1951, p. 12, draws attention to the fact that, in his *Hindustānī Saṅgīt Paddhatī*, III, p. 136, Bhātkhaṇḍe has written that Rezā has nowhere referred to his notes as *śuddh*.

⁴ It is tempting to think that this might be a result of Western influence, but this seems unlikely in view of the widespread acceptance in India of *Bilāval thāt* as the natural scale. It should be noted that very few traditional musicians have any familiarity with Western music, and most of them find it completely alien.

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In 1834 Captain N. Augustus Willard, an army officer attached to a small princely state, wrote *A Treatise on the Music of Hindusthan*, in which he drew attention to the considerable gap that had grown between musical theory and practice over the centuries.¹ In the second half of the 19th century musical theory was rejuvenated in Bengal. The publication of K. Goswami's *Saṅgīta Sārā* in 1868 was followed by various publications by S. M. Tagore² and a particularly important work by K. Banarjī, *Gīta Sūtra Sārā* (1855), written in Bengali. Banarjī made a serious attempt to integrate musical theory and practice and his work is remarkable for its critical assessment of musical theory. In 1914 Fox Strangways wrote *Music of Hindostan*, another commendable attempt to relate the numerous aspects of Indian music. The work shows an extraordinary perception and grasp of the subject. Fox Strangways's comments on contemporary Indian music are particularly praiseworthy and his analogies with Western music are often enlightening. But his discussions of ancient Indian music must be viewed with caution as they contain some very basic misinterpretations.³

The beginning of the 20th century was, however, dominated by the works of Pandit V. N. Bhātkhaṇḍe. His first important work, *Śrīmal-lakṣyaṅgītām*, was written in Sanskrit and published in 1910 under the pseudonym of Catura Paṇḍita. Although Bhātkhaṇḍe quotes from many prominent Sanskrit sources, it is quite clear that his main intent is to reconcile musical theory with existing practice. This work was followed shortly by the first of four volumes of a magnum opus in Marathi entitled *Hindusthānī Saṅgīt Paddhatī* (hereafter abbreviated to *H.S.P.*) which was finally completed in 1932 and later translated into Hindi.⁴ Bhātkhaṇḍe here expands many of the ideas expressed in *Śrīmal-lakṣyaṅgītām* and introduces many new concepts to explain the musical practice of his day. He traces the historical development of *rāgs* through Sanskrit treatises and attempts to analyse and present a standard form for each, while acknowledging divergent traditions. Bhātkhaṇḍe's second major work, *Kramik Pustak Mālīkā*, in six volumes (hereafter abbreviated to *K.P.M.*) was published between 1920 and 1937 and was also later translated into Hindi.⁵ This work is primarily devoted to the notation of more than two thousand traditional songs in different *rāgs* and *tāls* which Bhātkhaṇḍe was able to collect from musicians belonging to different *gharānās* (family traditions) throughout North India.⁶ *K.P.M.*

¹ The works of both Augustus Willard and Sir William Jones have recently appeared in a second edition as *Music of India*, Calcutta 1962.

² The article 'Hindu Music' has been reprinted from the *Hindoo Patriot*, 1874, in *Hindu Music from Various Authors*, Varanasi 1965, compiled by S. M. Tagore.

³ For instance, the ancient *Ṣaḍjagrāma* is assumed to begin on the Nī note which he equates with the Western note C: *Music of Hindostan*, Oxford 1914 (reprinted 1966), p. 109. This would mean that the *Ṣaḍjagrāma* was similar to the C mode or the Western major scale. In fact, it has since been firmly established that it is equivalent to the D mode.

⁴ Published by Saṅgīt Kāryālay, Hathras 1956-7. All the references to *H.S.P.* in this work refer to this translation.

⁵ Published by Saṅgīt Kāryālay, Hathras 1954-9. All the references to *K.P.M.* in this work refer to this translation.

⁶ The following list of contributors and their provenance is given by L. N. Garg, the writer of the preface of *K.P.M.*, Vol. IV. The list is, however, incomplete and includes only those musicians who gave permission for their names to appear in print. For instance, *Ustād Bundu Khan*, a famous

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also contains quotations from Sanskrit and Hindi sources on each of the *rāgs* (numbering about 180) and brief verbal descriptions of them. In addition, Bhātkhaṇḍe gives his own interpretation of the musical characteristics of these *rāgs*: the ascending and descending lines (*āroh* and *avroh*), a typical or 'catch' phrase (*pakar*) by which each can be recognised (Vols. V and VI employ a slightly different method), and at the end of each volume as many as twenty or twenty-five series of phrases (*svarvistār*—extension of notes), compiled to illustrate the melodic contours of each *rāg*.

Muḥammad Nawāb 'Alī Khan, a pupil of Bhātkhaṇḍe, followed his preceptor in that he too based his musical treatise, *Ma'ārif-ul naḡhmāt*, written in Urdu, on songs which he had collected from practising musicians. In recent times there have been many musical texts written in the Indian vernaculars which for the most part borrow heavily from Bhātkhaṇḍe's works. A considerable number of publications on Indian music have also appeared in English and other European languages, the standard of scholarship often leaving much to be desired. A. A. Bake's publications, although they have not found expression in a major work, are one of the noteworthy exceptions.¹ Herbert Popley's *The Music of India* (Calcutta 1950) is generally reliable and is a useful guide to both North and South Indian music. A particularly

sārāṅgi player of Indore who spent the last years of his life in Pakistan, is also said to have contributed to Bhātkhaṇḍe's collections (L. N. Garg, *Hamāre Saṅgīt Ratna*, Hathras 1957, p. 479).

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. H. H. Hāmid 'Alī Ṣāhib Bahādur | Ruler of Rampur and follower of Tānsen's descendants. |
| 2. Ṣāhibzāda Sa'ādat 'Alī Khan Ṣāhib Bahādur | Rampur—follower of Tānsen's descendants. |
| 3. Khan Ṣāhib Muḥammad 'Alī Bāsāt Khan | Rampur—descendant of Tānsen. |
| 4. Khan Ṣāhib Muḥammad Vazīr Khan and Amīr Khan | Rampur—descendants of Tānsen, and teachers of His Highness. |
| 5. Khan Ṣāhib Muḥammad 'Alī Khan | Jaipur—Manaraṅg (son of Sadāraṅg) <i>gharānā</i> . |
| 6. Khan Ṣāhib 'Ashiq 'Alī Khan | Jaipur—Manaraṅg <i>gharānā</i> . |
| 7. Khan Ṣāhib Aḥmad 'Alī Khan | Jaipur—Manaraṅg <i>gharānā</i> . |
| 8. Khan Ṣāhib Haidar Khan | Dhar—pupil of Bahrām Khān. |
| 9. Khan Ṣāhib Faiyāz Khan | Baroda—Raṅgīle <i>gharānā</i> . |
| 10. Khan Ṣāhib Amīr Khan Gulāb Sāgar | Baroda—instrumentalist. |
| 11. Śrī Rāoji Buvā Belbāgkar | Bombay—follower of 'Abdullah Khan, <i>dhrupad</i> singer. |
| 12. Śrī Eknāth Paṇḍit | Gwalior—follower of Nathan Pīrbakhsh's descendants and of <i>khyāl</i> singer, Śaṅkar Paṇḍit. |
| 13. Śrī Viṣṇubuvā Vāman Deśpāṇḍe | Gwalior—descendant of Vāmanbuvā, a <i>dhrupad</i> singer. |
| 14. Śrī Rājābhayā Pūchvāle | Gwalior—pupil of Śaṅkar Paṇḍit. |
| 15. Śrī Kṛṣṇarāo Gopāl Dāte | Gwalior |
| 16. Śrī Kṛṣṇabuvā Gokhle | Miraj—follower of Amīn Khan's descendants. |
| 17. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Śāstri Śukl | Ujjain (Gwalior). |
| 18. Śrī Gaṇpatibuvā Bhilvaḍīkar | Satara. |

¹ 'The Music of India', in *Ancient and Oriental Music* (New Oxford History of Music, Vol 1), London 1957, and 'Indische Musik' in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Musik, Bd. 6), Kassel 1957.

