



THE INFLUENCE OF HINDUSTANI CLASSICAL MUSIC ON
INDIAN CINEMA: A RASA-RĀGA-TĀLA APPROACH



BY

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to identify and appreciate the lasting influence of two pioneering notions from the Indian sub-continent's cultural memory and history – *rasa* theory and Hindustani classical music – on Indian cinema's music making traditions. *Rasa* theory is an important contribution from the ancient Indian Sanskrit drama compendium, the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, whose rudimentary precepts have provided a template for the workings of nearly all major fine art forms in the sub-continent. North Indian or Hindustani classical music is known to be *rasa*-centred, as, without emotional expression, its effectiveness is negligible and creates no counter-emotional responses in the audience. Both *rasa* and Hindustani classical music have informed Indian cinema such that a majority of film songs are based on some *rāga* and *tāla*, and each song or piece of background music score corresponds to a particular emotion.

The thesis argues that in an Indian talkie film there is little or no *rasa* manifestation without the *rāga-tāla* or melodic/rhythmic intervention. The thesis is divided into two parts. Part 1 provides the essential background, history and theory to ancient Indian aesthetics, the system of North Indian classical music and Indian cinema. Part 2 leads to further detailed analyses and case studies based on selected works of music directors, including Madan Mohan, Roshan, Naushad and Rahul Dev Burman. This part also examines in detail two *rasa*-centred films: *Jalsaghar* (1958) by Satyajit Ray and *Devdas* (2002) by Sanjay Leela Bhansali. While there is academic research that views Indian cinema more generally through the lens of *rasa*, there is no evidence of scholarly work which specifically explores the influence of *rasa-rāga-tāla* on Indian cinema. This thesis addresses that gap and fills it with relevant analyses.

The thesis not only demonstrates how to appreciate Indian cinema and associated expressive acting, diegetic and non-diegetic musical compositions, dances and melodramatic narratives using the *rasa* theory and Hindustani classical music; it also analyses in detail, what lies behind the formation of various situational film songs: particular *rāgas* and *tālas* implemented, specific melodic and rhythmic combinations used. It also scrutinises the impact on spectators with respect to manifestation of *rasa-bhāva* experiences, where *rasa*, the essence, signifies a fundamental mental state, and *bhāva*, the state of mind, is understood to be feeling, emotion or mood.

My conclusions argue that while western models of film criticism have been in favour of realism, this is not relevant here because the generic codes and conventions of Bollywood are non-realist. Instead of a bias towards a predominantly rational and realism-oriented medium of film criticism, a *rasa-rāga-tāla*-based analysis draws the focus of critical attention back to emotion-infused music and its various possible methods of expressive enunciation. Simultaneously *rasa* theory's capacity for understanding the art of *abhinaya* (acting) in conjunction with Hindustani classical music in the context of the culture – of its makers, various characters, and their performances – proves to be an invaluable asset for analysing and re-thinking apparently stereotypical, stylised performances of Hindi cinema. Overall, this research work covers relevant aspects of Hindustani classical music, Hindi film/music studies, the ancient *rasa* theory, Sanskrit studies, Indian philosophy, anthropology and culture, thus making it a cross-disciplinary venture.

Contents

Preface and Acknowledgements	5
A Note on IAST Conventions and Glossary	7
Introduction, Research Aims and Methodology	8
0.1 Indian cinema	10
0.2 The term 'Bollywood'	11
0.3 Development of Bollywood	12
0.4 Research aims	16
0.5 Literature review	22
0.6 Research methodology	29
PART 1: CONTEXTS, AESTHETICS, MUSICAL PRINCIPLES	33
Chapter 1: Śāstriya Saṅgīta to Bollywood – A Journey	34
1.1 Introduction	34
1.2 Nāṭyaśāstra	35
1.2.1 Rationale	35
1.2.2 History and origin	36
1.2.3 Bharata the author	37
1.2.4 Śāstras	39
1.2.5 Mythical-spiritual-philosophical connections	40
1.2.6 Structure and content summary	42
1.3 The concept of <i>bhāva</i>	45
1.4 The concept of <i>rasa</i>	52
1.5 'Rasa-Bhāva-Consciousness': A Complex Case of Music Learning, Making and Listening	56
1.6 <i>Rasa</i> in the Rāmāyaṇa	62
1.7 <i>Rasa-Rāga-Tāla</i> – A case study on their interdependencies	68
1.8 Milestones and events that shaped Indian film music	77
Chapter 2: Rāga and Rasa	83
2.1 Introduction	83
2.2 <i>Rāga</i> : An attempt at definition	83
2.3 Spiritual and aesthetic significance of <i>rāga</i>	86
2.4 Range of <i>Rasas</i> in <i>Rāga</i> Music: A Limitation	88
2.5 The basic twelve- <i>svara</i> system and melodic construction	91
2.6 Yaman	94
2.7 Conclusion	106
Chapter 3: Tāla-Tablā-Rasa: A Study of Rhythm	107
3.1 Introduction	107
3.2 A brief history	112
3.3 Why tablā?	113
3.4 <i>Laya</i> and <i>rasa</i>	115
3.5 The skeletal structure of a <i>tāla</i> (<i>ṭhekā</i>)	116
3.6 Excursus: A traditional Gaṇeś <i>paran</i> and <i>rasa</i>	117
3.7 Case Study: <i>Madhuban mẽ Rādhikā</i> (<i>Kohinoor</i> , 1960)	120
3.8 Case study: A <i>relā</i> from <i>Sholay</i> (1975) and Samta Prasad's contribution	124
3.9 Excursus: Tablā and <i>rasa</i> in a TV commercial	127
3.10 Creative example	130
3.11 Conclusion	131

Chapter 4: <i>Khayāl and Ṭhumrī</i>	134
4.1 Introduction	134
4.2 <i>Khayāl</i>	136
4.3 <i>Ṭhumrī</i>	141
4.4 What does <i>ṭhumrī</i> afford?	145
4.5 Case Study 1: Bade Ghulam Khan's stylistic influence	150
4.6 Case Study 2: Drama-infused <i>ṭhumrī</i>	157
4.7 Case Study 3: A comical <i>dādrā</i>	159
4.8 Case Study 4: Contemporary film <i>kajrī</i>	162
4.9 Case Study 5: Contemporary film <i>ṭhumrī</i>	167
4.10 Conclusion	173
PART 2: FILM SONGS AND FILM NARRATIVES	174
Chapter 5: Hindi Film Music Directors and Classical Music	175
5.1 Introduction	175
5.2 Madan Mohan	177
5.2.1 <i>Hum haĩ matā-e-kūcā-o-bāzār kī tarah</i> (<i>Dastak</i> , 1970)	179
5.2.2 <i>Merī āwaz suno</i> (<i>Naunihaal</i> , 1967)	182
5.3 Naushad	185
5.3.1 <i>Caturaṅga: Madhuban mẽ Rādhikā</i> (<i>Kohinoor</i> , 1960)	187
5.4 Roshan	196
5.4.1 <i>Garajat barsat sāwan āyo re</i> (from two films)	197
5.4.2 <i>Man re, tū kāhe na dhīr dhare</i> (<i>Chitralkha</i> , 1964)	199
5.5 Rahul Dev Burman (R D Burman)	204
5.5.1 <i>Rainā bītī jāye: Amar Prem</i> (1972)	205
5.6 Conclusion	208
Chapter 6: <i>Rāga-Rasa-Bhāva</i> in Action: Analysing Ray's Films	210
6.1 Satyajit Ray: An introduction	210
6.2 Introduction to <i>Jalsaghar</i>	212
6.3 The Plot	213
6.4 Scene-by-scene analysis	214
6.5 Conclusion	236
Chapter 7: <i>Devdas</i>	239
7.1 Introduction	239
7.2 The plot	240
7.3 Barua's adaptation	241
7.4 Bimal Roy's adaptation	242
7.5 <i>Devdas</i> – Sanjay Leela Bhansali	245
7.5.1 Examination of iconic dialogues	248
7.5.2 Examination of iconic songs	252
7.6 Conclusion	265
Chapter 8: Conclusion	266
8.1 The approach summarised	266
8.2 Beyond realism and towards aesthetic emotion	269
8.3 The Indian-ness of Hindi films	271
8.4 The role of artists	273
8.5 Relevance and future work	275
Selected Glossary	278
Bibliography and Filmography	284

Preface and Acknowledgements

While primarily focussing on North Indian classical music and Indian film, the thesis also explores the classical *rasa* theory of ancient Indian aesthetics, selected ancient Indian theological and spiritual concepts and selected Sanskrit texts. This thesis considers in detail the principle that within the Hindustani tradition there is little or no *rasa-bhāva* manifestation without *rāga* or *tāla* in a talkie Indian film. This fundamental principle has not been examined in detail in any scholarly study. I interrogate this in my analyses of selected Hindi film songs and sequences.¹

As well as providing an introduction to Hindustani *rāga-tāla* music in theory and practice, this work offers perspectives on how its two primary vocal genres, *khayāl* and *ṭhumrī*, have influenced the musical designs of Indian films and resulted in the manifestation and experience of *rasa-bhāva* for both the performers and audiences. I hope the contents will appeal to anyone drawn to Hindustani classical music and Indian cinema, particularly Hindi cinema, which is popularly known as Bollywood. The work may also be of interest to a diverse range of audience spanning aficionados (*rasikas*), academic scholars, researchers, teachers, students and those newly introduced to this subject. The reader may come across perspectives in the exploration of Hindustani classical music and Indian film music in relation to the wider scope of Indian cinema that have not been looked at in the same manner before this instance.

I have been a student and practitioner of Hindustani classical instrumental and vocal music since 1990, having trained under some stalwarts of this art form. My gurus are Ustād Abdul Halim Jaffer Khan (sitār), Ustād Allah Rakha (tablā), Paṇḍit Nayan Ghosh (tablā), Paṇḍit Ashok Johri (tablā), Paṇḍit Tushar Bhatia (sitār and vocals), Ustād Yusuf Mahmoud (tablā) and Paṇḍit Sanjay Guha (sitār). My musical training and considerable performance experience in India and the UK have been responsible for shaping my understanding of musical aesthetics, theory

¹ I have made use of relevant Youtube videos as references for these songs and sequences. It should be noted that all the Youtube links were active at the time of writing this thesis and also at the time of submission for examination. However, if any of the links do not work in the future or any Youtube videos are removed for any reason, the reader may refer to the available sources of those particular films/songs/sequences/scenes. All the YouTube videos were used for academic research purposes only.

and practice. I also received additional guidance from Paṇḍit Tushar Bhatia and Ustād Abdul Halim Jaffer Khan from 1999 till 2017 in the critical analyses of *rāga*-based Hindi film songs. This combined training, my own *riyāz* and passion for Hindi films have helped me formulate the concept of this research.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the invaluable guidance and support provided by my supervisors Prof. David Clarke and Dr Geetha Jayaraman. I must mention without exaggerating, that both of them have been much more than just 'PhD supervisors' for me. I realise the immense value and importance of attributes like not only subject-matter expertise or good supervision skills but qualities that go above and beyond these, to include compassion, empathy and many other things I cannot put into words. They have thus been 'gurus' for me in a true sense. Without their contributions to my continuous learning during the course of my PhD, I would not have been able to complete this piece of work. I would also like to thank all my musical gurus who taught me the nuances of Hindustani classical music and instilled in me the confidence to grasp challenging musical theories, compositions and concepts, while guiding me as a performer of the sitār and tablā. Last but not least, I would like to thank my family and friends whose support has been crucial and a constant source of motivation particularly during the last two or three years which have been very challenging for me.

A Note on IAST Conventions and Glossary

With respect to conventions used, I have implemented the IAST system of Sanskrit, Hindi and Urdu transliteration for all the traditional words including *Paurāṇic* proper names. However, I have not used it for names of any film characters or modern Indian names. With respect to *sargam*² notations, I have used capital letters for all the *śuddha* notes except for *madhyam* ('M' for *śuddha madhyam* and m for *tīvra madhyam*), small letters for komal notes, letters with a dot below them to denote lower octave notes and letters with a dot above them to denote higher octave notes.³ The notations presented in the thesis are heuristic in nature as it is not the purpose of my research to show intricate details of *svara* patterns associated with the songs that I have analysed. They mainly represent the melodic skeletons of the songs for a better appreciation of the embedded *rasa-bhāva* element.

