CHAPTER - II

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Music is the Cream and Crowning achievement of the cultural evolution of the Seers and Sages of India. Since the very goal of Life on this part of the globe has been fixed up as the liberation of human soul from the thralldom of senses and separative limiting finite consciousness, music came to be conceived as one of the subtle means of reaching the acme of spiritual freedom called moksha. Music should evolve and enable the seeker to climb the
heights of supreme consciousness which constitutes the soulfulness of a mystic's perfection. True music is, in its ultimate analysis, the Song of the Soul.

Right from the vedic times of which recorded history is available, this Song of Soul has, like a mighty mystical fall, streamed off from the unthinkable and the invisible spiritual heights of self-realization, where all limitations of the finitude of body-mind complex melt and merged into the skylike expanse of Eternity, of supreme unitive consciousness, of indivisible, absolute and unmanifest reality of the spirit.

It was this stream which flowed incessantly and structured itself variously matching the aspirations and abilities of the devotees of music, on the one hand, and meeting the needs of the time of which the devotees of music tend to become either creatures or creators, on the other. The texture of Indian classical music has ever been spiritual and as such those who are uninitiates in this discipline often find themselves duly stranded, if not confused, into the vagueness of its real spirit. It merits to be appreciated in context of the anguishcum-
advice of the late Romain Rolland who, while
talking to Shree Dilip Kumar Roy of the Aurobindo
Ashram in Pondicherry about Indian classical Music,
said: "I feel it would be wise to write about the
music of your country and tell us about its spirit.
Only, do not fight shy of the technicalities; you
would do well to explain to us not only the
sentiments of your mind in your deepest strata, but
also the technique whereby you arrive at the
translation of such sentiments. Otherwise we would
feel stranded, as it were, on a sort of vague
lyricism."

This has also been one of the inspirations
behind the work in hand and has been a factor in
lending this chapter the title 'Streams and
Structures of Music' in India.

Our scriptures tell us that the unmanifest
Brahman Sang from the depths of His Solemn Silence
'Ekoham Bahusyamaha' (एकोहम बहुशयमा:) and the
Sonorous sweet sound flowed out in the eternal
art-form of Nāda Brahma, the finest of the seven
fine arts and the Fount Eternal of all Music.
The flow came to be called Sāma-gāna when it streamed forth from the transcendental calmness of the Soul of the contemplative and meditative sages of the Vedic era. Sound Eternal from the Supreme Divine Consciousness was so spontaneous and sudden, so rhythmic and mystic, so perfect and pleasing that though the flow simultaneously or successively shaped itself into the twin forms of 'nada-maya-rupe' and 'devta-Maya-rupe', the Singing stream, perforce of its sublime charm, arresting resonance and liberating soulfulness, stayed with the seers in their post-meditative moments as the purest and the best means of invoking and enjoying once again the bliss and beatitude of the Divine Reality. Divine music thus happened to be the first enjoyable gift to human heart by the grace and power of the eternal presence of the Para Bhrahman. That's why music has come to be hailed as the sovereign art-form among the known disciplines of art and learning in India: 'na vidya Sangitat.'

2. Ibid, p. 52.
Music is the best and the finest of arts which found its fullsome expression first in Bharata-varsha, the land of the Rishis, and then elsewhere. Making Bharata the holy land and making the vedic seers the holy medii of divine nāade, music gushed out into various streams imbibing and exhibiting numerous forms and structures, raagas and talas, norms and nuances.

Music, God in sound form, chose the soulful silence and pious hearts of the vedic seers to flow and fashion Itself into the primordial musical sound which, in its own turn, melted and moulded itself through various sound-forms, singable hymns and mantras. This music was so charming that whosoever came under its spell became a mobile human mansion of music, divine in spirit and orientation, classical in structure and arrangement. The earliest chants of such music are known as the R.K. Vedic hymns.