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valuable critical work, discussing the comments and theories put forward by Willard, Bhātkhaṇḍe and K. Banarji, is H. L. Roy's *Problems of Hindustani Music* (Calcutta 1937). Roy highlights the inadequacies of some of the present-day terminology and gives suggestions for the reconstruction of musical theory. G. H. Ranade's *Hindusthani Music: An outline of its Physics and Aesthetics* (Poona 1951) is particularly useful for its analysis of the acoustics of the drone. A number of other writers have been concerned primarily with precise intonation in Indian music. Their work is based on the acoustic properties of individual intervals as determined by mathematical ratios, without reference to the varying musical context in which those intervals occur. In addition they attempt to explain modern Indian practice in terms of ancient musical theory. This 'school' was initiated by K. B. Deval, *The Hindu Musical Scale and the Twenty-Two Shrutees* (Sangli 1910), and E. Clements, *Introduction to the Study of Indian Music* (London 1913), and has recently been followed by A. Danielou, *Northern Indian Music* (London 1949, 1954).

On the other hand, there have been several valuable works on the history of Indian music. Foremost among these are, once again, the writings of Bhātkhaṇḍe. His two monographs in English—*A Short Historical Survey of the Music of Upper India* (Bombay 1934), originally a speech delivered at the First All-India Music Conference at Baroda in 1916, and *A Comparative Study of some of the leading Music Systems of the 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th Centuries* (Bombay, n.d.)—present in concise form some of the historical material which extends throughout his other writings. O. C. Gangoly's *Rāgas and Rāginīs* (Bombay 1935, reprinted 1948) is another scholarly work which deserves to be mentioned. As a source of reference it is of considerable value, but it does not go into details of musical theory. The works of Swami Prajnanananda, *Historical Development of Indian Music* (Calcutta 1960) and *A History of Indian Music*, Vol. 1 (Calcutta 1963), also contain valuable material. Most of the historical research has been based on Sanskrit sources. Perhaps the only useful work based on Islamic sources is a collection, *Essays on History of Indo-Pak Music* (Dacca 1962) by Abdul Halim. Much work still remains to be done in this field.

In this brief resumé of the musical literature of the present century many works have not been mentioned.¹ Considering the body of material on Indian music, it is surprising that so very little is concerned with the analysis of present-day Indian music.

This century has seen fundamental changes in the preservation and presentation of North Indian classical music. The traditional system of patronage has been gradually disappearing and musicians now earn their livelihood mainly by public recitals, radio broadcasts, gramophone records, and teaching in schools and music colleges, and only incidentally by private recitals and individual tuition. New devices have already been evolved to cope with the formal atmosphere in the concert hall where rapport with the listener is not so easily achieved. Many musicians have been

¹ Some of these have been discussed by Harold S. Powers in 'Indian Music and the English Language: A Review Essay', *Ethnomusicology*, ix, January 1965.

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experimenting with microphone techniques and, since, as a result, they are now less concerned with producing a large volume of sound, there has been greater emphasis on tone production. This is once again a period of exploration and change, and it will certainly influence the form of Indian music in years to come. At the present time, however, there is no reason to believe that the basic fundamentals of Indian music are in any danger of distortion in the foreseeable future.

I

An Outline of Present-Day North Indian Classical Music

Present-day classical music is directly descended from the court tradition of earlier centuries and some of the prominent musicians of today can still trace their ancestry back to the court musicians of the Mughal period.¹ Under the patronage system musicians were continually vying for the favours of the court and this gave rise to a highly competitive atmosphere in which virtuosity, invention and showmanship played a vital part. These characteristics still apply today. The musician aims to impress as well as entertain, but above all to convey an aesthetic experience. He is not rendering a traditional piece in a stereotyped manner, but refashioning his musical material afresh in each performance. Although a traditional song or melody often serves him as a basis, it is usually very short and in performance is elaborated and varied, and repeated statements of it are interspersed with improvisations. Thus the length of the performance is, to a large extent, determined by the inventiveness of the musician.

There are four main aspects of Indian music to be considered:

1. *Main melody line.* The Indian musical scheme is essentially monodic—it has a single melody line with an accompaniment.² The voice is usually thought to be the most effective carrier of the melody line, not because it is also capable of conveying verbal content, but because of its flexibility and expressive properties. However, any instrument can be used for this purpose, some naturally being more suitable than others. The following are the most prominent melody instruments: the *sitār*, a long-necked plucked lute with frets; the *surbahār*, a larger version of the *sitār*; the *sarod*, another plucked lute with a shorter neck and without frets; the *sārāṅgī*, a bowed lute; the *bāsri*, a side-blown bamboo flute; and the *shahnā'ī* (*shenai*), a double-reed wind instrument similar to the oboe, but without keys. Many other instruments are also used; some, like the violin and the clarinet, have been borrowed from the West.

¹ For instance, *Ustād* Vilayat Khan whose background is mentioned in Appendix B on p. 186.

² Duets (*jugalbandī*), in which there are two carriers of the melody line—two voices or two instruments, who generally perform alternately—are becoming increasingly popular.

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2. *Drone*. The melody line is generally played against a fixed, unchanging drone which is based on the tonic, its octave and its fifth or fourth.¹ This is usually played on a *tambūrā* (*tānpūrā*), a long-necked lute with four or five strings which has no frets and consequently sounds only the open-string notes. The drone may also be produced on a hand-pumped harmonium (*sur-peṭī*). The *shahnā'i* is often accompanied by other drone *shahnā'is*.

3. *Accompanying melody line*. A vocalist is accompanied by a secondary melody line, usually played on a *sāraṅgī* or a harmonium, which echoes the phrases produced by the singer. The *sāraṅgī* is usually played by an accompanist, while the harmonium is often played by the singer himself. When the vocalist pauses, the accompanying instrument assumes momentarily the role of the main melody carrier.

4. *Percussive line*. This is usually produced on the *tablā*, a pair of small kettledrums struck with the hands. Occasionally, a two-ended barrel-shaped drum, *pakhvāj* (*pakhāvaj*) or *mṛdaṅg*, may be used instead. The *shahnā'i* is generally accompanied by another type of kettledrum, the *khurḍak* or *ḍukaṛ*, also played in pairs. The percussive instrument serves primarily as a time-keeper, but is also used for rhythmic variations and improvisations.

Many musical instruments fulfil more than one function. The *sitār*, for example, not only carries the melody line, but also has special strings (*cikāri*) for supplying its own drone, and in addition has sympathetic strings (*tarab*) which provide an echo, in some ways like the effect produced by an accompanying instrument.

Indian classical music has two fundamental elements: *rāg*, the melodic framework, and *tāl*, the time measure.

RĀG

The term *rāg* has no counterpart in Western musical theory. The concept of *rāg* is based on the idea that certain characteristic patterns of notes evoke a heightened state of emotion.² These patterns of notes are a fusion of scalar and melodic elements, and each *rāg* can be described in terms of its ascending and descending lines (which may involve 'turns') as well as its characteristic melodic figures in which certain intervals are emphasised and attention is focused on particular notes. More than two hundred *rāgs* are extant and each is a melodic basis for composition and improvisation. Most of the *rāgs* have been in existence for several centuries and have evolved to their present form as a result of successive interpretations by generations of musicians.

