CHAPTER - 1
INTRODUCTION
India has been rightly extolled as Punyabhumi - the sacred land of virtue, beauty and prosperity. India has developed and enriched not only an excellent systems of music and dance but has also taken adequate steps to ensure their preservation and universality. Indian music though very old is essentially melodic and its appeal to the heart is everlasting.

Music is part and parcel of India’s culture. It is styled Gandharva Veda. God is conceived of as Nādabrahmam. Music is one of the God given boons to humanity. It is the oldest of all arts that God has conferred on humanity. It is the language of pure sound and is capable of moulding one’s emotional frame and character.

India has developed an excellent, original and magnificent system of music. Her sacred and secular literature inclusive of Vedas, Upanishads, Epics and Puranas contain very significant references to music. These references throw a flood of light on the music of the different periods and their stages of development. The word "music" is defined by the authors of the 13th to 14th Century as "Gitam Vādyam tatha nrittair ayam sangīta muchyate" i.e sangitam or music is the combination of the arts of singing, drumming and dancing. In India we find the definition of music as the blending of gita, vādyam and nrityam.

As a fine art it stirs up aesthetic consciousness in man’s mind and bestows on him supreme joy and happiness. It is the finest of fine arts. Just as a poet reflects his thoughts through the medium of words, a composer pours out his heart through the medium of music.
One of the Subhashitas runs as follows:–

संगीत साहित्य क लाविहीन : साक्षात्पाशू : पूर्वदिशाणीहीन :
(One devoid of music and letters is only a cow without the tail and horns).

The following sloka says. Music and its enjoyment is, indeed, a boon bestowed not only on man but also on the infant, the cow and the serpent.

शिशुवैति पशुवैति बैति गानसं फणी ī.

It is evident that Music has been employed from early times to minimise the sufferings of humanity. Haridasaswamy of Brindavan and many other sages are said to have cured diseases, through music. Musical therapy is also an ever fascinating subject, in which even modern scholars are doing research.

It is seen that Music can stir the elements of nature. Renowned composers and talented musicians have brought rains by singing the ragas, like Megha raga Kurinji and Amritavarshini.

Just as a language is studied, digested and appreciated through its literature, a system of music is studied and appreciated through its repertoire (treasure) of musical compositions.

* South Indian Music Book I Page No. 4 by P. Sambamoorthy.
Sārangadeva, author of the work Sangita Ratnākara has defined Music as "Sound is first heard as an interval- a sruti, but the resonance that immediately follows, conveying of itself an expression to the mind of the hearer, is called svara - a musical note" (Sangita Ratnakara).

Mahabharata too contains references to students of music, teachers of music, professional musicians, instrumentalists etc. Bharata Muni (500 BC) has referred in his Natya Sastra that gandharva type of non-vedic music was also favourite to the Vedic Aryans. It can be seen that Nāradadi Siksha of the Gandharva Naradan created a link between the vedic system and non-vedic classical system of music.

From the view point of the theory of evolution, music had its origin in the primitive society and it evolved by slow degrees from the simple tunes of the primitive men, accompanied by some language phrases. Really, the sound language together with some definite tunes ultimately give rise to the formation of music. It is also evident in the Vedic literature, that music evolved out of the riks of Rig veda added with tunes. "So the Sāma Veda being the collection of riks or stanzas with tunes is known as the source of Indian music.

The earliest songs were recititative and monotonous in nature and they were always recited with only one or two notes.

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1 Article by Mrs. Leela Omchery "Ideals as see through Mahabharata in journal of Indian History".
2 The Form and Function of Music in Ancient India "by Swami Prajnananda."
It was during the days of Ramayana and Mahabharata (400-200 B.C) that music manifested in a very developed form. The German Philosopher Hegel says, "What music claims as its own is the depth of a person’s inner life as such, it is the art of the soul and is directly addressed to the soul". This is a memorable observation.

