

# STUDY OF THE PERFORMANCE OF RĀGA BHŪPĀL TŌḌĪ ON JALATARAṄGA

SUGNAN DANI

UGC Junior Research Fellow, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University), Bengaluru

## Abstract

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Hindustāni Classical Music has seen its adaptation onto various kinds of instruments viz, Aerophones, Chordophones, Membranophones, and Idiophones. Jalataraṅga / Jalataraṅgam / Jaltarang is an Idiophonic solo concert instrument in Hindustāni Classical Music where musicians have performed exclusive Rāga concerts. This study through case-study method attempts at exploring the performance of Rāga Bhūpāl Tōḍī on Jalataraṅga and analysing the approach to Rāga and the playing techniques. Analysis has been done for the Introductory-Ālāp segment of the Rāga presentation with respect to the following parameters - relative duration, range of svara-s explored, structure of ālāp, approach to rāga phrases, and playing techniques. This study leads to understanding the approach to performing Hindustāni Classical Rāga-s on Jalataraṅga.

**Keywords:** Jaltarang, Idiophone, Bhupal Todi, Hindustani Classical Music, Jalataranga

## INTRODUCTION

Jalataraṅga is an Idiophonic concert instrument in Hindustāni Classical Music on which artists have performed solo Rāga concerts. The technique employed in presenting a Rāga on this instrument is unique to artists. This study aims to analyse the playing techniques and the approach to the Rāga phrases taken by artists in performing Rāga Bhūpāl Tōḍī on Jalataraṅga.

## SCOPE & LIMITATION

The scope of this study is confined to notating and analysing the playing style and approach of Jalataraṅga concert recordings to the introductory Ālāp segment of Rāga Bhūpāl Tōḍī. The study is limited to the concert recordings available in the public domain that contain this Ālāp segment of the Rāga.

## RATIONALE FOR SELECTION OF THE RĀGA BHŪPĀL TŌḌĪ

Belonging to the cluster of Tōḍī, mīṅḍ is a key feature of Rāga Bhūpāl Tōḍī. With the intrinsic discrete nature of the Jalataraṅga instrument, it cannot produce Mīṅḍ-s. Yet artists have chosen to perform this Rāga on a concert platform. The study analyses the approach of Jalataraṅga artists in showcasing the identity of the Rāga in the introductory Ālāp segment of the Rāga presentation.

## NOTATION SYSTEM

The notation system used to analyse the Ālāp segment of Jalataraṅga performances is provided in Table 1. It comprises of the existing Bhatkhande notation system along

with new nomenclatures coined by the researcher for the purpose of discussion of the improvisations done by artists on Jalataraṅga.

**Table 1 – Notation System**

Symbol	Description	Represents
—	Horizontal line below the Svara	Kōmal Svara
'	Vertical line above the Svara	Tīvra Svara
·	Dot above the Svara	Tāra Saptaka Svara
.	Dot below the Svara	Mandra Saptaka Svara
/	Forward slash before the Svara	Mīṅḍ from the previous Svar
\	Backword Slash before the Svara	Mīṅḍ from the next Svara
~	Tilde after the Svara	Oscillation of the Svara
ᵉᵣ	Top-left Superscript to the Svara	Kaṇ-Svara
—	Underscore after the Svara	Sustain of the Svara
,	Comma after the Svara	End of a melodic phrase
=	Two horizontal lines above the Svara	Two immediate strokes on the same bowl
≡	Three horizontal lines above the Svara	Three immediate strokes on the same bowl
≡	Four horizontal lines above the Svara	Four immediate strokes on the same bowl
→	Arrow above a set of Svara-s	Sweep <sup>1</sup> stroke from first to last Svara (Single hand)
→ → →	Two Arrows above a set of Svara-s	Sweep stroke from first to last Svara (Double hand)
s*g	Asterisk between two Svara-s	Simultaneously played svara-s (Left svara with Left hand and Right svara with Right hand)

<sup>1</sup> Sweep stroke refers to a discrete Glissando as in a Piano or a Harp

## RĀGA BHŪPĀL TŌḌĪ

Rāga Bhūpāl Tōḍī is an Auḍav-Rāga with the scale structure of Rāga Bhūpāli, but with the Rīṣabh, Gandhār and Dhaivat being Kōmal, it is grouped under the Tōḍī cluster with the characteristic calan being  $\backslash r / g \backslash r \sim s \underline{d} \sim / s$  [3] [6]. While Bhatkhande categorises this Rāga into Thāṭ Bhairavī [2], Jha classifies it into Thāṭ Tōḍī [7]. The latter states that this Rāga emerges by omitting Madhyam and Nīśādh in Rāga Tōḍī, while retaining all other characteristics including the Tōḍī āṅg. It is termed as Rāga Bhūpāl when performed with Bhairavī āṅg; else, Rāga Bhūpāl Tōḍī has to always be presented with Tōḍī āṅg, describes Kelkar [8].