A performance of a *rāg* usually begins with an *ālāp*, a kind of improvised prelude in free time in which the melodic characteristics of the *rāg* being performed are clearly established and developed. It is rendered on a melody instrument or by the voice, and is usually accompanied by a drone. The vocal *ālāp* may also be accompanied by a secondary melody instrument. The instrumental *ālāp* tradition is very.

¹ At the present time variant drone tunings are also used (see p. 187).

² The word *rāg* is derived from the Sanskrit root *rañj* or *raj* = to colour or tinge (with emotion).

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prominent today and the *ālāp* generally consists of a number of sections, some of which, like *joṛ* and *jhālā*, are played against a pulse or beat but without fixed metre. At the conclusion of the *ālāp* a composed piece set in a particular *tāl* is introduced.

TĀL

The term *tāl*, perhaps best translated as 'time measure', is conceived as a cycle. It has two principal aspects: (1) quantitative, meaning the duration of a cycle measured in terms of time units or beats (*mātrā*), which are generally held to be in three tempi (*lay*)—slow (*vilambit*), medium (*madhy*) and fast (*drut*); and (2) qualitative, meaning the distribution of stresses or accents within the cycle. These stresses occur at different levels of intensity: the principal stress at the beginning of the cycle (*sam*); secondary stresses within the cycle (*tālī*); and then there is a negation of stress (*khālī*) which always occurs at points where a secondary stress may be expected but is consciously avoided.¹ The following illustrations show the quantitative and qualitative patterns of three prominent North Indian *tāls*. Following Bhātkhaṇḍe's system, X represents the *sam*, the numbers 2, 3 and 4 the *tālīs* and 0 the *khālīs*:

Ex. 1.

(a) *Tintāl* (*Tritāl*)

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|--|
| Time units | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | |
| Stresses | X | | | | 2 | | | | 0 | | | | 3 | | | | |

(b) *Ektāl*

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|--|
| Time units | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | |
| Stresses | X | | 0 | | 2 | | 0 | | 3 | | 4 | | |

(c) *Jhaptāl*

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|--|
| Time units | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| Stresses | X | | 2 | | | 0 | | 3 | | | |

The metrical framework of each *tāl* is represented by a basic drum pattern, *thekā*, which is a fixed sequence of drum-syllables produced on a pair of *tablā*.² These sounds are produced by striking different parts of the two skins on the drum heads and are symbolised by mnemonic syllables such as *dhā*, *dhin*, *nā*, *tin*, *ke*, *ghe*, etc.³ A common *thekā* of *Ektāl*, for example, is:

Ex. 2. *Ektāl*

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|------|-------|----------|----|----|-----|----|-------|----------|------|----|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | |
| dhin | dhin | dhāge | tirakiṭa | tū | nā | kat | tā | dhāge | tirakiṭa | dhin | nā | |
| X | | 0 | | 2 | | 0 | | 3 | | 4 | | |

¹ Most of the common North Indian *tāls* have an even number of time units, the prominent exceptions being *Rūpak* and *Tivṛā* which have seven units. The *khālī* frequently occurs midway between two 'positive' stresses creating something of the effect of an 'up' beat against the 'down' beat of the *sam* and the *tālīs*. When keeping time the *khālī* is usually indicated by a wave of the hand, while the *sam* and the *tālīs* are marked by claps.

² Certain *tāls* are played primarily on the *pakhvāj*, which has its own drum syllables. The basic pattern of a *tāl* is then called *thapiyā*.

³ A description of drumming techniques is found in A. H. Fox Strangways, *The Music of Hindostan*, p. 225 ff., and in W. Kaufmann, *Musical Notations of the Orient*, Bloomington 1967, pp. 218–63.

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It is in the composed piece that *rāg* and *tāl* meet on common ground. In instrumental music this piece or tune is called *gat* and in vocal music, set to words, it is called *cīz* (*cīj*). The *gat* or *cīz* is not only in a particular *rāg* but also has a fixed relationship with the metre of a particular *tāl*. In instrumental music, especially that on plucked stringed instruments such as the *sitār* and *sarod*, the *gat* is constructed on percussive patterns obtained when the instrument is plucked. The following pattern, called *Majid* (*Masit*) *Khānī gat*, is a very common example:¹

Ex. 3. *Majid Khānī gat*

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|----|----|----|----|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|
| Time units | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| Percussive pattern | ♩ | ♩ | ♩ | ♩ | ♩ | ♩ | ♩ | ♩ | ♩ | ♩ | ♩ | ♩ | ♩ | ♩ | ♩ | ♩ |
| Stresses | | 3 | | | | X | | | | 2 | | | | 0 | | |

While the melody of the *gat* is based on a *rāg*, the percussive pattern is a feature not of *rāg*, but of *tāl*. It is the counterpart on a melody instrument of the *thekā* on the drums. In practice these patterns are not rigidly maintained and are commonly embellished, but the relationship with the basic pattern is nevertheless preserved.

In vocal music the song (*cīz*) serves the same purpose as the *gat*, providing a fixed relationship between *rāg* and *tāl*. There are at present several different types of songs—*khyāl* (*khyāl*), *thumri*, *tarānā*, *dhrupad*, etc.—each with their individual forms and styles of performance. They are sometimes also associated with particular *rāgs* and *tāls*. The text of the *cīz* is generally traditional, particular themes tending to be associated with specific types of songs. The words are not generally noted for their poetic content and are relatively unimportant in classical music. The voice is used rather like a special instrument, capable of varying its timbre through the enunciation of different syllables.

The composed piece in both instrumental and vocal music generally has two sections, *sthāyī* (*astāī*) and *antrā*. The former is the main part of the composition and is said to be usually limited to the lower and middle registers, while the *antrā* extends from the middle to the upper registers.² The vocal composition may sometimes have additional sections (*sañcārī*, *ābhog* and *bhog*), and in its full form may have a number of verses and extend over ten or more cycles of the *tāl*. However, since the main function of the composition is to provide a frame of reference for the *tāl*, only the first verse extending over one cycle is really essential,³ the others being used by the musician as and when needed, either to introduce variety or to draw attention to a different part or aspect of the *rāg*.

¹ It is composed of two equal parts, from 12–3 and 4–11. The melody, beginning on beat 12, leads to a climax at 1 and tapers away to 3. The second part of the melody builds to a false climax at 9 and tapers away to 11, the first part resuming at 12.

² *H.S.P.* I, p. 41.

³ In the *barā khyāl*, sung in very slow tempo (e.g. ♩ = 12), even this much is not usually used, for the full cycle of the *tāl* may last more than a minute and the song is too long to repeat in its traditional form. Here the relationship with the *tāl* is established only one or two time units (*mātrās*) before the *sam*, the remainder of the cycle being devoted to improvisation. In the short fragment of the composition which leads to the *sam* (called *mukhrā*), only the last few syllables of the full text may be used.

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The composed piece is not the primary focus of attention in North Indian classical music. This role is occupied by the melodic and rhythmic extemporisations which the musicians introduce during the course of their performance. The composition serves as a springboard for these and a frame of reference to which the musicians periodically return. Thus the form is similar to that of the Rondo, the composition alternating with the improvisations.¹ It must be stressed that the melodic improvisations are not variations on the composition itself, but elaborations of the different features of the *rāg* phrased against the metre of the *tāl*. Similarly, the rhythmic extemporisations are not variations of the basic pattern of the *tāl* but are phrases played against the metre of the *tāl* and regularly go across its stress patterns. The improvisations of the melody instrument (or voice) and those of the drums are generally undertaken successively, the metre of the *tāl* being maintained by the non-improvisator who plays his basic pattern softly in the background. Occasionally, both may improvise at the same time, but this would probably occur late in the performance when the basic patterns have already been heard several times and the listener is, to some extent, able to supply the underlying patterns for himself.

