6.1.0 MUSIC IN EPIC THEATRE

To understand the importance of music in Epic theatre, it is necessary to thumb through the pages of the history of Germany during the first half of the twentieth century. Germany - not only a country of great music lovers but a country that offered great composers to the world like Wagner, Bach, Beethoven and Schubert - also produced the music composers of the new world such as Weill, Dessau, Hindemith, and greatest of them all, Eisler. Incidentally, all of them gave music for the theater of Bertolt Brecht.1 Kurt Weill worked for The THREEPENNY OPERA (1933), MAN EQUALS MAN (1931), RISE AND FALL OF THE TOWN MAHAGONNY (1927) and SEVEN DEADLY SINS (Anna-Anna); the major productions of Brecht's theatre before 1933. When Hitler came to power, all communist artists - playwrights, actors, singers, composers and even film makers - had to flee from Germany.

Paul Dessau worked with Brecht for some of the most talked about productions of Epic theatre before 1933 as well as

1. Willett. op. cit. p. 125.

The third composer who not only changed the style of classical German music but propagated the change by extensively writing about it, is Hanns Eisler; considered to be 'A REBEL IN MUSIC'. A close friend of Brecht, Eisler had his firm moorings in the classical tradition of Bach and Beethoven, under the illustrious guidance of Schonberg. But, the advent of Industrial revolution, the first world war and strengthening of the Capitalist system in Germany compelled him to create a new system of music which could feel the pulse of the down-trodden and workers. In the book compiled by Manfred Grabs, Eisler writes²—

"The great music of Orlando di Lassi, of Bach, of Beethoven is to-day being used for social function in absolute contradiction to the original intentions of their composers e.g. Hitler using Beethoven’s Eroica symphony (for his public meetings). Composers must become aware of the

social functions for which their music is being used......
The history of Chinese music, of European music in the Middle Ages and of our own time shows that music has attempted again and again, more or less consciously, to play a part in social life."

Epic music was meant for Epic plays and Epic plays were mainly meant for workers. This was the claim. The whole movement was basically aimed against the development of capitalism, exploitation of the masses and a protest voice against bourgeoisie that was getting richer day by day. Poor worker could not attend the music concerts due to his economic condition and workers concerts never had the finnese of a trained musician’s playing. Yet gradually it was becoming a platform to suit the express purpose of class struggle.3 This music was meant to encourage political education and activate their members for struggle. It had a two-pronged performance element; songs of struggle, satirical songs, etc. where everyone in the auditorium participated along with the singers; and the music to be listened to, didactic plays, choral montage and choral pieces with a theoretical content.

Brecht in his writing on Epic music, had clearly stated that word, music and setting must become independent

elements in an Epic production. In the chapter on Alienation effect, this researcher has already mentioned his ideas on music. It would be interesting to understand them by selecting the examples from his three plays already mentioned.

7.1.1 Music should communicate the meaning.

The epic music helps to tell a story. It directly addresses the audience and shares its concerns, aspirations, pressures, and above all, philosophy. In the play CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE, the music is used very effectively as the narrator/singer Arkadi Tsheidse opens his book of old songs and starts reciting the story of Grusinia⁴.

Arkadi: Once upon a time

   A time of blood shed
   When the city was called
   The city of the damned
   It had a governor
   His name was Georgi Abshwilli
   Once upon a time.

Similarly, at the end of the first scene of play MOTHER, the Revolutionary Workers sing the song for Mother.

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Wokers: Brush down that coat
Brush it twice over
When you've finished brushing it
You are left with just a clean rag

Whatever you do
It won't be enough, though
Your position is bad
It'll get worse
You can't go on this way
And yet what is the answer?

Clear, direct message in the script communicated the problem to the audience through equally direct, matter-of-fact, unemotional music composition which appealed to the reason of the workers.

6.1.2 The Music should set forth the text.

Eisler expressing his views on Epic music, emphasizes the importance of word in music. Since words generate reason and logic in the mind of the spectator, Eisler underlined vocal music in his composition. Like Brecht, he used ecclesiastical (the Lutheran Chorale) as well as popular models (folk songs, popular ballads and jazz) and made something in no way imitative or spiced-up but recognizably
his own. About Eisler’s music of Mother, Brecht wrote--

"Eisler’s music can by no means be called simpler. Qua music, it is relatively complicated, and I cannot think of any that is more serious. In a remarkable manner, it makes possible certain simplification of the toughest political problem whose solution is a life and death matter for working class."

