



MUSICAL FORMS OF BHARATHANATYAM

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Abstract

The combination of music (geetham), orchestra (vadyam), and dance (nrithyam) is called 'Thourathrikam'. The art of dancing is a multifaceted composite art form. It is a co-ordination of the different angas of the body with the art form of singing and playing instruments. In all the dance forms of the world music and dance are so intertwined that is difficult to separate the one from the other. Both Music and Dance have their common source of joy. Both are inextricably intertwined with expression of inner beauty. The common system is joy or Ananda. The musical forms within Bharatanatyam are deeply intertwined with the dance, each contributing to a holistic experience. The music, often composed in traditional Carnatic style, complements the dance movements and enhances the emotive and aesthetic appeal of the performance. Compositions by revered composers such as the Tanjore Quartet, Swathi Thirunal, and Kshetrappa form the core repertoire. Through these varied forms, Bharatanatyam exemplifies the synthesis of music and dance, embodying spiritual, narrative, and artistic elements that connect the performer and audience to Indian cultural heritage. A Bharatanatyam performance usually included rich and varieties of musical forms. Alarippu, Jathiswaram, Shabdham, Varnam, Padam, Tillana, Mangalam.

Keywords: Bharatanatyam, Carnatic Music, Musical Forms, Tanjore, Southern India

INTRODUCTION

The history of Indian music goes back to much earlier times. Indian music originated with the early peoples of Indian subcontinent. The Aryans, Mongols, and Dravidians later influenced it. Each invasion of influenced the cultural patterns in India. There were many musical forms the later blend into one. The ancient forms of Indian music originated from the Vedic period between 1500-500 BC. Sama music was developed during this period. Hymns were recited and gradually notes were evolved and instruments of chordophones and drums were used in this period. Music evolved from devotional, folk, and tribal forms to a more structural forms over the centuries. A particular system of music based on Ragas (melody) and Tala (rhythm) came into existence. "The Indian classical music is categorized in two styles, namely 'CARNATIC MUSIC' and 'HINDUSTANI MUSIC'. They have the same base in both are melodic and follow rules of the Raga and Tala structures described above. The Carnatic is the art form of South India, while the rest of India follows the Hindustani method. Hindustani music has developed over time due to outside influence, while Carnatic music has maintained its original form". According to Indian theory sangita includes both music and dance. Very important early terracotta of the sangam period emphasizes sangita aspects of Shiva and in mute eloquence described him as the teacher of music and dance. The relation between Dance and Music are established physiologically. The potential link between dance and music heighten the emotional expression. A common feature of dance and music in India is that both are developed on oral tradition by and large the performers themselves create the form and music.

DANCE" has traditionally an important part of the religion and culture of India. According to Indian legend, the gods invented dance. Dancing is one of the most important Hindu arts because it incorporates melody, drama, form and line. "Dancing was one of the highest forms of worship. Vishnudhamotara puranam tells us that "to worship god by nritta (dance) is to fulfil all desire, and to him who dances the paths of preservation are unfolded". India has thousands of years old tradition of fine arts and classical and folk music and dance. Some of the world-famous dance forms that originated and invented in India are Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Kathakali, Kuchupudi, Manipuri, Mohiniyattam and Odissi. All the dance forms use principally the same mudras or sign of hand as a common language of Expression and were originally performed in the temple to certain various mythological stories from generation to generation while entertaining the audiences. The classical dances evolved to include the expression and themes from social life and experiences. Lord Shiva is





said to be the Nataraja meaning 'King of all dances' who is said to perform the cosmic Dance that graceful balances life and death and all that is happening in the universe in harmonious cycles.

