CHAPTER- 3

INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC
Introductory

We need not go deep down into the history to convince ourselves that the seed of music lies in the human voice itself. The very first attempts at music expression whether in India or elsewhere must have been in the religious chants.

In the research of the therapeutic potentiality in Indian classical music, a brief review of Indian ancient literature is inevitable, as the origin of Indian music is found in the Vedas. Music in India was deeply associated with the religious and social life of the people. The Vedas, the Puranas, the Tantric and other ancient literature of India are full of references to music. In fact, music was looked upon as the 5th veda known as the ‘Gandharva Veda’. A good amount of literature dealing with all this is either lost or has remained unexplored. However, the researcher has tried to and also might be able to draw attention to some of the important aspects which are particularly needed for this present venture.

But before we lean deeply in this vast divine ocean, we need to be clear with some of the technical terms from the Indian music required in correspondence of music therapy.
DEFINITIONS:

1. MUSIC: In India the most commonly used word to denote music is ‘Sangeet’. In its wider sense it also implies dance along with vocal and instrumental music. There are two types of music in our country. One is Uttar (north) Hindustani music and the other is the Dakshindhi (south) Karnatic music. Please note that in this thesis we are dealing with the Uttar Hindustani Music only.

2. DWANI: Any sound is ‘Dwani’. In dwani there are two categories. a) dwani useful for music b) Other. Here we are dealing with the dwani only which is useful for music.

3. NAAD: A dwani which is useful for music is called as ‘Naad’. Its main quality is that it pleases the ears. It has a fixed number of frequencies. There are three qualities of naad- Magnitude (this concerns with the volume), Timbre (this shows whether the sound is a human voice or of an instrument etc) and Pitch (this concerns with higher or lower tones)

4. SWAR: Swar is the further quality of naad. When a naad is chosen for sangeet, it becomes ‘Swar’. A swar has all the good qualities of naad. It pleases the ears, it has fixed frequencies and it remains for
some time in the air. There are mainly seven swars in Hindustani classical music they are-

- SA (shadja)
- RE (rishabh)
- GA (gandhar)
- MA (madhyam)
- PA (pancham)
- DHA (dhaiwat) and
- NI (nishad).

Further there are three types of swars- shudha swar (pure), komal swar (soft) and tivra swar (sharp).

5. SHRUTI: Shruti means a microtone. Between any note and the next, there exists the theoretically infinite number of steps in microtones. It is not practically possible to distinguish them or give each one of them a specific identity. In Hindustani classical there are main seven notes and 22 of microtones existing in between of them.

6. SAPTAK: Sapta is seven. Swar- saptak is a group of seven notes which are
used in the Hindustani classical music. The saptak is being divided into three groups namely-

- Mandra Saptak (lower pitch)
- Madhya Saptak (middle pitch)
- Tar Saptak (higher pitch).

7. TAAL: In the ordinary sense taal means rhythm. It is the medium of measuring time in music. The length of the taal is counted with the unit called as Matra. Thus, taal is a combination of a number of matras, which has a shape. It has divisions, sam, taali and a khali.

8. THAAT: Thaat is a cluster of swaras from which the ragas are produced.

9. RAGA: A raga originates from a thaat. It has a specific combination of swar and varna. It has minimum of five swaras to a maximum of seven swaras. The beauty of a raga lies in the arrangement of the vadi and the samvadi swaras.

10. SAMAY: Time cycle is followed to perform a raga. Every raga has a specific time frame like the morning raga, noon raga, evening raga etc.
11. RASA: Rasa is essentially an emotional reaction. The feeling may be sad or pleasant, high or low. In the system of Indian aesthetics there are nine emotions called ‘Nava Rasa’. They are-

- Shringara (romantic or erotic)
- Hasya (comic or humorous)
- Karunya (pathetic or sad)
- Rudra (angry or fury)
- Veer (heroic)
- Bhayanak (fear or terror)
- Vibhatsa (odious or disgusting)
- Adbhut (wonder or surprise)
- Shant (peace or tranquility)

12. CLASSIFICATION OF RAGAS: The classification of Ragas is called as ‘Raga Jaati’. The three Main Raga jaatis are- Audav jati (containing five swaras), Shadav jati (containing six swaras), Sampoorna jati (containing seven swaras). Further including these there is also the combination of these three jaatis for the further classification of ragas.

These are some of the basic terms an individual will come across while reading this thesis.
3.1 Brief history of Indian classical music

The hidden agenda of Indian classical music has always been spiritual. This, of course is one of the reasons why the word Naad-Brahma as a concept was born in India. It is that our music has emerged from a mythical past. A past that was before the recorded history. In the past, gods and goddess were the makers of our music. The concept of Naad Brahma belongs to this past. One constantly hears that "Indian classical music is derived from the Vedas". Although no one can say that this statement is false, it is deceptively simplistic. When discussing Vedic contributions to contemporary music, there are three things that should be kept in mind. There is not the least shred of evidence to support the belief that contemporary Indian music is derived from the Vedas.