4. Ibid, p. 22.

The Rk. Vedic chants were simple in form and religious in character because they were sung in the glory of some deities. Music was thus born in the spiritual depths of the contemplating vedic Rishis and it evolved in the religious disciplines of the Vedic Gāṇa. Early songs embody philosophical concepts, and are experiences of ethical precepts, art-pulsations and social criticisms. Singing thus came to be regarded by the Vedic people as an "act of dedication, penance and worship". For, as Naushad points out, "when you are lost in the realm of the modes, you get a glimpse of the Brahman activity." That is one big reason why art of music in India has always been an 'ally and illuminator' of religion.

Minister T.T. Krishnamachari, while addressing the Inaugural Session of Music East and West at Delhi in February, 1964, did rightly point out: "Because in India music is a part of

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7. Ibid, p. 51, India - Naushad
India's Culture, there could be no religion without music. Saintly people, the meditative seers often go to the length of saying that a man who does not know music, who has not got any ear for music, can't ever attain salvation. He goes on to opine that 'Indian music is philosophy. It cannot be divorced from devotion. Then the pedestal falls and then there is nothing for it to stand.'

The early classical music of India contained in the R.K. Vedic chants was 'simple in form and exclamatory in nature.' In the beginning, the Vedic hymns were sung on one note only. Therefore, the chants were called 'ārchipika'. The note used in the chant was a 'raised' note then known as 'udatta'. Since the hymn was sung in the 'udatta' swara, it was nearer reciting than singing. It lacked melodic life. This experience of one-note singing activity was soon utilized by the singing seer, sometimes consciously and often unconsciously, by adding or introducing into music certain gentle cadences to render music captivating, popular, and charming. Thus it was that the laws of rhythm were developed by the 'happy sequence of the long and short vowels occurring in words.'

The 'anudatta', or not raised 'swara was then the second 'swara'. 'Udatta' and 'un-udatta' represent the two main pitches of vedic singing. The sama-gāṇa or 'period of Tuning the Sāma Veda' reached and realized its next stage with the introduction of the balancing note between the raised and the not raised note i.e., the 'Svarita (Sounded) intratone. The notes now became three: Udātta, anudātta and Svarita. This period of the evolution of the musical tetrachord has gone down in Indian history as the Samik period of Vedic Music.

The earliest possible notes equivalent to these three were Ma, Pa and Sa respectively. Besides, the ancients were fully aware of the tonal unity of these notes Ma- above Pa- below. After the discovery of this tetrachord they realized the high degree of consonance which udātta, above and anudatta - below had with the fundamental note. They also found udātta to repeat below anudatta at the same intervals. This was how they came to appreciate and determine the accuracy of interval 'between udātta' and 'anudātta' which they call 'Antara' or the difference between the two notes. This went a long way in their bid to complete the scale.

'Rik Tantragi' - by Surya Kumar Shastri quoted by D. Goswami (1957), Ibid, p. 5.
It merits appreciation that the basic note of 'shadaja' was then in the Centre of the Scale. Only through the aid and use of the interval between Udātta and Anudātta it became possible to discover the seven notes of our classical music. The completion of the scale was a milestone in the evolution of music in our country. Thus music that evolved in the vedic Age was both spiritual as well as non-spiritual. It was spiritual in the sense that it sprang up from the deep silence of the meditative contemplation of the rishis, without any effort on their part; it was non-spiritual in the sense that the persons who heard the song of Soul flowing out musically from the meditations of Sages and seers, began to hum that song with effort and imitation, thus giving birth to new form of music. Thus the early Vedic music streamed itself out in two main ways: the spiritual and the human; but both these streams were religious to the core in the sense that both were put in the service of God as a way of worship. The former came to be called 'Deshi' and the latter "Margi." Religion was however at the base of both,
since it was essentially the religious inspiration that gradually fulfilled itself in the perfect lodgement of the rishi in the subline state of transcendental meditation and divine contemplation, a state where from music sprang up and streamed forth into various rhythmic, sweet and sonorous singable patterns. Thus the Vedic Music, known today as Sāma-gāna, evolved through the medium of songs and singing processes of the hymn-singers and hymn-chanters and their laws, materials and processes conceived and formulated in due course, are contained in three main Song-books, 'Grāma-geya-gāna', 'Aranya-geya-gāna', and 'Uha' and 'Uhya-gānas'. These three Vedic Song-books writes Śuami Prajnananda, were "really composed of three kinds of Rks or collections of verses and those Rks were 'Purvārēchikā', 'Aranyakā-Sāṁhitā', and 'Uttārārēchika'. Three verses were the sources or womb (yoni) of the songs. These flowed out of the musical chants of the mystics.