Carnatic music can be traced to the 14th –15th centuries AD and thereafter. It originated in South India during the rule of Vijayanagar Empire. Carnatic music is a system of music commonly associated with the Southern part of the Indian subcontinent, with its area. Roughly confined to four modern states of India- Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamilnadu. It is one of two main sub-genres of Indian classical music that developed from ancient Hindu tradition; the other subgenre being Hindustani music, which emerged as a distinctive form due to Persian and Islamic influence in North India. In contrast to Hindustani music is important in Carnatic music on vocal music; most compositions are written to be sung, and even when played on instruments, they are meant to be performed in Gayaki (singing) style. Although there are stylistic differences, the basic elements of sruthi (the relative music pitch), swarm (the musical sound of a single note), Ragam (the mode or melodic formula) and Talam (the rhythmic cycles) form the foundation of improvisation and composition in both Carnatic and Hindustani music. Although improvisation plays a significant role, Carnatic music is mainly sung through composition, especially the (Krithi or Kirthana) a form developed between the 16th and 20th centuries by well-known composers such as Purandara Dasa and the Trinity of Carnatic music.

'Bharatanatyam' is a classic dance form originating in Tamilnadu, a state in Southern India and is also the National Dance of India. It was bring up in the temples and courts of Southern India since ancient times. Later it was systemizing and documented as a performing art in the 19th century by four brothers known as Tanjore Quartet, whose musical compositions for dance form the bulk of the Bharatanatyam repertoire even today. The name Bharatanatyam is derived from three basic concepts of Bhava, Raga, and Tala. 'Bha' for bhava while 'Ra' for Raga and 'Tha' for Tala. This is unique evidence for the significance and scope of dance music in Bharatanatyam and other South Indian dance forms. Bharatanatyam is also known Sadir, Dasiyattam, and Chinnamelam etc. In ancient times surviving texts of the golden age of Tamil Literature and poetry known during the sangam age such as the Tolkkapiyam as well as the later Silapathikaram, submit to a variety of dance traditions which flourished in these times. The Natyashastra tells an epic story of the celestial dancers (Apsara) and musicians (Gandharvas) who celebrated with dance, music and drama; the devas victorious battle against the Asuras.

South Indian music is rich in musical forms. There are as many as 50 varieties of them. They have a long and colourful history. They are representative of art music, sacred music dance music, opera music and folk music. A Bharatanatyam performance usually included rich and varieties of musical forms. In the early times the format is called Nirupana. Each Nirupana in this collection contain 18 compositions. The eighteen items in Bharatanatyam performance they are:

(1) Jayajaya, (2) Saranu, (3) Alaru, (4) Sollu, (5) Shabda, (6) Varnam, (7) Pada, (8) Svarajathi, (9) Abhinayapada, (10) Tillana, (11) Abhinayapadha, (12) Jakkini, (13) Gita, (14) Prabhandu, (15) Tripudya, (16) Slokavarna, (17) Kautua, (18) Mangala.

Then the present time the earlier system is systematized by Tanjavur brothers namely Chinnayya, Ponnayya, Vadivelu and Sivanandam our present Bharatanatyam performance contain 6 or 7 items that are included are:

- Alarippu
- Jathiswaram
- Shabdham
- Varnam
- Padam





- Tillana
- Mangalam

ALARIPPU

Alarippu is considered as the 1st item in the Bharatanatyam concert. It is the invocatory form of dance which is very short, simple and attractive. The term Alarippu had its origin from Telugu word Alarimpu. Alarippu is welcoming of the audience and seeking the blessing of the deity, gurus and elders and their permission to perform the purpose of performing this item at the beginning of the performance is to enable the body and limbs to get, prepared for performing more difficult item subsequently. The word Alarippu means 'blooming' the mith of the Alarippu is considered our body as a flower and its dedicating to god. Alarippu is a selection from the Tiruppupal (tiruppukal) by the fifteenth century composer ArunaGirinathar. This convention was often followed by the T. Balasaraswati Bani and is the way he learnt first Alarippu from K Ellappain1964. The three main posters of Bharatanatyam namely Sama, Aramandi, Muzhumandi and three Layas Vilambita, Madhya and Drutha. Alarippu seen in jathis namely Tisra, Chaturasra, Khanda, Misra, and Sankirna. The Tala selected for this item will be Adi, Rupaka, Chapu both Misra and Khanda usually the item Alarippu set in the raga Gamberanatta, which produces veera rasa and make ulsah it usually ends with a Theerumana.

