A Reflection on the Aesthetics of Indian Music, With Special Reference to Hindustani Raga-Sangita

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Abstract
Like in any other heteronomous art-forms, the practitioners of Indian music and dance (Bharatiya Sangita) aim at expressing emotions and creating the aesthetic or the “beautiful.” Indian thinkers and musicologists have gone a step further in declaring that Indian classical music (Raga-Sangita) is the most appropriate means for attaining aesthetic experience and delight, and the most suitable pathway, if not, downright, short-cut, toward self-realization or realization of the Ultimate Reality or Truth. Thus, aesthetics and spirituality make up the very woof and warp of the Indian arts, in general, and Raga-Sangita, in particular. Raga-Sangita is, thus, considered a spiritual exercise (nada sadhana) to attain salvation (moksha) through sound. This conceptual article reflects upon and sheds light on the Theory of Rasa, as propounded in Indian Aesthetics, and attempts to make an assessment of it in relation to Hindustani Raga-Sangita. Through this theory, the author examines and explains the different causes leading to an aesthetic experience, referred to as “out-of-this-world” (alaukika). In doing so, he also brings to light the possible pitfalls which both the performer and the listener should avoid.

Keywords
Bharatiya Sangita, Hindustani Raga-Sangita, aesthetics, rasa

Introduction
According to Oxford Dictionary, music is “vocal or instrumental sounds (or both) combined in such a way as to produce beauty of form, harmony, and expression of emotion.” Alain Daniélou (2003) defines music as “the more or less pleasing effect that correlated sounds produce on our ears” (p. 49). These definitions hint at three main ingredients of music, namely, correlated sounds or sonic whole, expression, and beauty. Each musical note in a melody must have a distinctive relation with the preceding and succeeding notes. At the bottom line, all the musical notes of a melody, while acquiring meaning and becoming expressive from their relation to the tonic, make up a “form” worth appreciating. This conceptual article studies the ways and means through which emotions are expressed in Hindustani Raga-Sangita, and how the “beautiful,” or “rasa,” is created and experienced. “Rasa” is understood, literally, as “juice,” “sap,” or “flavor.” When applied to art, rasa connotes the idea of relishing aesthetically.

Problem Statement
It is commonly taken for granted by many students of Indian music, especially those studying Hindustani Raga-Sangita, that the mere singing or playing of the musical notes and the emanating melodies correctly with regard to the technical and grammatical aspects of the art-form are enough to create the aesthetic. This problem has led to two main wrong practices among those learners, namely, (a) mugging up of all musical materials that have the potential to create the “beautiful,” thus discarding completely personal creativity and innovation, and (b) producing the formal structure of a music, albeit improvised and grammatically correct, but dreary, inexpressive, and unaesthetic.

Purpose of Inquiry and Inquiry Questions
This article is intended to throw light on the fact that not only correct singing or playing of the tonal phrases and melodies but also personal creative inputs and expression of emotions are crucial to creating and performing good music. This is an aspect of the rich musical tradition that

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not only learners but also teachers in many music education institutions tend to ignore.

This study ventures to answer the following questions: What kind of music is there in the Hindustani musical tradition having the most potential characteristics to lead to the experience of “rasa” or the aesthetic? What could be the causes (necessary and sufficient causes) leading to rasa experience in this system of music? What are the prerequisites for and obstacles which subvert the experience of rasa in this system of Raga-Sangita?

Significance of the Inquiry

This academic venture is significant, as it tends to inform students as well as teachers of Indian music of the importance of creating a music that is not only grammatically right but also aesthetically profound and emotionally enriching. Such an awareness will inform and affect positively teaching and learning strategies and approaches.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This submission talks about music, as a means of communication, and its aesthetics, and not just as mere rendering of tones and melodies, learnt from cramming, albeit with some accuracy. A music performance must have the capacity to not only satisfy the intellectual aspirations of the listeners but also “touch their hearts” and uplift them from the weariness of their ordinary lives. The theory that is best suited to explain the necessary and sufficient causes conducive to aesthetic experience of the highest kind is the Rasa Theory, as propounded by sage-priest Bharata in his Natyashastra, a Sanskrit treatise on drama, and developed by the rhetorician and Kashmir Shaivite philosopher, Abhinavagupta in his Abhinavabharati. Bharata rightly says in the sixth chapter “Rasadhya” that “no meaningful idea is conveyed, if ‘rasa’ is not evoked” (p. 105). This theoretical framework is supported by a conceptual framework, which encompasses ornamentations, embellishments, improvisation, and emotional expression, as defined in Indian musicology.

Aesthetics as a Field of Inquiry

Aesthetics discusses what is beautiful, interesting, exciting, uplifting, and entertaining in such art-forms as music, painting, drama, sculpture, literature, and dance, among others. In a general way, depending on the nature of the art-forms, the “beautiful” is experienced through any one, two, or more of the five senses of perception. In music, the aesthetic, or “rasa,” is experienced directly through, primarily, the sense of hearing and, at most, the sense of sight, in a disinterested contemplative manner.

Indian Music and Dance (Bharatiya Sangita)

The arts of singing, playing musical instruments, and dancing, collectively designated as “Sangita,” are regarded as the main assets and expressions of Indian culture. These art-forms, in all their diverse genres, styles, and forms, are among the living traditions of the Indians and the Indian Diasporas, and are practiced, promoted, and perpetuated with much enthusiasm and earnestness.

Indian music comprises within its fold a vast, varied, and rich tradition of classical, semiclassical, light, and folk music, which has grown out of the different cultures and subcultures of India and their mutual sharing. The focus of this article is on Hindustani Raga-Sangita, or classical music based on raga singing, as practiced in the northern part of India.

Three Pillars of Raga-Sangita: Raga (Melodic Matrix), Tala (Rhythmic Cycle) and Pada (Lyrics)

“Raga” and “Tala” are the two unique and essential concepts that Indian music, be it South Indian or Carnatic Music, or North Indian or Hindustani Music, has given to the world (Gautam, 1980). Pada, or lyrics, however, though being important in vocal music, is reckoned as extramusical by many musicologists and musicians.

Raga

Raga, as it is understood in the Indian musical tradition, does not have its exact equal in other musical practices of the world. Raga “is the soul of our (India’s) musical system” (Srinivasan, 1999). Gautam (1980) says, “... Indian music, despite the constant influence of European music on it for the last hundred years or more, has still maintained its unique individuality. That is basically because of its raga and tala system” (pp. 24-25). Hence, one can say that the Indian raga system is so deep-rooted in the musical ethos of the connoisseurs that it will, undoubtedly, stand the test of time and the onslaught of change, and escape erosion of its very existence in India and elsewhere.

