

JASRANGI - REDEFINING JUGALBANDI THROUGH MOORCHANA

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Abstract

Jasrangi is a distinctive form of music pioneered by Sangeet Martand Pandit Jasraj. It is a form where two singers (one male vocalist and one female vocalist) sing two different simultaneously, yet harmoniously. This research paper explores how Jasrangi, through Moorchana, redefines the art of Jugalbandi. It examines the theory behind this unique musical form, the intricacies of selecting and performing the raga combination, and the technical mastery required to create such a harmonious complexity. By studying the contributions of Sangeet Martand Pandit Jasraj, this paper focuses on how Jasrangi has introduced a new dimension to Hindustani Classical Music.

Research Methodology: Historical, descriptive, analytical, and evaluative methods have been used.

Area of Study: The paper discusses the unique concept of Jasrangi, focusing on how it has redefined the notion of Jugalbandi, giving it a new format, through the core principle concept of Moorchana.

Keywords: *Jasrangi, Moorchana, Jugalbandi, Hindustani Classical Music, Mewati Gharana*

INTRODUCTION

Hindustani classical music has long been recognized for its complexity, emotional depth, and innovation. It is a beautiful tradition continuously evolving within its core principles. One of the most striking examples of innovation is the concept of 'Jasrangi'. Named after the legendary vocalist of Mewati Gharana, Pandit Jasraj, this concept stands on the principle of Moorchana (Harmony).

Among the many forms of performances, Jugalbandi, (musical duet) has stood as a unique expression of musical dialogue often characterized by Sawal-Jawab (question-answer) exchanges. Pandit Jasraj conceptualized this new style of Jugalbandi (musical duet), wherein typically one male vocalist and one female vocalist sing two different ragas on distinct scales (Sa) concerning their vocal ranges. This innovative rendition of ragas creates an immense musical experience.

JUGALBANDI

Jugalbandi comes from two Hindi words 'jugal' meaning 'pair', and 'Bandi' meaning 'bond'. It essentially means a partnership.

Jugalbandi traditionally involves two musicians or vocalists performing a raga. It is not limited to vocalists or the same type of instruments. It is also common to have Jugalbandi between different instruments, for example, Sitar and Flute.

The essence of Jugalbandi lies in the interplay of ideas, mutual respect, and collaboration of two equally skilled musicians. In the concept of Jasrangi, Jugalbandi has taken a step further. It is a particularly novel approach pioneered by Pandit Jasraj.

His contribution to the field of Indian classical music is monumental. He visualized this new form of Jugalbandi as a musical offering to the Divine basing it on the concept of 'Ardhanareshwara' a form of the Hindu God, Shiva, and Goddess Parvathi.

In an interview, Pandit Jasraj said, "I once asked God, 'You have made a world where we are always codependent on someone else - the Earth and the sky, the Sun and the Moon, Radha and Krishna, Shiv Shakti, et cetera. Nothing works without the other. How can I find that balance in music?' God gave me an answer. He said, 'I have provided you with everything, look into Moorchanabhed and you'll find your answer.'"

This gave Jasraj ji a new outlook towards Moorchana, and he then decided to experiment with this concept. According to Pandit Jasraj, Jsrangi represents the union of masculine and feminine energies in music.

PRINCIPLE OF MOORCHANA

Jsrangi is based on the application of ‘Moorchana’. This is an ancient and important concept in Indian classical music, particularly in raga development and improvisation. It refers to shifting the ‘Sa’ of a raga to a different note while maintaining the same sequence of notes, sometimes essentially creating a new raga. In simple terms, it can be understood as the transposition of the scale where the starting point of the scale is altered, but the order of the notes remains the same. It is also a concept profoundly used in Western music and is known as Harmony.

Sa	Re	Ga	Ma	Pa	Dha	Ni	Sa	Re
	Sa	Re	<u>Ga</u>	Ma	Pa	Dha	<u>Ni</u>	Sa

By taking the set of Natural notes (Bilawal Thaata) and then transposing or shifting the Sa to Re while maintaining the same notes, we can get Kaafi Thaata (a thaata with Ga and Ni komal). This is the basis of Moorchana.

Moorchana plays a vital role in Jsrangi for creating the simultaneous presentation of two ragas by maintaining their uniqueness and blending them to create a cohesive and enriching musical experience.