JATHISWARAM

Jathiswaram which is usually presented as the 2nd item. Is a difficult piece and belongs to the Nritha category. The dance combines rhythmic sequences of movements in grouping of Jatis. It is performed to swaras passages in a particular raga, Tala and accompanied by musical instruments. The item jathiswaram have the angas Pallavi, Anupallavi and Charnaswara. There will be only swaras not include sahyas. Full sequence of adavus in different nadas such as Tisra, Chaturasra, Khanda, Misra, Sankirna are presented in jathiswaram. At the beginning of the jathiswara there is a Theerumanam accompanied by Sollukattu, Jathiswaram is create various beautiful forms, purely for artistic pleasure. No mood or sentiment is expressed. There are certain choreographic features that are typical of a jathiswaram. Jathiswaram are usually set in auspicious ragas like Kalyani, Sankarabharanam, Thodi, Hamsadvani and Bhairavi etc. SwathiTirunal, Tanjvur brothers and others have great composers of jathiswarams.

SHABDAM

Shabdham is considered as the 3rd item in the Bharatanatyam concert. Shabdham introduces Abhinaya or expressive dance. It is belonging to Nritya category. The music includes lyrics, in Shabdham they are in praise of deity, a guru or a patron. The song may be devotional or narrative in theme, and may describe the qualities, accomplishments and deed of its subject. The dancer interprets the song without elaboration. The Sahitya for a Shabdham is usually simple. There are typically two to five stanzas of poetry with associated Korvais of dance each subsequent one adds more detail on the same theme. In shabdham the song is preceded or followed by a short jathi with the sollukattu. Most of the shabdham are sung in kamboji raga. A few are also in Raga Malika. A shabdham start with a short jathi. The tala selected for this item Misrachapu tala. Shabdham produce Sringara and Bakthi rasas. This usually ends with a Thirumanam and a great number of them are in praise of Lord Krishna.

VARNAM

Varnam considered as the 4th item in the Bharatanatyam concert. Varnam which is the main and most important item in the Bharatanatyam concert. Varnam is a form that belongs to both the Abhyasa and the Sabha Gana. There are three kinds of varnam

1. Tanavarnam
2. Daruvarnam





3. Padavarnam

'Tanavarnam' is used in classical music have the angas- Pallavi, Anupallavi, MukthayiSwaram, Charanam and Charanaswaram. In a music concert the varnam is sung at the commencing piece, though it is not mandatory

Ex: Mohanam varnam (Ninnukori) Composer- Ramanad Srinivasa Ayyangar, Hamsadvani varnam (Jalajaksha) Composer Manampoochavadi Venkitasubbayyar

'Daruvvarnam' format that typically consists of Swara, Jathi and Sahitya. All in one along with the usual Pallavi, Anupallavi and Charana.

Ex: Maathe Malayadwaja (khamas Raga/ Adi tala/ Composer – Muthayya Bhagavathar Sannuthangi Sree Chamundeswari (Vasanta Raga / Adi tala / Composer –Muthayya Bhagavathar.

'Padavarnam' which is the most intricate item in the Bharatanatyam concert is called Atavarnam or Chawka varnam. Padavarnam are composed in Chowka Kala or Vilambita kala. The term Varna means description of Varna. Abhinaya and Adavu have equal importance then it belongs to Nritya category. Angas-Pallavi, Anupallavi, Mukthayiswaram, Swarasahityam, Charanam and Charana swaram. The learning and mastering of this item reveal the artistic skill genius and knowledge of the performers. The PadaVarnam is rendered slowly and with great deliberation because the Varnam is the most important central piece of a Bharatanatyam performance. The slow tempo gives the dancer an opportunity to depict the Abhinaya with various poses and gestures. The Padavarnam has Sahitya for all its sections. This is necessary because the dancer needs the words, the themes and a concrete story line which she can depict. An exception to this rule is the well-known Padavarnam 'Rupamujuji' ascribed to Muthuswami Dikshitar which did not originally have sahitya for all the sections but had these added to it at a later stage. The theme is of the Nayaka-nayaki type similar to the themes in padams, dealing with a variety of situations in the Sringararasa. While dancing Padavarnam, the Sahitya repeated a number of times which Sangatis in order to enable the dancer to elaborate the theme and incidents related to the theme. The Pallavi is repeat one or two times then sung a Trikalajathi. Varna, it requires nearly 45 to 60 min. The artistic skill and talent of the dancer, Nattuvanar, Mridangam as well as the singer is revealed in its full form only in the Varnam. Some Padavarnams like chalamela, sumasayaka, sakhiye intha velayil, sami niveyani etc. Padavarnams is set in to auspicious ragas like Thodi, Kalyani, Sankarabharana, Bhairavi, khamas etc. composers of Padavarnams are RamswamiDikshitar, Tanjavur quartette, PallaviSeshayyar, Subbarama Dikshitar, Mysore SadasivaRao etc.