I have also included a glossary of key terms that I use in my thesis, summarised for the reader, to make my text more accessible and approachable. It includes mainly Indian language (Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu) terms.

² Hindustani music criticism happens through the medium of solfège (*sargam*) and modern Indian musicological theory. The seven melodic notes of Hindustani *sargam*—*sa re ga ma pa dha ni*—minimally corresponds to the European solfege—do re mi fa so la ti. The term *sargam* itself is a compilation of its referential string of the first four notes, *sa-re-ga-ma*. Dard Neuman argues that though *sargam* is inherent to the musicians' framework, its written representation is not.

³ Neuman, D. (2012). Pedagogy, Practice, and Embodied Creativity in Hindustani Music. *Ethnomusicology*, 56(3), 426–449.

Introduction, Research Aims and Methodology

There are thousands of *rāgas*, and they are all connected with different times of the day, like sunrise or night or sunset. It is all based on seventy-two of what we call '*mela*' or scales. And we have principally nine moods, ranging from peacefulness to praying, or the feeling of emptiness you get by sitting by the ocean.

Paṇḍit Ravi Shankar

Harold Schramm argues that mere acknowledgement of India's civilization as one of the most ancient ones globally does not always lead to the realization that its art-forms precede several of those developed in the West and hence the primordial beginnings and continuous tradition of Indian musical theatre continue to astound and to be marvelled at.⁴ The classical music of India and Bollywood film music are perhaps two of the most popular components of this extensive continuous tradition referred to be Schramm. While the former has been known to have a long history with technical treatises on Indian music in the literary Sanskrit language for nearly two thousand years,⁵ the latter has developed into a specialised genre in its own right over the last hundred years. Alongside the Sanskrit works on Indian music, the contributions of prominent musicians and musicologists of Persian origins, before and during the Mughal period cannot be overlooked. Amongst them, the 14th century musician, poet and Sufi mystic, Amir Khusrau is the most well-known. Later in the 16th century when emperor Akbar appointed musicians including Tansen from Gwalior to his court, the famed *Seniyā gharānā* was born. This stylistic school was associated with the ancient musical form of *dhrupad* which became the officially recognized musicological model at the time before *khayāl* rose to supreme prominence. In the 19th century, the stylistic approach of Niamat Khan 'Sadāraṅg, with respect to rendering *khayāl* music became the prevailing creative medium for the musical arts in North India.⁶ John Barlow and Lakshmi Subramanian argue that while most of the musical elements of *khayāl* were derived from older Indian social, folk and cultural traditions, its uniqueness can be traced back to the traditional Persian court and the Indian

⁴ Schramm, H. (1968). Musical Theatre in India. *Asian Music*, 1(1), pp. 31–40.

⁵ Jairazbhoy, N A. (2008). What Happened to Indian Music Theory? Indo-Occidentalism? *Ethnomusicology*, 52/3, pp. 349–377.

⁶ Karnani, C. (2005). *Form in Indian Music: A Study in Gharanas*. Rawat Publications, Jaipur and New Delhi, pp. 3–4.

Sufi '*khānāqāh*'.⁷ Further down the road, in the 19th and 20th centuries, based on the above-mentioned influences of and groundings in Hindustani classical music, various modern vocalists and instrumentalists came into prominence through their respective *gharānās* (stylistic schools). Some of them, including Bade Ghulam Ali, Ameer Khan, Ravi Shankar, Vilayat Khan and Ali Akbar Khan, influenced Indian film music composers and singers to eventually shape film music songs. Indian film music may be considered as a hybrid genre, as it incorporates elements of world music (especially western music) along with Indian classical and folk ingredients in its compositions. Its history has throughout been informed and heavily influenced by the Indigenous Hindustani classical and semi-classical music of India, as mentioned above. While Indian film music and Bollywood are popular 20th century Indian traditions, they have not been popularly seen in connection with *rasa* theory of Indian aesthetics that has been in existence since at least 2000 years.⁸

The classical features of Indian film music, although mentioned in some academic writings related to their respective influences on Bollywood, have not been examined in detail by researchers. Modern film research includes elements like literary criticism, philosophy, anthropology, semiology, psychoanalysis, gender studies and Marxism, but the musical component has not been addressed by a substantial number of scholars. I aim to fill this gap by a detailed systematic investigation of the influence of Hindustani classical music (with respect to *rāga* and *tāla* which may be considered its two pillars) and *rasa* theory on Bollywood's musical journey up to recent times. I argue that Indian discourse about what happens in Hindi films gyrates around the notion of exhibition that highlights a plethora of *rasas*. This notion assiduously requires that narratives move in certain ways and that the narrative is integrated with songs and dance sequences in which emotional situations are elaborated upon through intricately created melodic and rhythmic musical formulations.⁹ But what exactly does the term Bollywood imply? We find this out in the next section.

⁷ Barlow, J. and Subramanian, L. (2007). Music and Society in North India: From the Mughals to the Mutiny. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 42/19, pp. 1779–1787.

⁸ Bhatia, N. (2016). The 'Rasa' Theory and the Concept of the 'Sublime': A Universal Approach of Bharatamuni and Longinus. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 21/10-9, pp. 10-12.

⁹ Inden, R. (2013). What Happens in a Hindi Film? *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 41(5), pp. 492–509.

0.1 Indian cinema

Indian film industry was the largest film-producer second only to its western counterpart which is popularly known as Hollywood. Sayantan Ghosh Dastidar and Caroline Elliot, quoting from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, inform us that India continues to be by far the world's largest producer of films, producing 1724 films in 2013 compared to 738 films produced in the USA, and 638 films produced in China.¹⁰ According to Shagun Tatia, Bollywood as an industry not only expanded with respect to creativity and novelty but also enjoyed a major boost in its revenues between 2000 and 2018.¹¹ These figures indicate the level of popularity and importance that Bollywood enjoys not only in India but over the world.

According to Chidananda Das Gupta, Indian cinema is the one major market that Hollywood has never been able to understand fully and overtake.¹² Indian parliamentarian Shashi Tharoor is of the view that not only is it a source of pride for Indians, but also a diplomatic soft power.¹³ Olivia Chakraborty suggests that its sway over the masses is so extensive that it affects and reflects Indian distinctiveness, art, history, socio-political issues, and utopian romantic ambitions, among other things.¹⁴ Sheraf Rehman points out that Indian cinema as a whole entity has been responsible in sustaining the social and cultural fabric of Indian society, which boasts approximately seventy major languages, four major and several smaller faiths, several national and regional festivals and overall an extremely diversified, complex yet fascinating outlook.¹⁵

Since India's independence, its media and entertainment industry's popularity and financial value gained incredible heights. S. Chitrapu points out that in the early days of Independence, film makers targeted the domestic market, owing to negligible support from the central government, and this led to Hindi becoming Bollywood's favoured medium of communication (since a considerable percentage of people spoke Hindi).¹⁶ Ernst and Young reported that this

¹⁰ Dastidar, S.G. and Elliott, C. (2020). *The Indian film industry in a changing international market*. J Cult Econ 44, pp. 97–116.

¹¹ Tatia, S. (2019). *Evolution of Bollywood: A Study on Taste and Preferences and Income-Expenditure Framework of Consumers*. p. 2.

¹² Das Gupta, C. (1980). *New Directions in Indian Cinema*. Film Quarterly, 34/1, pp. 32–42.

¹³ Tharoor, S. (2008). *India as a Soft Power*. India International Centre Quarterly, 35/1, pp. 32–45.

¹⁴ Chakraborty, O. (2022). *Prevalence of Colonial Hangover in Bollywood Movies with Primary Focus on Queen and English Vinglish*. Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science, 10/5, pp. 33-38.

¹⁵ Rehman, S. (2016). *The Role of Music in Hindi Cinema*. Synergy, p. 317.

¹⁶ Chitrapu, S. (2012). *The big stick behind "soft power"? The case of Indian films in international markets*. Bollywood and Globalization: The Global Power of Popular Hindi Cinema, pp. 15-28.

industry was valued at US\$ 16.3 billion in 2010 and indicated its expected projected growth at a Compound Annual Growth Rate of 12 per cent in the following four-year period to reach a value of US\$ 26 billion.¹⁷ M. Sabeshmanikandan has further explained that India was estimated to have more than 700 television channels and 100 million pay-tv households, while 245 private FM radio stations operated, along with the government controlled All India Radio operating 237 radio stations.¹⁸ All these audio-visual media mostly present content related to the Indian film Industry (which Manikandan points out was already the largest in the world back in 2012 with the production of over 1000 films a year in over 20 languages) apart from other non-cinema related programs. The Indian film industry which produced a total of 2961 films including 1602 feature films in 2012 alone, emerged as a global enterprise in the 20th century, exhibiting worldwide in over 90 countries.¹⁹

0.2 The term ‘Bollywood’

Within the larger spectrum of Bollywood, there have been various interpretations of and commentaries on the different genres that are usually perceived as benchmarks of stylistic grouping of films by scholars, critics, and academicians. Madhava Prasad called the term Bollywood strange, adding that ‘stranger still is the wide acceptance that the term has gained over the last few years in a country where the dominant prevailing view is that Indian popular cinema is an entirely indigenous product. Today, the English language media, the Indian language press, journalists, and film scholars employ this term to talk about Indian popular cinema.’²⁰

Matthew Jones argues that the term Bollywood, which began as a humorous idiom referring to the Hindi Language film industry located in the erstwhile Bombay Presidency, was expeditiously endorsed to reference all cinema that was produced in India.²¹ Jones also points out that this sobriquet is so deep-seated in the jargon of cinematic culture that it is now erroneously considered to be a genre that encompasses all of Indian cinema. While various

¹⁷ Balsara, NJF. (2011). Spotlight on India’s entertainment economy Seizing new growth opportunities. p. 4. <http://producersguildindia.com/Pdf/Spotlight%20on%20India's%20entertainment%20economy.pdf>

¹⁸ Sabeshmanikandan, M. (2014). Service Sector-Led Economy in India: A case of Music Industry.

¹⁹ Hafeez, E., and Ara, A. (2016). History and Evolution of Indian Film Industry.

²⁰ Prasad, M. M. (2003). This Thing Called Bollywood. Seminar, 525, <http://www.IndiaSeminar.com/2003/525/525%20madhava%20prasad.htm>

²¹ Jones, M. (2010). Bollywood, Rasa and Indian Cinema: Misconceptions, Meanings and Millionaire. *Visual Anthropology*, 23/1, pp. 33-44.

narratives have been in existence with respect to the origins and history of the term 'Bollywood', it should be traced back to the older term Tollywood used by an American producer referring to the Tollygunge area of Kolkata in the 1930s.²² Desai and Dudrah further suggest that over a period, the term Bollywood has come to be used interchangeably with others such as Bombay cinema or popular Hindi cinema that marked films as regionally and linguistically specific; they state that the term has increasingly been used to refer to the now globalized Mumbai's Hindi film culture industry.²³ However, in present times, Bollywood seems to signify Indian cinema itself, especially to an international audience.

0.3 Development of Bollywood

Asma Ayob suggests that both classical Sanskrit theatre and Parsi theatre have affected representations in Bollywood films.²⁴ Teri Skillman argues that in the late eighteenth hundreds, under the influence of British dramatic traditions, there was a renaissance of classical theatre among the English educated Indian minority which led to its spreading in selected parts of the country.²⁵ Skillman further suggests that the folk dramatic tradition with its vast inventory of songs and dances became the primary resource for a new theatrical tradition that was to develop further into Indian cinema. However, Mrinal Pande argues that it is from Parsi theatre that Hindi cinema inherited its audiences and many of its dramatic traditions.²⁶ While Sanskrit theatre is known for being 'highly stylised with an emphasis on spectacle', it is from Parsi theatre that the content of many older Bollywood films was originated.²⁷ Despite this fact, Gregory Booth argues that Hindi films have historically had a direct connection with a large body of epic stories that exist in oral and written form throughout India, and it is the continuous use of these traditional elements that explains the ongoing popularity of Hindi films.²⁸ So one cannot attribute their origin to Parsi theatre alone; credit must be given to Sanskrit theatre that sourced Sanskrit epics and *Paurāṇic* stories. Booth also points out that

²² Prasad, M. M. (2003). 'This Thing Called Bollywood', Seminar, 525, <http://www.IndiaSeminar.com/2003/525/525%20madhava%20prasad.htm>

²³ Dudrah, R., and Desai, J. (2008). The Essential Bollywood In The Bollywood Reader. pp. 1-17.