Ere we take up the discussion of evolution of music in the post-vedic era, it would be desirable and noteworthy to fully appreciate or
understand the real meaning and distinction of the two forms of Vedic Music - Deshi and Margi noted above. Suami Prajnananda does not seem to be right when he subscribes to the view held by Dr. A.K. Coomaraswamy in his book 'Christian and Oriental philosophy of Art' that 'The distinction of Marga from Deshi is not necessarily a distinction of aristocratic and cultivated from folk and primitive art, but one of sacred and traditional from profane and sentimental art.' As already pointed out the Margi Sangeet was meant for the seekers of the Song of Soul. These Seekers religiously observed all the rules of hymn-singing as were instructed to them by the mystic Musicians, the Vedic Rishis. In the Sangeet Darpana, the highway Music is called as Marga because it flowed from Shiva or Druhina and was practised by Bharata. Thus Margi Music evolved as that branch of Vedic music which was practised by the initiates into the mysticism of the vedas. It was with great enthusiasm, thorough observances of the rules, strict adherence to the musical discipline laid down by the singing

seers that the learners had to adept themselves in the 'Margi' music which served as a pathway to God-realization. Thus it was that this music, though sacred and religious, was called Margi. It was neither profane nor sentimental as Dr. Coomarswamy points out and Swami Prajnanananda substantiates. Dr. Coomarswamy is, however, right when he examines the word 'Marga' from its root word 'Mrig' which means to chase or hunt, especially by tracking. Precisely then, 'a Margi' singer is on the way to self-realization through music. Margi music is thus a non-spiritual but religiously inspired form of Nādopāsanā.

Deshi music, has thus to be viewed as the Music of the Soul. For, this music is 'divine' in origin, orientation and expression. It is from the Fount Eternal that this music flows out and streams forth into various structural forms. In Vedic terminology the word 'Deshika' stands for the spiritual Master i.e., the Guru. The word desha is a composite of 'da' and isha i.e. delivered by God. In Srimad Bhagawat Gita it is clearly mentioned that God is himself the music as well as the source of Music: (Lord Krishna says:

इश्कर: कविकृतानां| हेदोहरिं तिस्तुति
Ishwaraha Sarva Bhootanam Hriddesha-rjuna Tishthati

i.e. God resides in the heart-region of all the beings.

Somewhere else in the same scripture Lord Krishna declares: वेदान्तं सामवेदान्तिः i.e., 'I am the Sāmaveda among the Vedas'.

By implication God manifests himself into the sound principle and becomes music. And the expression of music needs a vehicle. The meditating and contemplating hearts are chosen by Him as the vehicles of the music that he is. Thus God is both the Guru as well as music. Music, God and Guru are inseparable. Spiritually speaking, God is the music and God is the musician. Such music in which God himself becomes the musician is called the 'deshi' music.

The fact that the ancient music of India has been classified as 'Vedic' and 'Laukik' also substantiates the above assumption. Both the 'deshi' and the 'Margi' music are the vedic music in as much as they are spiritual in content and character.
It would, therefore, be most appropriate to regard 'deshi' music as the 'Music of Samādhi' and 'Margi' music as one that leads to it. The former is the goal of the latter. The 'Chhandoka' of the Vedas is the master Singer of the 'deshi' gāna. The 'deshi' is the goal, the 'Margi' is the highway to it.