Several definitions have been put forth by both music practitioners and scholars. Very often, raga is defined as a combination of notes or group of notes that can be sung or played. In short, raga is a melody. A raga is a scale. Raga is also defined as a melodic scheme, which has the capacity to color or please the mind of the listener. All these definitions are not satisfactory, for they are partially true and overly simplistic.

Matanga, the author of Brihaddesi, defines raga as “the peculiar order of sounds which is decorated, beautified or adorned with swara (note) and varna (order or movement)
and is pleasing to the listener.”

Fox Strangways defines raga as an arbitrary series of notes characterized as far as possible as individuals, by proximity to or remoteness from the note which marks the Tessitura (general level of melody); by a special order in which they are usually reinforced by a drone.

From these, it can be understood that a raga is, fundamentally, a specific melodic configuration produced out of a group of notes rendered systematically and beautifully. Swami Prajnanananda states that “a raga is a psycho-material object as it is an objective expression of the subjective feeling of the mind.” “Expression” here refers to that “extra” which an artiste adds to and renders in her or his performance, over and above the fixed form, along with the outward manifestation of notes and their prerequisites, to project her or his psychological and emotional states. Expression implies freedom, for there can be no expression without individual freedom and creativity.

The definition put forth by Saxena (2009b) brings more clarifications to the above-stated and thus more lucidity to the understanding of the concept of raga. He states,

A raga is a specific—and (in a way) living—melodic form which serves to permit and determine, as a matrix, the creation and contemplation of music on the basis of the quality, emphases and relatedness of tones, as also with the help of rhythmic abidance or passage, possibly with an eye to evoking an appropriate rasa, but always in accordance with one’s individual capacities for technical handling and grasp, visualization, and aesthetic sensitiveness. (Saxena, 2009b, emphasis in original; 2010, p. 77)

Raga is a “living” form whereby the notes, the parts, are integrated into a whole and follow a one-after-another or a before–after order. The notes are arranged in a particular order in a scale and are related as higher or lower to one another. Besides, two specific notes out of the group of notes must have mutual accord (samvada) and are given more prominence, thus bringing inner unity to the raga. Being created from the ascending and descending passages of notes, a raga is constituted of an inner pulse. On account of the latter, a raga can be viewed as a living form having movement and coordination among its parts, in short, sharing some features of life. Each raga has a distinct perceptible character of its own though two different raga-s can have the same notes. A raga is a matrix of melody, from whose material and restrictive or permissible principles, an infinite number of melodies can be created.

Tala

Tala or Talam is the other edifice on which Indian music, in general, stands. Tala refers to a rhythmic cycle on which a song, an instrumental piece, or a dance is based or set. Just like raga-s comprise notes, tala-s are constituted of beats. Tala is demonstrated time in music, for being the latter’s temporal metric. Tala, thus, is a specific rhythmic arrangement of beats to maintain time in music in a cyclic manner. Each cycle is complete in itself and is repetitive. A tala may have different sections of equal or unequal number of beats. In Hindustani Raga-Sangita, each tala has a specific “theka,” or rhythm signature, a group of basic mnemonic syllables by which the tala can be identified and recognized.

Pada

Besides raga and tala, the two essential concepts of Indian music, pada, or literature, or language also has its importance and unique place in this art-form, especially in vocal music, in all genres, forms, and styles. Pada can be construed as follows: (a) metrical or nonmetrical lyrics of vocal music, which are meaningful; (b) sets of syllables or mnemonics used to identify strokes of certain musical instruments, or sets of meaningless syllables used in songs (e.g., Tarana and alap of Dhrupada); and (c) a specific metrical structure with a refrain (e.g., Jayadeva’s Gita Govinda). All the three categories are used in Indian music, in general, whereas in Khyal and Dhrupada compositions, the two main genres of Hindustani Raga-Sangita, the first and third categories, are more predominant (Chaudhary, 1986).

A bandish, or cheez, is a well-knitted composition which synthesizes the key features of a raga, the gait and beat pattern of a tala, and the meaning and linguistic beauty of a text or lyrics. Saxena (1981, p. 145) refers to bandish as a “distinct incarnation” or “avatara” of a raga. Each bandish or composition is a distinct incarnation of a particular raga which, if properly composed, has the potential to unveil the latter’s diverse facets and aesthetic characters.

Unlike the “general” poems, pada or lyrics used in music is composed specifically for a raga and tala by a well-versed and competent “musician-poet-composer,” referred to in ancient musical treatises as a vaggeyakara. As per the latter’s definition given by Sharangdeva in his Sangitaratnakara, a composer must not only be a performer but must also have knowledge and skill pertaining to grammar, music theories, aesthetics, languages, patterns of rhythm, and sound used in poetry, among others.

There are divergent views with regard to the importance of text in Indian music, especially Hindustani Raga-Sangita. Pt. Vidyadhar Vyas, the renowned Khyal exponent of Gwalior Gharana, affirmed that wordings of a composition are like “pegs on which notes are hung.” The words of the text in a bandish act, merely, as aids to enable delineation of the notes, musical phrases, and tonal features of the raga. Nair (2007) aptly brings out this idea and the gist of current practices by stating,

. . . a Khyal singer’s emphasis does not fall on the words of the composition nor, many a time, on the literary or semantic content
Saxena (2010), on the contrary, stresses on the idea of “pure music or music alone” which “eschews both languages and beats organized as rhythm-cycles (tala), and which can yet be very expressive and generally winsome” (p. 70). He qualifies alap of the Dhrupada genre as “pure” music which is “free from admixture with what is not absolutely essential to this art, that is, language and beat-measured rhythm (or tala)” (Saxena, 2010, pp. 70-71). The phrase “not absolutely essential” makes more explicit the idea that lyrics is important, but not necessarily crucial for enabling appreciation of good Hindustani Raga-Sangita and aesthetic experience of the highest type. In this sense, very often, literature or pada has been considered as “extramusical.” Saxena (2010) goes to the extent of saying that language, if not rendered correctly, can even damage a graceful musical passage and its flow because of its “diversity of letters” and syllables and “their varying volumes.” To the question what makes pure music, for example, alap of the Dhrupada genre; expressive and capable of aesthetic appeal; the tunefulness of the notes and musical passages; the evocative and contemplative pace and manner of the singing; the aesthetic effects of profundity, serenity, continuity, and grandeur produced from the raga and its potential for delineation; the judicious and correct use of the ornamentations; the voice production of the singer; and the different emotions evoked, among others; in short, the overall raga “form” of the alap-singing have been given as some of the causal factors, both necessary and sufficient, for aesthetic experience.

Form, Melodic Form and Musical Form

The term “form” is derived from French “forme” and Latin “forma,” which means shape or an appearance. The term “form” in daily life refers to “shape,” for example, round shape or appearance, but this definition is not so appropriate to explain the main characteristics of “form” in arts.

