UNIT 4 MUSIC

Structure

4.1 Introduction

Objectives

4.2 Music and its Origins

4.3 Music as Ritual

4.4 Music in Everyday Life

4.5 Sangeeta

4.6 Vedic Music

4.7 Fundamental Concepts of Indian Music

4.7.1 Naada

4.7.2 Shruti

4.7.3 Svara

4.7.4 Raaga

4.7.5 Raaga and Rasa

4.7.6 Taal

4.8 Self Assessment Questions

4.9 Answers

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Music – a magical word which contains an entire universe with in itself. Can anyone define this exquisite heritage of all the human race? One can imagine the vastness of the universe. One cannot define it for as soon as a definition is attempted it becomes a boundary line, a framework within which the subject matter has to be fitted. And universe which is boundless just cannot fit into a framework. Universe is best described by the philosophical deliberations and visualisations by great philosophers and scientists and yet even they have not been able to do full justice to this staggering concept.

Similar is the case of Music. The former encompasses the same unimaginable dimensions as Universe. Same as every being who was born and will be born has a place in the Universe, he/she will have a place in the totality that is Music. Now you will ask here how can a human being have a place in music?

This question can be answered in many ways:

1) It is accepted that Music existed even before the birth of human beings, the Music of the Universe or Cosmos precedes the man-made music. Thus man, who became a part of this Universe must also become a part of which was much earlier than him, which is being merged with the Universe.

2) Man has always chosen music as a medium to communicate with God. And man is a minutest part of God and thus became a part of music.

3) Music became a powerful medium to convey feelings like joy, love, sorrow,
victory, hope, anger, defeat etc. Once again these are universal feelings which when expanded, merge into the Universe. Man is a creature of these universal feelings and thus becomes a part of the music that expresses them.

At the daily level once again it is the Mother who makes child to sleep; her music is the greatest thing for the child. She sings and makes her child with a repetitive rhythm; she puts it in her lap and pats its back with her rhythm. Her singing may be wordless – just a hum but it spells LOVE—the child understands it perfectly. A deep universal and unbreakable bond is created between the two – a universal bond of which every man is a part of.

The rhythmic rising and scattering of the waves of the ocean, the incessant pitter – patter of the falling rain, the sweet birdsong at dawn heralding the day which must end as per the universal rhythm. All these spell Music. Now, how can one attempt a definition of such a vast phenomenon which is as vast as the Universe?

This brings us from the general to the specific from Music to music—Indian music. Here one can attempt some definitions like,

i) Indian music is based on melody (raaga) and rhythm (taal).

ii) The term includes within itself the three-fold arts of geeta (song), vaadya (instrumental music) and nritya (dance).

iii) Indian music binds all the diverse elements like social, cultural, linguistic and religious ethos into one solid mass.

iv) Music is an indispensable part of the life of Indians; there is music for every occasion and every activity.

We may say, “An Indian and his music are inseparable”.

And as it has been already said, music is a performing art.

Let us understand this fabulous phenomenon.

Objectives
After studying this unit you should be able to:

• understand the beauty of any Indian music;

• become enthusiastic towards learning some music; and

• try to be one with the divinity of music.

4.2 MUSIC AND ITS ORIGINS

Music is as old in the history of civilisation as human speech. It is a spontaneous outburst of the basic human emotions in a melodious manner. All that which mere words fail to convey, music successfully and convincingly conveys. Music plays a significant role in the religious, social and artistic lives of human beings. It is an indispensable part of the activities of man’s everyday life.

The origin of music is not easy to trace. However, it is obvious that nature is the fountain source of all music. The buzzing bee, the babbling brook, the whistling wind, the roaring sea, the chirping birds— are some of the organs in nature’s glorious symphony. Doubtless it existed even before mankind made its appearance.
Primitive man realised that the various sounds that fill the nature are musical, even before he realized the fact that his body could be a musical instrument too. So slowly, as the human race evolved and progressed, man learnt to imitate or reproduce, in a modest way, the sounds around him. He either used his own vocal chords - his voice - for this purpose or made use of the natural things round him to create instruments which he gradually came to use for a variety of purposes. Thus, came into being various types of primitive drums that he created out of the dried vegetables round him round the mouths of which he tied the skins of animals that he hunted. He learnt to tie strings made up of animal gut to wooden planks and learnt to strum. He heard the wind pass through bamboo groves giving rise to the sweetest of sound and he created his own instrument on which he blew through his mouth. All these primitive instruments eventually were improved upon over a long period to result in today's sophisticated drums, string and wind instruments; but the ideas and fundamentals remain the same over the millennia.