A random survey of the presentations of the raga as rendered by Hindustāni vocal and instrumental artists across gharana-s brings out the additional observations, as below:

The oscillation on Kōmal Rīṣabh and Kōmal Dhaivat is not mandatorily observed in each phrase of Rāga elaboration. When phrases are performed without oscillation, Rīṣabh also acts as a Nyāsa Svāra. [4] [9] [11] [12] [13] [14] [16]

## ANALYSIS

This Study focusses on analysing the following aspects in the Ālāp segment of Rāga Bhūpāl Tōḍī:

- Relative duration of Ālāp segment with respect to the total concert duration
- Range of Svāra-s explored
- Structure of Ālāp
- Approach to Rāga Phrases
- Playing Techniques

The concert renditions of the following Jalatarāṅga artists have been considered, that are available in the public domain:<sup>1</sup>

## DULAL ROY

The below section provides notation for the Ālāp segment of the recording of Rāga Bhūpāl Tōḍī [10]<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Artists are analysed in alphabetical order with no other precedence  
<sup>2</sup> Rāga Bhūpāl Tōḍī in this recording begins at 24:32 min = 1472s

1472 → śdpgrsdpg → śdpgrs s , s r r s g 1480 s\*g s\*g s\*g s\*p s\*p s\*p s\*p s\*p s\*p s\*p  
 1489 s s s s s , srsgrsd s s s s , s\*ś s\*ś s\*ś s\*ś s\*ś, d ś d ś d ś p d g p r g s 1496  
 1505 s ddd s r r r s r g p s\*p s\*d s\*d s\*ś s\*ś s\*ś s\*ś s\*ś s\*ś s\*ś s\*ś s\*ś s\*ś, rs rs → rsdp → 1513 d s r p d  
 1516 p s d r s s , s\*p s\*p s\*p s\*p g d s\*d s\*d d\*d d\*d d\*d s\*ś s\*ś s\*ś s\*ś s\*ś śdpgrs → śdpgrs 1524 →

- \* Numbers above the Svar indicate the timestamp in seconds
- \* Spaces between svara-s does not indicate the laya/tempo

#### a) Relative Duration

In the 23min rendering of the Rāga [10], the artist has dedicated one minute for the Ālāp segment

#### b) Range

The Ālāp ranges to over 1.5 Saptaka-s that extends from the Mandra Saptaka Gandhār to the Tāra Saptaka Ṣaḍja

#### c) Approach to Phrases of the Rāga

- At 1472s, the artist begins with a Sweep of svara-s in an Avrōh format from the Tāra Saptaka Ṣaḍja to the Mandra Saptaka Pañcam that primarily depicts the svara-s of the Rāga
- Nyāsa svara-s are highlighted with several continuous strokes on the same svara
- Characteristic phrases of the Rāga are not seen
- A scalar pattern-based approach in elaborating the Rāga is visible at 1489s, 1496, and 1513s.

#### d) Playing Techniques

- Long Sweep strokes in an Avrōh format using a single hand is seen at 1472s and 1524s that quickly showcases the svara-s of the Rāga
- Short Sweep strokes are seen at 1510s that reflect the connectivity between svara-s

- Simultaneous playing of Śaḍja svara along with other svara-s, creating an effect of harmony, is seen in the melodic phrases at 1480s, 1494s, 1505s, and 1516s.
- Overall, the playing style of single stroke per bowl is observed

### JAINKUMAR JAIN

The below section provides notation for the Ālāp portion of the recording of Rāga Bhūpāl Tōḍī [15].