In art and aesthetics, the term “form” (in singular) refers to an organization of interrelated, diverse materials whereby each material heightens the significance of the other materials (Saxena, 2011). Form is, thus, a “distinct whole of agreeably related parts” (Mittal, 2000). Form exhibits both unity and variety.

Bourriaud (1998), rightly, defines form as an “independent entity of inner dependencies.” All the different features, or elements of an art-work, when put together, construct a coherent unity or structure and that unity or structure is referred to as “form.” Form is, thus, the whole and that whole is made up of parts. It is the form, the whole, and not the distinctive parts, which determines how the art-work “looks,” and how it is given to one who perceives and appreciates it.

Form in Indian music and dance is apprehended through sensory experience and imagination, and is the object of aesthetic contemplation and delight.

A raga is said to be a specific melodic form, which acts as a matrix of melody, as it is formed from, among others, the notes, the predominance of one of them, the unity among them, the importance of some as compared with others, their interconnectedness (consonance) and harmony, the avoidance of some other notes (dissonance), their before–after order and higher–lower order, their depth and proportion, and the pace or tempi at which they are used (Saxena, 2010). It is a form, as it is an integrated, organized complex, and a melodic form, as the notes follow a before–after order, which is more vertical than horizontal, given the ascending and descending order of its notes. It is a specific melodic form in the sense that each raga is different from one another. It is a matrix of melody, as it permits the creation of an unlimited number of melodies (Mittal, 2000). This specific melodic form (raga) is fundamental in Indian classical music, as there is form even in alap and any other type of unbound (anibaddha or manodharma) music as well.

The term “forms” (in plural) refers to musical structures and their varieties, which are made up, basically, of the three main elements, namely, melody (raga), rhythm (tala), and poetry (pada). These musical structures are called musical forms or bandish-s. Given this, it is noteworthy that a musical form is also a form (in singular), for it is also a formal unity (Saxena, 2011). The different musical forms refer to such genres as Khayal, Dhrupada, Tarana, Thumri, and Ghazal, among others. As these are also formal unities of raga and tala, they can be considered as “forms with forms” (Mittal, 2000).

It is through its form that a piece of music acquires its uniqueness, individuality, and, more importantly, its beauty. Aesthetic experience arises from the contemplation of the created form, and when that form is accessible and acceptable to perception and imagination of a rasika or connoisseur, it is reckoned as “the beautiful.”

According to musicologists and aesthetic thinkers, art may not be a thing of beauty or something which is appealing to the eyes. It is rather the expression of form that an artist/e can create. An art-object may not be beautiful, but it must have a form or a coherent structure (Mittal, 2000; Saxena, 2010).

Indian Aesthetics

Indian Aesthetics is unique insofar as it hovers around and is understandable through the theory of “rasa.” Indian aesthetics examines the capacity of music, or any art-form such as drama and dance, to transmit, and stimulate or induce an emotional state in the performers and educe the same state in the contemplators or connoisseurs, or “rasika-s,” as they are called in Sanskrit. This emotional state expressed through these arts, according to the theory, is experienced as “rasa.”
The experience of “rasa,” which can also be translated as “aesthetic consciousness,” “feeling par excellence,” or “sublimated emotion,” is different from one’s daily experiences of emotions such as anger, love, compassion, joy, and sorrow. According to Bharata, the experience of these mental predispositions or basic emotions is either pleasant or unpleasant in ordinary real life, but when these are experienced (rasanubhava) through complete identification or absorption (tannayai bhavana) with any art-works, they are experienced, invariably, as delight, bliss, rapture, or ecstasy (ananda). The essence of rasa is enjoyment and such enjoyment is experienced as long as its stimuli continue. Such an experience of delight, which cannot be expressed in words or grasped by the mind, comes in a flash and is akin to the delight of knowing or experiencing God (brahmananda sahodara).

Most thinkers agree that it is the aesthetic experience (rasanubhuti) which a person, with the right aesthetic attitude, experiences through arts which brings her or him nearer to self-realization or emancipation from the shackles of the ego-centric impulses. Through the arts, one can have a foretaste of freedom from the limited self and a motivation to transcend it. However, the right aesthetic attitude consisting of an absence of all interests in practical life, which implies a kind of distancing or detachment (vairagya) from all the practical needs of life and a complete identification with the work of art and/or the artiste, is required, hence paving the way for experiencing “universalization” (sadharanikarana) instead of “personalization.” This is what thinkers could have implied when they explained aesthetic experience as “to become one” with the object of art.

In the words of Saxena (2009a), aesthetic experience does disconnect the art experiencer (rasika) from the “spatio-temporal awareness and utilitarian interests” of his everyday life. The locus of rasanubhuti is the experiencer’s mental state of “imaginative self-identification” or universalization with the work of art and its inherent emotion. Gautam (1988) affirms that such an experience is an integrated and an indivisible one. It is self-luminous, as it does not require any mediator for its knowledge. It comes as a flash of delight. It is ecstatic in nature and is very much akin to a spiritual experience. In this experience, there is no distinction among knower, known, and knowledge. It is an intuitive experience, hence an immediate one. Such an experience has been compared with the bliss of self-realization as, first, there is no dichotomy between knower and known, and, second, there is no ego-centric consciousness. The experience is transcendental and supra-mundane in nature. It can be experienced or relished by someone who is sensitive to beauty, thus not given to everyone. In fact, aesthetic experience is the enjoyment of “one’s (own) being, as an intrinsic, indivisible aspect of one’s self” (Saxena, 2009a). Notwithstanding its similarity to spiritual experience, Saxena (2009a) puts forth a note of caution. Although aesthetic experience is considered as “akin to the bliss of self-realization,” it does not bestow self-realization. At its best, it can release the rasika temporarily from the vicissitudes of her or his life because of the emergence and experience of pure “happiness with absolute peace . . .” But as soon as this beatitude of aesthetic experience subsides, the individual returns to her or his usual state of dichotomy between herself or himself and the world.

Creativity and Expression in Hindustani Raga-Sangita

Raga-Sangita consists of delineating a raga or melodic matrix through singing, or playing of a musical instrument, while developing and expanding its hidden tonal potentials and characteristic features with a view to evoking emotions in the minds of the listeners, hence paving the way for the experience of rasa and delight. This is achieved by rendering two kinds of music, namely, nibaddha (bound) and anibaddha (unbound). These two concepts denote composition and improvisation, respectively.

As mentioned earlier, a composition or bandish refers to a well-knitted, structured musical form set to a specific melodic form (raga) and rhythmic cycle (tala) having a text, lyrics, or poetry. There is a large plethora of compositions in Hindustani Raga-Sangita. The focus of discussion in this article is on the two main classical musical forms, namely, Dhrupada-Dhamar and Khyal. These are not only musical forms or compositions but also two different genres in their own right. Both are appropriate for delineation and expansion (raga elaboration) through improvisation.