4.3 MUSIC IN RITUALS

Primitive man attributed thunder and lightning, storm and rain, floods and famine, birth and death to supernatural forces. He believed that these forces had to be pacified or rather propitiated by ritual and sacrifice in order to appease nature's fury and win the grace of benevolent spirits. In due course, instinct opened his eyes to a certain order and rhythm in the world around him. The paramount urge for survival pointed to him the need for co-operation and community life. The excitement and emotional exaltation flowing from a sense of common interests and group loyalty found expression in tribal dance to the tune of horn and drum. Priesthood and miracles, witchcrafts and magic, conch and kettledrum reigned. This marked the dawn of music as a ritual.

4.4 MUSIC IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Ballads and folk songs of wandering minstrels with their crude instruments, simple ditties to relieve the tedium of the reaper, the boatman and the gardener at the water - wheel by the well, made music a handy source of physical and mental relaxation. This, in broad outline, is believed to be the origin of primitive music all over the world. Thus, the evolution of music must have co-existed with the evolution of mankind and developed with the growth of humanity and fulfilled the physical and metaphysical needs of all people, irrespective of their caste and also creed.

4.5 SANGEETA

Vocal music, instrumental music and dance have varied from time to time and space to space according to the aesthetic taste and likings of the people. In India, in particular; 'sangeeta' (the collective term used for the three-fold arts of vocal music, instrumental music and dance or geeta, vaadya and nritya respectively) has been cultivated as an art for atleast three thousand years. The geographical and physical conditions in India and the cultural complexity of its people have throughout remained important determinants in shaping its music.
4.6 VEDIC MUSIC

The oldest evidence of the manifestation of human emotions and intelligence in the form of words are found in the hymns of the Rig Veda. The Rig-Vedic hymns came at the very beginning of humanity. They are the divine legacy of all human beings, irrespective of any caste, creed, sects, community and also nationality. The hymns are philosophical and they make an attempt to explain the mysteries of the universe. Hymns are composed in praise of gods like Agni, Varuna, Indra, Prajaapati and Soma, besides the other natural elements.

It is a matter of common knowledge to all music lovers that Indian classical music has its origin in the Saama Veda. Saama Veda is the selected collection of hymns from Rig Veda. The rules for chanting the Vedas are laid down in Saama Sootra.

Fourteen kinds of poetic metres were used in chanting the Vedas. The actual form of Vedic music is now untraceable as the Vedas, the Samhitaas, the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas, the Upanishads contain no explanation as regards the actual position of those accents and their proper use in Vedic chant.

4.7 FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS OF INDIAN MUSIC

Ancient Hindu culture had its roots in spirituality. To the Hindu, religion was a way of life that was governed by a four-fold goal-dharma, artha, kaama and moksha (collectively termed as 'purushaartha-s'). Moksha was liberation from the bondage of birth and death. This attitude to life as a journey towards an ultimate goal exerted a sobering influence on all human activity and gave it discipline and direction. These purushaarthas demanded sustained effort. For this, both body and mind were to be kept healthy and active through the practice of yoga. Control of breath and meditation on the sacred syllable 'Om' constituted praanaayaam, a vital element in yoga. That was also the starting point for Naadavidyaa or Naadopaasanaa. This brings us to the most important concept in music - 'Naada'.

4.7.1 Naada

Naada is musical sound. The entire subject of music is related to Naada. Naada gives rise to Shruti-s, Shruti-s give rise to Svara-s and Svara-s give rise to Raaga-s. Naada admits of two divisions — Aahata and Anaahata. Naada that is heard without the conscious efforts of man or other beings is Anaahata. Naada produced by the conscious effort of man is Aahata. Aahata means ‘struck’ and Anaahata means ‘unstruck’.

Anaahata naada is the music of the sphere, the music of Nature. It also includes the naada emanating from the mooladhara part of the human body. This is audible only to yogis. The perceiving of anaahata naada is the object of yogopaasanaa (meditation yoga). The science and art of music as practiced in this world relates to aahata naada. This admits of the threefold division — geeta, vaadya and nritya.