Traditionally it is the melody instrumentalist or the vocalist who is the leader of the ensemble in North Indian classical music.² It is he who determines the extent to which the drummer may improvise, if at all. In recent times the drummer has been getting an increasing share of the improvisation, though there are some musicians who still prefer their drummers to be merely accompanists and do not permit them much licence.

The improvised variations may begin at any point of the *tāl*, they may continue for any part of one cycle or several cycles and the return to the composition may be accomplished at any point, provided that the original relationship between the metre of the *tāl* and the composition is maintained. In practice many variations begin either on the *sam* or shortly after, and are very frequently concluded either at the *sam* or just before the beginning of the composition (e.g. in Ex. 3 just before time unit 12).

Whilst the form of North Indian classical music resembles that of the Rondo, the successive cycles generally increase in intensity, thereby creating the effect of an upward spiral. This is accomplished by the development of melodic ideas,³ the increasing complexity of both melodic and rhythmic variations, and the accelerating tempo which frequently culminates in a powerful climax.

¹ The degree of creativity in these extempore passages is not easily assessed, for in playing the same *rāg* and *tāl* again and again, musicians acquire musical habits and evolve favourite phrases which may recur from time to time. It is, however, when the musician is performing beyond his normal capacity that the music becomes 'alive'.

² The roles are reversed in what is referred to as a '*tablā solo*' where a melody instrument and drone may accompany the drums. Here the melody instrument serves as time-keeper, repeating a short tune (*lahrā*, similar to *gat*) against which the *tablā* player improvises. In the normal instrumental performances of a *rāg* it is quite usual for the melody instrument to assume the role of time-keeper at appropriate moments, to give an opportunity for the drummer to improvise.

³ As, for instance, in the gradual expansion of the range of the *rāg*. A more detailed discussion of the development of melodic ideas can be found in N. A. Jairazbhoy, 'Svaraprastāra in North Indian Classical Music', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. XXIV, part 2, 1961, pp. 307–25.

II

Basic Elements of Theory

A *rāg* does not exist in any precise form in the sense that a symphony can be said to exist in score, but is a complex of latent melodic possibilities. Although this seems to suggest an amorphous quality, each *rāg* is an independent musical entity with an ethos of its own, which becomes manifest through recognisable melodic patterns. In the course of time a corpus of technical terms has been evolved by theorists and musicians in order to convey some idea of the nature of *rāgs*. Since these technical terms are used primarily to supplement musical practice they are not always precise enough for purposes of analytical study. Therefore, in the following pages, as we consider the salient features of *rāgs*, it will be necessary to discuss not only the pertinent technical terms but also to extend the discussion to related musical principles.

NOTES

SVAR In North Indian musical theory seven notes (*svar*) are recognised. In their Hindi form, the names of these notes are *Ṣaḍj* (or *Khaḍj*), *Riṣabh*, *Gāndhār* (or *Gandhār*), *Madhyam*, *Pañcam*, *Dhaivat* and *Niṣād* (or *Nikhād*); or in the commonly used abbreviated form, Sa, Re (or Ri), Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha and Ni. It is these abbreviations that are used throughout this work, with the occasional addition, for the convenience of the Western reader, of the note's scale degree in brackets. The Indian nomenclature is comparable to that of Western tonic-solfa: there is no absolute or fixed pitch attached to the notes, and the ground-note (the note which serves as the point of reference of the scale) is called Sa, irrespective of its pitch. Once the pitch of the ground-note has been established, however, it remains unchanged throughout the performance of a *rāg* as there is no modulation in Indian music.

ACAL Of these seven notes, Sa and Pa (I and V) are 'immovable notes' (*acal svar*)—they have no flat or sharp positions and Pa is always a perfect fifth above the Sa. The remaining five notes are 'movable notes' (*cal svar*).
CAL These each have two possible positions, a semitone apart. One of these is

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ŚUDDH called *śuddh* (pure) which is comparable to the 'natural' of the West. In the *śuddh* scale, *Bilāval*, composed of Sa, Pa and the five movable notes in their *śuddh* position, the distribution of tones and semitones corresponds to that in the Western major scale.¹

When the movable notes are not in the *śuddh* position, they are called **VIKṚIT** *vikṛit*—altered. In the case of Re, Ga, Dha and Ni (II, III, VI and VII) they are a semitone lower than their *śuddh* counterparts and are called **KOMAL** *komal*—soft, tender. The altered Ma (IV), however, is a semitone above the *śuddh* position, and is called **TĪVR** *tivr*—strong, intense.

The terms *komal* and *tivr* are not exactly comparable to their Western counterparts, flat and sharp, as they apply only to specific *vikṛit* notes, whereas in the West every note has a flat and a sharp form. The Sa and Pa, being immovable, cannot have either *komal* or *tivr* forms; nor can a *komal* note be referred to as the *tivr* of the note below, which in the Western use of flat and sharp is common practice. (The semitone above C may be called either C \sharp or D \flat , depending on the circumstances, but in Indian music Re *komal* is not referred to as Sa *tivr*.) Notwithstanding this difference, in this work we are using the symbol \flat to indicate *komal* and \sharp to indicate *tivr*, and, where necessary to avoid confusion, \natural to indicate *śuddh*.

The full series of intervals in the gamut are set out below:

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|----|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|----|------|
| <i>Śuddh svar</i> | Sa | Re | Ga | Ma | Pa | Dha | Ni | (Sa) |
| <i>Vikṛit svar</i> | | Re \flat | Ga \flat | Ma \sharp | Dha \flat | Ni \flat | | |

These are represented in Western staff notation as follows, the Sa being arbitrarily equated with the C but not implying its absolute pitch:

Ex. 4.

| | | |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| <i>Śuddh svar</i> | | <i>Vikṛit svar</i> |
| Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni Śa | | Re \flat Ga \flat Ma \sharp Dha \flat Ni \flat |

This system of nomenclature has wide acceptance in India, and is generally used by Bhātkhaṇḍe (though he uses different symbols to represent *komal* and *tivr*).²

¹ In its present-day application the *śuddh* concept does not entail the idea of parent scale from which other scales are derived, but serves only as a standard for comparison.

² Another system of nomenclature is also sometimes used in India, and is referred to by Bhātkhaṇḍe (*K.P.M.* II, p. 12) as being used primarily by vocalists. In this tradition, the higher position of the movable notes is referred to as *tivr* and the lower position as *komal*. Here the term *tivr* should be translated as the upper of two alternative notes, not as sharp, and *komal* as the lower rather than as flat. A considerable amount of confusion is caused by the co-existence of these two systems. Of the many examples which could be quoted, those from record sleeves are the most obvious. For instance, on H.M.V. ALP 2312, the *rāg Jaijaivanti* is described as having all seven sharp notes in ascent. This is completely misleading and may even suggest to the Western reader that the ground-note can be made sharp in certain *rāgs*. The writer has evidently equated the *śuddh* of Bhātkhaṇḍe's system with *tivr* of the other. This is only justified in application to Re, Ga, Dha and Ni. In fact, the ascending line of *rāg Jaijaivanti* has 'natural' intervals.