5	8	10	13	15
gpd	d d d p̄ p	, s̄r̄ḡp̄d d d	, ḡp̄d̄ ś ś ś ś r̄ ḡ r̄ ś	, ḡp̄d̄ ś ś ś d̄ p
				, s̄r̄ḡp̄d d
17		22	25	
d̄s̄r̄ḡp̄	p r̄ ḡ r̄ s d̄ s r̄ s*g g	, s̄r̄ḡp̄d̄s̄r̄ ḡ ḡ ḡ r̄ ś	, d̄s̄r̄ḡp̄d̄s̄ ś ś ś d̄ p ḡ p d p ḡ	
29				
p r̄ ḡ r̄ s d̄ s r̄ s*g				

- \* Numbers above the Svar indicate the timestamp in seconds
- \* Spaces between svara-s does not indicate the laya/tempo

#### a) Relative Duration

In the 5min rendering of the Rāga [15], the artist has dedicated 30s for the Ālāp segment

#### b) Range

The Ālāp ranges to over 1.5 Saptaka-s that extends from the Mandra Saptaka Dhaivat to the Tāra Saptaka Gandhār

#### c) Approach to Phrases of the Rāga

- At 5s and 8s, the artist initiates the Ālāp with the phrases that prominently depicts the Vādī svara of the Rāga
- Nyāsa svara-s are highlighted with several continuous strokes on the same svara
- Calan of the Rāga displaying the Tōḍī aṅg – r̄ ḡ r̄ are seen in the melodic phrases beginning at 10s, 17s and 29s, but without Mīṇḍ-s
- Brisk movement between svara-s with phrase-based elaboration of the Rāga is visible

#### d) Playing Techniques

- Frequent double-playing on the same bowl with both hands is evident at 8s, 10s, 13s, 15s, 17s, 22s and 25s. This style of double-playing is consistently observed at the beginning of a new melodic phrase, and it extends to a minimum of 3 svara-s
- Simultaneous playing of two different svara-s at the same time, creating an effect of harmony is seen in the melodic phrases which begin at 17s and 29s.
- Overall, a continuous multiple-stroke playing style is observed.

#### MILIND TULANKAR

The below section provides notation for the Ālāp portion of the concert recording of Rāga Bhūpāl Tōḍī [1].

6	10	16	21
ṣ̄ ḍ s__	, ṣ̄ ḍ ṣ̄ r ṣ̄ḍ r s__	, p̄ ḍ s pḍ p s pḍ__	, p̄ ḍ s r g r g__
26	31	36	42
r g p ḡr p g r g r__	, ṣ̄ḍ r s__	, ṣ̄ ḍ ṣ̄ r g r ṣ̄ḍ r s__	, ṣ̄ r g p p
46	51	56	
p p , g r s ḍ s r g p ḡr ḍ p p	, g p g r ṣ̄ḍ g r__	, ḍ s r g r ṣ̄ḍ r s s ,	
59	62	64	66
ṣ̄ḍpḡrṣ̄ḍs	, ṣ̄ḍpḡrṣ̄ḍs	, ṣ̄ḍpḡrṣ̄ḍs	, p̄ ḍ s r g r ṣ̄ḍ r s s

\* Numbers above the Svar indicate the timestamp in seconds

\* Spaces between svara-s does not indicate the laya/tempo

#### a) Relative Duration

In the 12min rendering of the Rāga [1], the artist has dedicated 70s for the Ālāp segment

#### b) Range

The Ālāp ranges to around 1.5 Saptaka-s that extends from the Mandra Saptaka Pañcam to the Tāra Saptaka Ṣaḍja

### c) Approach to Phrases of the Rāga

- Nyāsa svāra-s are highlighted with sustain on Sa, Ga, and Dha which are visible in the melodic phrases at 6s, 10s, 16s, 21s, 31s, 36s. This highlights the Vādī and Samvādī svāra-s. Sustain on Re is also seen in the melodic phrases at 26s and 51s
- Characteristic phrases of the Rāga that displays the phrase of Tōḍī āṅg -  $\underline{r} \underline{g} \underline{r}$  are seen in the melodic phrases at 21s, 26s, 36s, 56s, and 66s.
- An unhurried phrase-based approach in elaborating the Rāga is visible.