4.7.2 Shruti

In the history of world music, Indian music is one of the earliest to use quarter-tones. It is the use of quarter-tones and micro-tones that imparts a peculiar
charm, colour and flavour to the music of India. Twenty-two notes have been in use for centuries. Many ancient Sanskrit works refer to the 22 shruti-s as the foundation of the Indian musical scale. The use of these subtle tones is infact the glory of Indian music and testifies to the highly developed aural powers of the Indian musician. Thus, shruti is that audible sound which is free from resonance. Shruti is said to be free from resonance whereas resonance is the characteristic feature of a Svara. When the string of a veena is plucked, the very first sound that is produced is shruti and the sound which follows immediately is called Svara. (Anuranana is an important feature of Svara).

A shruti is a note of minute pitch which a refined and trained ear can distinguish. It is the smallest audible difference of pitch. The octave is divided into 22 intervals of unequal pitch. In other words, the sthaayi is conceived of as the sum total of 22 shrutis of unequal size. In ancient music, the 22 shrutis were distributed over all the seven svara-s (sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni).

### 4.7.3 Svara

The basis of all systems of music is the seven solfa notes or sapta svara-s. the seven notes are shadja (sa), rishabha (ri), gaandhaara (ga), madhyama (ma), panchama (pa), dhaivata (dha) and nishaada (ni). Of the seven svara-s, the svara-s sa and pa (the tonic and the fifth) do not admit of varieties. The remaining five svara-s, admit of two varieties each. In Hindustani music, the soft notes are identified as komal and sharp notes as shuddha, except in the case of madhyama where the soft note is known as shuddha and sharp note as teevra.

The seven Svaras which are in vogue today are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. in ascending order</th>
<th>Names of Svaras</th>
<th>Names of Solfa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Shadja</td>
<td>Sa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rishabha</td>
<td>Ri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Gaandhaara</td>
<td>Ga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Madhyama</td>
<td>Ma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Panchama</td>
<td>Pa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dhaivata</td>
<td>Dha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Nishaada</td>
<td>Ni</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Same names and solfa letters hold good in the descending order.

The notes shadja and panchama which do not admit of varieties are called achala svaras or fixed notes. They are also referred to as avikrita svara-s or changeless svara-s.

As naada manifests itself in three places – the region of the heart, throat and the cerebrum, it is but natural that the svara-s are also produced from these three sthaana-s. This place of origin is termed as 'svara sthaana'.

### 4.7.4 Raaga

Raaga is the pivotal concept of Indian music. This concept is India’s proud contribution to world music. The ideal of absolute music is reached in the concept
of raaga. The whole structure of Indian music is built around the concept of raaga. Raagas are aesthetic facts and can be perceived by trained ears. Musical compositions and alaapanaas are concrete manifestations of the abstract raaga. In the formation of raagas, all possible combinations of notes for creating emotional effects have been utilized. Ability on the part of a person to recognise, distinguish and sing or play raagas indicates a high degree of musical culture.

Raaga, can be said to be a permutation and combination of the musical notes or svara-s which follow a specific melodic pattern. The permutation and combination should adhere to certain aesthetic laws that establish the form of a raaga.

Thus, the main feature of a raaga is its pleasing quality or ranjakatva. 'Raaga aalaapanaa' is the presentation of phrases admissible in the raaga in such a manner as to bring out its distinctive characteristics.

The present day raaga concept owes its origins to Bharata in his analysis of jaati raagas, to Matanga in his distinction between maarga (classical) and deshi (regional) sangeeta and to sharrgadeva in his detailed treatment of raaga in the historical perspective. The modern concept of raaga combines the fundamental points in the treatment of all these great musicologists and thus becomes a very clear and convincing concept enabling one to understand Indian music in its proper spirit.

4.7.5 Raaga and Rasa

An equally important aspect of Indian music closely connected with the concept of raaga is the concept of Rasa. Rasa is taken to be the vitalizing or the energizing power of a raaga. If raaga is the melodic core or microcosm of Indian music, rasa is its basic aesthetic appeal which enriches the raaga in the domain of art, and infuses life into music so that it grows and becomes an unending process flourishing in diverse forms of development culminating in spiritual enlightenment, a communion with the Infinite - the fullness in man. There can be no raaga without an accompanying rasa. This is perhaps the unique feature of Indian music which cannot be found in any other musical heritage.

