Any consideration of music in relation to moksha merits a synthetic analysis of three perspectives: music in moksha; moksha in music; and music as moksha.

Music in moksha is a spiritual experience. When one on the path of music takes to "nādēnu-sāndhāna", he lovingly and respectfully binds himself to a discipline required of him by the quest. The discipline of the seven manifest 'svaras' etc. is not at all easy to observe; it
entails an austere life of total dedication, sincere adherence and hard toil round the clock. The word of the Master Musician -- a human embodiment of Nāda Brahma -- is the key to his conduct, a sovereign command to be obeyed with faith and without 'butts'. For that is the way to music. What is sung by way of practice, as per master's instructions, is not the real music but only a replica there of. Cooking is not eating, though it may lead to it. The 'mārga' leads to, but is not the 'manzil'. 'Mārgi' music, how so ever effective and alluring, is only a pale shadow of the soulfulness of music which is nāda-brahma. He who realizes this as a result of sincere, ceaseless and devotional practice of 'mārgi' sangita for a long time and is graced by the Guru, enjoys the bliss and blessedness of 'moksha' which is end of all disciplines and purusartha (पुरुषार्थ). Moksha is man's own real nature, but enmeshed as he is in the 'I' and 'My' mire of ego perceptions that lead to separative and divisive tendencies which bind, he reaches and realizes it not only when his ascending sādhanā born of hard toil and the descending Grace of Guru, the Godman, coalesce into each other, the Inner Music is heard in the
liberative infinity of Sound eternal reverberating in the corridors of the Self. 'Mērgi' music is in 'Deshī' Sangita which is the 'moksha-dhāma' (मोक्षधाम), the liberating-source of the former. Music is thus there in moksha.

Till one achieves self-realization through personal effort as inspired, instructed and graced by a powerful Sadguru, it is of no use to talk of moksha or 'nādānubhava' and 'nāda-brahma'. But this much can be averred with due legitimacy that every successful step taken on the path of freedom is sufficient to yield an experience of release from bondage entailed in at least a step so taken. For example, four steps must inevitably be taken by one aspiring to achieve a perennial state of post-degreetal freedom in the field of formal education. The four steps are: higher secondary; graduations; post-graduation; and doctoral degrees. When one takes the first step by passing the higher secondary examinations, one is qualified to undertake graduation course of one's choice. By implication, the aspirant has freed himself from the bondage of fear and ignorance which haunted him before he crossed the first hurdle.
And when he passes through the second and enters the post-graduation course, he experiences and enjoys the freedom from fear and nescience that pinched him before he acquired success in taking the second step of decorating him with a University degree of graduation. So, he goes on and on till he reaches the acme of formal education which crowns his steps of success with the award of Doctoral Degree of literature (D.Litt.). Each step forward releases him from the fear of the former and a time comes when no fear remains. He is free. Likewise, on the long, arduous and zigzag path of 'mārgi' sangita one has to cross hurdles after hurdles through regular and round-the-clock hard practice involved in Sangitopāsana of the highest quality before a window is opened and entry allowed into the kingdom of Nāda Brahma. Each step taken ahead in 'nādopāsana' is a sweet experience of release from the tension of nescience of a 'raga' specifically now realized. Though there is only an experience of release in piece-meal or installments, each step is decidedly a step into larger freedom ultimately leading into the experience of the endless expanse of Nāda. Moksha is in music at each step. 'Tan-mayatā
deep absorption in music is 'moksha' in music, par excellence.

When the journey is complete and destination reached, the former is fulfilled in the letter and the letter fuses and flows into the former with fullness of life and music supreme. There the music, like the Ganges flowing into the ocean, mingles and mixes up with moksha, losing its separative or distinctive identity altogether. And, as Jagadguru Shankarāchārya sang out: 'jeevavrāhmiva na para'. So also it can be averred with similar zest for truth: music is moksha and moksha music.

The inalienable kinship of unity between music and moksha may be better appreciated through the analogy of the 'seed-end-tree law' - Bijs-Vriksha-Nāyaya. The seed is in the tree (i.e., in the fruit on the tree); the tree is in the seed; and the seed is the tree.