To the ancient Indian the five elements, the great seas, the great mountains, tress, human beings of great learning were of a lot of importance. The Vedic literature is all about this. One of these Vedas is the “Sam Veda” which is geya i.e. can be recited musically. It was recited in a very few simple melodic passages. The necessity of application of music seems to be due to music being particularly helpful in memorizing. Recitation has the idea of rhythm and music behind it. Thus the verses in the Vedas became simple chants. Music was produced out of these chants.
It is important to remember the old adage, "Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence". It turns out that we cannot reasonably expect to find any clear evidence. One of the first places to look for evidence is in the music itself. However, this allows us to push things back only to a limited degree. The situation is very analogous to owning a pair of socks. Let us say that we have a pair of white socks. As it wears out, we patch it with black thread. After some period we have no white thread left. At that point, there is no objective way to tell that there was ever any black thread at all. This analogy is very similar to trying to ascertain musical influences by examining contemporary musical practice.

Music is constantly changing. We need only look at how music styles have changed just within our own lifetime. If we consider the change in music over longer periods, we quickly reach a point where there is nothing recognizable. In a sense, this creates a ‘musical horizon’ beyond which we cannot expect to penetrate. There is considerable debate as to how long back this musical horizon extends, yet it is clear that it does not allow us to look back to the vedic period. Therefore, we cannot expect to find any unambiguous vedic influence in any contemporary musical practice.

The Vedas collectively refers to a corpus of ancient Indo-Aryan religious literature that is associated with the Vedic civilization and are considered by adherents of Hinduism to be revealed knowledge. Many Hindus believe that the Vedas were not written by anyone (including God), but are eternally existing (Apaurusheya). While many
historians regard the Vedas as some of the oldest surviving texts, they estimate them to have been written down between 1500 BC and 500 BC. The precursor for the Indian raga system originated in the VEDIC PERIOD [RIG VEDIC PERIOD] which is believed to precede the pre-historic Indus valley civilization. The vedic hymns of the vedic period were meant for Yajnas and were called ‘Yajur Vedas’ and the hymns that were meant for singing were called ‘Sama Veda’. Music was evolved out of the stanzas of Rig Veda set to tunes and tones in the form of ‘Samaganas’ cultured with a religious motive and a spiritual purpose. Indian tradition had a great intuition about the power of Sound and intonation and that the science of sound was very important for use in every condition of life, in teaching, in evolving, in healing and in accomplishment.

The vedic chants and music were intoned with utmost care as each intonation and infection of voice could have benefited or adverse effects. The Vedas and Upanishads had more of sound and rhythm and were used as a source of healing and upliftment. These vedic songs were used by people to please the presiding deities of different vedic sacrifices or yajnas to get benedictions of brilliance, power and wisdom. It was only from this sama-gana, that the seven notes [Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni] were evolved which formed the basis for the raga system of India.

The Vedas consist of several kinds of texts, all of which date back to ancient times. The core is formed by the ‘Mantras’ which represent hymns, prayers, incantations, magic and ritual formulas, charms etc. The hymns and prayers are addressed
to a pantheon of Gods and a few Goddesses, important members of which are Rudra, Varuna, Indra, Agni, etc. The mantras are supplementary by texts regarding the sacrificial rituals in which these mantras are used as well as texts exploring the philosophical aspects of the ritual tradition, narratives etc.

The Mantras are collected into anthologies called ‘Samhitas’. There are four samhitas: Rk (poetry), Saman (song), Yajus (prayer) and Atharvan (a kind of priest). They are commonly referred to as the Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda respectively. Each samhita is preserved in a numbers of versions or recensions (shakahs), the differences among them begin minor, expect in the case of the Yajurveda, where two ‘white’ (shukla) recessions contain the mantras only, while four ‘Black’ (krishna) recessions interspersed the Brahmana parts among the Mantras.

The Rigveda contains the oldest part of the corpus and consists of 1028 hymns. The samaveda is mostly a rearrangement of the Rigveda for musical rendering. The Yajurveda gives sacrificial prayers and the Atharvaveda gives charms, incantations, magic, formulas etc. In addition to these there are some stray secular material, legends etc.

The next categories of texts are the Brahmanas. These are ritual texts that describe in detail the sacrifices in which the mantras were to be used, as well as comment on the meaning of the sacrificial ritual. Each of the Brahmanas is associated
with one of the samhitas. The Brahmanas may either form separate texts, or in the case of
the Black Yajurveda, can be partly integrated into the text of the samhita. The most
important of the Brahmanas is the Shatapatha Brahmana of the White Yajurveda.