²⁴ Ayob, A. (2022). Understanding Bollywood: A Calling. p. 47.

²⁵ Skillman, T. (1986). The Bombay Hindi Film Song Genre: A Historical Survey. Yearbook for Traditional Music, 18, pp. 133–144.

²⁶ Pande, M. (2006). Moving beyond Themselves': Women in Hindustani Parsi Theatre and Early Hindi Films. Economic and Political Weekly, 41/17, pp. 1646–53.

²⁷ Gokulsing, K. M. and Dissanayake, W. (2004). Indian Popular Cinema: A Narrative of Cultural Change, p. 98.

²⁸ Booth, G D. (1995). Traditional Content and Narrative Structure in the Hindi Commercial Cinema. Asian Folklore Studies 54/2, pp. 169–90.

Hindi cinema is one of the oldest non-Euro-American cinematic traditions in the world.²⁹ Bollywood, a newly formed and emerging industry at the time started to become increasingly interlinked with the well-established and deeply rooted Indian art forms of classical dance and music, both of which already had centuries long history in the sub-continent. The first Indian-produced feature film, *Rajah Harishchandra* [King Harishchandra], was released in 1913, and Indian sound films first appeared in 1927. Alison Arnold argues that with the introduction of sound film technology into India in 1931 and the ensuing evolution and development of an Indian sound cinema, a genre of popular film music surfaced that was distinguishable from any extant native light, popular music.³⁰ By the late 1940s, Booth claims, an overtly stated standard had developed, focussing on precisely two stars, six songs, and three dances which were interwoven in a penetratingly stereotyped plot and performed by what often appeared to be an entire cast of character actors.

Amit Rai notes that approximately up to the mid-1980s, Bombay Cinema was classified into two main subdomains: art films and commercial films.³¹ Rai however argues that these genre distinctions were never as accurate or meticulous as might retrospectively appear, and that they eventually broke down in the late 80s and 90s, owing to combination of strong narratives, a realist camera-eye and Bollywood megastar celebrities. While art films have focussed on engaging with realistic social, political, religious, and other related issues faced by Indian society, the prime focus of commercial cinema is mass entertainment and profits. The latter group of films are often criticised for being unrealistic and fantasy-focussed in nature by educated modern Indian film viewers.³² Shakuntala Banaji gives examples of Hema Malini in *Sholay* (1980) who dances on broken glass pieces till her feet bleed profusely only to keep her lover Dharmendra alive, and of Salman Khan from *Maine Pyar Kiya* (1989) who despite being the son of a wealthy business tycoon in the film, works in a stone quarry to please his lover's father. Even so, Banaji argues, audiences still find such scenes engaging. Such audience responses are coupled with a plethora of sentimental outbursts often including loud cheers, energised screams, groans, tears etc. which suggest that they discover in their

²⁹ Booth, G D. (1995). Traditional Content and Narrative Structure in the Hindi Commercial Cinema. *Asian Folklore Studies* 54/2, pp. 169–90.

³⁰ Arnold, A. E. (1992). Aspects of Production and Consumption in the Popular Hindi Film Song Industry. *Asian Music*, 24(1), pp. 122–136.

³¹ Rai, A S. (2009). *Untimely Bollywood: Globalization and India's New Media Assemblage*. Duke University Press, p. 61.

³² Banaji, S. (2005). *Reading Bollywood: the young audience and Hindi films*. pp. 1-19.

melodramatic construction, something similar to psychological realism or realism at the level of emotion. Researchers have perceived realism as a multi-dimensional framework as pointed out by Brendan Rooney et al.³³ For example, how much of a 'reel-world' dramatic representation simulates real sensory data? Alice Hall identifies six dimensions that she claims constitute perceived psychological realism; plausibility (something that could be true), typicality (commonly or frequently occurs), factuality (accurate representation of specific real-world events), narrative consistency (internal coherence of the story), involvement (generates emotion), and perceptual persuasiveness (the extent to which the film creates a compelling visual illusion of realism).³⁴ These points are crucial with respect to the finer nuances of Indian cinema including the narrative, acting, music and other supporting aspects - all of them are *rasa* centric. While many Indian and specifically Bollywood film makers have stayed away from engaging with psychological realism, several of them have adopted this narrative style since the 1950s. While psychological depth was often secondary to visually striking exhibitions of characters in the early traditional Bollywood, film makers like Mehboob Khan, K Asif, Bimal Roy and Satyajit Ray heavily engaged with the former approach and produced some groundbreaking films, including *Mother India* (1957), *Do Bigha Zameen* (1953) and modern day films like *Taare Zameen Par* (2007), *Haider* (2014) and *Kapoor & Sons* (2016) which offer realistic portrays of emotional turmoils, trauma, and identity of characters in different situations of life. However, this does not mean that the comparatively flamboyant and glamorous films like *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960) and *Devdas* (2000) do not boast of psychological realism in Bollywood. Despite their spectacles, these films also focus on complex societal dynamics, repression, revenge and the protagonists' internal turmoil in a highly extravagant manner.

Yanyan Hong points out that Bollywood has been promoting and cementing India's place in the world as a 'soft power' through endorsing its culture, music, dance, values and beliefs.³⁵ All this it does, while also pulling extravagantly high profits into the country, such that in 2019,

³³ Rooney, B. (2012). The apparent reality of movies and emotional arousal: A study using physiological and self-report measures. pp. 405-422.

³⁴ Hall, A., (2003). Reading realism: audiences' evaluations of the reality of media texts. *Journal of Communication* 53, pp. 624-641.

³⁵ Hong, Y. (2021). The power of Bollywood: A study on opportunities, challenges, and audiences' perceptions of Indian cinema in China. 6/3, pp. 345-363.

Indian cinema box office revenues were over US\$2.5 billion³⁶ in the services sector accounting for over 50% of the Indian economy.³⁷ Can we then argue that it is mainly this collective ‘*rasa*-centric music and dance factor’ that makes Bollywood as attractive, important, entertaining and culturally relevant to not only the various classes of Indian film lovers but even to cinema lovers globally?

Various pieces of evidence throughout the history of the industry with respect to the content of most Hindi films, support this argument. Ajay Gehlawat and Rajinder Dudrah argue that the history of Hindi cinema is in many ways the history of song and dance.³⁸ Music, song, and dance, were commonly known to be the lifeblood of Indian cinema since the 1930s when *Alam Ara* (1931), India’s first sound film was released. Dudrah and Gehlawat argue that this ‘lifeblood’ aspect of Bollywood has been often recurrently acclaimed and bewailed, adored, and defamed, and despite these contrasting reactions to their existence, song and dance have sustained thus far to play an enormous role in Hindi films. However, they miss pointing out the fact that most of these engagements have been with songs and dances that are heavily influenced by the classical performing art forms of India. Danish Nabi et al. regard Hindi films as functioning on two levels. They argue that a Hindi film is made by its narrative, characterisation, and song-dance elements.³⁹ But, at deeper and rather subtler levels, the films have socio-cultural importance and connect directly to Indian consciousness. While both these observations are quite true, the reasons behind these are fully explored neither by Nabi et al. nor by other academicians with regard to the very soul of the Hindi film narratives, song-dance sequences and consequently the Indian consciousness that is being pointed at. The steady rise of Bollywood from its modest early stages in Indian theatre to its position as a transnational conveyor for global Indian audiences would have been almost impossible without serious associations with classical Indian aesthetics and music.

³⁶ Diwanji, S. (2020). Film industry in India – Statistics and facts – Statista [Dataset]. <https://www.statista.com/topics/2140/film-industry-in-India>.

³⁷ Dastidar, S. G., and Elliott, C. (2020). The Indian film industry in a changing international market. *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 44, pp. 97–116.

³⁸ Gehlawat, A and Dudrah, R. (2017). The evolution of song and dance in Hindi cinema. *South Asian Popular Culture*, 15/2-3, pp. 103-108.

³⁹ Nabi, D. D., Ahmad, D. A., and Khalid, D. Z. (2014). Bollywood : The Indian Celluloid Saga. *Asian Academic Research Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities* , p. 263.

Most of Bollywood music may also be described as a modern interpretation and practical implementation of a systematically preserved Hindustani music tradition that has evolved over a long period. Ameena Ahmad Ahuja and Bindu Chawla argue that the word Hindustani originates in the word 'Siñdhu' (the Indus river) that seems to run like a 'lifeline' through the North Western part of the Indian peninsula and yet unites the two parts that it separates through music.⁴⁰ They further argue that Hindustani music became fully recognized owing to its inability to identify with any one of the exclusive philosophies including those belonging to the Hindu or Muslim faiths and the open-mindedness of its early developers to encourage unity, thus bringing in a renaissance with respect to melodic and rhythmic creations.

Numerous Bollywood songs are based on *rāgas* set to rhythmic cycles known as *tālas*, and these two elements have been the collective support system of all Hindustani music *bandishes* (compositions) from the earlier *dhrupad* genre and the later *khayāl* genre that evolved between the 15th and 20th centuries in Northern India. While these compositions were woven around less complicated poetry based on the themes of devotion and romance and were only accompanied by instruments like *tablā*, *pakhāvaj* and *sāraṅgī*, Bollywood songs introduced heavier orchestration to suit the film sequences and provide enhanced dramatic effects. The use of multiple instruments, innovative preludes and music directors assuring clarity of pronunciation of the *bandishes* by the singers led to the masses being attracted to this ancient art form. The journey of classical music of India from Vedic times to the present has been an inspirational one for musicians and composers associated with Bollywood. Eminent music directors including Naushad, Roshan and R D Burman studied Hindustani classical music methodically, applied it in innovative ways to their several film music compositions, and introduced the masses to this ancient art form through the film medium.

0.4 Research aims

Much academic writing on Indian cinema is based on modern Western film theory. There are not many studies that look at Hindi film in its own cultural and aesthetic background. Hardly any scholarly study has been conducted on Indian cinema, keeping in mind the *rasa*, *rāga* and *tāla* tenets of ancient Indian aesthetics and music. Globalisation has opened up Indian cinema

⁴⁰ Ahuja, A. A, and Chawla, B. (1997). The River of Hindustani Music. India International Centre Quarterly 24, no. 2/3, pp. 178–86.

to the rest of the world on a massive scale. Till then very few Indian film makers were known outside India. Of course, as Meheli Sen reports, international exposure to these art-film makers led to a deep interest and reverence for the works of film makers like Satyajit Ray and Mrinal Sen. However, there exists an ignorance of the works of other film makers and even a lack of interest in other aspects of Indian cinema.⁴¹ There is also a lack of scholarly material on South Asian film makers. A solid Indian-film theory to oppose the authority of the Euro-American film theory referred to by South Asian film scholars has yet to be built. A need for researching Indian cinema on the basis of its aesthetics, which mainly comprises *rasa*, *rāga* and *tāla* is therefore imperative. Samhita Sunya argues that in contrast to film song sequences and film music, film lyrics have only occasionally constituted a primary site of analysis for media scholars, music historians, musicologists, cultural anthropologists, or literary scholars of South Asia.⁴² However, Sunya ignores the fact that even film song sequences and film music have not been examined through the lens of *rasa*, *rāga* and *tāla*, a collective paradigm which must be acknowledged as the soul of this music system.

My research aim is to focus on the *rāga-rasa-tāla* elements of Hindi cinema and this I will do through an investigation of the influence of Hindustani classical music on Indian cinema. *Rāga* is the prime melodic ingredient of this system of music. Neither *rāga* nor any particular style of performing remain static.⁴³ So, if they are dynamic and do not have clearly demarcated boundaries, what types of melodic interpretations do these *rāgas* promulgate? Also, how do these interpretations engage with the *navarasas* (nine types of emotions) to create a variety of emotionally charged melodic and rhythmic environments suitable for decorating the various *abhinaya* (both acting and dance) dominated scenes as part of the wider narratives of Indian films?

