

pre noon (*Bilawal*), noon (*Sarang*)
afternoon (*Bhimpalasi*, *Patdeep*),
dusk (*Marwa*, *Aiman*), evening
(*Bihag*, *Des*) and finally, late at night
(*Malkaus*, *Kanhara*), Ustad Rashid
Khan, a leading singer today, does
not like to even do riyaz (practice)
of a morning raga in the evening !

Not only the mood and time of a
raga, but the visual depiction of
ragas, is enlightening too. There are
six main ragas, pictorially always
depicted as males. Each of these
has eight female consorts and eight
sons, or ragaputras. The familial
links are made due to the notes of
the ragas that link them. The visual
depiction of ragas in the series of
Ragamala paintings was started
around the 15th century in various
courts –Mughal, Deccan, Pahari ,
Rajasthani and Central Indian. The
earliest known *Ragamala* paintings
date back to 1475 and were
found in Gujarat.

The seven notes – *sa re ga ma pa
dha ni* – were also symbolized
by the cry of an animal as well
as its representing deity and a
colour to aid the process of visual
representation. Thus according to
one manuscript, *sa* was taken to be

cry of peacock and its presiding
deity is the Fire God Agni, with the
colour being the white of a lotus;
re was said to be the cry of the
hawk, the deity represented is
Brahma and the colour is red; *ga*
is the sound of a goat, the deity is
Goddess Saraswati and the colour
is green; *ma* is the call of the deer
and is represented by Lord Shiva,
whose colour is blue, *pa* is the call
of the cuckoo bird; Lord Vishnu is
the deity, the colour is Black; *dha*
is the neighing horse represented
by Lord Ganesha and the colour is
yellow; *ni* is the elephant's trumpet,
symbolized by the Sun God and
the colour is a combination of all
the other six colours. The late Ustad
Vilayat Khan, sitar wizard, too,
associated ragas with colours as
well as images. These inescapable
connections between sound and
visual, mood and time, prevailing
since the last 500 years or so are
indeed a marvel. How a sur(note)
sung at the appropriate time, can
create a strong emotion or indeed
a physical phenomenon like rainfall
is truly miraculous!

Source : India Perspectives
March - June 2017

Cultural Calendar - October 2017

6 - 8
Friday - Sunday

Performances by ICC students at "Shilpa Abhimani – 2017"

International Handicrafts Exhibition
organized by the National Crafts Council, Sri Lanka
Venue: BMICH, Colombo 07

Garba and Dandiya Night

Organized by the
Hindi students of ICC
Venue: ICC Auditorium

6
Friday
6.00 p.m.
onwards

13
Friday
3.00 p.m.

Friday matinee

Hindi Film – *Manjhi – The mountain man*
(duration – 2hrs)
Directed by Ketan Mehta
Starring – Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Radhika Apte,
Tigmanshu Dhulia and Urmila Mahanta
Venue: ICC Auditorium

Hindustani Violin Recital
by the disciples of Dr. Somasiri Illesinghe
Venue: ICC Auditorium

20
Friday
6.00 p.m.

22 - 28
Sunday - Saturday

Asia Pacific Choir Games Workshops

Organized by Colombo Cultural Hub and Intekultur
(Closed Event)
Venue: ICC Auditorium

Programmes subject to change
Admission to all programmes are on first come first serve basis.
All are cordially invited