Pandit Jasraj observed that during a Jugalbandi performance, where a male and female vocalist sing together, they must compromise on the pitch and setting. The difference between a man’s pitch and a woman’s pitch is half an octave, so they have to find a middle ground to perform together. In 1987-88, Jasraj explored the concept of Moorchana (Harmony) by experimenting with the idea of having two of his students, Pandit Sanjeev Abhyankar and Shweta Jhaveri, sing two different ragas using the ‘re’ of one raga as the ‘sa’ of the other raga while attempting to sing the same composition (bandish). During this experiment, he realized that using the ‘ma’ of one raga as the ‘sa’ of the other raga does create a harmonious effect, and so does the using ‘pa’ of one raga as the ‘sa’ of the other.

He then tried this experiment using ragas, which have ‘Sa - Ma Samvaad’ and ‘Sa - Pa Samvaad’.

Madhyam (ma) of the female vocalist becomes the Shadaj (sa) of the male vocalist and the Pancham (pa) of the male vocalist becomes the Shadaj (sa) of the female vocalist.

Thus, creating various pairs of ragas that sounded harmonious while being performed together. Both musicians would take turns presenting their improvisations of different ragas with the same composition.

Pandit Jasraj introduced the Jsrangi style and performed it for the first time in Pune in April 1990. In an interview, he expressed that he considered Pune’s audience more receptive to this innovation. Following this performance, a woman named Nina Pednekar, seated amongst the audience, stood up to applaud and suggested the name, ‘ Jsrangi ’

Jsrangi meaning ‘Pandit Jasraj ke rang me rangi hui’ (Infused with the essence and spirit of Pandit Jasraj).

This groundbreaking performance in Pune started Jsrangi’s journey, inspiring future generations of musicians to explore new frontiers in Indian classical music.

PERFORMANCE STRUCTURE

The performance structure of Jsrangi Jugalbandi starts with an alaap (slow, non-rhythmic improvisation) in both ragas. During this part, both vocalists introduce their chosen raga. Following this, they perform

compositions in Vilambit (slow tempo) and drut (fast tempo). The rhythmic cycle, or beat cycle (taal), remains common between both vocalists. There are a lot of raga combinations that are performed as Jasrangi Jugalbandi, some of them are

Durga - Bhupali

Puriya Dhanashree - Shudha Dhaivat Lalit

Jog - Vrindavani Sarang

Abhogi - Kalavati

Madhuwanti - Nat Bhairav

Madhukauns - Chandrakauns

Todi - Lalit

Marubihaag - Hemant

Mangal Bhairav – Prateeksha

One of the popular pairings of Jasrangi is the combination of Raga Durga and Raga Bhupali. The Aaroh and Avroh of Raga Durga and Raga Bhupali are as follows :

Raga Durga

Aaroh – Sa Re Ma Pa Dha Sa

Avroh – Sa Dha Pa Ma Re Sa

Raga Bhupali

Aaroh – Sa Re Ga Pa Dha Sa

Avroh – Sa Dha Pa Ga Re Sa

Now, using the Madhyam (Ma) of Raga Durga as the Shadaj (Sa), while keeping the order of the notes the same we get the aaroh of Raga Bhupali.

→ Raag Durga (female)							
Sa	Re	Ma	Pa	Dha	Ṡa	Ṛe	Ṣa
		Sa	Re	Ga	Pa	Dha	Ṡa
→ Raag Bhoopali (male)							

The female vocalist sings Raga Durga on her preferred pitch and the male vocalist sings Raga Bhupali by using her madhyam as his shadaj thus increasing the pitch and making it easier for the male vocalist to perform in a higher pitch.

The compositions of the Vilambit (slow tempo) and Drut (fast tempo) remain the same. The lyrics of the composition performed in Raga Durga and Raga Bhupali –

Sthayi – Tumi san laga mora re manwa

Piharwa surjanwa mora pyara

Antra – Janam Janam sawariya paaya

Esi laagi preet maanat nahi jiyara

Below is the YouTube link for the performance of Pandit Sanjeev Abhyankar and Dr. Ashwini Deshapande performing Jasrangi Jugalbandi (Raga combination – Raga Durga and Raga Bhupali)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C08jC_GpY7c

Another beautiful example to explain the concept of Jasrangi is the combination of Raga Abhogi and Raga Kalawati.