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REGISTERS

| | |
|-----------|--|
| STHĀN | North Indian classical music is not, of course, limited to one octave, and the same names apply to the notes in the other octave registers above and below. There are three registers (<i>sthān</i> —position; or <i>saptak</i> —aggregate of seven) generally recognised, each extending from Sa to the Ni above: middle (<i>madhy</i>); high (<i>tār</i>) which is here indicated by a dot above the note name, e.g. Śa (Ī); and low (<i>mandr</i>) which is indicated by a dot below the note name, e.g. Ni (VII). Although musical theory usually acknowledges only these three registers which are based on the natural limitations in the range of the voice and most Indian instruments, the very low register (<i>atimandr</i>), indicated by two dots below the note name, is sometimes used by players of stringed instruments, especially the <i>sitār</i> and the <i>surbahār</i> . The very high register (<i>atitār</i>) is rarely heard. |
| SAPTAK | |
| MADHY | |
| TĀR | |
| MANDR | |
| ATI-MANDR | |
| ATITĀR | |

INTONATION

While the present-day North Indian gamut is comparable to the twelve-semitone octave of the West, some discussion on the subject of intonation is necessary. In the classical music of North India there is no need for equal temperament, since the factors which lead to this—changing harmonies and the system of keys—do not apply. Moreover, the technique of tempering notes by the use of beats is generally unknown, and since it is uncommon to find a number of melody instruments playing together, no objective standard of tuning is in general use. The only Indian instrument with fixed intonation is the harmonium which is often used for accompanying singers, but even here the precise tuning varies with each instrument. In general, intonation is governed by the individual musician's feeling for intervals. Except for the simple consonances of the ground-note, octave, fifth and fourth, these only approximate to a twelve semitone standard. Electronic analysis has confirmed that there is variation in intonation from one musician to another, as well as for a single musician during the course of a performance.¹

Apart from this unconscious variation in intonation, there are musical traditions in North India which consciously recognise that in a few particular *rāgs* one or two notes are flatter or sharper than that which they conceive of as the standard in the *rāgs* as a whole. Bhātkhaṇḍe refers to these traditions on a number of occasions; for instance, when discussing the *rāg Āsāvri* he says, 'Some say that the Dha (VI) of *Āsāvri* is flatter than

¹ For further discussion on intonation see N. A. Jairazbhoy and A. W. Stone, 'Intonation in present-day North Indian classical music', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. XXVI, Part 1, 1963, pp. 119–32.

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that of the *rāg Bhairvī*'. However, he does not appear to give much credence to this and prefers not to go further into the matter.¹

There is, however, one special case where subtle distinctions in intonation are particularly noticeable. This occurs when a note is subjected to a slow shake or an exaggerated vibrato (*āndolan* or *gamak*), either as a decoration or as a functional feature in certain *rāgs*.² It is in this context that certain musicians use the term *śruti* to indicate the subtle intervals produced as a result of this oscillation in pitch. They do, however, maintain that these microtonal deviations from the 'standard' intonation may only be used in oscillation and may not be sustained as a steady note.³

In the introductory chapter we have already suggested that the *śruti*, which was the basis of distinction between the two parent scales in ancient India, had certainly lost its original significance by the 17th century. In modern times certain musicologists and musicians still attempt to apply the old twenty-two *śruti* system to present-day music, while others go so far as to assert that the present-day gamut can only be explained in terms of forty-nine or even sixty-six different intervals. The fact remains that *śrutis* are no longer functional, that is they are not a primary basis of distinction between *rāgs*.

Bhātkhaṇḍe attempted in his early works to relate the twelve semitones to the ancient *śrutis* as follows:⁴

| | | | | | | | |
|------------|--|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|----|
| Śuddhsvār | Sa | Re | Ga | Ma | Pa | Dha | Ni |
| Śruti | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 | | | | | | |
| Vikṛitsvār | | Re♭ | Ga♭ | Ma♯ | Dha♭ | Ni♭ | |

The twelve-semitone system, however, is clearly at odds with the twenty-two *śruti* system since some of the semitones are composed of one *śruti* and others of two *śrutis*.⁵ In his later writings Bhātkhaṇḍe contradicts this earlier opinion when he says, 'To distinguish between two *rāgs* on the basis of the difference of only one *śruti* would not be acceptable to any present-day vocalist or instrumentalist'.⁶ If this statement is applied to the

¹ H.S.P. IV, p. 428. He continues, 'But I can see no reason why we should get involved in these minute intervals. In current practice, the [following] rule always obtains: "*svarasamgatyaadināni svarasthānāni nityaśaḥ*" [The position of notes depends upon the notes they are combined with].' Elsewhere, H.S.P. IV, p. 584, he is more explicit: 'When a note is connected with lower notes, then it is noticed to be lower [in pitch], and when with higher notes then it is seen to be raised. This difference is noticed only by people with acute perception. That is why wise people do not like to exert themselves unduly with the trouble of trying to ascertain the minute intervals.' We shall be discussing this question of intonation in Chapter VIII.

² An example of this can be heard in the *rāg Dardārī* on the accompanying record.

³ This view has been stated by Bāre Ghulām 'Alī Khan. For further discussion see Chapter VIII.

⁴ K.P.M. II, pp. 10–11.

⁵ It is sometimes stated that the octave contains twenty-four *śrutis*, presumably so that each semitone can have two *śrutis*.

⁶ K.P.M. VI, p. 21. This remark is reminiscent of that made by Puṇḍarika Viṭṭhala more than 350 years ago which has been referred to earlier (see p. 21).

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above scheme representing the semitones in terms of *śrutis*, it would mean that musicians could not distinguish between *rāgs* having a minor third (Ga^b) and a major third (Ga⁺) or a minor seventh (Ni^b) and a major seventh (Ni⁺), for the difference between these is only one *śruti*. Obviously this is not so. Bhātkhaṇḍe goes on to say that there is no absolute measure of *śruti* available to him and that he recognises that the position (intonation) of a note in any one *rāg* fluctuates with the changing context in which it occurs.¹

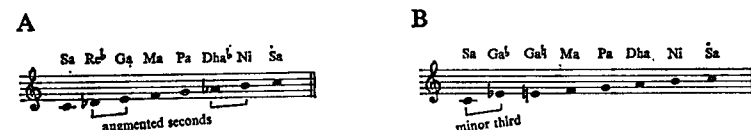
The gamut is a conceptual standard and, though it is derived from musical practice, it cannot take into account all the minute deviations from the norm, many of which are quite unconscious. Thus we are obliged to accept the twelve semitone standard, while making allowances for minor variations, conscious as well as unconscious.

ALTERNATIVE NOTES

The *śuddh* and *vikṛit* varieties of each of the five movable notes are alternatives and do not normally occur as consecutive steps in a melodic sequence. Thus, in principle, the complete musical series will consist of the two immovable notes, Sa and Pa, and one of each pair of alternatives, Re⁺ or Re^b, Ga⁺ or Ga^b, Ma⁺ or Ma⁺, Dha⁺ or Dha^b, and Ni⁺ or Ni^b. In general, Indian music can be described as 'diatonic' in the sense that the successive steps of a scale are different degrees, rather than as 'chromatic' where the steps could include both alternatives of any note.² But many *rāgs* are quite complex and have both forms of one or more movable notes. These usually occur each in their own particular melodic context from which the other is excluded. It sometimes happens that a skilful musician will merge the two contexts so that the two forms of a note may be heard in succession. This generally requires some preparation of ground, as in the

¹ K.P.M., *ibid.* This was written during the latter part of Bhātkhaṇḍe's life by which time he had obviously modified his earlier views on *śrutis*.

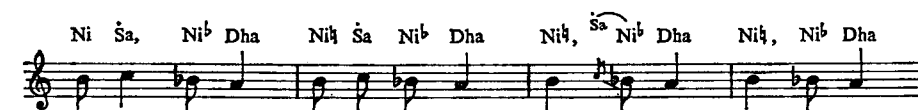
² In this work the terms diatonic and chromatic are used in this rather specialised sense. Here diatonic does not refer necessarily to scales whose steps are only wholetones and semitones. When applied to a heptatonic scale, chromatic indicates the use of both alternatives of a note as scalar steps and implies the corresponding omission of one of the other degrees, usually that just preceding or just following the alternatives. Thus in the following illustration scale A would be diatonic, in spite of its augmented-second intervals, while scale B would be chromatic because both alternatives of Ga are used and Re, the second note, is omitted. The fact that scale B has an interval of a minor third—virtually the same as augmented second—has no bearing on the subject.



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following example illustrating the successive use of both forms of Ni (VII):¹

Ex. 5.