Improvisation can be defined as “spontaneous singing or playing.” Improvisation is “not pre-determined” and comprises various nuances, variations, embellishments, and ornamentations sung by the performer during her or his recital (Nooshin & Widdess, 2005). Through such extempore improvisation, the raga is developed gradually and its whole “personality” is built up, projected, and relished by the audience as well as the performer. Either the raga alone (as in alap) or both the raga and lyrics are developed through improvisation within a set rhythmic cycle with the ultimate aim of creating, expressing, and awakening various emotions, one of which can be the most predominant and pervading one, whereas others, more transient and subservient in nature. For example, love can be the dominant emotion and others such as longing, jealousy, stupefaction, anxiety, joy, sadness, anger, and pity, among others, which are connected, in one way or the other, to the dominant one, can be the transitory and servile ones. When the dominant emotion is experienced, along with the passing moods and emotions, in a steady but impersonal, disinterested, and contemplative manner, it is realized as rasa by the connoisseur as well as the performer. Such a lofty experience comes in a flash and is short-lived, but leaves a permanent and an enriching imprint on the listener’s mind. However, the fact related to the imperative nature of improvisation for self-expression and expression of one’s moods and emotions can never be over-emphasized upon.
Having said this, the method of raga elaboration through improvisation in Dhrupada genre differs from that of Khyal.

**Raga Elaboration in Dhrupada-Dhamar Genre**

Dhrupada is the oldest living vocal and instrumental classical genres within the Hindustani system. Sanyal (1987) maintains that Dhrupada is the most profound living tradition of Hindu spiritual music. It is a kind of music much richer than any other musical genres because of its tonal complexities and stylistic renderings. Saxena (2010) claims that the word “Dhrupada” refers not only to a specific genre of vocal classical music but also to the compositions prevalent in this genre. “Dhrupa” means fixed, unchanging, eternal, and “Pada,” text or lyrics; thus, Dhrupada is a text composed in praise of the Eternal, Unchanging, Immutable, and Ultimate Reality. However, not only the text of the composition is said to be spiritual, as it often has as subject-matter themes related to spirituality, but also, more importantly, the kinesis and expressions of the musical notes.

A typical Dhrupada recital starts with alap, the unfolding of the tonal potential of the raga, in very slow tempo using mnemonic syllables. Alap is not constrained by tala or lyrics. After the slow-moving alap reaches its climax, the singer proceeds to the jod and jhala, which are rendered in different tempos or varieties of aesthetic pace to explore the raga in its entirety. According to the present researcher, the last phase marks metaphorically, so to say, the culmination of the spiritual journey into ecstatic delight and freedom whereby the ego is sublimated and thus transcended. Varma (2009) states, in this regard, that “[A]lapa is basically the ‘spread-out’ of the spiritual aesthetic vision of the musician . . . Alapa thus expands what is latent in the individual” (p. 73). After the alap-jod-jhala segment, that is the anibaddha or unbound singing, is over, the nibaddha, or bound singing, the composition, is sung in its entirety. This is followed by another segment of “anibaddha” music rendered in a playful way called upaj. The performer improvises with the words of the text in different tunes and layakari-s or tempi within a specific tala, to, time and again, reach and bring together the opening phrase of the composition, or mukhda and its culminating beat with the first beat of the tala, or sam, in every cycle, or avartana. Reaching this meeting point (sam) together bestows a very intense feeling of relief, satisfaction, and happiness in the performers, the vocalist/s and percussionist/s, as well as the audience.

The improvisational aspects of Dhamar are very much similar to that of Dhrupada. However, the alap-jod-jhala phase is shorter and less profound, and the upaj segment is bouncier and colorful. It is very interesting to note that in both the genres, the text (pada) as well as the melodic form (raga) are subject to elaboration through improvisation.

**Raga Elaboration in Khyal Genre**

Khyal is regarded as the most popular vocal genre of singing in *Hindustani Raga-Sangita* today. The Arabic and Persian word “Khyal” means imagination, whim, vision, fantasy, fancy, and thought, among others. Khyal is, thus, the imaginative rendering of the musician, which is full of feelings and fancy. This genre is appreciated for its fluid, flexible, and expansive character and its amenability to greater use of ornamentations and embellishments to maximize aesthetic expressiveness.

Khyal singing and its creative and improvisational facets differ in terms of presentation and emphasis from one musical lineage (gharana) to another. Yet, the ornamentations and embellishments are, more or less, similar across the board. Both the nibaddha (preset composition) and anibaddha (spontaneous improvisation) forms of music are present in Khyal singing. After introducing the raga and the composition, different kinds of embellishments such as swara alap, akar alap, and bol-alap; swara behelava and bol behelava; and swar tana, akar tana, and bol-tana are sung within the composition for delineating the raga. These are rendered through the musical notes (swara-s) and/or wordings of the composition with various kinds of tonal graces (gamaka-s).

**Hindustani Raga-Sangita and Rasa Experience**

*Hindustani Raga-Sangita* is more suitable for awakening rasa in the mind of the listeners for being, first, a largely “improvised” (Nooshin & Widdess, 2005) kind of music whereby individual creativity is appreciated and praised; second, a heteronomous art-form, thus always making reference to and depicting some emotions outside itself; third, a music comprising various “channels” through which a wide range of human emotions can be expressed; fourth, a genre of music which is sweetly rendered in a “tranquil, yearning or ecstatic, and dignified manner” (Saxena, 2009b; 2010, p. 139), thus creating its sublime and spiritual nature; and, finally, an art-form capable of reducing drastically the agitations of the mind, the root cause of all trials and tribulations of existence. While talking about *Hindustani Raga-Sangita*, Thielemann (2001) claims that “[W]hile proceeding on his spiritual path, man resorts to music as a vehicle . . . [and] a suitable tool to attain to higher spiritual ends because of its capacity to intensify the emotional potential of man” (p. 17). Ravi Shankar (2011), the world-renowned Sitar player, while talking about *Hindustani Raga-Sangita*, remarks that a raga is “the projection of the artist’s inner spirit, a manifestation of his most profound sentiments and sensibilities brought forth through tones and melodies” (para. 11).

It is worth noting that, given the complexity of *Hindustani Raga-Sangita*, only a trained contemplator or a
connoisseur (sahrdaya) can understand and appreciate a raga performance and help contribute to the kind of “give and take” between her or him and the artist/e, an element so crucial for the evocation or projection or manifestation of rasa, which, in turn, gives rise to the experience of delight (ananda). Conversely, the “primary or immediate quality” (Saxena, 2009b) of a raga, such as sweetness of notes and the like, can be accessible to everyone, irrespective of one’s training in and knowledge of music.