The focal ideas in this system of music are *rāgas* and associated musical compositions which provoke specific moods or emotions. There have been several studies conducted in the past that support the claim of distinct *rāgas* having the potential of eliciting distinct emotions.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Sen, M. (2013). Beyond Bollywood? *Cinema Journal*, 52/4, pp. 155–160.

⁴² Sunya, S. (2022). Moving toward the “City of Love”: Hindustani Lyrical Genealogies. In *Sirens of Modernity: World Cinema via Bombay* (1st ed., Vol. 3, pp. 50–84). University of California Press.

⁴³ Van der Meer, W. (1980). Hindustani Music in the Twentieth Century. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, pp. 99-113.

⁴⁴ Chordia, P., Godfrey, M., and Rae, A. (2008). Extending Content-based Recommendation: The Case of Indian Classical music. In *Proceeding of International Conference on Music Information Retrieval* (Atlanta, GA), pp. 571–576.

The word *rāga*, having its origins in the classical Sanskrit language, may be defined as ‘the act of colouring or dyeing’ (the mind and emotions in this context); it therefore refers metaphorically to ‘any feeling or passion such as love, affection, sympathy, desire, interest, motivation, joy, or delight’.⁴⁵ Thus, a *rāga* and any composition based on it, comprises a specific combination of notes which are used by the composer to create a *rasa* (mood) or an environment that is unique to the *rāga*. Some Western theorists do not seem to support the view that music signifies specific emotions as seen from the *rāga-rasa* correlation. Mandler proposed a theory which draws a connection between emotional qualities of music and the biological adaptive value of emotional reactions.⁴⁶ He argued that realisations and infringements of musical anticipations lead to natural biological exhilaration, which may lead to an emotional interpretation in the listeners. However, Mandler feels that since biological arousal is essentially contentless, emotional qualities cannot be derived directly from the characteristics of arousal. In contrast to Mandler’s views, Cooke identified musical patterns of sound that were commonly used to express emotion in this body of work.⁴⁷ Kivy also acknowledged that some links between music and emotion may be natural.⁴⁸ While there are differences of opinions in the Western thought regarding the connection between music and emotion, the *rasa* theory is certain about its correlation with both melody and rhythm which will be explored further in the thesis.

The songs that accentuate Indian films and give them much of their phenomenal international appeal are emotionally drenched. But with respect to melody and rhythm, where do these emotions come from? In Bollywood films, right from the first talkie, a majority of the songs are based on *rāga* music (barring a few which may have been composed to western music themes). And the *rasa* and *tāla* aspects, which may be considered universal owing to their all-encompassing nature, are present in all the songs. Kauffman argues that the concept of *rasa* dominated a great part of medieval Hindu drama, poetry and, to some extent, music.⁴⁹ Every sound-based film since inception has evolved in the process of this trio, representing a premeditated reaction in the spectator or listener when their mind is ‘attuned’ to the

⁴⁵ Valla, J et al. (2017). Music and Emotion—A Case for North Indian Classical Music. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 8, p. 10.

⁴⁶ Mandler, G. (1984). *Mind and Body: Psychology of emotion and stress*. New York: Norton.

⁴⁷ Cooke, D. (1959). *The language of music*. London: Oxford University Press.

⁴⁸ Kivy, P. (1980). *The corded shell: Reflections on musical expression*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

⁴⁹ Kaufmann, W. (1965). *Rasa, Rāga-Mālā and Performance Times in North Indian Rāgas*. *Ethnomusicology*, 9/3, pp. 272–291.

performance and becomes stimulated by the dramatical, poetical or musical representation. Although the methods, quality of presentation, acting, music, technology, and various other elements have changed considerably since the first talkie, *rasa*, *rāga* and *tāla*, have been the soul of these films. Some film scholars including Carl Plantinga have challenged the hypothesis that spectacle is incompatible to narrative in Hollywood films and that the emotions are not worthy of consideration in their study.⁵⁰ With respect to Indian films and especially Hindi cinema, the situation with respect to emotions is actually quite the opposite to the hypothesis challenged by Plantinga and unfortunately, hasn't been examined with the depth that it deserves. Since existing Euro-American film theory models are inadequate to address the challenges of Indian cinema with 'tangled roots and highly complicated historical trajectories' in the words of Sen, a thoroughly researched investigation is required for a more empathetic methodology. This can bring Hindustani classical music, *rasa* and Indian films under a single roof.⁵¹ Empathetic in this context is an understanding and appreciation of the nuances of *rasa*, *rāga* and *tāla* focussed approach to analysing Indian cinema. Laura-Lee Balkwill and William Forde Thompson argue that the Hindustani classical tonal system is particularly suited to the study by virtue of the *rāga-rasa* aspect of Hindustani music theory as it specifically outlines traditional relationships between the *rāgas* and their corresponding moods.⁵²

Music director Vanraj Bhatia has claimed that Indian music generally lacks dynamism.⁵³ He suggests that it is not effective enough for embellishing scenes of action, narrative progression, and transition, implying that western music is necessary for these parts in Hindi films. Bhatia's observation may be partly true but can certainly not be generalised. There are considerable examples of scenes that have primarily made use of Hindustani classical music either through the dominance of *rāga*, *tāla* or a combination of both these vital elements. Anna Morcom also points out that western music implemented in films like *Mother India* (1957) and *Mughal-E-Azam* (1960) seems to be out of place in those narrative contexts.⁵⁴ However, there are several cases, not only in those movies but also in other Hindi films, where

⁵⁰ Plantinga, C. (2009). *Moving Viewers: American Film and the Spectator's Experience*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

⁵¹ Sen, M. (2013). *Beyond Bollywood?* *Cinema Journal*, 52/4, pp. 155–160.

⁵² Balkwill, L.-L., & Thompson, W. F. (1999). *A Cross-Cultural Investigation of the Perception of Emotion in Music: Psychophysical and Cultural Cues*. *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 17(1), pp. 43–64.

⁵³ From my encounter with him in Mumbai in 2001.

⁵⁴ Morcom, A. (2017). *Hindi Film Songs and the Cinema*. 2nd edn, p. 270.

pure Hindustani classical instrumental music and not its western counterpart has been persuasively used.

By the late 1940s, Hindi film songs were decorated with larger orchestras often embracing and endorsing a symphonic feel to the sound, typical of Hollywood film music.⁵⁵ While examples of violin and piano dominated melodramatic sounds are often referred to, there is a lack of acknowledgement or comprehensive investigation of sounds dominated by Hindustani classical instruments like the *tablā*, *sitār*, *sarod* etc. These instruments have created intensely melodramatic sounds and required levels of profoundly theatrical audio-visual responses both in background scores and in the main songs.

This lack of comprehensive study of Indian film music in turn affects the study of Indian cinema itself. Scholars like Matthew Jones suggest that Indian cinema has a wounded history in the global film community and its products are seldom seen as transcendental works of art, but rather as unsophisticated, depraved, political pieces of escapist fun.⁵⁶ Does the general assumption amongst people that Hindi movies are influenced only by an amalgam of Hollywood, Indian epics and folk drama make a justifiable claim? What has been the influence of the ancient system of Indian performing arts and related scientifically developed musical and aesthetic theories and literature on the film industry of India? Patrick Colm Hogan points out that although ancient Indian aestheticians recognised that the emotional response of an audience was crucial to art, it has not led to any more exhaustive understanding of Indian cinema in relation to *rasa* theory.⁵⁷

A *rasa*-based examination of a sound-based film would be incomplete without the *rāga-tāla* elements. Priyadarshini R. argues that Indian classical music plays a crucial role in exposing the characters' *rasa-bhāvas* and even a film's melodramatic tensions.⁵⁸ She further argues that Indian film music's dominant role in its vogue, its heterogeneous musical nature, and an

⁵⁵ Shephard, T., and Leonard, A. (2013). *The Routledge Companion to Music and Visual Culture*. 1st edn, p. 355.

⁵⁶ Matthew, J. (2010). *Bollywood, Rasa and Indian Cinema: Misconceptions, Meanings and Millionaire*, *Visual Anthropology*. 23/1, pp. 33-43.

⁵⁷ Colm Hogan, P. (2008). *Understanding Indian Movies: Culture, Cognition, and Cinematic Imagination*. 1 edn, p. 142.

⁵⁸ Priyadarshini, R. (2021). *Impressions of Rare Ragas in Indian Film Music*.

ever-growing global following of it assimilate various aspects of *rāga saṅgīta* for creating expressive compositions which become dramatically a part of the film music.

While in purely technical terms, the definition of a *rāga* cannot be limited to just melody and that of *tāla* to rhythm both *rāga and tāla* play a vital role along with *rasa* to create an impact on the audience. It may also be said that *rasa* element draws generously from *rāga-tāla* to provide a convincing portrayal of itself.

When components of Hindustani classical music combined with *rasa* theory are transplanted into a musical and narrative context as complex as Indian film, are their functions and very essences re-defined? If so, then at what multiple levels do they operate and how effectively? This intention correlates to my overall vision of enhancing the very film-viewing, film-criticism, film-making aspirations/experiences of film-lovers, connoisseurs, academic scholars, film music composers and filmmakers, with the hope of turning it into a more holistic and well-informed venture. The artistic purpose of Indian cinema and Hindustani classical music is mainly to invoke *rasa* in the audiences affiliated to the emotional situation represented through the configuration of elements including music, acting, dance etc. Thus, this emotive response of *rasa*, is variously coloured by the quality of a specific emotional complex, the *bhāva*.⁵⁹ I endeavour to bridge a perceived discontinuity between theory and application of aesthetically based appreciation of Indian film analysis through a *rāga-rasa-tāla* based holistic method.

Considering all of the above, I also aim to investigate those aspects of Indian philosophy on which Indian music and aesthetics of Hindi film song are based. In parallel, I analyse, through selected case studies, the complementing of these crucial elements of Indian performing arts and aesthetics with the artistic imagery that most cinematic narratives usually require. In examining songs, sequences and films, my goal is not simply to examine different cinematic representations through the lens of the *rasa* theory, but to consider the cinematic images as reflections of the collective cultural consciousness (articulated or not) of primarily twentieth century India (with references to relevant historical data), in order to establish the inherently

⁵⁹ Cuneo, D. (2007). The Emotional Sphere the Light of the Abhinavabharati. *Rivista Degli Studi Orientali*, 80(1/4), pp. 21–39.

rasa-rāga-tāla-centred nature of its culture. I also hope to read these scenes as transformational works that reflect upon existing film-making approaches, anxieties and fantasies. In this case, I do this as the mediated reflection of the struggle for cultural control and implementation of Hindustani classical music, ancient Indian theories of arts and relevant philosophical thoughts through an inspection of selected important works from the Indian cinematic realm.

0.5 Literature review

As already stated, not many scholars have studied the role of Hindustani classical music in Hindi film music in depth, though there is relevant material that has touched upon Indian aesthetics. Popular and non-academic evidence of interest in this topic includes the works of David and Chandra Courtney, who through their website <https://chandrakantha.com/music-and-dance/film-and-pop/film-songs-rags/> have listed *rāga* based Hindi film songs methodically. There are many others who have been propagating the influence of *rāga saṅgīta* on Hindi film songs through practical, vocal and instrumental demonstrations on social media websites. Scholars including Anna Morcom, Gregory Booth, Guy Beck and Amrita Singh have gone further in this pursuit by publishing scholarly material on the subject. While Singh has looked at the influence of Hindustani classical music on Bollywood songs from a statistical outlook, scholars like Morcom, Booth, Widdess, Schofield and Beck have done so from a purely musical perspective and hence are probably more significant to my research.