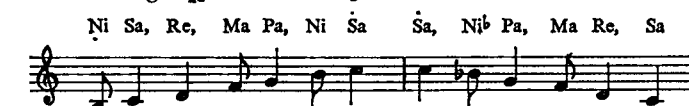


There is, however, a major exception to the scheme of alternative notes as outlined above. This is provided particularly by the *Lalit* group of *rāgs* in which both forms of the fourth, Ma⁺ and Ma⁺, commonly occur as consecutive steps. These will be discussed in greater detail in a later chapter. We may note here that it is primarily the two Ma's which sometimes provide exceptions to the rule that the *śuddh* and *vikṛit* positions of a note are alternatives.

SCALE SPECIES

While many *rāgs* have both forms of one or more of the five movable notes, there are some from which one or two notes are omitted entirely—the Sa alone by definition cannot be omitted. Such *rāgs* are described as transilient. In North Indian theory *rāgs* are sometimes classified according to the number of notes they contain, the classes thus obtained being known as *jātis* (species): *rāgs* with all of the seven notes are called *sampūrṇ* (complete), those with six, *śāḍav* (or *khāḍav*) and those with five, *auḍav*. These terms are equivalent to the Western hepta-, hexa- and pentatonic. It should be noted that alternatives do not count here as separate notes: in a heptatonic *rāg* any or all alternatives may be used as accidentals; similarly, in a pentatonic *rāg* any alternatives of the five notes of the *rāg* may be used as accidentals. The *rāg* *Vṛindāvnī* (*Bṛindāvnī*) *Sāraṅ*, for instance, is classified as pentatonic although both alternatives of Ni (VII) are used:²

Ex. 6. *rāg* *Vṛindāvnī* *Sāraṅ*



¹ This is often an oversimplification of what actually occurs in practice. The circumstances are complicated by the fact that musicians have been preparing the ground for this sort of movement in certain *rāgs* perhaps for several generations. Consequently, there are instances when the preparation of the ground is taken as read. Some musicians avoid this apparent chromaticism entirely, but probably for the majority this is something which can be done in a few specific instances, and then only with nicety.

² K.P.M. III, p. 496. Bhātkhaṇḍe does not explain the exact significance of commas in his notations of *rāgs*. The commas are not used in his notations of *cīz* where the duration values are regulated by the *tāl*. In the *ālāp*-type of phrases of the *svarvīṭār*, the *āroh-avroh* and *pakaṛ*, which are

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THĀT The most important system of classifying *rāgs* is, however, in terms of heptatonic scales, *thāt* (*thāt*), which are discussed in some detail in the next chapter.

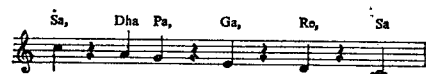
MELODIC MOVEMENT

PAKAR It is not enough to define a *rāg* in terms of mode or scale alone, as a number of *rāgs* have the same notes, yet each maintains its own musical identity. When we examine different performances of the same *rāg* we find that, allowing for divergence of tradition and the possibility of experimentation, not only are the same notes consistently used, but also particular figurations or patterns of notes occur frequently. The most characteristic pattern of notes in a *rāg* is described as *pakar*, a 'catch' phrase by which the *rāg* can be easily recognised. This is inevitably a subjective concept as *rāgs* are not generally limited to just one pattern and the 'catch' phrase of a *rāg* varies, to some extent at least, with the interpretation of the musician. A more complete delineation of a *rāg* is obtained in the *svarvistār*—a series of phrases devised to show the various note-patterns which are permissible in, and characteristic of, the *rāg*. These, too, are subject to varying interpretations.

VARN These patterns of notes can be described in terms of their melodic movement, *varṇ*. Sanskrit treatises have recognised four types: *sthāyī*—steady, unchangeable; *āroh* (*ārohi*)—ascending; *avroh* (*avrohi*)—descending; *sañcārī*—wandering, i.e. a mixture of ascent and descent. Only the *āroh* and *avroh* terms are now commonly used in the description of *rāgs* and refer to the most characteristic ascending and descending lines of a *rāg*, whether step by step or including irregular movements (*sañcārī varṇ*) if these are essential functional features of the *rāg*. For instance, in the *rāg Des* (*Deś*) the common *āroh* (ascent) is a step by step pentatonic movement

not regulated by *rāl*, a comma could indicate either a pause or the lengthening of the preceding note. The former seems highly improbable in view of the frequent occurrence of the comma which, if interpreted as a pause, would disjoint the melodic line, as can be seen in the following typical example (*K.P.M.* III, p. 23):

rāg Bhūpālī



Thus it would seem more reasonable to interpret it as extending the time value of the preceding note. There are no specific breathing indications except, by implication, at the end of variations in the *svarvistār* which are marked by bar lines, and we presume that breath may be taken as required.

In this work the notes preceding the comma have been given double the time value of the other notes; however, there is no evidence that Bhātkhaṇḍe intended such precise values and our notation system has been adopted for the convenience of the reader.

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—which can be described as directional transilience—while the common *avroh* (descent) is heptatonic and has two irregular turns at *x* and *y*:

Ex. 7. *rāg Des*



These turns, which are characteristic features of certain *rāgs*, are designated by the term *vakr* (crooked or oblique), and the note from which this oblique movement begins, i.e. Pa and Re in the example above, *VAKRSVAR* is called *vakrsvar*¹ (oblique note).

On the basis of the given *āroh* and *avroh*, the *rāg Des* could be described as having a pentatonic ascent in which the Ga (III) and Dha (VI) are omitted, and a heptatonic descent in which Pa (V) and Re (II) are *vakrsvar* and Niḃ (VIIḃ) replaces Niḃ (VIIḃ). The terms *āroh* and *avroh* do not always refer to the typical ascending and descending lines in a *rāg*, but are sometimes used to indicate specific upward or downward movement. The dual implications of these terms occasionally create confusion. For instance, in describing the *rāg Kāmōd*, Bhātkhaṇḍe states that the Ma* (IV*) is used only in the *āroh*, and yet when he gives the typical *āroh* and *avroh* of the *rāg*, the Ma* occurs in both the lines:²

Ex. 8. *rāg Kāmōd*



There is a further complication in the description of this *rāg*, for although the Ga (III) is omitted in the typical *āroh* line, it occurs in the ascending phrase Ga Maḃ Pa (III IVḃ V) which is in the typical *avroh* line, and Bhātkhaṇḍe describes this *rāg* as being heptatonic in both *āroh* and *avroh*. It thus becomes necessary to distinguish clearly between the use of the terms to indicate the typical ascending and descending lines (which

¹ According to Bhātkhaṇḍe, only Re is *vakr* in the *rāg Des* (*K.P.M.* III, p. 521). However, in the *svarvistār* of this *rāg* (pp. 760–1) the Pa is frequently *vakr*, as in the example above.

² *K.P.M.* IV, p. 92.

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may involve oblique movement), and the use of the terms to indicate the function of each individual note appearing in an ascending or descending context within a *rāg*. It is the latter which we must now discuss in greater detail.

There are two aspects to a note which belongs in a simple ascending movement: that it is approached from a lower note, and that the note following is higher. When these two conditions are fulfilled, it can be said that the note is clearly an ascending note. However, in certain *rāgs* it is permissible to approach a note from below, but the following note may not be a higher one. Here only one condition is fulfilled and it is a matter of interpretation whether this note should be considered as ascending or not. In fact, in both Indian musical theory and practice, it would not be considered an ascending note, as it leads downwards. This is commonly taken for granted in the system, and a note prohibited in ascent may generally be approached from below but must be followed by a lower note. The descending line in *rāg Des* provides a good illustration of this, where, although the Dha (VI) and Ga (III) are prohibited in ascent (except in certain phrases to be discussed later), the descending line has turns leading upwards to these notes (see *x* and *y*, Ex. 7). On the other hand, if a note may not be approached from below, but the following note is a higher one, that note is commonly thought to be in an ascending line; for instance, in the *rāg Kāmōd* the Ma \sharp (IV \sharp) can only be approached from above and is always followed by a higher note (see Ex. 8, *w*). These three possibilities are shown in the following examples, where L stands for a lower note, H for a higher note, and the note under consideration is represented by N:

Ex. 9.

