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Music in Major Dravidian Languages

M. A. Padmavathi, M.Music., M.A. English, B.Ed. Ph.D. Scholar

Music is a language by itself. It is a language that appeals to all, irrespective of caste, creed, religion or nation. It is also the language of emotion. It is interesting to note that most of the books related to music are in the most widely spoken Dravidian languages -Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam and Telugu.

Telugu

Telugu, with its profuse use of vowels and fine words ending with Na and La is an apt medium for the conveyance of Carnatic musical expression. It brings a melody in the Carnatic musical expression and hence non-Telugu musicologists prefer to compose and sing in Telugu. 'Raga Tala Chintamani' and Sangeeta sara sangrahamu'- two authenticated Granthas about classical music are in Telugu.

Composers

Tallapaka Annamacharya was the first Vaggeyakara (singer-poet) in Telugu. "Chandamama rave - Jabilli raave", the most sung song and with which every telugu child is initiated into music was composed by him. He is credited to have composed 32000 Sankirtanas in praise of Lord Venkateswara. And during the 15th

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century, his son - Peda Tirumalacharya ,grandson - Chinna Tirumalacharya and great grandson Tiruvengadappa, composed music. They were followed by Rudra Kavi, Prologanti Chenasuri, Sivanarayana Thirthulu, Siddendra Yogi, Bhadrachalam Ramadas, and Kshetrayya of Movva.

A revolution was brought about in 17th century by the trinity Tyagaraja, Shyama Sastry and Muthuswami Dikshitar. Famous musicians of later years include Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu, Mangalampalli Balamuralikrishna, Sripada Pinakapani, Nedunuri Krishnamurthy, Voleti Venkateswarlu, Emani Sankara Sastry, Smt. Srirangam Gopalaratnam, and Manchala Jagannadha Rao..

The life and work of Tyagaraja, the bard of Tiruvayyaru, is a miracle of miracles. For, no musician, with exception of Purandaradasa, revolutionized and gave direction to Indian music as he did. So creative a musician and saint was he that he has come to be known as Sri Tyaga Brahmam, which is a reference not only to his creativity but carries with it a part of his father's name, Ramabrahmam.

Tamil

Scriptures

In Kudumiyamalai in Tamilnadu, Tamil scriptures were found, which are said to belong to the seventh century. The scripture is carved on a piece of rock on the orders of MahendraVerma, the king of the pallavas, Of the few scriptures available on Indian music, this is the major one and it has created a lot of interest to our musicologists. Discovered by Dr.Bhandarkar in 1904, it was found at the cave temple at Melakkovil in Tamilnadu. This scripture, carved beautifully and placed in a slant manner in the temple is about thirteen feet tall and sixteen feet wide in size. Though the letters in the scripture belonged to the seventh century, the musicologists found it difficult to decide who the script belonged to. While some were of the opinion that it was the script of the Chalukyas, some others opined that it was that of the Pallavas. But the letters in the scripture were found to be similar to the other scriptures of MahendraVerma in Tiruchanapalli and South Arkat. What is more, towards the end of the scripture, it is said that the scripture has been carved on the orders of King Maheshwara who was none other than MahendraVerma-1. That King Mahendra Verma had mastery over music and other fine arts is evident through the characters in the ‘MattaVilaasa Prahasana’ written by the king himself. The sentence ‘Ettirkum Elirukkum ivai uriya’ in this scripture has been explained differently by wits. For example, according to an explanation, what MahendraVerma played in his seven-stringed veena can also be

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played on an eight stringed one. The other explanation is that the total number of swaras occurring in the scripture is $7*4*16=448$, which is divisible both by seven and eight. This perhaps is the implied meaning in the sentence, according to some musicologists. Another scripture was also found in Thirumayam near Pudukkottai in Tamilnadu, which is situated about fourteen kilometers to the south. This scripture was discovered by the great scholar Sri T.K.GovindaRao. Though this scripture was written several years earlier, the place was misused in an irreparable manner by King Pandya, who wanted to use the same place to get a scripture written about the coins that he had released. Of the remains of the music scripture, we can know about some technical terms in musicology. This scripture is very much similar to the one at Kudumiyamalai. As the term Parivadini is being used in both the scriptures and as King Mahendra Verma was well versed in playing the parivadini veena and as both the scriptures are in the same script and have been carved in the same manner and more notably, as the name Gunasena occurs in both the scriptures,(Gunasena is the other name of Mahendra Verma), it was decided that both the scriptures have been created by King MahendraVerma. These scriptures have helped in the system of music script to a large extent.

Ilangovan's 'Shilappadikaram' is an authenticated book on Carnatic music. It deals with the Shastra part of music. Ragas are referred to as Puns in this book. Shilappadikaram gives clues to the rich theater culture of South India. . In Tamil, we also have the 'Panache Bharateeyam' , 'Tala Samuttiram' , 'Raga Tala Prastaram' , 'Shuddhananda Prakasham' and 'Bharata Senapatim' . The 'Tevarams' seem to be the first composition in Tamil. Arunagiranathar of Fifteenth century wrote Tiruppugals which are extremely popular in Tamilnadu even today.