Gregory Booth's works are of particular interest in this area as he has mainly worked on the music culture of Bollywood and associated song, music scenes, meaning and narrative conventions. He has also examined oral historical tradition in Indian music apart from historical, and musical ethnography of the Hindi film music industry. Booth's body of work also includes studies involving construction of music scenes in films, musical stylistic features, selected composers and their styles, apart from other topics like history, aesthetics, politics, gender, narrative functions and conventions. Booth researched on the survival of oral traditions of music transmission. Booth argues that Indian classical music is a performing art with a high degree of dependence on contextual oral learning that is largely responsible for the purposefulness of music as a non-literate art form. His aim was to confirm the significance

of oral teaching methods and corresponding musical outcomes in Hindustani classical music. Booth also studies *tawāif* (courtesan) centred Hindi films which is also part of my research, though mine is conducted from a musical and *rasa* point of view. He reports that of the twenty-four *tawāif* films identified in his study, fifteen were released between 1970 and 1986, which he argues is almost a full generation post India's independence.⁶⁰

Similarly to Booth's work, Anna Morcom's research also encompasses ethnographic and oral historical methods and traditional as well as modern Indian film music. Her book, *Hindi Film Songs and the Cinema* explores new ways of appreciating the musical styles of Bollywood. She mainly examines the industrial and aesthetic methodologies of song and film production in Hindi cinema. Although her research is primarily grounded in ethnomusicology, it is also applicable to a certain degree to film studies and the broader study of music and narrative. She also examines the implementation of Hollywood-style music in Hindi films. It analyses what this occurrence can potentially inform us regarding the creation of meaningful music and also shed light on the interaction of Western and Indian musical elements.⁶¹ Most importantly in the context of my research, Morcom conducted an interview of the late santūr maestro Shiv Kumar Sharma in March 2000. Apart from being one of the most celebrated Hindustani classical musicians, Sharma was also a successful music director who composed for several Bollywood hits in collaboration with another celebrated classical musician, flautist Hari Prasad Chaurasia. As part of the interview, Sharma sheds light on some crucial topics related to film music composing, including orchestration, *rāgas* used, *rasas* explored, the use of western instruments in Indian films, situations and melodic requirements of the narrative apart from his thoughts on composing for films while coming from a classical performance background.⁶² Sharma was also a lesser known *tablā* artist of high calibre who played this instrument in some well-known Bollywood songs of the 1960s such as *piyā tose nainā lāge* (*Guide*, 1965). Sharma provides insights into the *laya-tāla* aspects of film music compositions and explains how the *tablā* can create multiple emotions in diegetic and non-diegetic music.

⁶⁰ Booth, G.D. (2008). Making a Woman From a Tawaif: Courtesans as Heroines in Hindi Cinema. *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, 9, pp. 1-26.

⁶¹ Morcom, A. (2001). An understanding between Hollywood and Bollywood? The meaning of Hollywood-style music in Hindi films. *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, 10/1, pp. 63-84.

⁶² Morcom, A. (2009). Interview with Shivkumar Sharma, Classical Santoor Player and Hindi Film Music Composer. *Ethnomusicology Forum*, 18/1, pp. 65-72. (I have met both Sharma and Chaurasia on two occasions in the late 1990s in Mumbai and during both my encounters, I received some valuable information related to a range of topics covered by Morcom.)

Suvarnalata Rao's work titled 'Acoustical Perspective on Rāga-rasa Theory' examines *rasa* in relation to *rāga*.⁶³ She has taken a novel approach towards understanding the complex issue of *rāga-rasa* correlation, wherein theories and tools of modern scientific technology have been employed. In this technological era, this may perhaps be the first work to examine the aspects of intonation and *svara* movement in the actual performance context implementing computer software. A section of her work also deals with a detailed comparison between Indian and Western thought processes on the longstanding issue of music and emotion. She includes an exhaustive literature survey on the subject of *rāga-rasa* with information on the historical evolution of *rasa* as applied to various aspects of Indian music. Although no specificity in terms of a particular *rasa* can be attached to the aesthetic experience associated with a *rāga*, the study reassures that the principles inherent in a *rāga* and their aesthetic capabilities are not limited to theoretical norms but correspond to real experience of *rasa*.

David Clarke's recent book, *Rāgs Around the Clock* is a comprehensive conspectus on the theory and practice of Hindustani classical *rāgas*.⁶⁴ It consists of a handbook of essays that scrutinise *rāgas* meant for different times of the day. Alongside, it also sheds light on relevant scholarly, historical, cultural, and artistic contexts. The other useful aspect of this work is that it also includes two online albums – *Rāg samay cakra* and *Twilight Rāgs from North India* – featuring *khayāl* singer Vijay Rajput and accompanists. It features components including description of the *rāgas*' principal characteristics and technicalities, notations of the *bandiśes* (compositions) sung by Rajput, and transliterations and translations of the *bandiś* lyrics. These make it an important body of work for learning the nuances of *rāgas*. As a researcher, I find this work particularly useful since it draws from both theory and practical implementations of *śāstriya rāga sangīt*. Being a practicing Hindustani musician myself, and also because an element of my thesis includes combination of an aural, and written exploration of *rāga* and *tāla*, I found the book to be an abundant repository of musical material.

Wim van der Meer's book *Hindustani Music in the 20th Century* is an important publication with respect my research's relevance. To begin with, it provides introductory material on key

⁶³ Rao, S. (2000). Acoustical Perspective on Rāga-rasa Theory.

⁶⁴ Clarke, D. (2024). *Rāgs Around the Clock: A Handbook for North Indian Classical Music, with Online Recordings in the Khayāl Style*.

concepts including *rāga*, *tāla*, *rasa* and their practical applications in a performance setting. However, he takes a subjective approach and passes judgements on certain *rāgas*, artists and their styles. But he also provides discussions on applications of some traditional analytical musical concepts including *tirobhāva* (reflecting the premeditated distortion of a *rāga*'s image) to contemporary performance scenarios.⁶⁵ This particular aspect of van der Meer's book encouraged me to look out for similar applications in Hindi film music. As a result, I discovered that music director Rahul Dev Burman implemented the *āvirbhāva-tirobhāva* concept in one of his film compositions which I analyse further in chapter five. The book also examines Hindustani music in its social environment and discusses Hindustani music's transition from the royal courts to the masses. This part of the study provides a banauisic framework for understanding the changes that occurred in Indian music in the 20th century. Inspired by Wim van der Meer, I also conducted a similar examination, but with respect to the transition of Hindustani musicians from concerts to film music setting.

Peter Manuel is one of the other scholars who has worked on Hindustani classical music culture. He particularly focuses on what he terms as the 'Intermediate Sphere' in North Indian music culture.⁶⁶ This, according to Manuel, is between and beyond the semi-classical genre of *ṭhumrī*; it includes other folk elements and the purely classical genre of *khayāl*. He argues that this so-called intermediate sphere comprises a diversified set of traditional music genres that in different ways, share certain characteristics with both folk and classical dominions. Manuel's observation regarding this unique space between two distinct musical genres is relevant to Hindi film music compositions and thus my own research. From some of my analyses of *rāga* based film songs, I have also noticed this 'middle' space but have not defined it as such.

Richard Widdess' work on the classical music traditions of North India and particularly his research on the *rāga* element is relevant to my work. He argues that one of the factors that distinguish the great Indian classical music tradition is the concept of *rāga*, and that classical music in India is *rāga-dhārī* (*rāga*-based), almost by definition.⁶⁷ From studying the geography

⁶⁵ Manuel, P. (1986). Review of Hindustani Music in the 20th Century, by Wim. van der Meer. *Asian Music*, 18(1), pp. 208–211.

⁶⁶ Manuel, P. (2015). The Intermediate Sphere in North Indian Music Culture: Between and Beyond 'Folk' and 'Classical'. *Ethnomusicology*, 59/1, pp. 82–115.

⁶⁷ Widdess, R. (1993). The Geography of *rāga* in Ancient India. *The World of Music*, 35/3, pp. 35–50.

of *rāga* system in ancient India to researching on early Indian musical notations, Widdess has produced a comprehensive body of work that has helped scholars and academicians to appreciate the nuances of Hindustani classical music in considerable depth. He argues that notation in Indian musical tradition should not be overlooked as its significance and functions are different from those of Western notation and that orally articulated symbols can constitute a sophisticated system for representing music, with the potential to also convey vital historical information about music.⁶⁸ His most extensive piece of work is the book titled *The Rāgas of Early Indian Music* which is a comprehensive study of the early *rāga* system. It lays a foundation for scholars to study this complex musical subject in a methodical manner.

Jonathan Katz's paper, "Music and Aesthetics: An Early Indian Perspective. Early Music," sheds light on some crucial topics related to my research. Katz elaborates on two of the most important texts in this context: *Saṅgītaratnākara* ('Ocean of jewels of music'), a monumental treatise composed by Śārangdeva in the 13th century CE, and *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharata both of which are relevant to my thesis. Katz argues that while the former 'brought together many strands of musicological thought in a masterly organization, and presented an overview of musical theory and approved practice', the latter is 'a treatise on the whole of the composite art of ancient Indian Sanskrit drama'.⁶⁹ He also points out the essential functioning of the *rasa* theory in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* which promulgates eight *sthāyī bhāvas* (permanent emotions) with one or more of forty-nine *vyabhicāri bhāvas* (transitory emotions), and the consequential *niṣpatti* (production) of *rasa*. Further, he argues that discussions of any eloquent genre in classical Indian traditions cannot be taken very far if they fail to incorporate this vital domain of *rasa*. According to Katz, the recipients of *rasa*-experience have varied levels of cognitive understanding; their acumen and assimilation of an art work's several components decide how intensely *rasa-bhāva* affects them. However, it is also the quality of the artwork (which may be music, dance or drama) that affects how strongly a receiver may feel the manifested *rasas*. This is a phenomenon which I discussed further below; indeed, all these points raised by Katz are significant to my research.

⁶⁸ Widdess, R. (1996). The Oral in Writing: Early Indian Musical Notations. *Early Music*, 24/3, pp. 391–405.

⁶⁹ Katz, J. (1996). Music and Aesthetics: An Early Indian Perspective. *Early Music*, 24/3, pp. 407–420.

Chloë Alaghband-Zadeh's in-depth analysis of the *ṭhumrī* genre is of significant relevance to parts of my thesis, which also explores this semi-classical form of Hindustani music. Zadeh focusses on analysing how this music becomes meaningful for its practitioners and listeners and how the genre participates in broader social processes. She draws from her training in *ṭhumrī* singing from one of the legendary maestros of the genre, Girija Devi, to analyse *ṭhumrī*'s building blocks, to transcribe and analyse of traditional compositions, and to argue that its melodic characteristics are firmly fixed in specific historical, social and cultural episodes.⁷⁰

Katherine Butler Schofield is a historian of music and listening in Mughal India. Her research interests include South Asian music, the history of Mughal India, Islam and the British empire. Schofield, focussing on the cultural history of North Indian classical music, has undertaken a variety of associated tasks like relating the relationship of *rāgamāla* paintings to their melodic inspirations, telling the stories of blighted *tawāifs* (courtesans), exploring the lives and times of some legendary *ustāds*, and tracing their ancestries to the Mughal emperors from Akbar to Bahadur Shah Zafar. Some aspects of these undertakings are relevant to my thesis, as they are a part of Hindustani music's journey from medieval times till the 21st century, before and during its association with Indian film music. Schofield identifies markers which she argues are common to the seventeenth-century Mughal period and early twentieth century. These include, on the one hand, illiteracy and musical decadence of performing artists and, on the other, an attempt to approach music scientifically through the reshaping of theoretical knowledge of musicologists. The production of *saṅgīta sāstras* or musical treatises, evolution of a new exclusive audience consisting of musical aficionados and consequently, the establishment of a convention of 'art' music genres and *rāgas* that signified the tastes of the connoisseurs also occurred in these times.⁷¹ She also explores how melody during Mughal times operated a stratified set of embedded meanings within itself.⁷² She also considers the question of what was required in Mughal India for a patron coming initially from outside the *rasa* tradition to genuinely transform into a *rasika* of North Indian music; she argues that one

⁷⁰ Alaghband-Zadeh, C. (2013). Analysing *ṭhumrī*. PhD Thesis. SOAS, University of London

⁷¹ Schofield, K B. (2010). Reviving the Golden Age Again: 'Classicization,' Hindustani Music, and the Mughals. *Ethnomusicology*, 54/3, pp. 484–517.