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| (a) | (b) | (c) |
| Pa Dha Ni | Pa Dha Pa | Ni Dha Ni |
| | | |
| L N H | L N L | H N H |

- (a) N is clearly a direct ascending note.
- (b) N is not an ascending note.
- (c) N is an incomplete ascending note, and since it can only be approached by a turn from above (as in Ex. 8, *w*) it can also be referred to as an oblique (*vakr*) ascending note.

These same three possibilities also occur in relation to descent:

Ex. 10.

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| (a) | (b) | (c) |
| Ni Dha Pa | Ni Dha Ni | Pa Dha Pa |
| | | |
| H N L | H N H | L N L |

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- (a) N is a direct descending note.
- (b) N is not a descending note (cf. Ex. 9c).
- (c) N is an oblique descending note (cf. Ex. 9b).

There still remains one further distinction to be made. In some *rāgs* a note which is generally omitted in the ascending line may nevertheless occur as an ascending note in certain characteristic figures: for instance, in the *rāg Kāmōd* (Ex. 8), where the Ga (III) is normally omitted in the ascending line but may be used as an ascending note in a melodic figure usually found in the descending line:

Ex. 11. *rāg Kāmōd*

(Pa,) Ga Ma Pa, Ga Ma Dha Pa, Ga Ma Re Sa

Here the use of the Ga as an ascending note limits the possibilities which may follow. In step by step movement the Dha (VI) may not be exceeded and the phrase is only felt to be completed by the cadential fragment *v*. A determining feature of this movement is that it does not extend into the next octave but turns back on itself. Thus Ga in *Kāmōd* is an oblique ascending note (as it can only be approached from above) which occurs only in a discontinuous ascending figure, and can be described as a discontinuous, oblique ascending note. The Ma \sharp (IV \sharp) in this *rāg* is not usually used in ascent, but occurs as a discontinuous, direct ascending note in the above example.

Similarly, in the *rāg Des*, both Ga (III) and Dha (VI), while omitted in the continuous, direct ascending line (see Ex. 4), may be used as discontinuous direct ascending notes, the former in melodic figures beginning and ending on the Re.(II), the latter on the Pa (V):

Ex. 12. *rāg Des*

Re Ga Ma Pa Dha Ma Ga Re Pa Dha Ni \flat Dha Pa

Bhātkhaṇḍe describes *Des* as heptatonic in both ascent and descent, with the qualification that the Ga and Dha are generally omitted in ascent,¹ but in fact, the continuous ascent of *Des* is pentatonic, the Ga and Dha being used only occasionally as discontinuous direct ascending notes.

¹ K.P.M. III, pp. 250-1. These discontinuous direct ascending notes can be heard in the *rāg Des* on the accompanying record.

IMPORTANT NOTES

VĀDĪ In every *rāg* two notes, in theory, are given greater importance than the others. These notes are called *vādi*—sonant, and *saṃvādi*—consonant.
SAMVĀDĪ According to Bhātkhaṇḍe the prime character of a *rāg* appears in the *vādi*.¹ The *vādi* is that note which is sounded clearly again and again, a note which is superabundant in a *rāg*.² The *saṃvādi* is described as being a note used less than the *vādi* but more than the other notes in the *rāg*. The *saṃvādi* should not be near the *vādi* as it will tend to detract from the importance of the *vādi*. Ideally it should be a perfect fifth away or, if that note is not present in the *rāg*, it should be one of the adjacent notes, the fourth or the sixth, preferably the former.³ These definitions of *vādi* and *saṃvādi* appear to relate primarily to frequency of occurrence, but statistics applied to Bhātkhaṇḍe's own notations reveal irreconcilable inconsistencies.⁴ Obviously much depends on the interpretation of the key phrase 'sounded clearly again and again', which Bhātkhaṇḍe does not clarify. He seems aware of the inadequacy of his definition and quotes a divergent view from the *Gīta Sūtra Sāra* by K. Banarjī (Bannerjee) in which the author questions the validity of these terms.⁵

Much of this difficulty seems to arise from the fact that *rāgs* have different facets which are successively developed in the course of a performance. In this connection Bhātkhaṇḍe equates *vādi* with *viśrānti* **VIŚRĀNTI** *svār* (or *maqām sthān*), terminal or resting notes, when he states that singers choose different notes on which to end their melodic phrases, momentarily presenting each of these notes as *vādi*, finally returning to the prescribed *vādi* without detriment to the *rāg*.⁶ Thus in a particular *rāg* there are several important notes which may be emphasised either by frequency of occurrence or by their use as terminal notes. In theory the *vādi* is chosen because it is the most important note in the characteristic phrase (*pakar*) of that *rāg*. There are, however, further qualifications. In all *rāgs*, the Sa (I) is a vitally important note, both as a frame of reference and as a melodic terminal. Yet the Sa is not a good candidate for the position of *vādi* because it is a feature common to all *rāgs* and gives no indication of the

¹ H.S.P. I, p. 20.

² K.P.M. II, p. 14 and K.P.M. VI, p. 23.

³ H.S.P. I, p. 22.

⁴ In the *svarvīṭār* of *rāg Yaman*, as set out in K.P.M. II, pp. 487–8, there are 62 Sa, 83 Re, 70 Ga, 54 Ma, 74 Pa, 47 Dha and 45 Ni. On a statistical basis, Re should be *vādi* and Pa *saṃvādi*. Bhātkhaṇḍe, however, gives Ga as *vādi* and Ni as *saṃvādi*. In the other *rāgs* examined there is also a similar deviation between the most often used notes and Bhātkhaṇḍe's given *vādi* and *saṃvādi*. This is discussed further by A. N. Sanyal, *Rāgas and Rāginīs*, Calcutta 1959, p. 20.

⁵ H.S.P. I, pp. 79, 80. Banarjī gives an example of the *rāg Yaman* in which some say Pa is *vādi*, others Ga or even Re and Ni, suggesting that, in the hands of an expert, there may be even greater latitude. The important notes of this *rāg* are discussed in Appendix B on p. 205.

⁶ K.P.M. V, p. 49.

character of a particular one. The same applies, although to a lesser extent, to the Pa (V). Further, Bhātkhaṇḍe's choice of *vādi* is often influenced by his time theory which is an attempt to relate the musical characteristics of a *rāg* to its hour of performance.¹ In this connection, he divides the octave into **PŪRVĀṆG** two parts, *pūrvāṅg*, first portion, the lower tetrachord Sa to Ma (I to IV) or the pentachord Sa to Pa (I to V); and *uttrāṅg*, second portion, the upper tetrachord Pa to Śa (V to Ī), or the pentachord from Ma to Śa (IV to Ī). According to his theory, in the *rāgs* performed between noon and midnight the *pūrvāṅg* is emphasised, i.e. the *vādi* is in the lower tetrachord; while in the *rāgs* performed between midnight and noon the *uttrāṅg* is prominent, i.e. the *vādi* is in the upper tetrachord.