This is true of most of Eisler’s settings of Brecht’s words. Their originality consists in chamber-music orchestration and lively counterpoint in those changing rhythms that match Brecht’s irregular lines, in the dry flavour and persistent yet slightly unexpected melodies, at once logical and fresh.

6.1.3 Music in Epic plays should take up position. The singer becomes the reporter of the incident.

Brecht while discussing the music of CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE at one point praises the music of Paul Dessau and describes certain outstanding methods that the composer used to bring about the effect.6

"The singer by using a chilly, unemotional voice to describe the servant-girl’s rescue of the child ..... makes

5. Willett, op. cit. p. 137.
evident the terror of the period in which motherly instincts can become a suicidal weakness."

Just as Brecht as a playwright used various verbal methods such as rhymeless verse with irregular rhythm, heightened prose and metered poetry, similarly epic composers used various musical genres according to the demand of the situation in the play. E.g. Eisler’s ideas on the function of music did not imply any restrictions in the use of various types of ballad singing or folk songs, or in the quality of material and thematic multiplicity. Epic music did not introduce new technical methods but insisted on serving them for new social functions. At the same time, a change in the social function of music offered the development of new methods.7

The script as well as the production of ‘Mother’ contained and communicated the new purpose of theatre which Eisler exquisitely produced in his music. The song of ‘In Praise of Revolutionary’ or ‘In Praise of communism’ were the songs which were instantly picked up and sung by the whole auditorium.

7. Willett, op. cit. 137.
6.1.4 Music adopts attitude, develops social gest.

In the play 'Mother Courage', Ywette 'Song of Fraternization' and Courage 'Song of Grand Capitulation' tell us about the singers' past while commenting on the way life treated people in 17th century. Courage's own song was a trenchant expression of the wolfish principles by which she lived and Dessau's original music further underscored the falsity of the message.8

6.1.5 The use of music alienates the prose dialogues automatically.

As stated earlier, word, music and setting played independent role in the production of Epic theatre and the end result culminated in an effect of monatage. This was directly against The Aristotelian idea of UNITY in a production. Each element in the stage presentation working for itself yet enhancing or setting forth the other. The music of 'Mother Courage and Her Children' by Paul Dessau discovered a new effective method of story-telling which

left something to be supplied by the audience; it was up to them to link voice and melody aurally.  

6.1.6 Placing the orchestra on the stage in the full vision of the audience and lighting it during the song sequence.

This device Brecht used in many of his plays. The music that was produced from a particular corner directed the attention of the audience towards musicians, thus the tunes did not create any atmosphere of a particular emotion as generally happened in a Realistic production. Similarly, the sheer presence of the musicians marred the empathy of any sort.

In the performance of MOTHER COURAGE, the musicians were placed in such a manner that they could be seen sitting in one of the boxes, and their performances became little concerts, independent contributions made at suitable points in the play. The box communicated with the stage, so a musician or two could occasionally go backstage for trumpet calls. The overture of only four players, on thinner side, all the same reasonably ceremonious for the confusion of war.

Brecht used a completely different device in the production of CHALK CIRCLE where on one hand, he integrated the music

with the main action in the form of story-telling, and on the other hand, the main singer Arkadi Tsheidse made necessary comments on the happenings in the play. The stage direction of Scene 2 clearly states -
"The singer who is seen sitting on the floor in front of his musicians .... leafing through a well-thumbed note-
book."

6.1.7The titles of the various song numbers were projected on the screens during the song sequence.

'Mother' was one of the earlier productions of Brecht (1933), when he was playing with the idea of separating music from the performance in such a manner that it should be an integral part of the performance while developing a distinct identity of its own. In this production, Brecht used the titles of the songs on the screen on one side and during the song sequence they were brightly lit."