Raga Abhogi

Aaroh – Sa Re Ga Ma Dha Sa

Avroh – Sa Dha Ma Ga Re Sa

Raga Kalawati

Aaroh – Sa Ga Pa Dha Ni Sa

Avroh – Sa Ni Dha Pa Ga Sa

→ Raag Abhogi (female)								
Sa	Re	Ga	Ma	Dha	Sa	Re	Ga	Ma
			Sa	Ga	Pa	Dha	Ni	Sa
→ Raag Kalawati (male)								

The lyrics of the composition performed in Raga Abhogi and Raga Kalawati –

Sthayi – Ras Barsat Tore Ghar

Rasik Sajan Mohat Man

Antra – Sur Sagar Apaar

Ras ki Saritan Dhar

Gunjat Chalkat Basrat Tore Ghar

Below is the YouTube link for the performance of Pandit Sanjeev Abhyankar and Dr. Ashwini Deshapande performing Jasrangi Jugalbandi (Raga combination – Raga Kalawati and Raga Abhogi)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-q4K_z_Ob8

JASRANGI JUGALBANDI ARTISTS

Jasrangi is a complex form of vocal music that cannot be performed by beginners. It requires seasoned, skilled artists with a strong grasp of raga aesthetics and a deep understanding of Jugalbandi dialogue. Performing a Jasrangi Jugalbandi requires immense skill and mastery. The vocalists must be deeply familiar with their respective ragas and capable of maintaining their raga while the other vocalist sings and improvises in a different raga and pitch.

Some of the artists who have performed Jasrangi together are:

Pandit Sanjeev Abhyankar and Pandita Tripti Mukherjee

Pandit Rattan Mohan Sharma and Smt. Gargee Siddhant

Pandit Sanjeev Abhyankar and Vidushi Dr. Ashwini Bhide Deshpande

Krishna Bongane and Ankita Joshi

Dr. Avinesh Kumar and Dr. Rindana Rahasya

Saiprasad Panchal and Dr. Vilina Patra

The tabla players, the harmonium players, and the other accompanying instruments also play a vital role in maintaining a harmonious atmosphere.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF JASRANGI

Simultaneous rendition of two different ragas

The performers singing two different ragas create a multi-layered musical experience, where both ragas maintain their uniqueness as well as blend harmoniously in the soundscape.

A treat for the listeners

Aesthetically speaking Jasrangi allows the listener to enjoy the Rasa (mood) of two different ragas at the same time. Suppose the two vocalists are from different gharanas, i.e., in the case of Pandit Sanjeev Abhyankar (Mewati Gharana) and Dr. Ashwini Bhide Deshpande (Jaipur – Atrauli Gharana). In that case, a listener can even experience two different Gharana gaayaki (style) at the same time.

Vocal Interplay

Typically performed by a male and a female vocalist, Jasrangi creates a natural contrast of vocal registers, adding depth and beautiful tonal balance to the performance.

A Symbolic and Spiritual Union

Jasrangi symbolizes the coming together of the masculine and feminine energies. As stated by Pandit Jasraj ji, the concept of Jasrangi was derived from Ardhnareshwar, it thus depicts a spiritual union of two equally beautiful energies of the Hindu God, Shiva, and Goddess Parvati.

Expanding artistic expression

Performing two ragas together gives a new view toward exploring rhythmic and musical interactions. It opens up new layers to look at two distinctive ragas as well as look them together as a whole.

Rooted in Tradition

While Jasrangi is a novel innovation in Jugalbandi, it is beautifully grounded in the principle of Moorchana. Being a very different form of music, It stays true to the traditional framework while pushing the boundaries of musical creativity.

TECHNICAL AND AESTHETIC CHALLENGES OF JASRANGI

Jasrangi is a sophisticated and demanding art form, requiring singers to possess technical skills and a high level of understanding of musical dialogue and cooperation.

Singing Jasrangi presents several unique challenges, both technical and aesthetic. Some of the challenges that a singer performing Jasrangi might face are –

- One of the basic challenges that a new Jasrangi singer comes across is forgetting their pitch (Sa). As the other vocalist is singing their respective raga on a different pitch, one tends to forget their current pitch.
- Maintaining clarity and avoiding confusion between the different pitches and octaves while still achieving a harmonious blend can be challenging, particularly during faster passages or complex phrases (taans).
- The major part of singing a Jasrangi is a conversation, it is not a solo performance, the singers have to keep in mind that the performance as a whole should sound harmonious and beautiful.