This theory tends to influence the choice of *vādi* in Bhātkhaṇḍe's system. For instance, in the *rāg Tilak Kāmod* the Ni (VII) is very prominent and is considered the *vādi* by a number of musicians. Bhātkhaṇḍe fully recognises the importance of this note in *Tilak Kāmod* when he says that the quality of the Ni in this *rāg* is so spectacular that nearly everyone recognises it from the (particular) way this note is used.² *Tilak Kāmod* is, however, sung at night and according to Bhātkhaṇḍe's theory should have its *vādi* in the lower tetrachord. In K.P.M. Bhātkhaṇḍe gives the *vādi* as Re (II) and the *saṃvādi* as Pa (V),³ but in the H.S.P. he says that, according to experts, the Re is weak in descent⁴ and gives the *vādi* as Sa (I).⁵

From the foregoing discussion it is apparent that the concept of *vādi* and *saṃvādi* is not quite consistent with present-day musical practice. The terms have been used in the musical treatises since the *Nāṭyaśāstra* where *vādi*—sonant, *saṃvādi*—consonant, *vivādi*—dissonant and *anuvādi*—assonant (i.e. neutral) represent a general theory of consonance which is now either forgotten or has at least lost its earlier significance as Fox Strangways has pointed out.⁶ The terms, however, have persisted to the present time. The original concept appears to have been quite reasonable. Only perfect fourths and fifths were recognised as consonant, while the semitone and/or perhaps the major seventh was recognised as dissonant. The other intervals were considered assonant. These terms were thus

¹ Bhātkhaṇḍe's time theory has been described in *Rāgas and Rāginīs*, by O. C. Gangoly, Bombay, reprinted 1948, pp. 90–2. The time theory of *rāgs* is a controversial subject and there are several different attitudes which may briefly be expressed here. There are some who will not tolerate a *rāg* at any but the prescribed time. Bhātkhaṇḍe is not so dogmatic, but states that a particular *rāg* sounds especially beautiful at a particular time. Some musicians look at this matter in an entirely different light; they feel that if a particular *rāg* is performed well it will create an atmosphere of a particular time of day or night. Finally, there are those who believe that the time theory has no application to present-day practice and Banarjī, quoted in H.S.P. I, p. 75, says that the tradition of performing *rāgs* at particular times of the day and night is 'purely imaginary'.

² H.S.P. I, p. 243.

³ K.P.M. III, p. 297.

⁴ H.S.P. I, p. 250.

⁵ H.S.P. I, p. 243.

⁶ Fox Strangways, *The Music of Hindostan*, p. 114.

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AMŚA

intended to express the phenomena of consonance and dissonance as conceived in that period. Obviously consonance and dissonance were particularly significant in relation to the important notes in a mode (*jāti*). These important notes were designated by the term *amśa*. Bharata, the author of *Nāṭyaśāstra*, says, 'That note which is the *amśa*, that note is *vādī*',¹ indicating that the *amśa* is the sonant note whose consonance and dissonance are particularly important, not that *vādī* is a synonym of *amśa*. But later writers have equated the two terms, and so *vādī* has come to mean important note and the term *amśa* has now become redundant.

This has led to some confusion. Whereas in Bharata's time modes frequently had several important notes (*amśas*), and indeed there was one, *Ṣaḍjamadhyamā*, in which all the seven notes were considered important, the present-day *rāgs* can have designated only one *vādī* and one secondary important note, *saṃvādī*. The ancient *saṃvādīs* comprised the consonant fourth and fifth, while the present *saṃvādī* refers to the second most important note in a *rāg*, which, to preserve the importance of the *vādī*, is removed from it by generally a fifth or fourth, not necessarily perfect intervals,² or perhaps by a sixth.³

VIVĀDĪ

ANUVĀDĪ

The terms *vivādī* (dissonant) and *anuvādī* (assonant) are also occasionally used at the present time, especially by theoreticians. *Vivādī* as 'disputing' is particularly meaningless in the present context in which the minor second and the major seventh have a very prominent place in the system. Bhātkhaṇḍe explains *vivādī* as that note which, when used in a *rāg*, would damage it, and refers to it as *varjitsvar*—omitted note. He concedes that the *vivādī* may, however, be used by expert singers and players without detriment to the *rāg*.⁴ Here again the precise meaning of the term remains unclear. Are all the omitted notes called *vivādī*, or just those notes which may occasionally be used by experts, but are not essential to the *rāg*? In discussing the *rāg Kāmod*,⁵ he says that sometimes *Niḥ* (VIIḥ) may be used in descent as a *vivādī* note, indicating that it is the latter meaning

¹ *Nāṭyaśāstra*, 'Kāshi Sanskrit Series' (No. 60), prose following śl. 20, chapter 28.

² *K.P.M.* III, p. 612. In *rāg Pilū*, for example, the *vādī* is given as Gaḥ and the *saṃvādī* as Niḥ—an augmented fifth. The same applies to the *rāg Mārvā* where *vādī* and *saṃvādī* are given as Reḥ and Dhaḥ. Some musicologists are disturbed by the fact that these two do not form a perfect interval and give Dhaḥ and Gaḥ as its *vādī* and *saṃvādī*. V. N. Paṭvardhan in *Rāg Vijnān*, Vol. II, p. 1, discussing *rāg Mārvā*, says, 'Reḥ is prominent in its lower tetrachord (*pūrvāṅg*), Dha in its upper tetrachord (*uttrāṅg*). . . . Sometimes one also pauses on Ga, because Ga makes a consonant (*saṃvādī*) relationship with Dha. But if this is done often it gives the appearance of the *rāg Pūriyā*. . . . It is customary to give Reḥ and Dha as *vādī* and *saṃvādī* of *Mārvā*, but seen from the point of view of the *śāstras* (treatises) it is not possible for Reḥ and Dhaḥ to be *saṃvādī* (i.e. consonant) to each other. For this reason, in our opinion it is proper to accept Dha as *vādī* and Ga as *saṃvādī*.' These comments reflect the confusion which prevails among musicologists regarding the interpretation of these terms. A further discussion of the *rāg Mārvā* will be found in Appendix B on p. 202.

³ Some musicians also accept the third as *saṃvādī*.

⁴ *K.P.M.* II, p. 14.

⁵ *K.P.M.* IV, p. 92.

Basic Elements of Theory

that he has in mind. When this *vivādī* or accidental is used with sensitivity, it is considered particularly beautiful—a far cry from its original meaning of dissonant. The term *anuvādī* still refers to the notes in a *rāg* other than *vādī*, *saṃvādī* and *vivādī*, though these may, in the present period, include the perfect fourth or fifth of the *vādī*.

To summarise, Bhātkhaṇḍe's choice of *vādī* for a *rāg* is influenced by three factors:

1. It should be an important note in the characteristic phrase of the *rāg*.
2. It should belong to the correct part of the octave in relation to his time theory.
3. Sa (I), and to a lesser degree Pa (V), are less meaningful as *vādī* than the other notes because they give little indication of the character of the *rāg* and so become *vādī* only when there is no other reasonable possibility to fit his time theory. It will be seen that much depends on the validity of the time theory. This is difficult to assess, but the fact that the theory is widely accepted in India suggests that it is reconcilable, at least to some extent, with the time of day at which *rāgs* are traditionally performed.¹ We shall have more to say about the time theory in the chapter following.

SUMMARY

This discussion of technical terms can be concluded with a summary of the principal features by which a *rāg* may be distinguished from others:

1. Basic notes used (*thāt*).
2. Transilience (*sampūrṇ*, *ṣāḍav*, *auḍav*).
3. Emphasised notes (*vādī*, *saṃvādī*).
4. Ascending and descending lines (*āroh*, *avroh*):
 - (a) alternative notes used as accidentals (*vivādī*?);
 - (b) directional transilience;
 - (c) oblique movement (*vakr*).
5. Register of emphasis (*sthān-mandr*, *madhy*, *tār*).
6. Shakes (*āndolan*) and intonation (*śruti*).

These factors will be discussed in the following pages.

¹ There are, of course, differing traditions regarding the time at which *rāgs* should be performed and no time theory can satisfy all of these.