Briefly, the oak lies asleep in an acorn. In other words, tree is sleeping in the tree but it is not visible. It becomes manifest only when the seed is sowed in a fertile piece of soil and
water is given in due proportion so that after the lapse of few days, as a result of the play seed, soil, water and sunshine, the seed gets burst and sprouts up breaking the crest of the soil. Lo, the seed is torn and the plant is born. As months and years roll by the plant grows into a mighty tree, giving shade and shelter to many. It is the same small acorn, the tiny seed, which has now developed into a big oak like tree. When the tree enters the blossom of its youthful growth, numerous fruits are seen growing on its multiple branches. And, when the tree is graced by its seasonal touch fruits ripen and are plucked for human consumption. People eat and enjoy the fruit, but the careful and expert planters choose some ripened fruits, dry them up and from each fruit they take out the necessary seeds for future plantation. It is the same seed which became the tree and is ready again to be reborn. The cycle continues. Fruit is the fulfilment of seed via full growth into tree. Now, the tree was invisibly sleeping in the seed; when the tree woke up; the outer shell of the seed was broken, and as it began to develop and branch out, earlier limitations gave way and it gained in form as well as in spirit. The seed fruitioned in time
to deliver more seeds. A seed became the
germinating ground of several new seeds. The
seed is in the tree. The tree was in the seed.
And, now, the seed is the tree and vice versa.
The seed, the tree, the fruit - all are one.

In the same manner, we can see how the
'mārgī' music is the seed; music on the pathway of
regular and ceaseless practice is the tree of
music; and 'deshī' music is the ripened and juicy
fruit on the tree which becomes the 'yoni' of
'mārgī' seeds for different seekers of musical
excellence in the expert hands of the 'Deshika',
the planter of music in the heart of a sangita-
sādhaka.

'Mārgī' sangita enters the Book of Music;
it is the scriptural seed. When this seed is sown
by the Deshika in the 'hrit-bhoomi' (ह्रीतभूमि)
i.e., soil of heart of the aspirant of musical
blossom in life, the seed gets torn and plant of
music is born in aspirant's life - 'hrideyasthali'
(ह्रीदयस्थली) - as and how the loving care and
devotional fervour with which the plant of musical
practice is tended by the sadhaka of 'mārgī sangita'
and as and how the seed, the soil and the sun
(deshiks) come into full play with the bestowal of sun's grace, the plant blooms into tree; tree gains the blossom of fruits and, lo, the seed of 'mārgi' sangita has fulfilled itself into the fruit of 'deshi' sangita. The scriptural word is transcended; the Vina of Life's music begins to fill the life of an aspirant – become – deshika'.

Music is released from its earlier bonds. Not only is music free, music is itself freedom incarnate. Music is moksha. Only a 'Deshika' i.e., a Vēggyakāra who is a perfect embodiment of 'shabda' brahma and 'nāda' brahma in human form knows it from direct, first hand and intuitive mystical experience of Nada Brahma that from the viewpoint of aspirants' intellectual perception 'music is in moksha', from the 'mārgi' music practitioner's point of view 'moksha is in music'; and from the 'deshi' sangitajna's viewpoint music and moksha are two names of the one Reality - the Nāda Brahma.

Music is thus not only a rhythmic and melodic means to self-realization or mukti, music itself is the revelation of the self, the Brahman. This is precisely the meaning and message Sri Soranga Deva wishes to convey through the verse of
'manglêcharana' to his monumental work on Indian Classical music 'Sangita Ratnakar':

चेतान्यं सर्वं मूलांं विषूंतं नन्दाय्यं ।
गणेनन्दं नन्दानन्दं मद्विकीयमयामयेः ॥ ९

i.e., We worship (upasmaha) the Nâda Brahma (nâda brahma) which is the life and consciousness in all creatures (chaitanyam serva bhootanam), which appears in the form of the world (विषूंतं अष्ट), which is bliss 'par excellence' (नन्दानन्दं) and which is nondual (अद्वित्यम)

He also says that all the gods of the famous Trinity - Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesha - are assuredly worshipped beyond doubt by Nâdopâsanâ because they are nâdatmakā-ha.

अद्वित्यपास्थितं देवा विष्कृतं महेश्वरं ।
अद्वित्यपास्थितं भृषं अहमदेन्तं नन्दाय्यं॥ २.

Saranga Deva rightly sings elsewhere in this very voluminous treatise that Siva, the Ultimate Reality

2. Ibid, p. 54.
out of whom everything including the whole creation emanates, in whom it is preserved and promoted, and by whom everything is soaked and sucked up into nothingness, is the Fount Eternal of Music which fills the universe and is called 'nāda tanu', the body or form of Nāda. He says:

नन्दे नादतनु तमुदुर्भणजातिं सुदे शंकुर्म्।

Music is thus the song of soul. Soul is none other than Shiva or Shankar. That is why Devarshi Narada, 'the first Bhagawat - musician' who proclaims playing his Vina and singing aloud 'Nārayana, Nārayana' was explicitly told by the Lord that 'O, Narada! I stay where my devotees adore Music and sing with cheer' - मद भक्ते यत्रा गर्यां तरा तिथाम, Narada! No wonder 'Nāda-Moorti' St. Tyaga Raja had adored Nārada as his Guru and in one of his kannada poems on Narad he calls Narada "the honey-bee on the lotus of Nāda" - Sri Narada Nāda Sāresiruha Shringa. And, in his Vesanta Song - Etla Dorikitivo - Tyaga Raja

says that it is as a fruit of his sweet music that he has been able to realize God - "Susuaroopa Nêde Phalamo". 4

Maharshi Yajna Valkya's conclusive observations in his Smriti are a pointer to the same logical deduction that music paves the pathway to spiritual liberation or 'moksha'.

i.e., The constant singing of the Rik (vedic mantras), Gatha, song of soul (Brahma-Gitika), Panika etc. verily beston's divine. Status called 'moksha' (III.4). He who knows the truth of Vina music, is also adept at Srutis and their varieties and is the best knower of tala etc., reaches the zenith of moksha - merge without effort and exertion (a-prayasen).

