

# THE JOURNEY OF INDIAN MUSIC: FROM ANCIENT ROOTS TO CONTEMPORARY EXPRESSIONS

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## Abstract

The Indian music has evolved with time to reflect the spiritually, socially and culturally diverse nature of India. Indian music comes in various forms, although classical music is unique in its way since it is deep and it has a religious foundation. The Indian classical music encompassing both the Hindustani and Carnatic versions has evolved with time but has retained its philosophy and linguistic connections. This genre is still being transformed in a significant manner by the utilisation of worldly influences, digital tools, and workplace across the disciplines during this period. The fusion music is gaining popularity and Bollywood is really popular. This indicates that the two are compatible. The Indian classical music has survived in the modern globalized and fast evolving art scene. This paper examines how it has managed to do this. The present research looks at the complex interaction between tradition and modernization, with the focus on the remaining relevance, inspiration, and strong connection of Indian classical music with Indian tradition.

**Keywords** – Evolution, Indian, Classical Music, Globalization, Contemporary Arts, Digital Age

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## INTRODUCTION

Music is the study or artistic creation of the arrangement of sounds in melody and rhythm<sup>1</sup> Music has been used by people the world over and of all walks of life to communicate with people and express their ideas and emotions since time immemorial. Classical music is not a new thing to the Indian culture, be it during religious rites or during a social gathering. Indian classical music is not just a form of art, it is a subject of serious study which relates to religion, philosophy as well as science.

With the advancement of civilization, music has advanced. It has evolved to being a mere raga performance to being a complex Vedic hymn recitation. It has evolved over time to conform to the societal changes, which include, invasions, cultural exchange, revolution of technology and historical events. It has accomplished this by incorporating new pieces without losing the critical element of it. This paper explores how Indian classical music has evolved to meet the demands of contemporary art with the view to an ability to maintain its identity yet absorb new ideas.<sup>6</sup>

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This paper examines the development of classical Indian music, the cultural interactions and its topicality through the interdisciplinary and qualitative prism. The methodology includes content analysis, historical analysis, and literature. It is a mixture of ancient musicological resources with new artistic explanations.

### Research Design

This paper is exploratory-descriptive in nature to consider the transformation and modernization of Indian classical music in its relation to numerous genres of art. The plan is rooted in the fact that social, musical and historical patterns are examined in terms of their content and subject matter and not in terms of experimental data.

### Sources of Data

The main sources used in this research include secondary sources, which has been gathered through some relevant and reliable sources, which include: There are three books on classical music, namely *Natyashastra*, *Brihaddesi* and *Sangita Ratnakara*. Published books and articles on musicology, cultural studies and ethnomusicology contained in scholarly journals. Obituaries and interviews with related music people discussing their lives and their work. Tapes of films and performances and collections of cultural groups. Published works of famous Indian groups such as All India Radio, Sangeet Natak Akademi, and ITC Sangeet Research Academy. Websites, music streaming services, etc. to help comprehend modern interpretations and fusion works.

### Data Collection and Interpretation

Our approach is through the application of the Ancient, Medieval, Colonial, Post-Independence, and Contemporary themes. The style of composition, cultural influence, ways of performing, education, technology, globalization and technical development were some of the key areas that emerged during these eras. The other criterion was qualitative content analysis: The sounds and images of certain raga songs. Video and audio

recordings to see how style of performance develops and how the audience is involved. Detailed interviews with musicians is published to enable us to learn more on how classical music has impacted on the modern art.

### **Original of Indian Classical Music**

Musical chanting began in the Samaveda, a sacred book in the Vedic era of India. It is here that the Indian music we all know today began. The chants of the Samavedic were rigid tonal patterns and they were rendered using definite musical tones referred to as svaras. The chants formed the foundation of the later evolution of the complex systems of ragas and talas which are extremely important in Indian classical music.

Two styles of Indian classical music: Carnatic and Hindustani music: even though these styles have certain philosophical and historical foundations, they developed independently. This was due to the fact that the Persian music was rather popular in the region between the 1500s and the 1800s. Their accents and ragas are however not normally the same.<sup>7</sup>

### **Ancient Indian Music**

Indian music is one of the oldest music traditions in the world which has its primary text written in the Vedas written between 4000 and 1000 BC. The Indian music was initially codified in the Sama Veda. It is one of the four Vedas. Here, the initial 7-note scale was built by the addition of three notes to the tetrachord.