### d) Playing Techniques

- A unique style of providing sustain to svāra-s is observed
- Initiating a melodic phrase by double-stroke on the same bowl with both hands for the first svāra of the phrase is seen at 6s, 10s, 16s, 21s, 36s, 42s and 66s
- Certain quickly played svāra-s in a phrase, performed as Kaṇ Svāra-s, provide a feeling of continuity between notes. For instance, in the phrases at 10s, 31s, 36s, 51s, 56s and 66s, the phrase  $s \underline{d}$  is always played as  $^s \underline{d}$  that reflects a vocal feel of  $s/\underline{d}$ . Similarly in the phrases at 26s and 46s, the phrase  $\underline{g} \underline{r}$  is played as  $\underline{g} \underline{r}$  reflecting  $\underline{g}/\underline{r}$ .
- Long sweep strokes in an Avrōh format using a single hand is seen at 59s, 62s, and 64s that keeps reminding the svāra-s of the Rāga
- Overall, a single-stroke approach with multiple-strokes on the first svāra of the phrase is the playing style observed.

## SHASHIKALA DANI

The below section provides notation for the Ālāp portion of the concert recording of Rāga Bhūpāl Tōḍī [5].

0 → → → → → → 10  
 pgršdpgrs pgršdpgrs pgršdpgrs pgršdpgrs pgršdpgrs pgršdpgrs , ś s s ,

12 15 18 22 26 29  
 ḍ s ś s , ḍ s r r̄ r̄ , r̄ g r̄ r̄ , g r ḍ r ś s , ḍ s r ḡ g g , r̄śḍp̄g g g ,

32 → → → → → 39 42 45  
 ḡpḍ pḍs ḍsr srg , ḡpḍsrg g , g r r , ś r g r̄ r̄ , r̄ g r ḍ r ś s , p̄gršdpgrs ,

47 50 54 57 60 63  
 ś d p̄ p , ḡ p d d d ḡ p p p , d p g r̄ r̄ , r̄ g r̄ r̄ , r̄ g r ś s , ś r g p p p ,

66 68 71 74 77 80  
 g p d d pdḡpḍrgpḍsrgpḍ srgpḍ d , g p d s\*s s\*s s\*s , ḍ s r\*r r\*r r\*r , s r g r\*r r\*r ,

82 85 → 87 90 93 95  
 r g r ḍ s s , p̄gršdpgrs , ḍ s r g ḡ g , r̄śḍp̄g g g , ḡpḍḍssrrg g ḡpḍsrg g ,

97 100 102 105 → 106 110  
 g r p ḡ g , p g g r̄ r̄ , r̄ g r ḍ r ś s p̄gršdpgrs , ḍsrgrgp p p , ḡpgrgrsrḍsd

112 → 114 → 118 121 123  
 p pḍsrgp p p , pḡgr rs ḍ pḍsrgp p , ḡ p d d d , ḍsrgrgpḡpḍ d ḍsrgpḍ d ,

124 127 131 134 137 →  
 d p ḡ p p p , śrgpḍpḡpgrgr r , ś r g r̄ r̄ , r̄ g r ḍ r ś s , p̄gršdpgrs ,

\* Numbers above the Svar indicate the timestamp in seconds

\* Spaces between svara-s does not indicate the laya/tempo



138	141	144	147		
dsrgsrgrgpd d d , pdgprgsrdsrgpd d , dsrsrgrgpgpd d , dssrrggppd d ,					
149	152	155	159		
d p g p d d d d , ḡ p d s s g p d s , srgpd̄s̄ , s srgpd̄s̄ srgpd̄s̄ , d̄ s r*r r*r r*r ,					
162	164	166	168		
gppddssr r r r̄gpd̄s̄ r*r , d r s*s s*s , s*s r*r g*g g*g g*g ,					
170	173	176			
r*r g*g r*r r*r , r*r g*g r*r s*s s*s , s*s d*d p*p p*p p*p ,					
179	181	183	186	189	191
ḡ p d d d , ḡ p p , d p g r̄ r , srgpd̄pgr̄r̄ , r̄ g r̄ r , g r d̄ r s̄ ,					
194	196	200	203		
s r g p d s , srgpd̄s̄ srgpd̄s̄ s*s d p g r r , dsrgpd̄ p g r̄ r , pdsrgp̄ g r̄ r ,					
205	208	212	215		
pdsrgp̄ g r̄ r , dsr̄ r dsr̄ dsr̄ r r , g r d r s*s s*s , p̄gr̄sd̄pgr̄s̄					