4. Ibid, p. 44.

Music is thus a much nobler and higher revelation than philosophy. Reference needs to be made here to Tyoga Raj's song in Chitta-Ranjani (sung in Kharahara-priya), a Sanskrit composition, in which he pays obeisance to Siva, whose body is Nāda, who is the quintessence of Śāma Veda, the delightful and the best of the Vedas, and from whose five faces Sadyojata etc., the svaras emanated. He sings with love, faith and devotional experience thus:

It deserves to be noted that in this purely Sanskrit poetic piece, Tyaga Raja has incorporated part of mangalasaram of Sangita Ratnakar of Sārng Daśa.

seeks my shelter and achieves liberation." But St. Tyaga Raja says that in this very human birth man can enjoy 'moksha' and be lodged in the light of one's own supreme self only through divine music and devotional music itself is 'jeevan mukti'. In one of his songs he juxtaposes Veda and Sāstra, Advaita Jñāna and the secrets of the Nāda Vidya, implying thereby that a mastery of the secrets of music confer the same 'Summum bonum' as Vedantic knowledge and spiritual realization gained by metaphysical pursuits.

One may ask as to how does music lead to moksha. M. Harkare writes in his article entitled 'Sangita Se Samedhi Tak' i.e., from music to moksha, that "Sangita Śāstra is essentially based on yoga Sāstra whose paramount objective is Self-realization which makes one 'jeevan - mukta". Yoga is absolute control of mind and sense through disciplined concentration of mind - "Chitta Vritti Nirodha".

---

For, this one pointedness or concentration of mind—manas-ekagreyam (मनस एकाग्रेयम्)—is the prerequisite of salvation and is the first step on the path of Brahma-jnana:

Vijnāneshwar, the author of Mitākshara finds this significant especially in sage Yajna Valkya's expression 'tal-jnanascha' (तालज्ञानस्य), for the constant attention which tala requires when singing, brings about concentrations of mind which serves as a springboard for transcendence into meditation which leads to spiritual freedom. 

Thus it is seen that the Moksha-Sādhan-Tattva of music is through enabling the mind to develop the power of contemplation conducive for a deeper devotional dive into the music of soul. For, till the aspirant is with 'Shabda' Brahma, he is on the path of 'mārgi' Sangita, however refined, rejuvenating and rhythmically melodious it may be. This 'Shabda' brahma—the seed of music—has to be transcended and 'nāda' brahma experienced. In this experience


12. Ibid, p. 15.
that one expert in the music of 'shabda' brahma can enter after transcending the limiting barrier of the Word, the Realm of the Illimitable Param Brahma. This transcendence is of paramount significance for it is the only door-way for the 'margi' sangita to fulfil itself into the 'deshi' sangita. The seeker of music enters the source and, becoming one and identical with it, realizes himself as the Supreme soul, free from all bonds and limitations that fetter. Moksha is his music.

There seems to be no better way of closing the discussion of this chapter than to cite the immortal words of wisdom of Adi Acharya Shankar

13. Ibid, p. 16.
and the holy exhortation of devotion by St. Tyaga Raja - the former is Parama Jnāni and the latter is Parama Bhakta says Bhagawans Shankara Chārīrya:

नोदनुसन्धानलं नमोऽस्तु तुमस्य
तो आश्चर्ये तत्त्वाधमसे आने।
अवलंगीतान पवनेनं सपनं
विलासते किषु पदे भनेरे।।

I.e.

O, Nādānusandhāna! Salutations to Thee. For I have known the means of realizing that-hood. By thy Grace my mind merges, together with the breaths, in the perfect equipoise of Vishnu-pad 'i.e., Self or That-hood). In his Garuda-dhvani 'Kirtana', as if with a clarion call St. Tyaga Raja proclaims:

"श्री गणेशभक्तिदत्तो नामकारा
केशवेन गणेशब्रह्मसंहस्त काबड़
मीदनान्द देशसु मुख्य भाद्र"

i.e.,

"Rama! one that does not float on the ocean of music, adored by gods and Vedas, which is Brahamnated itself, is verily a burden to the earth".