On the basis of this assumption which has its root in the spiritual experience of the reality as is mentioned in the mystical lore of India, the 'deshi' music should be appreciated and understood as music of soul in Samādhi. The word 'deshi' in Vedic age and literature did not mean local. It would thus be worthy of us, as the progeny of the sages and seers of India, to restore 'deshi' music of the Vedic times to the pride of place it enjoyed with our Rishis. It would be erroneous to regard, as Dr. A.K. Coomarswamy and Swami Prajnananda have done, 'deshi' music as the music of the rustics.

Today, the word 'deshi' has suffered a distortion in its meaning. The spell of time lies at the root of it.
A time there should have been when the
term 'deshi' and 'Margi' were understood in their
ture perspective. A time there came when the term
Margi usurped the real import and original meaning
of the term 'deshi'. A time has come today when
the term 'deshi' had been emptied of its Vedic
implication and has been given a new connotation—
Today it stands for 'regional' music. A serious,
scholarly and deeper probe into the verses of
Brihaddesi written by the great musicologist
Matanga reveals that the term 'deshi' was used to
mean and imply 'Dhwani'. The shloka says:

देशी देशी प्रवृत्तसृषी चविनेदशीति संज्ञितः

De'sey De'sey prabrttasseu dhvanirdes'i
ti

Sanggitah,

Professor Arun Bhattacharya of Ravindra Bharati
University, Calcutta, points out that K. Sambasiva
Shastri, the editor of Trivandrum edition (1928)
of the MS Brihaddesi, which was first exhibited
from Travancore at the All India Conference of
scholars and artists at Indore in 1921, was the
first to quote the most significant shloka that
appears in the very first page of treatise.
According to him Matanga equates the term 'deshi' with dhvani. To him dhvani is of supreme importance. Matanga regards dhvani in its true metaphysical perspective when he says that 'dhvani is to be regarded as the supreme source (yoni) and the root of all that is; the entire world of inert and alert matter is pervaded by dhvani.' The shloka says:

ङणिवर्णम् पशु स्वायत्ते द्वैते: स्विस्मय ज्ञातम्।
आपूर्ते द्वैतमानः स्वयं जगत स्थायिकमात्॥

Dhvani, says Matanga is of two kinds: Vyakta and Avyakta. The Vyakta dhvani is that which becomes manifest when it is rendered vocally after having heard during the course of transcendental poise where the dhvani is generating. It is the heart region of different seers of music where dhvani becomes Vyakta. This is Nāda-Brahma. The term 'deshi' has thus to be understood as a fulfilment of music and the term 'Mārgi' has to be viewed as the pathway discipline of classical music leading

to it. The vedic music is thus 'deshi' and 'Mārgi'. 'Mārgi' is the devotional discipline and 'deshi' is the fulfilment thereof.

In this context alone these two terms merit recognition and deserve to be appreciated in that very light where ever they appear in the epoch making treatise of the great musicologist before and after Bharat. Take, for example 'Manglecharana' of Sharangdeva in his monumental work Sangeet-Ratnakar wherein the author prays and bows down to Lord Shankar Manifest in Nada-Form. It is this Mystical root which has to be borne in mind when the three verses (22nd to 24th) are brought under scrutiny. The 'Mārgi' and 'deshi' terms will then certainly yield meaning which is spiritually delivered by the Sage Musicians right from the ancient times. As far as the term Mārga is concerned the critics of the musicological text have done some justice at least in the sense that it is taken in the sense of 'pathway'. Professor G.H. Tarlekar, while commenting upon the twenty second verse referred to above in his three - Volumed commentary on Sangeet Ratnakar, regards 'Mārgi' music as one
leading to self-realization. But he falls into the common error of the present day writers in regard to defining 'deshi' music; he equates 'deshi' with regional music. This is a sheer distortion of the original meaning implied in the term 'deshi'. To explore and arrive at the true definition of 'deshi', one has to keep in mind the supreme source of all music.

