

Vocal and Instrumental

Folkways Records FW 8854

RAGAS FROM SOUTH INDIA

GAYATHRI RAJAPUR, Vocal and Gottuvadyam / HARIHAR RAO, Percussion / DOROTHY MOSKOWITZ, Tamboura



M
1808
R16
R14
1967

MUSIC LP

Folkways Records FW 8854

SIDE A: VOCALS

1. VARNA: SHANKARABURANA (5:55)
2. KRUTI: BHAIRAVI RAGA (15:20)

SIDE B: INSTRUMENTALS

1. KRUTI: HATHA RAGA (11:30)
 2. RAGA MALICA WITH TILANA (15:45)
- (All Are in Adi Tala)

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HARIHAR RAO, Percussion
DOROTHY MOSKOWITZ, Tamboura**

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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RAGAS FROM SOUTH INDIA

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RAGAS: THE CLASSICAL MUSIC OF SOUTH INDIA

Notes by Joseph Byrd

Sung by Gayathri Rajapur

Accompanied by Harihar Rao
and Dorothy MoskowitzM
1808
R16
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MUSIC LP

The Music

The music of India has its roots in the pre-Christian centuries of the Aryan civilization and, thus, in the Hindu religion. With the advent of the Moslems, and their occupation of North India in the 12th and 13th centuries A. D., the Aryan musical system branched into the Northern and Southern systems in existence today. In the North, the Muslim courts encouraged and subsidized virtuosity. The secular aspects of raga and tala—the sensuous, evocative elements—were emphasized. The religious aspect of music became less pronounced. In the South, the musical system remained basically an element of the larger system of worship; the music retained and retains today the religious song as its base. It thus remained more readily accessible to society at large than the relatively esoteric style of the North.

Likewise peculiar to the South is the existence and perpetuation of composed music by master musicians of the past and present. These compositions are often simply highly skillful improvisations of the masters, laboriously memorized by their pupils, and thus passed on through generations. In the hands of skilled musicians these "classicized" improvisations become themselves subject to intricate improvisation.

Classical music of South India, while primarily derived from song, is, like its Northern counterpart, an improvised music; the performer is acclaimed not for interpretation but for creativity. A performance may include many pieces, made up of combinations of traditional song, set compositions, and improvisation. Generally, each piece is called by the name of the composition or song included in it.

The basis for improvisation is the raga—the collection of pitches which the performer may use in a piece. Like the Western scale, the raga is made up of seven steps, with "do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti, do" corresponding to "sa, ri, ga, ma,

pa, da, ni, sa." However, where the Western scales are limited to one major and a few minor forms, the South Indian raga system admits of 72 basic scales and more than 500 derived forms. The raga also differs from the scale in that it involves certain melodic patterns that do not always follow the simple ascending-descending order (see for example the Devagandari raga in the raga malica below). Finally, each raga has particular pitches of primary and secondary melodic importance, as well as specific variety and placement of ornamentation. All of these elements combine to make the raga characteristic of the emotion it seeks to establish.

Each section of an Indian composition has a particular function. Among these possible sections are: alapana, a slow, arhythmic presentation of the raga; tana, a free—but rhythmic—raga presentation; kruti and varna, large composition forms; pallavi-anapallavi-charna, generally a large precomposed piece; and raga malica, or "garland of ragas," a sort of alapana wherein the performer subtly shifts from one raga to another.

The rhythmic system of South Indian music revolves around a repeated sequence of stressed and unstressed beats. Superficially, Adi tala, the tala or "rhythm cycle" used in these recordings, resembles a two- or four-measure phrase in 4/4 time. However, the pattern of stresses is: a single predominant beat, three silent beats, strong-weak, strong-weak, i. e.:

X - - - / X o X o

South Indian audiences "keep tala" with the musicians by clapping on strong beats and waving on weak ones. While this might be disconcerting to a Western performer, the Indian musician welcomes this practice, for it not only establishes a metric rapport between himself and the audience, but allows him more freedom for improvisation, since the audience has assumed the responsibility for counting time.