⁷² Miner, A. (2015). Raga in the Early Sixteenth Century. In F. Orsini and K. B. Schofield (Eds.), *Tellings and Texts: Music, Literature and Performance in North India*, 1st edn., pp. 385–406.

must ideally learn to taste the *rasas* not just intellectually, but also experientially by feeling them, as this forms the foundations of deeper levels of musical understanding.⁷³

The relationship between Indian music genres and music theory and aesthetical presentation has been studied by some scholars. However, some studies make unjustifiable claims. Annette Wilke is of the opinion that *bhajan* singing has little to do with aesthetics and art, dismissing it as a form of singing of 'mere predetermined melody.'^{74 75} It may however be inappropriate to state that lighter forms such as *bhajans* do not count as genuine art forms that do not have these requirements. Though not to the extent of pure Hindustani classical renditions such as *khayāl* and *dhrupad-dhamārs*, lighter forms such as *ṭhumrī*, *ghazal* and *bhajan* also crave the need for free as well as *tāla*-woven improvisation especially when composed on the basis of complex *rāgas* by expert composers. There are various examples of such semi-classical pieces rendered mellifluously by *ustāds* and *paṇḍits* who have directly or indirectly influenced the *gāyakī* of Bollywood playback singers and compositions of film-music directors. Such renditions will be examined in my thesis, as well as how selected *khayāl* repertoire (which primarily consists of incessantly repeated phrases in particular *rāgas*) was adapted to suit film sequences and modified to form lighter melodies.

Another problematic study is the one undertaken by Piyush Roy through his PhD research involving a *rasa*-based analysis of Indian cinema and television. Roy aims to explore the 'direct influence of *Nāṭyaśāstra* guidelines on Indian filmmaking practices and provide arguments-driven proposals on how to use the *rasa* theory for appreciating cinematic aesthetics.'⁷⁶ This is to a certain extent, similar to my search for a cinema aesthetics grounded in the principles of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. However, Roy undertakes an analysis of *rasa* without touching on *rāga* and *tāla*. While it can be argued that *rasa* can exist without these two elements, it will not be a fulfilling aesthetic experience, nor will it have enough depth worthy of serious study. My argument here is that there can be no or negligible *rasa* in a talkie Indian film without *rāga* and *tāla*. *Abhinaya* alone does not create an elevating experience and therefore Roy's

⁷³ Schofield, K. B. (2015). Learning to Taste the Emotions: The Mughal Rasika. In K. B. Schofield and F. Orsini (Eds.), *Tellings and Texts: Music, Literature and Performance in North India*, 1st edn., pp. 407–42.

⁷⁴ Classical compositions set to a particular rhythmic framework

⁷⁵ Wilke, A. (2024). *Sonic Consciousness in Hindu India*.

⁷⁶ Roy, P. (2017). *Aesthetics of emotional acting: an argument for a Rasa-based criticism of Indian cinema and television*, PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh

investigation of expressions of actors depicting certain *rasas*, becomes a mere descriptive exercise.

The focus of my research is on examining Indian cinema through the combined lens of Hindustani classical music and aesthetics, which none of the above works mentioned have touched upon. Therefore, it would be appropriate to say that the *rasa-rāga tāla* strategy is what makes my approach distinctive.

0.6 Research methodology

My research draws from six principal sources of data: (1) 30 years of *tālīm* (training) under renowned Hindustani classical musicians; (2) fieldwork undertaken at regular intervals, including interviews with important musicians and recordings of my own music; (3) study of *Nāṭyaśāstra* and other relevant treatises (on the subject of theory of aesthetics, acting, dance and music); (4) Empirical listening, study and musical analysis of selected traditional Hindustani classical compositions (vocal and instrumental); (5) analysis of selected Hindi film songs and sequences; and (6) analysis of two complete Indian films.

Combining these six approaches, I investigate aspects of Indian philosophy on which Indian music and aesthetics of Hindi film song are based. A key methodological principle will be the use of case studies that analyse particular scenes, not only musically but also in relation to the scenography: the visual imagery and dramatic context. This approach will be applied from various perspectives: sometimes to illustrate technical aspects of the music; sometimes to illustrate the work of a particular director or composer; sometimes to illustrate a genre. Finally, I illustrate how all this comes together in a single film through analyses of two films, *Jalsaghar* and *Devdas*.

Between 2017 and 2024 I took eight trips to India to gather musical recordings, *bandīśes* (compositions), printed copies of relevant texts on the theories of aesthetics, music and films and conduct interviews of some performing musicians as part of my qualitative research methodology. The aim of these interviews was to delve deeper into their thought processes and record their musical experiences and their views on the *rasa-rāga-tāla* paradigm in

relation to Indian cinema. The other aim was to get deeper insights into how theory and practice of Hindustani classical music are combined to offer a unique musical experience to the audiences. However, as a researcher I also acknowledge that there can be methodological challenges in ethnomusicological study. It is not unknown that some musicians (sometimes even recognised maestros) may present opinions as theory. This may sometimes even be due to personal agendas. As such, a deep understanding of the subject helps in balancing ethnographic inquiry with object analysis. Being a keen student of the art of Hindustani classical music, I recognize these issues and work towards resolving them strategically.

I considered informed consent, reflexivity and positionality while mapping any potential issues that may be faced by the participants and mitigating any such risks. All my interviewees provided me with permission to use their names and views as part of my research within the thesis contents. I have not included any excerpts from the videos or transcripts from the conversations because they inform my thesis in a more generalised way. However, where I do invoke specific aspects of my conversations, these are referenced at the appropriate points.

I interviewed the following three artists formally:

- **Interview 1:** Vidushi Dhanashri Pandit Rai (July 2019) – Thumri and Hindi film music. She specialises in the performance and stylistic demonstrations of the *ṭhumrī* genre. Paṇḍit-Rai presented some crucial insights into how Hindustani classical and semi-classical music genres implement *rāgas* and *tālas* to bring out different *rasa-bhāvas*, consequently impacting the audiences to experience a plethora of emotions. She also explained the effect of certain *rāgas* on the human psyche and the influence of these *rāgas* on Hindi film songs. These discussions paved the way for my approach in analysing the profound influence of the *ṭhumrī* genre on several Hindi film songs and sequences that I considered in my thesis. I made a video recording of this interview with the permission of the artist.
- **Interview 2:** Ustād Zunain Khan (March 2022) – Classical *rāgas* and Hindi film music. Zunain Khan is the son of my late *Ustād*, Abdul Halim Jaffer Khan. Zunain Khan gave me invaluable insights into the works of his late father, who apart from being a renowned classical sitār maestro, also provided musical pieces on the sitār for several

famous Bollywood composers including Naushad, Madan Mohan, C Ramchandra and Vasant Desai. I have mentioned Halim Jaffer Khan at several relevant places in my thesis and analysed some of his works. This interview was not video recorded. However, I noted down the responses and stored them in a document.

- **Interview 3**: Shri Nakul Ghanekar (July 2019) – Kathak’s influence on Hindi films. Marathi stage and film actor Nakul Ghanekar who is also a kathak virtuoso. Nakul shed light on the topics of *abhinaya* and *rasa* with respect to kathak moves and selected tablā compositions that accompany the kathak dance style. I incorporated the findings from these interviews into my thesis to illustrate my arguments. I made a video recording of this interview with the permission of the artist.

I also interviewed Ustād Abdul Halim Jaffer Khan, Paṇḍit Nayan Ghosh and Paṇḍit Tushar Bhatia several times informally during my learning sessions with them between 1999 and 2017. While the three formal interviews were planned and documented (as discussed above), the other three were spread across several sessions and not recorded formally. The interviews with Pandit, Khan and Ghanekar were designed to be semi-structured. With each of the three, I combined a pre-determined set of open-ended questions with the opportunity for myself to explore specific themes through the course of the interviews. I purposely chose the semi-structured method since the artists did not want to be bound to a strictly planned interview. During my remaining trips in 2023 and 2024, I attended several Hindustani classical concerts, met and interacted with renowned classical musicians and purchased relevant material including musical recordings and books for referencing.

While in Mumbai during my formative years, I received methodical *tālīm* under several renowned musicians as mentioned in my preface. This training in tablā, sitar and to an extent even in vocal music equipped me with crucial empirical evidence with respect to the very soul of *śāstrīya rāga-dārī* (melody-based) and *tāla-maya* (rhythm personified) *saṅgīta* (Hindustani classical music) to which I draw upon directly and indirectly throughout my thesis. My training in sitār playing under Halim Jaffer Khan was valuable not only from a classical music point of view but also from learning about composing shorter instrumental pieces for Hindi film songs. This learning experience proved to be invaluable during my selection of songs and scenes for analysis and also during the actual articulation of complex and abstract themes associated

with *rasa-rāga-bhāva* in words. Learning the *tablā* under creative geniuses like ustad Allah Rakha and Nayan Ghosh taught me how to examine *tāla* and *laya* minutely, and how a multitude of tones and sounds are created to manifest emotions that make lasting impacts on listeners. This once again proved to be crucial in my *tāla*-based analysis of selected scenes in my thesis. Occasional vocal music *tālīm* and instructions on Hindi film music analysis from acclaimed music director and *sitār* player Tushar Bhatia provided the ultimate inspiration for devising this research topic and undertaking it.

PART 1: CONTEXTS, AESTHETICS, MUSICAL PRINCIPLES

This part explores relevant historical aspects of Hindustani classical music and *rasa* with particular reference to the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, from the Vedic times to modern times. It then explores the *rāga* and *tāla* elements with respect to *rasa* and their applications to Indian film music. This section is also aimed at providing readers with essential background, history and theory of ancient Indian aesthetics, the system of North Indian classical music and Indian cinema. This will enable readers to better appreciate the content of Part 2, which leads to further detailed analyses and case studies. Part 1 concludes with an exploration of Hindustani classical music and its two primary genres, *khayāl* and *ṭhumrī*, with their respective histories and applications in Indian film music compositions.

Chapter 1: *Śāstrīya Saṅgīta* to Bollywood – A Journey

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I introduce the major themes and associated literature that function as a ‘fulcrum’ of the research. I begin with an introduction to the ancient text, *Nāṭyaśāstra*, composed by sage Bharata around 2000 years ago. I discuss its origins and its connection to ancient Indian spiritual themes along with a discussion on *rasa-bhāva* theory. This is followed by a demonstration of the co-dependency between *rasa*, *rāga* and *tāla* through a mini-case study. I then go on to elaborate on some other important Indian classical music treatises and various categories of Hindustani classical music. This is further followed by an analysis of milestones in the history of Hindi cinema that I argue are responsible in shaping its musico-cinematic destiny. I then present a brief discussion on the transitioning of selected Hindustani classical musicians to film music composers, when required by contemporary music directors. This chapter will thus place my research in its appropriate historical, cultural, spiritual, and social contexts.

Radhakamal Mukerjee argues that although Indian art seems to have a religious (spiritual) intention and a metaphysical aim, it is not an adjunct of either, but pertains to the *pāramparik* (traditional) stratagem of *vidyā* (knowledge) to the realm of dance, dramaturgy (*Nāṭyaśāstra*), and poetics (*Alaṅkāraśāstra*), revealing and communicating the *rasa*, *bhāva* of humans.⁷⁷ The ancient Indian spiritual traditions of the Vedas and Upaniṣads are the source of the principal concepts of *rasa*, *bhāva*, *rāga* and *tāla* propounded by the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. These concepts were further developed at a later period leading to what is now known as *śāstrīya saṅgīta* or that music which is based on the theories presented within the *śāstras*. In the third verse of *Dattilam* by sage Dattila (ca. 400–200 BCE), *saṅgīta* is defined as collection of *svaras* (musical notes), which is based on *pada* (poetic lyric), which is regulated by time-measurement (*tāla*) and which is executed with vigilance.⁷⁸ A similar definition of the term *saṅgīta* is also found in the 8th śloka of chapter 28 of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.

⁷⁷ Mukerjee, R. (1965). ‘Rasas’ as Springs of Art in Indian Aesthetics. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 24(1), pp. 91–96.

⁷⁸ Nijenhuis, E. W. (1970). trans. *Dattilam: A Compendium of Ancient Indian Music*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, p. 17.