PADAM

Padam is considered as the 5th item in the Bharatanatyam concert. Padam means a „word or foot“ Padam is purely Abhinaya item belonging to Natya group. Literally it is a musical monologue and belongs specially to dance music. Padam composed in vilamba kalam is produce Sringara, Bhakthi and Valsalya rasas. Hasthabhinaya and Sanchari important factor of Padam. "Bharata in his Natyashastra refers to Pada as a verbal theme in the context of defining the characteristics of the Gandharvas music poet Kalidasa in his Meghasandesam has stated the setting meaningful words (sahitya) to music and writing meaningful sahitya to the already set music as pada "Virachita padam geyamudgatukama". Padam is a composition giving full scope for Sringara abhinaya. Most of the Padam are in Telugu or Tamil and few in Malayalam and Kannada. Pada serve as symbolic examples to the theory of aesthetics with regard to the different classifications of the Nayika (heroine) and the nayaka (hero) and not the least, the type of duties of messengers sent on a mission to convey the feelings evoked love. Padam are mainly praise of Lord Muruga. Lord Krishna and lord nayaka nayaki. The tala selected for this item Misrachapu and Aditala. Telugu composer 'Kshetrayya' the father of the Pada, SwathiTirunal, Annamacharya and others are the great composers of padam.





TILLANA

Tillana considered as the 6th item in the Bharatanatyam concert. Tillana is a crisp and short form. It is brisk and attractive music it also sung towards the close of music concert. It is usually begins with jathis. The name Tillana is constituted of the rhythmic syllables. Ti la Na it is tempo is usually Madhyamakala. In Hindustani music is called Tarana. The Tillana is a constant item in a dance concert. It gives scope to the dancer to display her skill in foot work. Tillana is composed in Adi and Rupaka tala. Ramanad Srinivasa Ayyangar has to his credit a Tillana in Lakshmisatala (one of the 108 talas) Tillana are mainly in praise of king and lord deva. Tillana usually have 3 sections Pallavi, Anupallavi and Charanam. Adavus will be performed in 3 degree of speed Vilambita, Madhya; Drutha laya the item is included with completed Corvai and Thirumanam.

MANGALAM

The dancer concludes the performance with a mangalam simply by making time with her feet, a short benediction during which the dancer performs the namaskaram, giving thanks and invoking blessing for everyone present A Mangalam usually is no more than a minute or two in duration. The music uses one of the “auspicious” ragas, typically Madhyamavathi.

CONCLUSION

Bharatanatyam and Carnatic music are the legacies of Indian culture, transmitted by tradition from pre- historic times. Music and Dance have a fraternal affinity which has been proved from the study of the origin of dance and music and their evolution jointly and independently. The present condition of dance music as it provided in Bharatanatyam requires a lot of improvement, it has deviated from the traditional order, its contents and constitutes has decline, it has lost its serenity at the hands of commercially motivated people. Dedication and devotion to the art has become very rare. The Natyashastra has undergone many variations and changes its constituents such as the singer, song, items presented, the accompanying artists, the Nattuvanars, choreographers and even the patrons. Organizers and the public have undergone many changes. Alarippu, Jathiswaram, Shabdham, Varnam, Padam, Tillana, Mangalam. Each of these forms contributes to the overall aesthetic experience of a Bharatanatyam recital, blending rhythmic precision, expressive storytelling, and musicality.

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