Be it clearly understood also, however, as Saxena (2009b) points out, that rasa “is not mere emotion conveyed by, or expressed through the form of the raga; it is the emotive look of the raga-rupa (melodic form) itself . . .”

| Bhava-s                      | Rasa-s                      |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Rati (Love)              | Shringara (Erotic)          |
| 2. Hasa (Laughter)          | Hasya (Humorous)           |
| 3. Shoka (Grief)            | Karuna (Compassionate)     |
| 4. Krodha (Tendency to become angry) | Raudra (Furious)           |
| 5. Utsaha (Tendency to feel enthused) | Vira (Valorous)           |
| 6. Bhaya (Propensity to feel afraid) | Bhayanaka (Fearful)        |
| 7. Jugupsa (Tendency to dislike, abhor) | Vibhatas (Odious)         |
| 8. Visnaya (Prone to wonder) | Abdhuta (Wondrous)         |
| 9. Nirveda (Detachment)     | Shanta (Peaceful)          |

The ninth bhava and rasa, namely, Nirveda and Shanta, respectively, were later additions, due to the high influence of the Buddhist philosophy and the artistic representations of the Buddha in meditative posture on Indian aesthetics.

When any one of these emotions (first column) is expressed through drama, its corresponding rasa or “feeling par excellence” (second column) can arise in the mind of the performer as well as the connoisseur. Rasa experience builds on and arises from the interplay of these natural, permanent tendencies or predispositions of the mind (sthayibhava-s) present in the performer as well as the perceiver or contemplator with (a) vibhava-s—alambana and uddipan—objective stimuli such as the main protagonists (alambana), and the props or created surroundings and stage decoration, and other subordinate or secondary characters (uddipan); (b) anubhava-s—bodily movements (angika), speech (vachika), involuntary signs such as tears (sattvika), and costumes, lighting, and music and dance (aharya); and (c) fleeting and transitory emotional states (sancharibhava-s and vyabhicharibhava-s). All these subjective and objective elements when brought together give rise to the experience of rasa by both the performers and the sensitive and discriminating audiences.

If we apply the vibhava-s (determinants) and anubhava-s (consequents) of drama to live music, the main musician and accompanying musicians and the main character of the lyrics (bandish) would be the vibhava-s; the performers and/or the main characters as depicted in the text become the alambana, (emphasis in original). What is being stressed upon here is that the whole melodic form, or “raga-rupa,” and not just a part of it, becomes the embodiment of an emotional state. It is the tonal quality of the correlated sounds and the inner dynamic of the raga which convey its emotive content.

**Causes Leading to Rasa Experience in Hindustani Raga-Sangita**

According to Bharata, there are eight basic human emotions, or mental predispositions (sthayibhava-s), and their corresponding sublimated feelings (rama-s) that could be experienced in drama (naya) as follows:

1. Rati (Love)
2. Hasa (Laughter)
3. Shoka (Grief)
4. Krodha (Tendency to become angry)
5. Utsaha (Tendency to feel enthused)
6. Bhaya (Propensity to feel afraid)
7. Jugupsa (Tendency to dislike, abhor)
8. Visnaya (Prone to wonder)
9. Nirveda (Detachment)

Shringara (Erotic)
Hasya (Humorous)
Karuna (Compassionate)
Raudra (Furious)
Vira (Valorous)
Bhayanaka (Fearful)
Vibhatas (Odious)
Adbhuta (Wondrous)
Shanta (Peaceful)

The musical sounds (vachika), facial expressions (kayika), emotions felt and expressed by the musicians (sattwik), and their costumes, appearance, and demeanor (aharya) on stage would then be the anubhava-s. The sthayibhava-s are the predominant emotions that are expressed by the performer as well as projected through the wordings of the text and their meanings. Sancharibhava-s and vyabhicharibhava-s are the fleeting, transitory, and less predominant emotions that well up and fade out during and throughout the performances.

In the case of recorded music too, there can be aesthetic experience of the highest kind. Although the main musician or the main protagonists of the lyrics (e.g., Radha–Krishna; alambana), and the accompanying musicians (uddipana), are not seen, the texture, quality, and timbre of the voice, or musical instruments of the musician and accompanying musicians, the text and its meaning (in the case of vocal music), and the quality of the sound of the recording could be considered as vibhava-s. The sounds of the musical notes produced by them either through singing or playing a musical instrument, the preciseness and correctness of the notes sung or played, the judicious use of ornamentations and embellishments, the personal creativity of the performer, and the emotions felt and expressed by the performer will make up the anubhava-s. Together with the sthayibhava-s (predominant emotion/s evoked by the raga and text), sancharibhava-s, and vyabhicharibhava-s (the
transitory, fleeting, and less predominant emotions), which could all be heard while listening to a recorded music, the vib-hava-s and anubhava-s could, undoubtedly, help evoke rasa in the listener or connoisseur (rasika), provided, first, all these are experienced in an impersonal or “unindividualized” way by her or him, and, second, there are no factors leading to “rasa bhang,” or obstacles to aesthetic experience.

When these multiple “bhava-s” are expressed and experienced in an “unindividualized” manner by the performers and contemplated, in turn, by the connoisseurs (rasika-s) in a yet impersonal way in both live and recorded music, the main emotions are awakened and realized as rasa. The ego-sense is surrendered for some time but not “rubbed out” completely, as in mystical experience. This implies some kind of detachment on the part of both the performer and the listener or contemplator from their limited individuality, the ego-consciousness. Raga-Sangita is, thus, regarded as a journey from the emotional to the spiritual.

Before we move on further, let us put forth a clarification of the word “spiritual.” Saxena (2010) states that the word “spiritual” carries two meanings: a secular and a nonsecular one. He defines secular spirituality as a state and a process “belonging or arising from the mind or intellect; or highly refined in thought or feeling,” and nonsecular spirituality as “belonging, referring, or relating to the spirit or soul rather than to the body or to physical things; belonging, referring, relating to religion; or sacred, holy, divine” (Saxena, 2010, pp. 137-138). Secular spirituality implies an intellectual search for refinement in thought and feeling. Likewise, Throsby (2001) refers to spirituality as that which involves enlightenment, understanding, insight, and global or universal awareness. This is basically a Western view of spirituality. Nonsecular spirituality, which is typical of the Indian view, refers to such matters as ego, soul, and salvation. Music, according to Saxena (2010), is conducive to self-realization or the realization of the spirit (atman-brahman) within. In the same line of thought, Gautam (1980) defines spiritual attainment as “the transcendence of the limitations of egocentric impulses, where all consciousness of duality has been obliterated” (pp. 80-82).