The Musicians

Gayathri Rajapur began study of voice with Musuri Shubhramanyi Iyer at the age of 13. At 16 she entered the Central College of Karnatic Music (University of Madras) where she studied gottuvuadyam with Guru Krishnamurthi Shastri. Now 25, she is a recognized artist in the traditional music of the South. As a teacher, she has written a basic music text in Kannada, the language of Mysore, taught at Karnatic College in

Dharwar, and is now a staff specialist in residence at the Institute of Ethnomusicology at UCLA.

Harihar Iyer, mridungam, is a student of North Indian music at the Institute, where he studies tabla and other Northern drums.

Dorothy Moskowitz, tambura, is a pupil of Miss Rajapur.

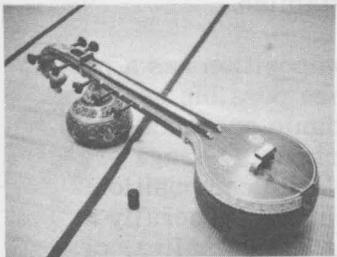
The Instruments

Gottuvuadyam is, with the vina, the traditional plucked-string instrument of the South. While similar to the vina in construction and tone quality, it is played in a manner similar to the Hawaiian guitar, i. e., with a wooden bar. While this technique allows nearly all the ornamentation possible with the voice, it somewhat inhibits speed. For this reason, and because of the great difficulty of technique necessary, the gottuvuadyam is today a rare instrument; there are probably fewer than 15 players in all of India.

Mridungam is the classical drum of the South,

from which the Northern tabla is said to have evolved. It is two headed: the right-hand head is actually three layers of drumskin superimposed on each other then cut away to reveal concentric rings, while the left and larger head is tuned with a piece of moist dough placed in the center before playing.

Tambura is the drone-stringed instrument in both North and South. The "buzz" associated with its sound is caused by the insertion of strands of silk thread between the strings and bridge.



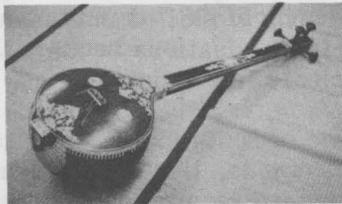
1. gottuvuadyam



2. gottuvuadyam
in ensemble



3. mridungam



4. mridungam
in playing
position



5. tambura



6. position of
singer with
tambura

SIDE ONE

Varna (Telegu language): Shankaraburana raga,
Adi tala (5:55)

Varna



Pallavi: Saminimnekoru,
Sala marulukonadira,

Anapallavi: Salaamasalamujeyaka a,
Dajuda rajagapala.

(Chita swara)

Charna: Nirajakshi nipai.

(Yetugade swara)

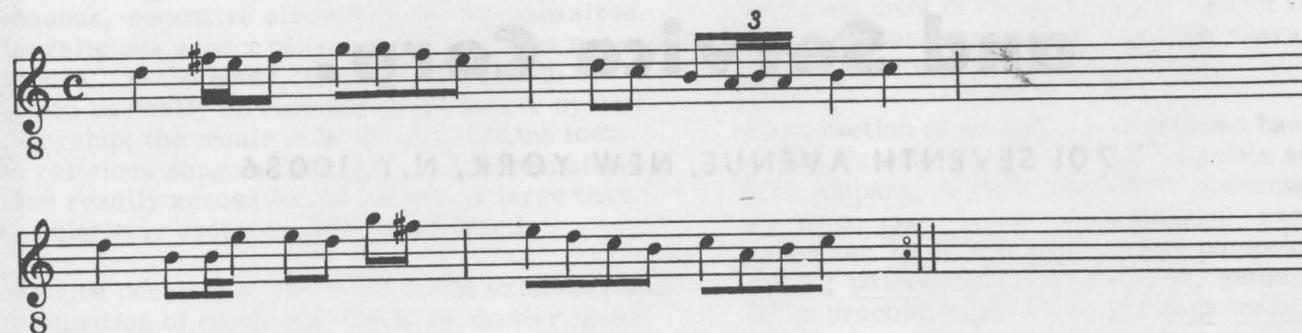
(Improvisation)

Pallavi: O Lord, I await you.

Anapallavi: Torture me neither with your
absence nor your anger. Please
come soon, Rajagopala.