The Aranyakas and Upanishads are theological and philosophical
works. They are mystic or spiritual interpretations of the vedas, and are considered their
putative end and essence, and thus known as Vedanta (the end of the vedas). They often
form part of the Brahmanas (e.g. the Brahadaranyaka Upanishad). They are the basis of
the Vedhanta school of darsana.

The hindu tradition regards the vedas as uncreated, eternal and being
revealed to sages (Rishis). The Rishi Krishna Dwaipayana, better known as Veda Vyasa-
‘Vyasa’ meaning editor or compiler- reputedly distributed this mass of hymns into four
books of the vedas, each book being supervised by one of his disciples. Paila arranged the
hymns of the Rig-Veda. Those that were chanted during religious and social ceremonies
were set to music and melody- ‘Saman’ (samaveda). The fourth collection of hymns and
chants known as the Atharva Samhita was collated by Sumanta.

Philosophies and sects that developed in the Indian subcontinent have
differing positions on the vedas. In Buddhism and Jainism, the authority of the veda is
repudiated, and both evolved into separate religions. The sects who did not explicitly
reject the Vedas remained followers of the Santana Dharma, which is known in modern times as Hinduism.

In the later Hinduism, the Vedas hold an exalted position. They are regarded as Sruti i.e., revelation, and the Brahminical caste based on the Vedas forms an important part of Hindu religious life to this day. Vedanta, Yoga, and even bhakti acknowledge the Vedas as revelation.

After the Vedic music ‘GANDHARVA OR MARGI MUSIC’ evolved which was a type of a stage song or Natyadharmigiti, possessed of Swara, Tala and Pada. Then the formalized regional or ‘DESI MUSIC’ evolved which enriched the treasury of Indian classical music in the form of gitis which originated with the succession of tones that produced agreeable and pleasing sensations. Afterward one of India’s learned sage ‘Bharata’ wrote an authoritative treatise on the performing arts called ‘NATYASHASTRA’ from which the genuine type of raga came into being, with 10 determining characteristics (dashalakshanas) and psychological values, with the new names of Gitiraga and Gramaraga. Bharata mentions in the Natyashastra that music was being researched into and had reached a very high level in the terms of performance as theory as well. Later Scholars like Dattila wrote ‘Dattilam’, Kohala wrote ‘Kohalam’, Narad wrote ‘Nardiya Shiksha’, Matang wrote ‘Brihadeshi’. 
During the thirteenth century Sarangdeva (1210-1247) wrote ‘Sangeet Ratnakar’ which came to be regarded and respected as the most exhaustive study on ancient Indian classical music, in which he brought up to date the musical development of the centuries right from bharata onwards. It has an extensive exploration of the system of notes- three to seven and experimentation on which of these affects the audience greatly. There is a general agreement that Sangeet Ratnakar is the ‘treatise which set the standards for Indian Classical Music as we know it today’.

Further the credit of taking Hindustani Music out of its dark ages goes to Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande (1860-1936) and Pandit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar (1872-1921). Pt.Bhatkhande gave up his profession as a lawyer and created a history by publishing basic books on Hindustani Sangeet Padhhati, Lakshan Geet and devised the notation system. He, by his great work cleared the debris accumulated for centuries. The great disciple of Pandit Balkrishnabuva Ichalkaranjikar, Pt.Vishnu Digamber Paluskar popularized music in the masses, which was strangled in the royal courts and in the drawing rooms of the rich and the nobles. He founded the ‘GANDHARVA MAHA VIDYALAYA’ at Lahore, and through his unique style, taught the youngsters the intricacies of Hindustani classical music. He invented his own style of notation system and also wrote many books. He re-enshrined music in its place as Veda.
Now at present the class of music lovers is widely spread and many new thoughts are being practiced. One may say that though quality depends on the environment, the wave of Hindustani music is spreading worldwide.