The crux of spirituality from the Hindu religion’s perspective is the annihilation of the ego-sense, the source of all physical, mental, and intellectual ills, and the attainment of peace and tranquility within. Realization of tranquility or serenity, which gives rise to humility, is regarded as an important sign of spiritual attainment. In this regard, Gautam (1980) throws light on the state of tranquility, which can be achieved while performing Hindustani Raga-Sangita, by saying that the melody produced (out of the notes of a particular raga) will create within him (the artiste) an ineffable tranquility. It seems paradoxical to produce musical sound without; when silence reigns within. This is, as I understand it, the “summum bonum” of Indian music. (pp. 23-25)

This tranquility, if correctly expressed and conveyed, has the capacity to invade the whole being of the listener as well, provided he or she is attuned to receiving it. Vatsyayan (1972) refers to this state of tranquility as the “still centre of being.” Aesthetic experience (rasasvabhuti) and aesthetic delight (rasananda), as they are understood in the Indian tradition, are said to be akin to spiritual consciousness and the bliss of self-realization, but one is, simply, not the other; at best, aesthetic experience, which is a transcendental, educative experience, can make the ideal goal of spiritual life appear reachable or “feasible.” It is, therefore, not difficult to make out why most accomplished musicians in the Hindu tradition, for example, Saint Tyagarara, Swami Haridas, and the like, were worship-worthy saints in their own right. Although apparently two distinct paths, aesthetic and spirituality unveiled their meeting points to those noble souls.

### Determining Elements of Hindustani Raga-Sangita Leading to Aesthetic Experience: Swara-s, Ornamentations, Embellishments, and Expression of Emotions

Before attempting to discuss further the determining elements of Hindustani Raga-Sangita in a detailed manner, let us, first of all, make some clarifications as to the two terms “ornamentations” and “embellishments,” and their distinctions and overlaps, as these were debated in ancient musical treatises and are understood in present-day Hindustani classical music scenario.

In ancient musical treatises, two types of alankara were mentioned, namely, varnalankar and shabdalankar. Varnalankar referred to tonal movements based on the four varna-s, namely, sthayi, arohi, avrohi, and sanchari; and shabdalankar meant all other sonic production techniques rendered by the voice or a musical instrument. Therefore, varnalankar related “to the structural aspect” of a raga whereas shabdalankar “comprised the aesthetic aspect.” So, in ancient times, shabdalankar referred to “everything that a performer wove both melodically and rhythmically outside the periphery of the fixed composition,” thus encompassing today’s ornamentations (kan, khatka, murkhi, etc.) and embellishments (alap, behelava, tana, etc.), excluding the four aforesaid tonal movements.

But, as per current practices, the eight anga-s or limbs, namely, alap, sargam, bol-alap, behelava, bol-behelava, bol-banth, tana, and bol-tana as well as kaku would, collectively, be termed shabdalankar or embellishments, and the tonal ornamentations such as kan, murkhi, meend, and others, alankara or ornamentations. The various arrangements of notes in specific sequences rendered for training purpose, especially by beginners, however, are called varnalankar, or, simply, alankara or vocal exercise.
However, more often than not, these two terms, namely, ornamentations and embellishments, are used interchangeably by both students and teachers. There are different definitions and interpretations for these two terms. In spite of this, I believe that a line of demarcation has to be drawn between the two, and ancient musical treatises could give us a hint on how to go about it. But what matters most is that, at the end of the day, learners should be able to render these ornamentations and embellishments flawlessly, whether these are raga-specific or form-specific (ITC, Sangeet Research Academy).\(^{11}\)

**Swara-s**

The basic elements of Hindustani Raga-Sangita having the capacity to lead to aesthetic experience are the 22 shruti-s (microtones). Out of these 22 microtones, a minimum number of five and a maximum number of seven could be selected for a particular raga and these become its notes (swara-s) in ascending and descending order. In the words of Dr. Vidyadhar Oke,\(^{12}\) a swara is a chosen, single frequency, and has softness, viscosity, steadiness, resonance, accuracy, and delightfulness or the capacity to please the listeners’ mind, as fundamental qualities. Generally, it is said that there are 12 different pitches as follows: S r R g G m M P d D n N. Dr. Oke further states that out of these, besides Sa and Pa which are already single frequencies, thus notes in their own right, 10 are, strictly speaking, not notes, but frequency ranges of notes or ranges of individual frequencies called swarakeshtra-s. In each of those 10 frequency ranges or swarakeshtra-s, there are two shruti-s, and any one selected from these for a raga becomes its (ragu’s) note or swara. For example, r is, in fact, a frequency range having two individual frequencies (a lower r’ and a higher r’\(^2\)): r’ as is used in raga Todi, and a higher r’\(^2\) as is used in raga Bhairav. It is also said that the distinction between a tone and a “swara” (musical note) is only in terms of the latter’s amount of refinement, as compared with the former’s plainness. Hence, a tone has to be made into a swara through in-depth reflection and rigorous practice.

**Ornamentations**

Having said this, the swara-s or refined tones alone cannot bring out the aesthetic potentials of a raga. In the latter, the musical notes need to be rendered with ornamentations known as “gamaka-s” or “alankar-s.” Parshvadeva sheds light on the concept of “gamaka” as follows:

> When in a song a note peeps over the region of its own legitimate shruti-s (microtones) a shade into the region of its (higher or lower) neighbours a ‘Gamaka’ is there. (Ranade, 1976, p. 36)

These subtle ornamentations or “graces” are integral to the notes of each distinct raga, and not extrinsic and accidental to it. Those graces can be expressed in different ways, either as a glide from one note to another, or touch of one, two, or three notes with another, or simply a shake to a particular note. Therefore, each raga acquires its uniqueness because of not only its musical notes but also the latter’s aesthetically rendered, accompanying graces. Thus, in Indian music, a bare note, as is played on a keyboard, or a staccato, is very rarely used, if at all. Each note is linked to its preceding or succeeding note. A musical note, to be qualified as “musical,” must invariably move along with its graces.

Without going into the origin and historical development of gamaka in Indian music, for this is beyond the purview of this article, the author now moves on to the types of ornamentations which are used in Hindustani Music in the present time. Suffice it to say, the different types of gamaka-s, as mentioned in some old music treatises, for example, Natyashastra of Bharat Muni and Sangitaratnakara of Sharangdeva, are still being used today, but under different appellations.

**Ornamentations in Khyal Genre**

As mentioned earlier, Khyal is the most popular genre of Hindustani or North Indian classical vocal music nowadays. This form of singing involves a lot of improvisation and creativity in its rendering.

The ornamentations used in Khyal singing are as follows.