It is in this context that we shall have to redefine these two terms, restate the supreme objective of our classical music and then briefly spell out the various streams and structures that flowed forth from the vedic music till date.

Dr. Narayan Menon writes: "In the highest conception of arts, in India, religion and art are synonymous. This would be in accordance with the rationale of a hieratic society. Music is an instrument in the realization of God."

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a well known saying that God can be worshipped only when the worshiper becomes god.

The Golden Age - 5th to 12th Centuries

The golden age can be fixed at the 5th to the 12th centuries. It is the glories of this period that are codified in the monumental Natya Shastra of Bharat. After that we come across statement such as 'only that which accords with the canons is beautiful in the eyes of the discerning, not that which pleases individual fancy'. This implies a negation of the living relation of art to life. From now on music will have to be created, appreciated and criticised in its own terms. Dangerous theories of 'Formatism' began to appear. The ossification of the leisured class who alone had the cultural background necessary for critical appreciation develops 'Precocity'. The only thing which conditions favoured was the development of technique. The coming of the Muslims led to interesting developments in the North. The Muslims brought with them a very subtle art. The Persians had by the 10th century developed a singularly complete melodic scale. Their impact on Indian
music had strange effects. Indian music assimilated the new forces and theories. A delicate Muslim superstructure with fine curves was given to the robust body of Hindu music. The dominating and most important figure in this regeneration was Amir Khusro who settled in India in the 13th century and who was a great fertilising force in Hindustani music. He discovered some important and useful musical instruments.

The South, untouched by the influence of Islam kept up and developed the older and the more traditional style. The difference between the North and the South today is mainly a difference of style. Instrumental music is more developed in the North. The North has also brought into the main current a temporal element which has had a healthy effect. Both have their basis in the same system, both turn to the same sources for their authority; both represent pure melodic system.

One or two fundamentals should always be borne in mind. The first is that this music is conceived totally outside the Western system of tonality. There are no absolute values in Indian music. Pitches and intervals are purely relative
and bear no relationship to any staple standards. This music can be called Modal; but it is modal only in a technical sense. It is poles asunder from the modal music of the Greeks or medieval ecclesiastical music. To compare it with Gregorian musical chants is to overlook significant factors not merely to rhythm and construction but even of the whole conception of the music. The second fundamental point connected with the first is that Indian music is purely melodic. This factor governs almost every aspect of Indian music - the construction of the Melody, the varieties of rhythm, the preponderance of vocal music, the nature of the accompaniment, The importance attached to improvisation and the absence of any serious concerted music.

Purely melodic music means music which neither needs nor implies harmony. Harmony affects the structure of melody itself and it has become almost impossible for a Westerner to conceive of Melody without the implications, tacit or explicit of a harmonic system. In Western music, a melodic line is really the top or the surface line of a carefully constructed
harmonic structure. Thus in the building up of melody, the harmonic implications of substantive and passing notes and the relationship of these play an important part. Also, western melody has a tendency to develop round notes which are harmonically related to the Tonic. Indian music takes no note of these things and is even refractory to laws which govern Western melody. Thus the contrast between the Major and the 'Minor' used so effectively in the Western music would be meaningless in Indian music, unless it is emphasised and graduated by subtle shades of intonation non-existent in Western music.