In MOTHER COURAGE performance, Casper Neher, the designer, introduced a musical emblem consisting of a drum, a flag, a trumpet and electric globes which lit up during the song interlude. Whenever the song came, the emblem was lowered.

11. Helmut M.-Technian (article) BRECHT AS THEY KNEW HIM. p. 154
from the flies, which in a way did not arise directly from the action, thus remained clearly apart. This device lifted the music above the reality of action, it served as a visible sign of shift to another artistic level (music) and gave the right impression of musical insertion as a separate entity, rather than arising out of an emotional content.

6.2.0 MUSIC IN CLASSICAL INDIAN THEATER

Indian music consists of three basic elements Bhāva (emotions), Rāga (particular combination of musical notes) and Tāla (rhythm). In this research study, detailed discussion has already taken place regarding Emotions (Bhāvas), permanent ones (Sthāyi Bhāvas) and transitory ones (Sanchāri Bhāvas). Raga literally means to colour (or to tinge with emotion). Seven basic notes form the body of Rāgas13; they are Shadja, Rishabha, Gāndhāra, Madhyama, Panchama, Dhaivat and Nishāda. There are Rāgas with minimum five notes (Adava Rāgas), six notes (Shādava Rāgas) and all the seven notes (Sampurna Rāgas). "Rāga is a sound composition consisting of melodic movements, which has the effect of colouring the hearts of men, says Matanga, a 17th

century musicologist. Rāga gives a melodic structure in which a comprehensive emotional ethos is presented. It is imperative not only to know the notes of a Rāga, but also how they are used. Mixed Rāgas can combine various ideas, thus setting contrasting moods side by side as the Rāga is expanded. Yet, only those rāgas which are less serious and contemplative are appropriate for such treatment.

Swaras made of microtonal intervals which are called Shrutis are 22 in Indian classical music\textsuperscript{14}. Each swara consists of a particular number of Shrutis. Similarly, each Rāga consists of particular swaras from the basic seven ones. The inter-relationship of notes and their fragmentary graces (Shrutis) with the permanent invariable notes, and their relationship with one another undergo a detailed build up in the course of performance.

The third important element in Indian music is Tāla or rhythm. There are five basic Jātis (time scales) consisting of three, four, five, seven and nine beats. They are called Tishra, Chatushra, Khanda, Mishra and Sankeerna respectively. The tālas are specific combinations of rhythm-patterns which are based on Jāti Structure\textsuperscript{15}. It is important to note at this point that the word Tāla is used

\textsuperscript{14} Bandopadhyaya op. cit. p. 30

\textsuperscript{15} Ghosh. NATYA SHAstra VOL. II p. 54
in two fold manner, firstly, it represents the general rhythm and secondly, specific beat (Mātrās) combination. There are seven such specific Tāla patterns, namely, Dhruva, Matha, Rupaka, Zampa, Triputa, Ata and Ekatāla. Each Tāla has particular rhythm combination. e.g. the formula of Ata tāla is Jāti, Jāti, 2, 2. So Khandajāti Atatāla would consist of 5+5+2+2 = 14 beats, whereas Sankeerna Jāti Atatāla would consist of 9+9+2+2 = 22 beats (Mātrās). Thus classical music consists of 35 Talas (rhythm-patterns), a formidable variety which is rarely used by any musician in his life time.

Laya is the tempo of the music, in which Tāla plays a significant part. There are three types of Laya, Vilambita (slow), Madhya (medium) and Druta(fast). Laya also leaves its imprint on Rāga.

Melody and rhythm are pronounced in Indian music. Each Rāga has strong emotive value. Rāga Marwā e.g. permeates impressive devotional mood; yet at times, it transforms into a melody of great tenderness and sensuality. Sindhu Bhairavi is a Rāga of great beauty, creating images of pathos, peace and restfulness. The melancholy of the notes flavour the mind long after the performance, a certain muted anguish like 'a woebegone love song'. this happen perhaps because of the quivering sound of Swara Pa.

16. Ghosh. NATYA SHASTRA VOL. II p. 54
Rāga Chandrakausa fluctuates around the seventh note Ni with its pensive mood. In Rāga Todi, Komal Re, Komal Ga, Teevra Ma and Komal Dha conjures up the stately muted grace and mellowness.