**Kan or spars.** When a note is sung or played with a touch of a preceding or succeeding note, a kan or spars is produced and thus embellishes that main note.

**Meend.** This is a slow glide from one note to another in ascending (anuloma) or descending (viloma) order with a view to connecting and bringing them to light. Meend is a unique tonal grace in the sense that it is used only in Indian music.

**Khatka.** This ornamentation is executed in fast speed around a main note. The main note is embellished with a touch of the next higher note and then with that of the next lower note, or vice versa. This is also known as gitkiri in instrumental music.

**Murkhi.** Murkhi is softer than a khatka, but as fast as the latter. It is rendered in a cluster around a main note, but instead of involving four notes, it does with only three notes.

**Zamzamma.** If a series of murkhi is executed in ascending or descending order, a new kind of ornamentation called zamzamma is produced. Such ornamentation is mostly used in Sitar.

**Andolan.** This is rendered by doing a gentle oscillation of a note so much so that it involves the microtones of its higher
counterpart; thus, it is a subtle oscillation in between two notes. The note on which the oscillation takes place is called the andolita swar. It is worth noting that andolan is raga specific and thus cannot be used whimsically in any raga.

Gamaka. This is a specific type of ornamentation bearing the same name as its generic term “gamaka.” If a musical movement between, let us say, Sa and Re is rendered in slow speed, it becomes a meend. But if the same movement is executed with force in fast speed from below or above, a gamaka is produced.

Kampana. This is rendered by oscillating a note in fast speed, and the resulting effect is a shake or a vibrato.

Lahak and hudak. These are typical ornamentations rendered in the Dhrupada genre of singing. Lahak is a grace movement produced by singing a note from below with a slight touch of breath force. In hudak, the same exercise is performed with a heavier pull from below with a more forceful breath exhalation that creates a “hum” sound.

Dhuran and muran. Dhuran and muran are rendered when the musical notes are sung in a rounded pattern in ascending and descending order, respectively.

All the above-mentioned ornamentations have very important functions in Hindustani Raga-Sangita:

i. They embellish the music;
ii. They bring out the salient features of the melodic matrix or raga;
iii. They strengthen the genre or form of music being performed and segregate it from others;
iv. They demarcate Hindustani Raga-Sangita from other systems of music in the world;
v. They act as vehicles to express various emotions and moods.

However, it is to be noted that the above-stated ornamentations should be executed in such a way that they do not appear “artificial” or “formal.” One has to practice very hard and systematically for their proper execution, but once they are used in a raga, they should blend into the very personality of that raga. This is achieved through proficiency and self-expression. Sanyal (1987) points out in this regard that a performer must transcend the formal structure of a raga in order to experience and project the beautiful (pp. 175-206).

Embellishments in Hindustani Raga-Sangita

The most important types of embellishments are alap (raga delineation in slow tempo) and its kinds, behelava (raga delineation in moderate tempo comprising different rhythmic patterns) and its kinds, and tana (raga delineation in fast tempo) and its kinds. These embellishments are part and parcel of Khayal singing. Alap using mnemonic syllables (nom-tom) rendered at different speed (sphurita), and upaj (improvisation with the wordings of the composition in different rhythmic divisions) forms an integral part of Dhrupada singing. Instrumental music, such as Violin and Sitar, involves most of these forms of embellishments.

There is yet another form of embellishment known as “kaku” that occupies an important place in Indian Music, be it Hindustani or Carnatic. Kaku refers to a specific sound modulation in the rendering of the musical notes to convey the multilayered meaning and emotions and moods of a text and/or the diverse shades and nuances of a raga. In vocal music, the performer takes recourse to different “voices” in different timbres and volumes to express his or her inner feelings in a varied way, thus creating a tension in quest of a resolution. Just like a dancer takes recourse to abhinaya to express a plethora of emotions, a vocalist or instrumentalist uses kaku as vocal abhinaya to give vent to the complexities of human emotions through voice modulations. Although six types of kaku have been mentioned in ancient musical treatises, in actual practices, any kind of tonal or vocal modulation having the capacity to evoke a particular emotion is considered a kaku. Having said that, it is noteworthy that kaku is used quite sparingly in Dhrupada and Khayal genres, lest its excessive use might dilute their sobriety and chastity as classical genres.

Expression of Emotions in Hindustani Raga-Sangita

Music as an art-form must satisfy both the heart and the head. One is even tempted to go a step further in saying that when music touches the heart, it overwhelms the whole being so much so that very little space is left for intellectual realization, thus transcending the knower–known dichotomy. It is a journey from the heart to the soul, the emotional to the spiritual. For music to have such an impact on one’s emotional being, it ought to be made into an appropriate means to communicate inner feelings and thus fully expressive in nature.

By being a heteronomous art-form, unlike autonomous art-forms which are strictly self-referential, Hindustani Raga-Sangita is an integral part of the empirical life of man, as it always points to some emotive, social, moral, religious, or spiritual values. “Heteronomous art . . . imitates, represents, or expresses things outside itself” (Hamilton, 2007, para. 27). Let alone the lyrics of a composition, which is obviously heteronomous in nature, even a raga refers to and conveys an emotion beyond its own melodic form which can be revived and relished by the connoisseurs each time the raga is sung or played. Even a tala played at a certain speed is replete with references beyond itself. For example, Teentala played at fast speed can never convey the sentiment of pathos.
Having said this, it is imperative for and incumbent upon the practitioners to express emotions while performing, and not just to demonstrate the mere technical excellence. A music which is mugged up and/or stresses excessively on technical excellence is devoid of its quintessence or sap (rasa) and is thus “empty,” arid, and uninspiring. However, one will never overemphasize on the fact that to make one’s music become a vehicle for the expression of emotions, one has to master the “nuts and bolts” of the art-form. Extensive learning and listening, intensive analysis and reflection, and rigorous practice and refinement are the basic pedagogical obligations for all students of Raga-Sangita during their training or “taleem” period, which can easily extend over a decade or more. It is only then that Raga-Sangita becomes an object of contemplation for the talented performer as well as the sensitive and discriminating listener (rasika).

Conclusion

Prerequisites for and Obstacles in Aesthetic Experience of Hindustani Raga-Sangita

As stated above, rasa experience through Hindustani Raga-Sangita, as is the case for other genres, styles, and forms of music in the world, builds on and arises from the chemistry of the different bhava-s, or emotions and moods, both permanent and transitory, as projected by an able performer from his or her inner core with a blend of his or her musical knowledge, skills, understanding, and judgment. When the connoisseur listens to such a soul-lifting music, through complete absorption in the art-form (tannayi bhavana) and the automatic process of universalization (sadharanikarana), aesthetic relish (rasawada) takes place, the beautiful is evoked (rasanishpatti), and delight (ananda) is experienced. Such an experience has been compared with the bliss of self-realization, which is transcendent and supra-mundane in nature. It can be experienced or relished by someone who is sensitive to beauty, thus simply not given to everyone. In fact, aesthetic experience is the enjoyment of “one’s (own) being, as an intrinsic, indivisible aspect of one’s (higher) self” (Saxena, 2009a; Gautam, 1988, p. 158).