This music, at a much later stage, led to the formation of modern-day Hindustani classical music. Hence, a brief introduction to this genre is provided next. I then present a section on crucial milestones that occurred during the pre-to early Bollywood-era, which were mainly responsible in shaping the musical narrative and hence the overall success of Hindi films. Finally, I go on to introduce Bollywood itself, selected productions of which are the focus of my analysis.

1.2 Nāṭyaśāstra

The *Nāṭyaśāstra* is a compendium of theatre and informs my research primarily with respect to aesthetics. Sally Banes and Andre Lepeck indicate that according to this treatise, drama is an art which accepts and acknowledges that each person from the audience may be existing in varying inner states and temperaments.⁷⁹ In their view, the artistic performance seeks to afford enjoyment to those wanting pleasure, solace to those in anguish, tranquillity to the anxious, stamina and zeal to the brave, audacity to the apprehensive, eroticism to the ones desiring lust, pleasure to the affluent, knowledge to the ignoramus and wisdom to the scholarly. Much later in the historical timeline of Indian performing arts, following in the footsteps of the treatise, modern theatre and then Bollywood consistently strove to offer these experiences to the audiences.

1.2.1 Rationale

The cinematic experience of Indian films is almost entirely based on savouring each of the *navarasas* or nine states of emotions. These are portrayed by actors through the means of *abhinaya* (acting), *saṅgīta* (music) and all the other supportive techniques laid out in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Alisha Ibkar argues that Indian cinema, since its conception, has relied on the *Nāṭyaśāstra* for its skeletal theme and structure. There is sufficient evidence that the role of *navarasas* have been unquestionably central to cinema's framework as they not only work to drive the plot and accentuate the behaviour of the characters; their function is deeply engraved in the basic storyline.⁸⁰ Ibkar further argues that performance in Indian cinema is highly *Nāṭyaśāstra* oriented, unlike the modern Euro-American cinema based on the methods

⁷⁹ Banes, S., and Lepecki, A. (2012). *The Senses in Performance*. Routledge. pp. 27– 28.

⁸⁰ Ibkar, A. (2015). *The Nāṭyaśāstra and Indian Cinema: A study of the Rasa Theory as a Cornerstone for Indian Aesthetics*. *International Journal of English Language and Translation Studies*, 3/1, pp. 80-87.

of Konstantin Stanislavsky. She suggests that the major difference between the two cinemas is *rasa*. According to Hogan, the most indispensable human emotions are love and sorrow, owing to which the most displayed *rasas* are *śṛṅgāra* and *karuṇa*, which in turn makes the cinema revolve around melodrama and romance.⁸¹ Indian cinema lays emphasis on *śṛṅgāra* and *karuṇa rasas*.⁸² It rarely displays just one core emotion but engages with different types of *rasas*, thanks to the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. This treatise has also influenced other crucial aspects of cinema including dance, music, stagecraft and screenwriting according to Ibbotson.

Hence, I present a very brief background of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* by introducing the reader to available information regarding its history origins, authorship, and structure. This is followed by a detailed elaboration on the two main concepts propounded by this treatise: *rasa* and *bhāva* along with their interdependency with the Hindustani classical music elements of *rāga* and *tāla*.

1.2.2 History and origin

Known to be the oldest of surviving ancient Indian works on performing arts⁸³, the roots of this colossal piece of literature extend at least as far back as the *Naṭasūtras*, dated to be around the middle of 1000 BC.⁸⁴ Steven Walker is of the opinion that when the question of origin is dealt with at all, the history of South Asian theatrical traditions may have been characterised by fabricated and debatable theories of native origins.⁸⁵ According to Oscar G. Brockett's *History of the Theatre*, there is evidence that plays were being written by the beginning of the Christian era despite it being a complicated task to determine exactly when Sanskrit drama initially appeared in India.⁸⁶ Walker further states that the *Nāṭyaśāstra* was probably composed in the second century CE.

⁸¹ Hogan, P. (2003). *Rasa Theory and Dharma Theory: From The Home and the World to Bandit Queen*. *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, 20(1), 40, pp. 37-52.

⁸² Guy Beck argues that as classical music was gradually separated from drama, four of the original eight *rasa* including *śṛṅgāra*, *karuṇa*, *vīra* and *adbhuta* maintained their affiliation with music, with the *śṛṅgāra* *rasa* reigning as the *rasa* of supreme importance through the centuries. The *śṛṅgāra* *rasa* was described as having two types: *sambhoga* (union, which celebrates the joy and euphoria of lovers meeting) and *vipralambha* (separation, which endures profound emotional distress, including anxiety, craving, and to an extent, even jealousy). In the tenth century CE, a ninth *rasa*, *śānta* (peace) was introduced to Bharata's well-established theory of aesthetics by the Kashmiri philosopher Abhinavagupta which was the appropriate musical aesthetic in response to the formless nature of the divine, or *nirguṇa* endorsed by the non-dualist school of Advaita Vedanta propounded in Kashmiri Saivism.

⁸³ Schwartz, S. L. (2004). *Rasa: Performing the Divine in India*. Columbia University Press, pp. 12–15.

⁸⁴ Lidova, N. (1994). *Drama and Ritual of Early Hinduism*. Motilal Banarsidas, pp. 111–113.

⁸⁵ Walker, S. F. (2004). *The Invention of Theatre: Recontextualizing the Vexing Question*. *Comparative Literature*, 56/1, pp. 1-22.

⁸⁶ Brockett, O. G. (1995). *History of the Theatre*. 7th ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, p 76.

According to Paul Kurtz, one of the four Vedas (which are a collection of ancient hymns — poems and prose passages), namely the *Rig Veda*, gives evidence of dramatic theatre in India coming into existence around the 8th century BCE.⁸⁷ Kurtz also points towards the *Jātaka* tales containing evidence of theatre which provide a depiction of the Indian society between 600 BCE and 300 BCE.⁸⁸ As for the dating of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, there are some discrepancies amongst scholars and academics. With respect to the historicity of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* treatise, Sheldon Pollock argues: '*The Treatise on Drama* was undoubtedly revised, possibly in Kashmir in the eighth century CE, but the work as a whole is as much as five centuries older. It therefore must come first, despite the likelihood that its earliest commentators knew nothing of some ideas it advances in the form we now have it.'⁸⁹ Pollock thus places the treatise in the third century CE and indicates that it was the very first of its kinds to be ever composed in India, specialising in the subject of aesthetics. However, some scholars place its origins earlier than 300 CE and argue that the first complete compilation of the treatise is dated to between 200 BCE and 200 CE.⁹⁰ William Dace is also amongst those scholars who are in the favour of the treatise's ancient origins and calls the *Nāṭyaśāstra* 'a very old Sanskrit document difficult to date (estimates range from 500 BCE to 500 CE).'⁹²

1.2.3 Bharata the author

Bharata could quite possibly have been the name of one particular author. However, it could have also been a title that was conferred upon multiple people. There is a controversial theory proposed by Kapila Vatsyayan regarding the origin of the name Bharata.⁹³ According to her, the name Bharata could have been formed by the integration of three different Sanskrit syllables: *Bha* – which may stand for *bhāva*, *Ra* – which may stand for *rāga*, and *Ta* – which may stand for *tāla*. While there may be some logic or perhaps a coincidence that the syllables in the name end up being the first letters of the three pillars of drama and audio-visually engaging artistic opera, there is no historical or authentic documented evidence to back

⁸⁷ Kurtz, P. (1988). *The Making of Theatre History*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall College Div, p. 66.

⁸⁸ Folk tales of Buddhist origins

⁸⁹ Pollock, S. (2016). *A Rasa Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press, 25/2.

⁹⁰ Lidova, N. (2014). *Natyashastra*. Oxford University Press.

⁹¹ Mehta, T. (1995). *Sanskrit Play Production in Ancient India*. Motilal Banarsidass.

⁹² Dace, W. (1963). *The Concept of Rasa in Sanskrit Dramatic Theory*. *Educational Theatre Journal*, 15(3), pp. 249–254.

⁹³ Vatsyayan, K. (1996/2003). *Bharata: The Nāṭyashāstra*, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi.

Vatsyayan's theory. This etymological interpretation of the word 'Bharata' is a *nirukti*.⁹⁴ The *nirukti* is a notional etymology that indicates an understanding of essential meaning but rarely stands up to historical philological analysis.⁹⁵ Its meaning is etymologically derived from its Sanskrit roots. While the word 'Bharata' can refer to the historical name of India (*Bhārata*) and male characters in ancient Indian epics including the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*, it also embraces a profound meaning entrenched in classical Sanskrit linguistics. Moreover, in chapter thirty-five of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* itself, the author referring to an actor who may arguably be the leader of a performance calls him 'Bharata.' This may be so because that one person had been supposedly acting in multiple roles, playing multiple instruments, and providing multiple accessories relevant to the act. This seems to be logical, as according to Indian traditions, the country⁹⁶ was named *Bhārata* after the *Pauraṇic* King Bharata who was known to have unified a vast geographical landscape. However, there could also be a possibility that 'Bharata' was just a title available for anybody to earn based on their abilities, as was the case with several other titles such as *Vyās*, *Vaśiṣṭh* and *Chakravarty* in ancient India. Charu Uppal quoting, Gupt, 2006, points towards the belief that until the time of Abhinavagupta (mentioned below), the surviving text of *Nāṭyaśāstra* was not the work of a single Bharata, but a coalition rendered by Bharata by combining separate sets of three schools by the names of *Brāhma-mata*, *Sadāśiva-mata* and *Bharata-mata*.⁹⁷ Although some modern scholars refuse to believe that this piece of literature is the creation of a single author, Kathleen Marie Higgins choses to credit a sage-ascetic of Indian origin known as *Bharata-muni* (Bharata the sage) in the period between 200 to 500 CE.⁹⁸ Higgins further describes the work as an exhaustive conspectus of technical knowledge about the performing arts and a practical manual for the production of successful dramatical works, which included music, dance and acting.

⁹⁴ *Nirukti* is a Sanskrit term that refers to the etymology and interpretation of words and concerned with understanding their origins and meanings by evaluating their sources and how their meanings/motifs have developed over time.

⁹⁵ It is an artificial explanation of the derivation of a word; thus defined: निरुक्तिर्योगतो नाम्नामन्यार्थत्व- प्रकल्पनम् ।

ईदृशैश्चरितैर्जाने सत्यं दोषाकरो भवान् (*niruktiryogato nāmnāmanyārthatva- prakalpanam* | *īdṛśaiścaritairjāne satyaṃ doṣākaro*

bhavān) || (where *doṣākaraḥ* is equal to *doṣāṇāmākaraḥ*). Also, derivation, etymological interpretation of words; जरत्कारुनिरुक्तिं

त्वं यथावद्वक्तुमर्हसि (*jaratkāruniruktiṃ tvam yathāvadvaktumarhasi*) *Mahābhārata* (Bombay) 1.4.2.

(bombay.indology.info/mahabharata/text/UD/MBh06.txt) (IITS Koeln)

⁹⁶ The erstwhile geographical land which was under the influence of the ancient *sanātan* culture.

⁹⁷ Uppal, C. (2018). *Western Indology on Rasa: A Purvapaksa*, *Rasa: From Natyashastra to Bollywood*.

⁹⁸ Higgins, K M. (2007). *An Alchemy of Emotion: Rasa and Aesthetic Breakthroughs*. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 65/1, pp. 43–54.