Books such as that of Bharata Muni Natyashastra and Matanga Muni Brihaddesi made music a formal subject over the years. The books discussed some of the earliest to discuss jatis (labial ragas) and performance. Back in the olden days, people tended to write music as a ritual or a service to the god in order to invite the god or maintain the balance of the universe.<sup>4</sup>

Silappatikaram is a literary work, authored by IlangoAdigal, a renowned scholar in the palace of the Chera Kings and had literary counterparts to the ancient Tamil music system. This reflects the fact that the South Indian musical culture was rich in the regions, and it was usually influenced by the local mentality.

The two Indian old cities (Mohenjo-daro and Harappa) demonstrate how creative and civilized people can be. The excavation has uncovered new and exciting facts about the music of that period. Sculptures and engravings of various types of clay have musical instruments, and this allows us a hint of the rich culture of these peoples who are no longer present.

Some individuals also imagine the well-known image of a man playing on a percussion instrument resembling a dhol with a tiger when they listen to the sacred or secular music. Other male musicians however wear drums around their necks. There is a beautiful sculpture of a woman carrying a drum under her left arm which can serve as a reminder of the power of women in music. They attached the skins of various animals on a wooden frame and tightened them to construct the dhol. The material did not possess any inherent acoustic qualities but the way it was manufactured allowed it to be played in order to produce deep, resonant sounds that could be used during serious occasions.

### **Medieval Indian Music : A Historical Transition**

Much of the history of great music in India occurred during the Middle Ages that spanned the sixth century to the eighteenth century. The most popular form of classical music in the north is Hindustani and in the south is the Carnatic. The reason why they both occurred at this time was because of a combination of some cultural and geographic factors. Indian music genres of the time before the 1300s shared the most fundamental concepts of the octave, shruti (microtones), and saptaswaras. The fundamental conception was the same throughout the subcontinent. It was Haripala who first in a written work distinctly divorced "Hindustani" and "Carnatic" music. He also brought those words to light very clearly.

When the Muslims replaced in northern India a lot changed. Due to this fact, the Persian and Arabic establishments were aware of much about the Indian music particularly in the royal courts where music was of great importance and was frequently played. Through these interactions new elements and styles were incorporated in the Indian music and the strange blend that resulted out of this is where the Hindustani classical music originated.

Due to this fact, the old musical traditions of the southern India were provided with the possibility not to be altered by external forces. The local kings and Hindu temples played a very important role in preserving and diffusing classical music. This allowed it to develop itself, without any external assistance. This is what has preserved the Vedic origins of carnatic music. Vedas are the oldest known texts in India, and the origin of the Hindustani, as well as the Carnatic, classical music.<sup>2</sup>

The Indian music evolved during the Middle Ages. There began to develop two systems:

### **Hindustani Classical Music (North Indian)**

Hindustani music came into being due to the influence of Persian and Mughal in the northern part of India. It has now new genres and instruments, such as the tabla and the sitar. Music and culture merged in the Mughal courts. Tansen and Amir Khuro contributed to the genre greatly since they created new gharanas and methods to play.

### **Carnatic classical Music( South Indian)**

This is because foreign invasion did not have so much influence on the Carnatic music and hence it was in a position to remain faithful to old Vedic traditions. The Bhakti movement heavily inspired this style and the saint composers such as Thyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Syama Sastri also included devotional songs in their music. Carnatic music incorporated the violin, veena and mridangam as vital elements of music. The two schools of thought are advancing in unison, although they are not similar. Both the Renaissance and the Contemporary Revival are examples of the modern age.<sup>9</sup>

### **Modern Era : Revival and Renaissance**

The modern era of Indian classical music has seen musicians and scholars emphasize the preservation and revival of traditional musical knowledge.<sup>3</sup> Since the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Indian music did not fare well and had no idea of what to do. India was divided into small princely states when Mughal Empire disintegrated. Due to this reason, the tradition of music that the court had previously upheld became weakened. Earlier on, royal patronage had been effective among many musicians. However, when smaller courts in such places as Baroda, Jaipur, Rampur, Gwalior, Murshidabad, Dacca and Mysore continued to subsidise the arts, they had to seek assistance elsewhere.

The classical music in India was not the concern of the British colonial government during the time. They were supposed to educate the high Indians about western ideologies and values and this made Indian art forms less significant. Since a lot of good musicians were unable to get proper funding, they have to do with less formal training or even perform in less popular venues. This deteriorated the aesthetic value of the classical music.

Many noble families and nawabs were deprived of money and power by the British government and this reduced the sums of money available to fund arts. This implied that a large number of musicians were forced to abandon their careers and seek alternative careers. There were those musical traditions or gharanas which could endure with the change in the weather that preserved their traditions with their system that depended on family and followers.