In real life, objects are considered as either pleasant or painful or neutral depending on how and for what purpose and utility an individual or percipient relates to these objects. In aesthetic experience, as the percipient is free from all individual personal attachment, purpose, or utility, the aesthetic object is experienced by the de-individualized or impersonalized self as bliss. Such bliss is nothing but the very essence of the self in the state of “de-individualization,” free from the shackles of the ego-sense. As stated above, rasa is manifested in the percipient because of his or her capacity for universalization which is, however, temporary in nature. Hence, though such an experience is unique, transcending (alaunkika), different from mundane ones (lokottara), and is similar to spiritual experience, that is, the experience of Moksha (liberation from the cycles of births and deaths, as understood in Indian philosophy), rasa experience is transient and short-lived and endures as long as the stimuli coming from the art-form are present.

Abhinavagupta, while commenting on the Natyashastra in his Abhinavabhavarati, makes reference to seven sadhaka-s or positive factors which are conducive to aesthetic experience of the highest kind. These are (a) inborn capacity to enjoy and appreciate works of art (Rasikta), (b) theoretical and practical knowledge of and insight and sensitivity toward the work of art being experienced (Sahrdaya), (c) extraordinary imaginative power to fill the gap and make sense of that aspect of the work of art which is not perceptible (Pratibha), (d) inner predisposition (inherent and acquired) to appreciate works of art (Vasana Samskara), (e) capacity for rumination, capacity for recollecting parts, and contemplating these as a whole (Bhavana-Charvana), (f) physically and mentally fit to enjoy works of art (Sharirika and Manasika Yogaya), and (g) capacity to lose one’s limited self and identifying completely with the work of art (Tadatmya). Deficit of any of these prerequisites will, at best, lead to a “surface satisfaction” of the aesthetic object (Saxena, 1996). At the bottom line, one who can experience bliss through music or any other art-forms is a connoisseur (sahrdaya or rasika), for he or she can get himself or herself in a state of consciousness devoid of individual particularities and conditions, in short, the ego-sense.

Be that as it may, there are certainly several important obstacles on the path leading to aesthetic experience in Raga-Sangita. Abhinavagupta also mentions seven such obstacles or vigna-s or badhak-s in the context of experiencing a drama or poem as follows: (a) improbability (Sambhavanaviraharupa—pratipattavayogvata), (b) intrusion of space–time particularity (Svagataparagatavatvayamenaka’kalavarnesvaseash), (c) helplessness of personal mood (Nijasukhadivivas’ibhavah), (d) lack of means of apprehension (Pratityapayavaiakalyam), (e) lack of clarity (Sphutatvabhavah), (f) lack of emphasis on the principal element (Apradhanaka), and (g) doubt (Sams’ayogah).

Hence, based on the above-mentioned prerequisites for and obstacles to rasamuhava, as discussed by Bharat Muni and Abhinavagupta, and the long-standing experience and observation of the author spanning over 43 years as well as the views of other musicians (Pt. Ritwik Sanjaly, Pt. Vidhyadhar Vyas, Prof. Chittaranjan Jyotishi, Late Dr. Pradeep Kumar Dikshit) and musicologists (Gautam, 1980; Saxena, 1996, 2009a, 2009b, 2010; Varma, 2009) in their capacity as teachers, researchers, thinkers, and performers, the following could be submitted as the main hindrances to aesthetic experience in Hindustani Raga-Sangita:

a. Lack of proper understanding and grasping of the basics of Hindustani Raga-Sangita;

b. Faulty use of the voice and its placement, production, intonation, and modulation, in the case of vocal music,
and faulty handling of the sound production of musical instruments, in the case of instrumental music;
c. Unrestrained and improper use of the elements of music, namely, shruti-s, swara-s, ornamentations, embellishments, and expression of emotions;
d. Mixing up of genres, styles, and forms in an unreasonable way;
e. Too much emphasis on technical and grammatical excellence;
f. Mugging up of ornamentations and embellishments and rendering same in performances without any personal creative outputs;
g. Lack of emotional expression while performing;
h. Artificiality in self-expression;
i. Unrestrained self-projection and self-image building;
j. Unsuitable dress code and misdemeanor on the stage;
k. Unwarranted behavior as a performer;
l. Improper stage decoration or improper use of musical instruments;
m. Improper use of lyrics or use of vulgar lyrics in evoking certain emotions and moods;
n. Improper use of bodily language, hand gestures; and facial expressions;
o. Improper use of time and space;
p. Lack of attention and concentration on the part of the performer and/or listener;
q. Lack of team spirit and tolerance;
r. Lack of emotional sensitivity of the audience;
s. Predominance of the ego-sense of the performer;
t. Nonobservance of the rules and regulations pertaining to Hindustani Raga-Sangita;
u. Listener’s lack of knowledge and understanding of Hindustani Raga-Sangita;
v. Inability to forget or put aside the vicissitudes of one’s daily life;
w. Inability to be oblivious to disturbances, thus unable to get absorbed in the art-work;
x. Inability to “de-individualize” oneself and universalize emotions.

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Notes
1. “Na Hi Rasadrite Kaschidarthah Pravartate.”
2. Definition quoted in Mahajan (2001, p. 18).
3. Definition quoted in Mahajan (2001, p. 19).
4. Definition quoted in Mahajan (2001, p. 18).
5. See Dhrupada Annual (1986, Vol. 1).
6. All that goes skillfully and aesthetically into the total singing, including the euphonic, temporal, and emotive elements.
7. Saxena (2009a, p. 169).
8. “Yato Vaco Nivartante Aprapya Manasa Sah”—Taittiriyap Upanishad (2.9.1).
9. Bharat’s Natyashastra.
10. A musical tradition of at least three generations, espousing specific stylistic renderings.
11. Retrieved from http://www.itscra.org/Study-of-Alankars
12. See website: 22shruti.com

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**Author Biography**

**Santosh Kumar Pudaruth** has been teaching and performing Hindustani classical vocal music for almost 35 years now. He has also been organizing cultural events at national level for quite some time now for the Mahatma Gandhi Institute and Ministry of Arts and Culture of the Republic of Mauritius, and these are very much appreciated by both locals and overseas guests. Besides, he is very much involved in research work and publications, and his areas of interest include Indian music, aesthetics, cultural industries, cultural policy, soft power and diplomacy, and cultural values.