Indian musicologists advice to sing particular Rāga at particular time of the day as well as time of the year (Seasons). There are basically six major Rāgas, each having complimentary compositions called Rāginis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rāga</th>
<th>Varieties of Raga</th>
<th>Months of the year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shree</td>
<td>Mālavi, Triveni, Kedāri, Madhmātī and Vihāri (Bihari)</td>
<td>Jan February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basanta</td>
<td>Desi, Devagiri, Vairāti, Todi, Lalita, Hindolā</td>
<td>March April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhairava</td>
<td>Bhairavi, Bengāli, Vartikā Saindhavi and Madhyamādi.</td>
<td>May June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megha</td>
<td>Malhāra, Saurāshtri, Āsāvari, Gāndhāri, Harashingār, Kaushiki</td>
<td>July August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panchama</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>Sept. October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narayana</td>
<td>Shuddha Nata, Nat hambir, Saluk</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

18. Bandopadhyaya - op. cit. p. 32
Musicologists have divided Rāgas into two groups; the first one called Purva Rāgas which are supposed to be sung during 12 noon and midnight; the second, Uttara rāgas are timed between mid-night to mid-day (12 noon).

The quality of Swaras also denotes time\(^\text{19}\) e.g. Teevra Madhyam swara denotes twilight, evening time, whereas Shuddha Madhyama denotes morning time (precisely morning twilight). Rāgas like Basant, Paraja, Lalit, Bhairav, Rāmkali and Kalingdā are sung between 3 a.m. to 9 a.m. Shree, Purvi, Puriā-dhangāhri, Mārwā are sung in the fourth quarter of the day.

Theatre uses the art and grammer of music to bring about the effect of a particular time or particular season according to the textual reference. Bharata in Natyashastra gives detailed information about the art of music (vocal as well as instrumental) in the chapters 28 to 33. Though the initial grammer has undergone considerable change, one finds a continuous tradition of musicologists writing at different time, propounding, developing, modifying the initial grammer presented by Nārada and adapted in Natyashastra by Bharata.

In this research it would be interesting to compare the effect of Indian music with the kind of effect Epic music left on the spectator.

\(^{19}\) Bandopadhyaya op. cit. p. 40
6.2.1 Music communicates and enhances the emotion.

The metered poetry (mātrāvrittas) in Classical Sanskrit theatre has a unique feature of having in-built rhythm in the construction of the couplet. This rhythm underlines the mood as well as the action or the movement of the character. Bharata describes five types of Dhruvā songs to be placed at particular junctures in the development of the text. The Mātrāvritas in Dhruvas are carefully selected to depict the basic purpose of the song. Similarly, the choice enhances the movement of the character. Swara literally means to shine. The use of music in theatre offers luminosity to the action.

In the first act of VIKRAMORVASHIYAM, the king is returning after paying his obeiss ance to Sun god so the time is early morning - when he is requested by the celestial nymphs to rescue Urvashi from the clutches of Keshi deamon. The metre used by Kalidasa, is Shārdulavikridita, a long and complicated metre, yet it effectively registers the youth, bravery and magnificance of the king. The appropriate Rāga would be either Lalit, A hir Bhairava or even Hansadhwani which provides a feeling of great space, gandeur and urgency.

6.2.2 Music and the text in Indian Classical Theatre.

It is improtant to remember that whether it is Indian
Classical drama or classical music, all ancient Indian arts are the outcome of one common philosophy. The Rasa theory (the theory of Aesthetic Experience) is applicable to all the performing as well as plastic arts of the ancient times. Thus whatever may be the story-mood or intellectual meaning of the text, what is accentuated and developed is the RASA. Melodious Rāgas, intricate Tālas and structure of the couplet, all contribute to the RASA-NISHAPATTI and complimentary function.

6.2.3 Music does not take up intellectual positions. Singer, instead of becoming a reporter, Sings to brighten up the actions of the dancer/actor.