The individuals were beginning to communicate with one another in different ways, which included gramophone, radio and, eventually the television. The manner in which people played, listened to as well as enjoyed music in these areas altered gradually yet certainly as Western musical styles entered India and influenced the Indians in their music. Meanwhile, the traditional court music was losing favour, thus providing Indian music with opportunity to attract new audiences in the contemporary world.

The social conventions have changed since the 1800s, and attempts have been made to popularize Indian classical music and protect it. Although guru-shishya model remained relevant, academic institutions, radio (particularly All India Radio) and music conferences became even more significant in promoting classical music.<sup>1</sup>

In 1947, the year India gained independence, there was revival of the culture. An Indian musical tradition was invented as a national symbol. The Sangeet Natak Akademi and other organizations of this nature were established to enable the classical musicians to perform in festivals. The popularity of pop music grew tremendously within the shortest period of time but the classical music managed to maintain a small yet significant following. It evolved and was included in movie scores, assorted with other forms of music, and lastly the academy.

### **Contemporary Landscape: Globalization and Innovation**

The Indian classical music is currently experiencing the golden age since the world is getting interconnected to an extent never seen before. Due to the emergence of the internet and other technical innovations, artists can now easily communicate with people across the entire globe than ever before. Instagram, Spotify and YouTube are all turned into performance spaces and we can now all see and hear what we desire. Due to this, collaboration between jazz, techno, and world music continue to increase in number in these websites. Established musicians adhere to the raga grammar but experiment with audio sources of other parts of the world. It has brought Indian classical music to a different generation of listeners with locations such as Coke Studio and in other music festivals across the world despite its issues. There is a fear that although new ideas will attract more listeners, the richness and genuineness of the heritage will be lost. A happy medium between being individuals and creating new ideas is one that should be discussed further.

### **Healing Power of Indian Classical Music**

Indian classical music has been used by people to make them heal since it is known to make people calm. Studies suggest that some ragas can affect the mental and physical health. Conversely, Raga Yaman causes joy and satisfaction where Raga Bhairavi promotes calmness and introspection. Studies on music therapy have shown that ragas reduce stress, lower blood pressure, and improve concentration levels. Classical music is becoming more popular in wellness programs and holistic health programs due to its spiritual foundations and relaxing beats.

### **Contemporary Indian music Q: Tradition meets Innovation**

The Indian music has evolved significantly over the last several decades. It has introduced new styles and technology and retained its rich history. The new and interesting methods of communication to the people all around the world are being employed by modern artists. They combine traditional melodies with the new sounds.

### **Fusion Music: Bridging Cultures and Sounds**

Fusion music is an excellent illustration of the variety that India is good at music. Artists are producing new sounds by blending more traditional styles of music with more modern ones such as jazz, rock and electronic music. This music is a good example of how Indian instruments are transformed to accommodate various genres and cultures.

### **Embracing Technology in Music**

The impact of modern technology on Indian music has been very significant. The resources available to artists are greater than ever before to experiment with sound and style due to the improved recording techniques and the development of new technology. The other best thing about the digital media is that the process of reaching out to people at any part of the globe is very easy to the artists. Electronic fusion is a genre of music which is gaining popularity. It blends Indian traditional instruments such as bansuri, tabla and sitar with electronic beats and effects. When artists such as Nucleya and Karsh Kale brought this sound to the frontline, this will forever alter the perception people had about Indian music.

Greater International Availability: The expansion of the Internet means has significantly influenced the dissemination and research of Indian music. The Indian instrumental music is more accessible than ever before due to the to music schools, video sharing websites as well as music applications that teach, allow people to play live and allow students to collaborate with one another.<sup>8</sup>

### **Limitations**

This research is purely based on literature reviews and observation and does not involve fieldwork or ethnographic interviews. It attempts to circumvent this, however, through artist statements made available to the public, oral histories made on tape and interviews made digitally.

### **Recent Trends and International Presence**

The Indian classical music remains very popular globally. There are numerous well-known artists who perform in other nations, and most international students go to India to study with ancient gurus. Many school institutions and higher learning institutions throughout the world offer courses on Indian music. Many individuals favour blended bands and other types of cross-cultural teamwork. It is through online workshops, virtual performances and online archives that the study and enjoyment of this ancient form of art is transformed.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Indian classical music has been preserved and flourished due to the intellectual background it has and its history. It has accepted modernity without losing its spiritual society and structural sophistication. The art form currently lies in the crossroads of history and the new concepts and unites centuries of the tradition with the contemporary preferences. The actual challenge would be to determine whether it is possible to port it to other platforms without diminishing its integrity. One of the ways to ensure that Indian classical music is preserved as a living heritage is to make the smart use of technology, establish relationships with people in other nations, and rejuvenate educational programs.

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