If this music sounds strange or exotic to the west, it is because the west has lost the ear for pure melody and the feeling for just intonation. The use of quarter tone and smaller intervals is significant here. There is no such thing as an exact 'quarter-tone' in Indian music. Enterprising musical enthusiasts who build key-board instruments which can play quartertones only make things more difficult. The microtones of Indian music are produced by subtle shades of intonation by which a 'sharp' is often slightly sharpened and a 'flat' flattened.
Ragas - The basis of this melodic system is the Raga. The parallel to the word Raga in the west is 'Mode'. But a Raga is a much more definite concept. In a ragā not only are the notes used important but even the sequences of the notes are important. There are accented and unaccented notes. There are 72 fully septatonic ragas and in all these the fifth is constant; Thirty six have true fourths; 36 augmented fourths. This represents the maximum possibilities of a comparatively modern system of classification in use in the south. Each one of these 72 ragas forms the basis for several derivative Ragas. Some pentatonic, some hexatonic. In all, about 400 have been classified and are more or less in actual use. Accidental notes are rare, but where used, form an integral part of the Raga. Tala, the basis of Indian rhythm, is really a measure of time. Talas can be symmetric or asymmetric in shape. Often a bar is made up of say 4-2-2 (Adi Tala) or 5-5-4 Dhamar of Hindustani tala. Variations of talas do not always proceed in geometric progression. A variation of the Carnatic,— Aditala will be 5-2-2 or 3-2-2. There are accented and unaccented beats within a bar. For e.g. in the Karnatic Adi tala (4-2-2) the 1st, 5th and 7th are strongly accented.
beats. All these varieties of rhythm are possibly only in the Indian system, because it is not forced to accept symmetries of rhythm which are harmonic planning necessitates. The purely melodic concept is a capacity of the human voice. The glory of Indian music is, thus, its sung music is not highly developed in India. In variety and even in sheer numbers, India has as many instruments in everyday use, as Europe. The best of these instruments are capable of subtleties of intonation and nuances in excess of any instruments. But they all play—and this is where the preponderance of the vocal element comes in music which is essentially vocal in conception.

The laws which govern vocal and instrumental music are identical. So are the styles of improvisation. The singer or the instrumentalist is the centre; the figurehead of the musical idea. The highest art is purely contemporaneous and every musician is a creative artist in the fullest sense of the word and not merely an interpretative one as in the west. The singer's voice is capable of tremendous agility and is trained to achieve a purely 'white' tone. Beauty of tones as such is
comparatively unimportant. To an Indian musician, ‘voice’ is no more important than, say, handwriting to a poet. In this highly creative activity what a musician sings is more important than how he sings it. He is hardly ever a vehicle for the expression of other people’s ideas.

This pattern is natural to a society which has been essentially static, not stagnant, but static, as opposed to dynamic. A static society could have produced no other. It is a sophisticated and within its limits, rich pattern. European civilization upto the Renaissance presented a more or less similar order, though it did not reach the same level of sophistication. Then came tremendous social, political and economic upheavals – the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Industrial Revolution. Renaissance means the emergence of the individual – The Reformation, the beginning of serious criticism. Individual comprehension makes room for the community. Art becomes secular, music develops tonality. It moves out of the pôle of the church. This democratization is advanced to a further stage by the Industrial Revolution. Orchestration develops in music.
It is a transformation of somewhat similar kind that is happening in India now, from a feudal, static to a democratic dynamic society. The early superficial Angliciation had only a somewhat reactionary effect. It meant a top-heavy educational system, and ugly type. Vernacular literature became discredited. Indian styles of architecture fell into desuetude. A Mongrel school of painting sprang up which looked to the more respectable Victorian R.A's. for inspiration. Ravi Varma was the shining light of that period. But after the first period of confusion, disillusionment and decadence began the awakening of National consciousness — a consciousness which meant pride in national institutions and a general regeneration of the arts set in. After a long period of political and economical confusion, the attempt to rediscover our real bearings has started. History is mixed with legend, aesthetics, confused with dogma; theory with formalism, execution with rigid canons. Prof. Bhatkhande collected and codified all the existing material in a scientific manner on music. Dr. O.C. Ganguly, the authority on painting, gave us new perspectives. Music Academies are making the ancient texts available to the public. There are commercialisations and
vulgarisations in the field of cinema, but even they present a groping towards dynamics. Vishnudas Shirali, Ravishanker and Jayarama Iyer's orchestral renderings are quite successful. A complete re-orientation in social outlook would vitally affect the musical structure.