The description of rains in the fifth act of MRICHHAKATIKAM, where Vasantsenā comes to meet Chārudatta, is spread over nearly 18-19 couplets of various vrittas (metres). The theme of rain in such circumstances, should dominate the choice of rāgas i.e. Meh or Megha, and the specific compositions should mainly select the complimentary Rāginis such as Malhār, Saurāshtri, Āsāvari, Gândhāri etc.

The discriptive songs (Prāśādika Dhruvās) are meant to enhance the scenic or visual beauty of the image, inherent in the text, through the proper selection of the Rāga and Tāla, sung in particular tempo (Laya).
6.2.4 Sanskrit theatre does not believe in creating contradictory forces or in the juxtaposition of conflicting themes. While presenting a particular world view, it represents the laws of nature. The use of Ānuvamshya Shlokas in the dialogues - the sayings of the ancestors or the quotations from the book of conduct (Nitishāstra) - inform the audience about the ways of the world and offer a moral perspective to the action of the character. Music confirms to the basic overall meaning and purpose of the text. It does not stand independently as in Epic theatre. In fact classical music helps to complete, over-all stylization of the text in the performance.

6.2.5 Verse, prose and music in Sanskrit plays.

It is true that the verse plays an important role in the construction of the play in Sanskrit Theatre also. Various meters are carefully selected to project the right mood and the feeling of the character. It adds on artistic embellishment to the text. The verse that generates different rhythm patterns, at once lifts the level and the quality of appreciation. The ultimate aim of the classical play is to provide spiritual bliss to the audience. This purpose is achieved by the use of verses, recited or sung in appropriate Rāgas. Thus, apart from providing multiple alternatives of verbal expression, the music while providing the idea of time, or season also submerges the
audience in a kind of bliss (RASA) which is basically a deep emotional state felt by the Rasik, the spectator.

6.2.6 The Seating arrangement for the Musicians.

the second chapter of Natyashastra describes various types of theatre buildings and the detailed analysis of Vikrishta Madhya theatre, which Bharata considers the best for classical performance\textsuperscript{20}. Describing the various elements on the stage, Bharata mentions the existence of Kutup, a platform with little height, meant for the seating of the instrumentalists and vocalists. The musical accompaniment during the performance would be provided by this group of artists. The platform is placed right at the back, in the center of the upper stage (Ranga Sheersha) and the groups consisting of singers and musicians sit there throughout the performance. Thus people sitting on it, are in the full view of the audience. Yet nowhere Natyashastra mentions that this arrangement presented any diversion or a feeling of discord or disturbance. In fact, their positioning seems to occur from keeping all the exits and entries clear, devoid of any obstacle for the actor.

CONCLUSION

Cursory comparison of Epic and Classical Indian Theatre, in the first place, would note the element of music which is

\textsuperscript{20} Ghosh. \textit{NATYA SHASTRA VOL. I.} p. 22.
conspicuously prominent in both the theatre practices. People who take for granted, the element of Alienation in traditional Indian theatre, often overlook the purpose of music as used by Brecht. Music, a fully developed art has its own themes, structure, and presentation methods in both, Indian as well as German tradition. Yet in both theatrical practices, it becomes a subordinate element to fulfil a specific purpose.

Epic music was meant to encourage political education and activate their members to struggle. It had a two-pronged performance element; songs of struggle, satirical, critical songs to be sung by the actors as well as spectators; secondly, there was part to be listened to, didactic plays, chorale montage, with a theoretical content. Brecht’s music directors used every kind of music, right from Lutherane chorale to folk songs, popular ballds and jazz. Basically it emphasized the word which generated reason and logic in the minds of the spectators. Epic music did not introduce new technical methods but insisted on serving the existing ones for new social functions. It also instantly alienated prose dialogues. Placing the orchestra in the full vision of the audience and lighting it during the performance also broke the empathy of the audience and spectator was forced to understand the content in a new light.
Music in Classical Indian Theatre, on the other hand, enhances the emotion. Beautiful poetry, when sung in suitable Rāga elevates the aesthetic experience of the performance. Though a fully developed art in itself, Indian classical music serves effective complimentary function in Sanskrit Theatre. It does not take position as in Epic theatre, but brings luminosity to the action and the spoken word of the actor. It helps to complete the over-all stylization of the text in performance.

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