It is an accepted fact that a raaga is something more than its mere melodic pattern or the melodic microcosm; it has something more than its tonal structure which is, as it were, its body. It has a soul which inhabits the body. The soul of a raaga is the rasa, the indwelling spirit. Raagas are the musical vehicle to convey a specific aesthetic-cum-emotional sentiment characteristic of a rasa, its definite ethos, its spiritual and trans-empirical appeal. It is this emotive - aesthetic principle, the indwelling or presiding sentiment which the musician tries to invoke with the help of a unique combination of notes - the raaga. As said earlier, since a soul must inhabit a body, so also a rasa is incarnated in a raaga which depends on a vocabulary of musical notes each signifying a particular rasa. Bharata in his Natyashastra, Matanga in his Brihaddeshi and Sharrangadeva in his Sangeetaratnakara, have all attributed certain rasas to the seven svaras.

4.7.6 Taal

Nature provides us with the first evidence of the presence of rhythm in the Universe. The rotation of day and night, the dancing waves of the sea, etc. are
the evidence of natural rhythm. Our vital breath and along with it our heartbeats or pulse beats which follow a strict regularity suggest that we are born with a rhythm of our own. This means that the sense of rhythm is intrinsically human.

Rhythm is the most fundamental element in any form of music. It is the movement generated and also regulated by measured application of beats with the help of any suitable percussion instrument. It is also the creative impulse in the very heart of the musician.

The main purpose of ‘taal’ or ‘time measure’ is to maintain rhythm and to infuse life into music. A systematic study of ‘time’ as an absolute factor is undertaken by Indian musicians which has led to an elaborate taal system. Music operates on the domain of time and sound. The measurement of this musical time corresponds to organized patterns of beats called taal-s. Taal regularises music. It is cyclical in nature. In Indian music taal has broadly speaking, both the functions of nihshabda kriyaa and sashabda kriyaa i.e., without manifested sound and with manifested sound respectively.

It is clear that the two main pillars of Indian music are raaga and taal, the former referring to the basic melodic pattern of music and the latter to the rhythmic pattern followed in rendering the music. Maintaining the rhythm in a fixed, logical and systematic measure is, however, the main purpose of taal.

A detailed classification of taal-s is found in all the treatises, beginning from the Naatyashastra of Bharatamuni to the texts of the late medieval period. Naatyashastra mentions two principal taal-s - tryashra and chaturashra. The tryashra was named chaachaputa and the chaturashra was named chachchatputa. The other taals were the shatpitaaputraka, sampakveshtaka and udghatta. Later on, several taals were introduced under the category of ‘deshi taals’ with the Sangeetaratnaakara describing as many as 120 deshi taal-s. In the contemporary scenario one witnesses a significant implementation of time measures in Hindustani music such as Daadraa, Teevra, Roopak, Kaharvaa, Jhaptaal, Chautaal, Ek taal, Aadaachautaal, Teenatal or Tritaal. Carnatic music today relies more heavily on the soolaadi sapta taal-s and chaapu taal-s.

4.8 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

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

a) Indian music is based on .................. and .................

b) Sangeeta includes ................... .................. and ...................

c) Naada is ................... ................... and has two divisions ...................

and ...................

d) Shruti is ................... sound which is ................... of ...................

e) Raaga is ................... and ................... of ................... which follow a specific melodic pattern.
Introduction to Performing Arts

(svaras, rhythm (taal), audible, combination, melody (raaga), aahata, resonance, musical sound, free, geeta, anaahata, permutations, vaadya, nritya, geeta).

2) Write 5 to 6 lines on svara.

3) Write briefly on raaga and taal.

4.9 ANSWERS

1) a) melody (raaga), rhythm (taal).
   b) geeta, vaadya, nritya.
   c) musical sound, aahata, anaahata.
   d) audible, free, resonance.
   e) permutation, combination, svaras,

2) The basic of all systems of music is the seven solfa notes or sapta svaras. They are shadja (sa), rishabha (re), gaandhaara (ga), madhyama (ma), panchama (pa), dhaivata (dha) and nishaada (ni). Sa and pa do not admit of varieties and hence are called achala svaras. The remaining five admit of two varieties each. The svaras are produced from regions of three sthaanas - heart, throat and cerebrum. This place of origin is called svara sthaana.

3) Raaga is the main element of Indian music. Aalaapanaas are concrete manifestations of the abstract raaga. Raaga can be said to be a permutation and combination of the svaras which follow a specific melodic pattern. The permutation and combination should follow certain aesthetic laws that establish the form of a raaga. Taal (rhythm) is the most fundamental element in any form of music. The main purpose of taal or time measure is to maintain rhythm; it regularises music. Maintaining the rhythm in a fixed, logical and systematic measure is the main purpose of taal.