Indian classical music is based on the ragas which are scales and melodies that provide the foundation for a performance. Unlike western classical music, that is deterministic, Indian classical music allows for a much greater degree of ‘personalization’ of the performance, almost to the level of jazz-like improvisation. Thus, each performance of a raga is different. The goal of the raga is to create a trance state, to broadcast a mood of ecstasy. The main difference with western classical music is that the Indian ragas are not "composed" by a composer, but were created via a lengthy evolutionary process over the centuries. Thus they do not represent mind of the composer but a universal idea of the world. They transmit not personal but impersonal emotion. Another difference is that Indian music is monadic, not polyphonic. Hindustani (North Indian) ragas are assigned to specific times of the day (or night) and to specific seasons. Many ragas share the same scale, and many ragas share the same melodic theme. There are thousands of ragas. A raga is not necessarily instrumental and if vocal, it is not necessarily accompanied. But when it is accompanied by percussion (such as tabala), the rhythm is often rather intricate because it is constructed from a combination of fundamental rhythmic patterns (or talas). The main instrument of the ragas is the sitar, although historically the veena was at least equally important.
Karnatic (Southern Indian) ragas constitute one of the oldest systems of music in the world. They are based on seven rhythmic cycles and 72 fundamental ragas. The founder of the Karnataka School is considered to be Purandara Dasa (1494). Karnatic music is mostly vocal and devotional in nature, and played with different instruments than Hindustani music (such as the mridangam drum, the ghatam clay pot, the vina sitar as opposed to sitar, sarod, tambura and tabla). The fundamental format of Karnatic songs is the "kriti", which are usually set in the style of a raga (the raga serves as the melodic foundation). The golden age of Karnatic music was the age of Syama Sastri, who died in 1827, of Tyagaraja who died in 1847 and who composed the Pancharatna Krithis as well as two ‘operas’, Prahalada Bhakti Vijayam and Nauca Charitam, and of Muthuswami Dikshitar, who died in 1835 after composing the Kamalamba Navavarnams and the Navagraha krithis.

### 3.2 Raga, its meaning and purpose

Every lover of Indian music must feel highly gratified to see our music contributing its share to the general progress, the general awakening of the modern India. A particularly bright feature of this all embracing awakening in music is that educated people are taking a keen interest in music. The increasing number of educated persons among its listeners has given an impetus to a systematic and scholarly study of the art and science of music. The theory of music is once more seriously attended to and it may not be very long before music will be as decent a profession as law or medicine. This state of
affairs requires that every individual should possess the basic knowledge about raga, its meaning and purpose.

The root idea of Hindustani classical music today is what is now known as the raga, which in its ancient crude form, was known as Jatis. The word raga is derived from the Sanskrit root word Raj- to please, to be agreeable. Literally, anything that pleases, that soothes the mind, would be a raga. Technically the Ragas are the melodic systems to be developed extempore, according to certain rules of procedure and composition. These are expressed either by vocal or on a musical instrument. Vocal musicians or instrumentalists, well trained and well practiced, cultivate their voice to such a wonderful quality and strength that they can develop a single raga (a single melody, mode five toned, six toned or full scaled seven toned) alone for an hour and half keeping the listeners spell bound and enrapture all the time.

A special feature of the Hindustani classical ragas is their appointed time of singing. A lot of controversy has been going on among the scholars as to the propriety and scientific or unscientific nature of the time table of the ragas.

3.3 Therapeutic characteristics of Hindustani classical music

Music has been frequently used as a therapeutic agent from the ancient times. People in the villages or having rural background in the developed and under developed countries still believe in the charismatic power of music for curing certain
diseases and correcting physical and mental disorders. The therapeutic values of music have been recognized and employed from a very early stage in the history of mankind and medicine. Thus, with pride, music therapy points to a tradition as old as mankind itself. Historical sources verify the very existence and effectiveness of the combination of music and medicine to cure certain diseases and disorders.

The concept of mixing music as a part of therapy on one side with myth, superstition, cult or religion and on the other side, questioning about the placebo effects which are faced by every therapy and finally the appeal of scientifically, under-pinning empirical facts about the concepts of music therapy have forced the scientists, musicologists and physicians to put music therapy into action.

There is an unexplored, highly scientific field of music therapy i.e. the effect of musical sounds and the effects of ragas in curing human ailments. Also a number of successful experiments have been conducted from the past on testing the effects of these ragas on the particular diseases. Here below are some of the examples of the effects of the Indian classical ragas on different ailments.
Table no: 08
List of a few Hindustani classical ragas suggested by our renowned musicologists that have the therapeutic value in curing diseases:

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<tr>
<th>S.NO</th>
<th>NAME OF THE RAGA</th>
<th>DISEASES THAT CAN BE CURABLE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ahir Bhairav</td>
<td>Hypertension</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Bageshri</td>
<td>Insomnia</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Bhairavi</td>
<td>Rheumatic Arthritis</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Bhairav</td>
<td>Cancer</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Darbari Kanada</td>
<td>Liver Problems</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Hindol</td>
<td>Backache</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Jaunpuri</td>
<td>Constipation</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Kafi</td>
<td>Sleeping Disorders</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Kausi Kanada</td>
<td>Common Cold</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Kausi kanada</td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Kedra</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>Lalit</td>
<td>Mental retardation</td>
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<td>Marubihag</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>Miya ki Malhar</td>
<td>Chronic Asthma</td>
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<td>17.</td>
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<td>Hypertension</td>
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<td>Rheumatic Arthritis</td>
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