The ancient period of India can broadly be grouped into three. Primitive, Pre-historic and Vedic. Music of India has been handed down from vedic times. Sanskrit writers say that our music has been derived from the sama veda. So it is well traced by scholars that music began with the singing of vedas. Gradually, other compositions like chants and tunes were created and these developed into the prabandhas of ancient and medieval times.

Around 2000 B.C. the Aryans migrated to the subcontinent and with their arrival India entered into the vedic period of Her history. The sacred scriptures consisted of the 4 vedas. Rik, Yajur, Sāma & Atharva. These together with the celebrated Kavyas, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata and various Puranas had close links with music. The Ramayana throws plenty of lights on the musical culture of the age and abounds in references to music.

The fact that great admiration is shown to the prominence and dignity of Carnatic music proves how great an esteem is given to the classical compositions. In Carnatic music, composers are styled

* "Hegel's Aesthetics" Oxford 1975 written by The German Philosopher Hegel.
"Vāggeyakaras". Tamil saints like Appar, Sundaramurthy Nāyanār and Tirujnāna Sambandar who have composed Tēvaram songs thousands of years ago are very popular even today. It was the famous Mārgadarsi Sesha Iyengar’s composition (17th to 18th) which set up the definite and universally acceptable and adopted standard, for the present day style of rendering kritis.

The different periods of musical history have their distinctive and unique characteristics. One period witnessed a band of brilliant musicologist, another period gave rise to composers of eminence and in the third period musicians of outstanding ability flourished. Medieval period covering roughly the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries was specially remarkable for the intense output of compositions belonging to the domain of sacred music.

It is clear that many compositions have been composed by great composers, during moments of intense emotion. They are mostly inspired ones created without any conscious effort on the part of the composer, expressing the spiritual longings in their hearted of hearts towards the particular deity.

The study of the lives of great composers has a perennial charm. The lofty ideals they preached and practised are a continuous source of inspiration. To know the circumstances that occasioned some of their best compositions is a thrilling experience rewarding and enriching.
The period 1750-1850 appears to have been a golden period in the history of music, the world over. Musical trinity of South India lived and flourished during that period and their period is aptly praised as the Golden age of classical Carnatic music. Generally vaggeyakaras may be classified into uttama vaggeyakara, madhyama vaggeyakara and adhama vaggeyakara. An uttama vaggeyakara has good mastery of language, raga and tala and he can express sublime ideas in his songs. The madhyama vaggeyakara will be talented in creating only good music. The adhama vaggeyakara will not have much of creative skill but will compose or write sahitya of other great composers.

If Carnatic music is throbbing with life even during the present day, it is entirely due to the galaxy of composers that made substantial and significant contribution to it. Due to the achievements of Sri. Tyagaraja, the banners of Karnatic music were flown to such a height that music cannot be matched by any other art. A composer through his compositions not only pleases and enjoy himself but also gives enjoyment to the audiences of his times, and for future generations.

Composers like Arunagirinathar, Purandaradasa, Kshetrajna and Tyagaraja have to their credit more than thousands of compositions. Some of the bhakās of ancient period are Mira Bai, Tulsi Das, Kabir Das, Arunagirinathar and so on.

During the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries hundreds of compositions were composed by Vāggēyakaras like Tāllapakkam, Annamacharya,
Purandaradāsa, Narayana Tīrtha, Bhadrāchalam Ramdas and many others. These were mostly devotional in character and were in the form of kirtanas. These kirtanas paved the way for the evolution of the modern compositions having raga bhava, rasa bhava and rhythmic loveliness.

Sangita Kavitram and sahitya mādhuryam are respectively the important factors of the compositions. In some compositions sahitya has a dominant role than music. But in some cases, music is given more importance than sahitya.

Musical compositions may be divided into those composed during the ancient, medieval and modern periods. The ancient period can be set to be from vedic times to the time of Matanga and medieval period extends from the time of Matanga to the time of Purandaradāsa. The modern period might be studied under three heads. Pre - Tyāgaraja period- from the time of Purandaradasa to Tyagaraja, the period of Tyagaraja and the post - Tyagaraja period.