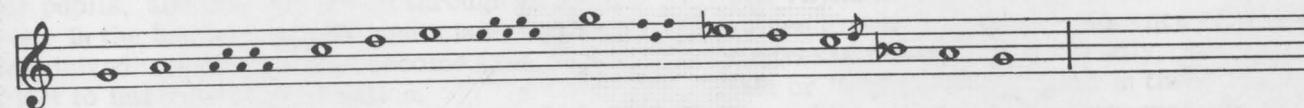
Charna: She whose eyes are like the lotus
awaits you.

This composition was written by Gopal Iyer, composer and singer who lived in the late 19th century. The swara sections use the melodic syllables (sa, ri, ga, etc.) in place of words. While improvisation may be interspersed anywhere within the piece, the singer has chosen to place it at the end. The musical example below is the opening of the charna section.



Kruti (Telegu): Bhairavi raga, Adi tala (15:20)

Kruti



Alapana

Pallavi: Nipadamule gatiyani,
Nammiti nirajakshi parashakti.

Anapallavi: Shripanchanadiswaruni ranivyna,
Srutajanapalini dharma sum
vardhini.

(Kalpana swara)

Charna: Kamitaphaladaiyaki kaumari,
Kamadahanumanohari Shankari,
Omahakali sanathani Onkari,
Sadani bhavani,
Samajasamagamani sukhabhashini,
Sakalalokajanani papadahani,
Pamarasuramadavibhanjani,
Paratpani pavaniniranjani.

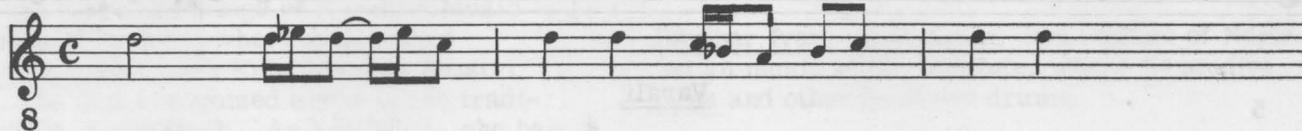
Pallavi: My faith in you, Devi, is absolute.
You of the lotus eyes are the
source of all the powers of the
world.

Anapallavi: Princess of Panchanadiswara, you
are the mother of all of us, you
are the presence of truth.

Charna: Princess of Panchanadiswara, you
inspire all my works.
Shankari, I hear your voice singing
like a wild bird.
Mother of all, forgiver of sins,
you are loved by all, O Princess
of Panchanadiswara.

This composition by Subhramanya Iyer, a contemporary of Gopal Iyer, includes improvisation in the anapallavi, as well as a wholly

improvised alapana and swara. The basis for improvisation in the anapallavi is the melodic fragment below:



SIDE TWO

Kruti Nathe raga, Adi tala (11:30)



Alapana
Tana
Pallavi
Anapallavi

Only the pallavi and anapallavi are written in this composition by Muttuswami Dikshitar, a 19th-century Madras composer. These are a set of variations on the theme:



Raga Malica with tilana: Adi tala (15:45)

The ragas included are:

Malica 1

Kannada

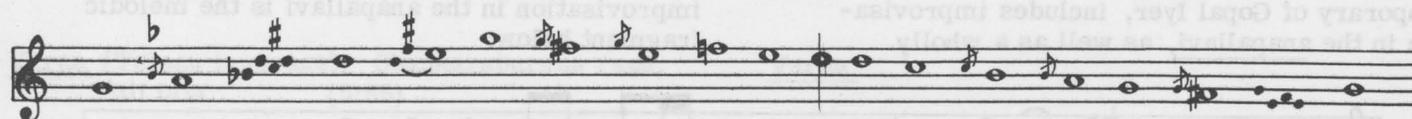
2

Kalyani

3

Ranjani

4 Devagandhari



5 Varali



6 Todi



7 Shankarabharana



8 Madyamavati



The tilana (which returns to Kannada) is a short "theme" (given below) followed by a set of improvised variations. This particular tilana is on a theme of North Indian origin.



Recorded December 18, 1963, by Joseph Byrd,
at the Institute of Ethnomusicology, UCLA,
Los Angeles, California