- Both the vocalists have to pay close attention to align the phrases harmoniously with each other.
- Jasrangi is not only about Moorchana (Harmony), it is a lot more about understanding, and getting involved in each other's singing while maintaining the individuality of a raga.
- It requires the presence of mind and concentration to counter the musical phrases that the other vocalist sings.
- During Jasrangi performances, Pandit Sanjeev Abhyankar emphasized that audience members may not be satisfied if they try to listen to two different ragas individually. To truly enjoy Jasrangi, one must listen to the performance as a whole, rather than as two separate ragas. Both vocalists need to align their thinking in the same direction. The performance should emanate from two different directions and converge towards a single destination.
- The phrases used in Jasrangi consist mostly of Sawaal – Jawaab (Question-Answer). Both singers must pay close attention to what the other has sung and then sing a phrase that either counters the previous phrase or sounds like a musical dialogue or conversation.

To example this in a better way, consider the raga combination, Raga Nat Bhairav and Raga Madhuwanti.

Raga Nat Bhairav

Aaroh – Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni Sa

Avroh – Sa Ni Dha Pa Ma Ga Re Sa

Raga Madhuwanti

Aaroh – Sa Ga Ma Pa Ni Sa

Avroh – Sa Ni Dha Pa Ma Ga Re Sa

→ Raag Nat Bhairav (female)										
Sa	Re	Ga	Ma	Pa	Dha	Ni	Sa	Re	Ga	Ma
			Sa		Ga	Ma	Pa		Ni	Sa
→ Raag Madhuwanti (male)										

If the female vocalist sings Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Ma (Nat Bhairav), the male vocalist tends to respond with the phrase Sa Ga Ma Dha Pa (Madhuwanti). Understanding the Samvaad is also a crucial point in Jasrangi Jugalbandi.

Taking the above example, the Ma (madhyam) of Raga Nat Bhairav will align with the Pa (Pancham) of Madhuwanti.

This is the atmosphere that Jasrangi Jugalbandi creates. It feels as if both the ragas are talking to each other. However, doing this becomes challenging in the advanced stage. The vocalist has to constantly find the answer in their respective raga, being vigilant in maintaining the bhaav (mood) and the chalan (raga rendition) of the raga.

Below is the YouTube link for the performance of Sai Prasad Panchal and Dr. Vilina Patra performing Jasrangi Jugalbandi (Raga combination – Raga Nat Bhairav and RagaMadhuwanti)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHg0hfsPr_4&t=3433s



- The composition (bandish) also has a distinctive feature. The composition that is already been composed in one raga remains the same, but the composition has to be tweaked to sing the same bandish in a different raga.

For example, the composition – Ras Barsat Tore Ghar is a composition in Raga Abhogi. While singing Jasrangi in the raga combination Abhogi and Kalawati, the composition (bandish) that is originally in Raga Abhogi has to be changed and made within the notes of Raga Kalawati.

This has to be done while maintaining the raga chalan (rendition) and the essence of the other raga. The composition (bandish) is tweaked or changed not only notation-wise but also in an aesthetic sense. It has to be aesthetically pleasing to listen to when heard together.

Jasrangi is a unique and distinctive form of Jugalbandi. It is a sophisticated and demanding art form, requiring singers to possess technical skills and a high understanding of musical dialogue and cooperation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Jasrangi Jugalbandi is a distinctive style of Indian Classical Music. This style has been created by Pandit Jasraj, which has taken the principle of Moorchana to a greater height. Jasrangi represents the balance of masculine and feminine energies in the field of music. It has given a new definition to the format of Jugalbandi (musical duet).

CONCLUSION

Jasrangi Jugalbandi is a novel concept of Indian Classical Music. By fusing two independent ragas into something beautiful and harmonious, it elevates the concept of Moorchana and Jugalbandi to greater heights.

This new style created by Sangeet Martand Pandit Jasraj has highlighted the technical and spiritual depth of Music. It has transformed the traditional jugalbandi format and introduced a new level of complexity, beauty, and innovation in Indian Classical Music through Moorchana. It has not only expanded the boundaries of raga improvisation but also vocal techniques. This form has inspired musicians to think beyond and explore new possibilities to keep the tradition of Indian Classical Music alive and evolving.

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