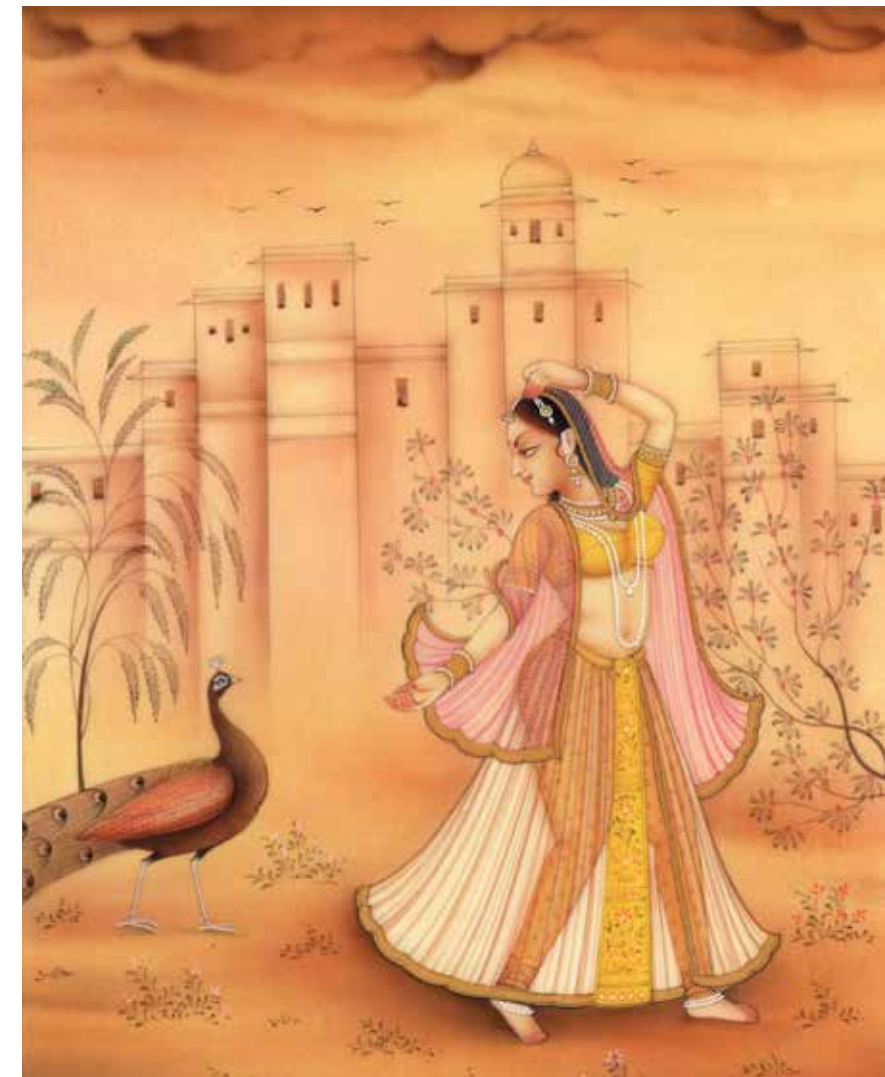
UNIE ARTS, 2330195



Sanskarika

Newsletter of the Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo

October 2017



Cultural Tapestry

Moods of the ragas

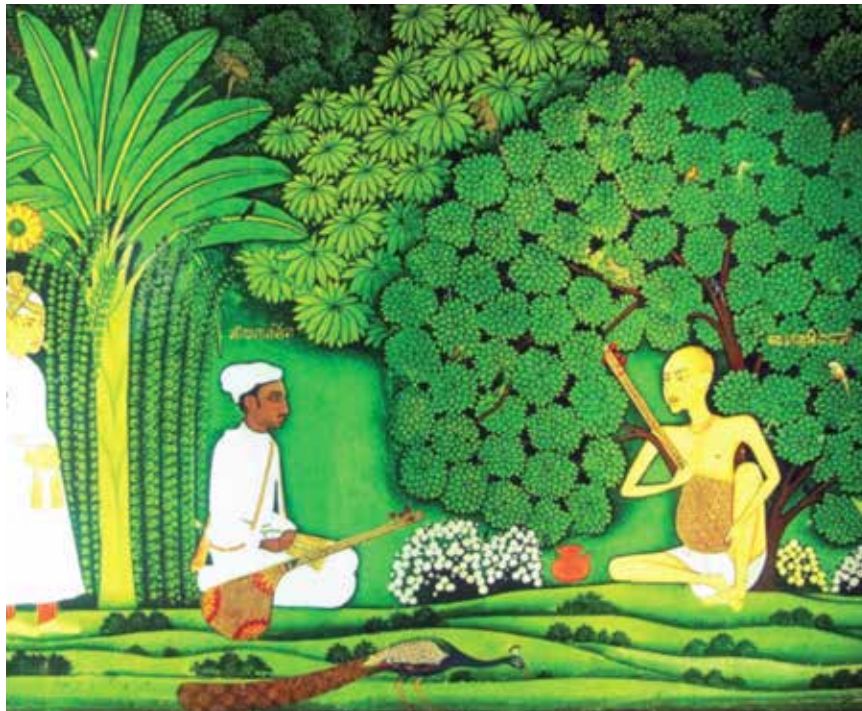
Intrinsic to the musical heritage of India, ragas possess not just auditory beauty but also visual and cultural richness

Shailaja Khanna

Ragas are integral part of Indian classical music, and are indeed a purely Indian concept seeming

to have esoteric origins as their rendering is linked with so many other ideas of mood (*rasa*), colour, seasons and time - concepts that don't have anything to do with notes. The Sanskrit word 'raga' in fact, translates into emotion and colour.

Each raga is a melodic idea that uses at least five notes of the octave,



An imaginary depiction of Mughal emperor akbar watching Tansen receive a lesson from Swami Harida (Mughal miniature painting). Miniature painting in India often depicted ragas in human form or associated with gods



Left: Raga Basant, 18th century, Bundi, from a collection of HK Swali; (Right:) a 17th century Manwar painting depicting Raga Hindol

and two ragas may have exactly the same set of notes like Darbari and Jaunpuri but their sound and the mood they create are completely different, since they use the same notes differently. Rasa or emotion is associated with a raga - a raga like Puriya is meditative, while the same set of notes with different emphasis in Raga Marwa create a restless energy. Raga Sohini, also with similar notes, is effervescent and is associated with the season of spring. The examples are too many to enumerate!

Ragas can evoke the nine rasas or emotions- the predominant ones being love (*shringara*), peace (*shanti*), detachment and



melancholic solitude (*vairagya*). Ragas like *Des* and *Pilu* are considered romantic, *Bhupali* brings peace and *Shri* is a raga of *vairagya*. There are anecdotes associated with many of the ragas too, delineating their cultural significance. According to one anecdote, Raga *Tilak Kamod*, a lyrical, light raga was being played on the sitar and a spider on the wall nearby slowly started inching towards the music. The moment the notes of the sombre and melancholic Raga *Malkaus* began to play, however, the spider ran back up the wall! This experiment was repeated two or three times, with exactly the same result.

There are also specific ragas meant to be performed during two of the six main seasons spring and monsoon. Raga *Basant* and *Bahar* are specifically sung in spring in the day or at night.

The lyrics are also to do with blooming flowers and verdant forests. A famous composition in *Basant* talks of the dairy maids going to pluck the profusion of flowers in the forests of Vrindavan Raga *Megh* and various forms of *Malhar* are performed in the monsoon and are associated with the rains – visually shown as dark blue or grey, with

pouring rain or dark overhanging clouds. The lyrics, too talk about clouds rain and thunder. There are many tales of *Malhar* concerts bringing on rains, even in modern times..

Apart from representing different moods, ragas are also linked to the theory of time. There are specific times of day at which specific ragas are to be performed. This concept is still adhered to in the north Indian classical tradition. There are pre dawn ragas (*Lalit*, *Ramkali*) ragas to be sung at dawn (Bhairav) in the morning (*Todi*),



Left: Kalubha ragini, Rajasthani miniature painting ; (right:) Raga Bhairav, 18th century, Deccan