- \* Numbers above the Svar indicate the timestamp in seconds
- \* Spaces between svara-s does not indicate the laya/tempo

#### a) Relative Duration

In the 25min rendering of the Rāga [5], the artist has dedicated 3.5min for the Ālāp segment

#### b) Range

The Ālāp ranges to 2.5 Saptaka-s that extends from the Mandra Saptaka Śaḍja to the Tāra Saptaka Pañcam

#### c) Approach to Phrases of the Rāga

- The artist begins with a sweep of svara-s in an Avrōh format from the Tāra Saptaka Pañcam to the Madhya Saptaka Śaḍja that primarily depicts the svara-s of the Rāga

- Nyāsa svāra-s are displayed with melodic phrases ending on Sa, Ga, Pa, and Dha which are visible in all the melodic phrases. Sustain on Re is also seen in certain melodic phrases.
- Multiple strokes with melodic phrases ending on Dhaivat, emphasising the Vādī Svar, is seen at 68s, 71s, 118s, 121s, 123s, and 138s-149s
- Multiple strokes with melodic phrases ending on Gandhār emphasising the Samvādī Svar, is seen at 26s-32s and 87s-95s
- Characteristic phrases of the Rāga that displays the phrase of Tōḍī āṅg - r g r are observed at 18s, 39s, 42s, 57s, 80s, 82s, 102s, 131s, 134s, 170s, 186s, 189s, and 191s
- Alaṅkāra-based phrases are seen at 66s, 93s, 110s, 121s, 138s, 141s, 144s, 147s, 162s
- A blend of phrase and alaṅkāra -based elaboration of the Rāga is visible.

#### d) Playing Techniques

- Initiating a melodic phrase by multiple strokes on the same bowl with both hands, for the first svāra of the phrase is seen at 10s-63s, 87s-102s, 127s-134s, 179s-191s
- Long sweep in an Avrōh format using a single hand is seen at 0s, 45s, 85s, 105s, 137s, and 215s
- Long sweep in an Ārōh format using a single hand is seen at 71s, 95s, 112s, 114s, 123s, 155s, 164s and 196s
- Short and long sweeps in Ārōh format using single and both hands are seen at 32s, 200s, 203s, 205s and 208s
- The playing of sweeps between Svāra-s creates an impression of continuity between svāra-s and highlights subtlety in Ālāp elaboration
- Simultaneous playing of Ṣaḍja along with other svāra-s, creating an effect of harmony is observed at 74s, 166s, and 212s
- Left and right hands simultaneously playing the same svāra-s in the Madhya and Tāra Saptaka-s respectively, creating an effect of harmony is observed at 74s – 80s, 159s, 170s – 176s and 212s
- Overall, a single-stroke approach with multiple-strokes on the first svāra of the phrase is the playing style observed.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### a) Relative Time Duration

Typically, 10-15% of the concert duration is dedicated to the initial Ālāp segment

### b) Range of Svара-s explored

This is between 1.5 to 2.5 Saptak-s. Additional observation is that the range of svара-s explored is not always dependent on the time duration of the introductory ālāp segment.

### c) Playing techniques

- Three kinds of playing styles - Single stroke per bowl, Multiple strokes for the first bowl and continuous multiple strokes for over three svара-s
- Using unique stick for the sustenance of sound, highlighting the Nyāsa svара-s
- Single and double handed sweep strokes range from three svара-s (short sweeps) to over one Saptaka (long sweeps)
- Striking two bowls simultaneously, creates the effect of harmony

### d) Approach to the Rāga

- Characteristic phrases of the Rāga are displayed during the elaboration
- Several types of Alaṅkāra based patterns are performed between svара-s
- Kaṇ Svара-s are played by quick strokes between two bowls, reflecting the feel of Mīṇḍ-based phrases
- Scale-based random phrases of svара-s are also showcased

## CONCLUSION

The calan of the Rāga Ālāp involves svара-phrases discrete in nature. Attempts have been made to overcome the absence of continuity between svара-s in Jalatarāṅga by introducing subtle quick strokes depicting Kaṇ svара-s, unique strokes for sustain, and sweep strokes - all that audibly display connectivity between svара-s. Alaṅkāra-type patterns and scale-based phrases are also seen. Unique striking style is observed for each artist with respect to single and/or multiple strokes per bowl, providing an exclusive flavour to the artist's presentation.

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