Composers

Prominent composers prior to the Trinity of Carnatic music include Arunachala Kavi, Sadasiva Brahmendra and Oottukkadu Venkata Kavi. Other composers are Gopalakrishna Bharathi, Neelakanta Sivan, Patnam Subramania Iyer, Koteeswara Iyer, Subramania Bharathiyar and Papanasam Sivan. The compositions of these composers are rendered frequently by artists of today. Gopalakrishna Bharathi used the signature *Gopalakrishnan* and composed in Tamil. Papanasanam Sivan, who has been hailed as the *Tamil Thyagaraja* of Carnatic music, composed in this language as well as Sanskrit, using the signature *Ramadasan*.

Malayalam

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Temple music in different parts of Kerala was known as early as 7th century **Swathi Tirunal** is the chief composer of Kerala. Swathi Thirunal's reputation as a patron of cultural activities attracted several musicians, dancers and writers from all parts of India to his court .He ranks with the giant in South India by the number and variety of his compositions in different languages. His style combines the excellence of Aryan and Dravidian Music while avoiding the defects of both.

Kannada

Kannada is highly rich in music literature. In Kannada we have a great many books related to music. ‘Abhinava Bharata Sara Sangraha by Mummadi Chikka Bhupala, ‘Shivatatva Ratnakara’ of Basavappa Nayaka and Nijaguna Shivayogi’ s ‘Viveka Chintamani’ are the chief ones. Innumerable Granthas are available on dance too.’ NatyaChoodamani’ , Jayanta Senani’ s ‘Nriitya Ratnavali’ , ‘Natya Darpana’ , and Srikantha’ s ‘Rasa Kaumudi’ ,to name a few.

The 15th century marked a watershed period in the history of Indian classical music. Sripadarayaru, a contemporary of Kallinatha (the commentator on Sarngadeva's Sangitaratnakara), was a musician and composer who heralded the musical traditions of the Haridasa movement. Vyasarajaru, Vadirajaru, Purandaradasaru and Kanaka Dasaru (15th – 16th century) who followed in the tradition were contemporaries of celebrated musicologists like Ramamatya (*Svaramelakalanidhi*), Poluri Govindakavi (Ragatalachintamani) and Pundarika Vitthala (*Sadragachandro`daya*, *Ragamala*, *Ragamanjari* and *Nartananirnaya*)

The Haridasas, the Vaishnava saints of Karnataka, are classified into the Vyasakuta and Dasakuta. The Vyasakuta were the pontifical saints known for their scholarship and exposition of the Madhva philosophy. The Dasakuta were the peripatetic saint disciples of the Vyasakuta sanyasins. They were proficient singers and composers and used classical music and the Kannada language as a medium to propagate the teachings and philosophy of the Dwaita school. Purandara Dasa systematized the method of teaching Carnatic music which is followed to the present day. He introduced the raga Mayamalavagowla as the basic scale for music instruction and fashioned series of graded lessons such as *swaravalis*, *janti swaras*, *alankaras*, *lakshana geetas*, *prabandhas*, *ugabhogas*, *daatu varase*, *geeta*, *sooladis* and *kritis*. Another of his important contribution was the fusion of *bhava*, *raga*, and *laya* in his compositions. Purandara Dasa was the first composer to include comments on ordinary daily life in song compositions. He used elements

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of colloquial language for his lyrics. He introduced folk ragas into the mainstream, setting his lyrics to tunes/ragas of his day so that even a common man could learn and sing them. He also composed a large number of lakshya and lakshana geetas, many of which are sung to this day. His sooladis are musical masterpieces and are the standard for raga lakshana. Scholars who succeeded him are believed to have followed the systems he devised. Purandara Dasa was a *vaggeyakara* (performer), a *lakshanakara* (musicologist), and the founder of musical pedagogy. For all these reasons and the enormous influence that he had on Carnatic music, musicologists call him the "Sangeeta Pitamaha" (grandfather) of Carnatic music.

Purandara Dasa had great influence on Hindustani music. The foremost Hindustani musician Tansen's teacher, Swami Haridas also a Saraswat Brahmin was Purandara Dasa's disciple. Purandara Dasa's compositions are equally popular in Hindustani music. Hindustani music legends such as Bhimsen Joshi and Basavaraj Rajguru have made them more popular in recent years. Young, well known artists such as Puttur Narasimha Nayak, Venkatesh Kumar, Nagaraja Rao Havaldar, Ganapathi Bhatt, Vidyabhushana and Nachiketa Sharma are continuing the tradition of singing Purandara Dasa's compositions in Karnataki as well as Hindustani music concerts. Film director and playwright Girish Karnad made a documentary film titled, *Kanaka-Purandara* (English, 1988) on the two medieval Bhakti poets of Karnataka. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purandara_Dasa - cite_note-20

Other composers of Karnataka include Sri Muttiah Bhagavatar, Mysore Sadashiva Rao, Mysore V. Ramaratnam, and T.Chowdiah.

Conclusion

Rich and well-established traditions of South India in Music continue to inspire new generations. Music festivals in South India continue to attract a big crowd of people. Research and discussions relating to innovations also have become an integral part of music in Southern languages. Through all these knowledge of music is not only retained but also further developed.

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M. A. Padmavathi, M.Music., M.A. English, B.Ed., Ph.D. Scholar
#832, Manujapatha Road, 1st Cross
E & F Block, Kuvempunagar
Mysore 570023
Karnataka, India
padma832@gmail.com

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