1.2.4 Śāstras

With respect to Indian traditional ways of acquiring any form of knowledge particularly related to the *sanātan* philosophy, one often comes across the term *śāstra*. Referring to the authenticity of elements of bodies of knowledge such as spiritual *krīyās*, classical music, science etc., a mentor or a seeker often uses the term *Śāstroktā* or that which is in adherence to a particular *śāstra*. Leela Prasad sheds light on the origin and meaning of the term *śāstra* pointing towards its derivation from the Sanskrit root *śās* which means ‘to teach or instruct.’⁹⁹ It may mean injunction, order, command, precept, rule, or a compendium of rules, religious or scientific treatise, or law. The word *nāṭya* is a derivative of the Sanskrit root *nrta* which means to dance. Approximately, *nāṭya*’s meaning can be reduced to a combination of ‘dance-theatre-music’¹⁰⁰, while *śāstra* signifies a theoretical authentication of a discipline authorized by the religious realm.¹⁰¹ However, according to the *Nāṭyaśāstra* verse I,121, *nāṭya* occurs when the representation of the *deva* (deities), the *daitya* (demons), the kings, the heads of the family and their routine activities are expressed through the gestures of the body and everything which is correlated to these particular gestures. However, as much as the physical body and related aspects are crucial to drama and its effects on the audience, so also is the spiritual aspect. Indian philosopher and accomplished *tāntric*¹⁰² Abhinavagupta (933-1015 C.E.) equated aesthetic experience with mystical experience and aesthetic ecstasy with the esoteric experience of bliss known as *ānanda*.¹⁰³ Having said this, it is now important to explore the connection of the treatise with spirituality. In the following sections, I will discuss various *ślokas* from the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. In doing so, with respect to the original Sanskrit text, unless otherwise stated, I primarily use the edition: (Paṇḍit Kedarnath. (1943). The *Nāṭyaśāstra* by Śrī Bharatamuni, Satyabhāmābāi Pāṇḍurang, Nirṇaya-Sāgar Press, Bombay). For the English translation of the treatise, I use the edition: (Bharata-Muni. [2nd c. A.D.] 1961. The *Natysastra*. Authorship ascribed to Bharata-Muni. English translation by Manmohan Ghosh. Calcutta: Asiatic Society. Vol. 2.). I have also used another edition of the English translation: (Rangacharya, A. (2003). trans. *Nāṭyaśāstra: English Translation with Critical Notes*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal). Since I do not have access to a hard copy of the

⁹⁹ Prasad, L. (2006). Text, Tradition, and Imagination: Evoking the Normative in Everyday Hindu Life, p. 2.

¹⁰⁰ Schechner, R. (2003). ‘Rasaesthetics.’ In *Performance Theory*. London: Taylor & Francis Routledge, p. 334.

¹⁰¹ Katz, J. (1996). ‘Music and Aesthetics: An Early Indian Perspective.’ *Early Music* 24 (3), p. 411.

¹⁰² Practitioners of esoteric/metaphysical yoga-based activities originating from one of the several branches of Hindu philosophy.

¹⁰³ Gnoli, R. (1968). *The Aesthetic Experience According to Abhinavagupta*. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Studies, The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, Varanasi-1, Volume 62, p. 24.

original Sanskrit text of the treatise and owing to a poor print quality of the Kedarnath (1943) soft-copy edition, I have also corroborated against an online version of the Sanskrit *Nāṭyaśāstra*: (<https://sanskritdocuments.org/iast/natyashastra/> - [nATyashAstra : Sanskrit Documents](#))

1.2.5 Mythical-spiritual-philosophical connections

In order to briefly explore basic empirical evidence from the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, I present the following *śloka* from its first chapter which describes the origins of the *Nāṭya-Veda* or dramatic arts as follows:

महेन्द्रप्रमुखैर्देवैरुक्तः किल पितामहः ।

क्रीडनीयकमिच्छामो दृश्यं श्रव्यं च यद्भवेत् ॥ ११ ॥

न वेदव्यवहारोऽयं संश्राव्यः शूद्रजातिषु ।

तस्मात्सृजापरं वेदं पञ्चमं सार्ववर्णिकम् ॥ १२ ॥

*Mahendra-pramukhair devair
uktaḥ kila pitāmahaḥ |
krīḍanīyakaṁ icchāmo dṛśyaṁ
śravaṇyaṁ ca yad bhavet ||
na veda-vyavahāro'yaṁ
saṁśrāvyaḥ śūdra-jātiṣu |
tasmāt sṛjāparaṁ vedaṁ
pañcamāṁ sārvavarṇikaṁ ||*

Chief of the *devas*, *Mahendra* along with the other *Devatās* appealed to *Pitāmaha* (*Brahmā*, the creator amongst the Hindu trinity): We desire a recreational activity (*krīḍā*) for experiencing through the senses of vision and hearing synchronously. Since the (existing four) Vedas are not meant to be heard by those belonging to the *śūdra* caste, you invent a fifth Veda that can be savoured by all the four *varṇas* (layers of the society; *brāhmaṇ*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, *śūdra*)¹⁰⁴.

(*Nāṭyaśāstra* 1.11-12)

¹⁰⁴ My translation

The rationale for the paragraphs below is to draw out from key points from the *Nāṭyaśāstra* with respect to its origins, spiritual and philosophical significance.

According to the verse 1.14 of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, its authorship has been attributed to the deity *Brahmā*. This implies that the treatise was not only meant to be enlightening to beings of all the three *lokas* (geographical locations in space according to Hindu cosmology) but also appealing and pleasant enough to pursue its practical offerings. In order to fulfil all these requirements, it is believed that *Brahmā* the creator composed the *Nāṭya-Veda* (also recognised by many as the *pañcama-Veda* (5th *Veda* in line after the *Rig, Atharva, Yajur* and *Sām*)¹⁰⁵.

- Verses 26.119-122 of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* indicate that drama is based on three main elements:
- Verse 119: The people, the Vedas, and the spiritual faculty (*adhyātma*) are known as the three authorities. The drama is mostly based on objects related to the last two (the *Veda* and the *adhyātma*).
- Verses 120-121: The drama which has its origin in the Vedas, and the spiritual faculty (*adhyātma*) and includes [proper] words and metre, succeeds when it is approved of by the people. Hence the people are considered to be the [ultimate] authority on drama.
- Verses 121-122: A mimicry of the exploits of deities, sages, kings as well as of householders in this world, is called drama.

With respect to spiritual faculty (*adhyātma*) mentioned in verse 26.119 of *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Gowri Ramnarayan delineates an inward contemplation manifested within humans, where union is relished through the medium of aesthetic experience.¹⁰⁶ *Rasas* stimulated by art are unusual. This is because, indicators of the dramatic content and the essence of the audience's reaction go beyond the limits of mere attraction, curiosity, and the passion-intensive ego, into the deeper realms of *adhyātma* to experience spiritual bliss or *ānanda*. With respect to *adhyātma* or spirituality, interpretation of *rasa* transcends the concept of mere taste or aesthetic

¹⁰⁵ Let *Nāṭya* (drama and dance) be the fifth Vedic scripture. Combined with an epic story, tending to virtue, wealth, joy and spiritual freedom, it must contain the significance of every scripture, and forward every art. — *Nāṭyaśāstra* 1.14–15.

¹⁰⁶ Ramnarayan, G. (1987). Letter to the Reader. Kalakshetra Quarterly, vol. 9.

enjoyment and transforms into an elevated *adhyātmic* (spiritual) experience as per the core teachings of ancient Indian philosophies.

According to verses 1.17-18 of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* translated by Rangacharya (1966: 1), *Brahmā* took the words from *Rig Veda*, music from *Sāma Veda*, movements and make-up from *Yajur Veda*, and emotional acting from *Atharva Veda*. He then transferred this piece of combined knowledge to Bharata and his disciples or *śiṣyas* to practice and perform the lessons of a good, civilised, and moral life for the entertainment and enlightenment of all. The *Nāṭyaśāstra*, thus provides some vital insights into the imaginary, creative and philosophical vision of an ancient-era author from ancient South Asia. More importantly, it lays the foundation of an art form which is not only meant for sensory gratification but additionally yields both the performers and their audience with *adhyātmic ānanda* or spiritual bliss.

Beyond the times of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, in an eleventh-century work of Mahimabhaṭṭa, Bhaṭṭanāyaka is quoted as follows: *Dramatic performances and the music accompanying them feed the rasa in all its fulness; hence the spectator, absorbed in the tasting of this, turning inward, feels pleasure through the whole performance. Sunk into his own being, he forgets everything (pertaining to practical life). There is manifested in him that flow of inborn pleasure, from which the yogins draw their satisfaction.*¹⁰⁷

1.2.6 Structure and content summary

जग्राह पाठ्यमृगवेदात्सामभ्यो गीतमेव च ।
यजुर्वेदादभिनयान् रसानाथर्वणादपि ॥ १७॥

The readable text is a part of the *Rig Veda*, music of the *Sāma Veda*, acting a part of the *Yajur Veda* and aesthetics a part of the *Atharva Veda*.

Jagrāha pāṭhyamṛgvedāt, sāmabhyo gītameva ca
Yajurvedādabhinayān,rasānātharvaṇādapi
(*Nāṭyaśāstra* 1:17)

¹⁰⁷ Larson, G. J. (1976). The Aesthetic (Rasāsvadā) and the Religious (Brahmāsvadā) in Abhinavagupta's Kashmir Śaivism. *Philosophy East and West*, 26(4), pp. 371–387.

According to the above-mentioned *śloka*, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* primarily consists of four elements, each of them known to have been taken from the four Vedas. These four elements are:

- *Pāṭhya* or (readable) text, including the art of recitation and rendition in performance taken from the *Rig Veda*
- *Saṅgīta* or music, including instrumental music from the *Sāma Veda*
- *Abhinaya* or acting, the technique of expressing the poetic meaning of the text and communicating it to the spectator from the *Yajur Veda*. In a play, the process of dramatic communication is executed by an archetypal technique termed as *abhinaya*. As indicated by its etymology, Bharata explains in the *Nāṭyaśāstra śloka* 8.6 that *abhinaya* is what carries the meanings in front of the spectator, *abhi-* standing for *ābhimukhyaṁ* (in front), prefixed to the root *ni*, (to carry, or to lead).¹⁰⁸ As a generic symbol, the term *abhinaya* accounts for the sophisticated system of acting, involving various techniques which evolved in ancient India before *Nāṭyaśāstra* was composed.¹⁰⁹
- *Rasa* or aesthetic experience from the *Atharva Veda*.

Despite having its origins in the ancient Indian spiritual-religious traditions, the *Nāṭyaśāstra's* fundamental concerns are not philosophical, theoretical, or even theological; rather, the text explicates and expands on the intricate process of theatre performance. It also prescribes in sophisticated detail, the following aspects of drama:

- The construction of theatre spaces,
- The application of make-up
- The design and building of props, arm, foot, eye and other body movements,
- Ritual practices
- The organization of theatre companies
- The audience, dramatic competitions, and the community of actors with additional material on music and audience appreciation.

The treatise consists of thirty-six chapters, each dealing with particular aspects of the Sanskrit drama. Chapters one to five discuss elements such as the feedback and participation of the

¹⁰⁸ अभिपूर्वस्तु णीञ् धातुराभिमुख्यार्थनिर्णये । यस्मात्पदार्थान्नयति तस्मादभिनयः स्मृतः ॥ ४.६॥

¹⁰⁹ Ganser, E. (2007). The spectacular dimension of emotion in Indian theatre. *Rivista Degli Studi Orientali*, 80(1/4), pp. 63–79.

audience in the drama, importance of a drama in the attainment of bliss, spatial or architectural aspects, the first drama to have been produced called *Amritamañthana* i.e. ‘Churning of the Nectar’, the foundations of physical acting and finally preliminaries consisting of a ritual worship (*pūjā*) made up of eighteen or nineteen parts (up to twenty in the later treatises)—technically called limbs (*aṅga*)—which is to be customarily executed on stage preceding the theatrical consummation of a drama. Chapters six to seven are a particularly crucial reference with respect to my research, as the discussions within them are focussed on the theory of *rasa* and *bhāva* aesthetics while chapters eight to thirteen focus on the physical acting technique and its elaborations. Aspects such as verbal representation, metrical patterns, diction of a play, rules of the language and modes of address are dealt with in chapters fourteen to nineteen, while chapters twenty and twenty-one discuss the types and structure of drama. Chapters twenty-two to twenty-six deal with aspects such as styles, costumes and make up, how acting may be represented with harmony, dealing appropriately with courtesans and the philosophy of performance. Bharata considered, developed and produced detailed theories on issues such as female temperaments concerning eroticism, expression of desire and patterns of sexual behaviour with respect to performing arts (especially in chapters twenty-two and twenty-three). All of them have considerably influenced modern Indian theatre and Bollywood films. Chapters twenty-seven to thirty-one contain a comprehensive analysis on the other vital elements with respect to this thesis; *rāga* and *tāla*. While the focus is on the type of music engaged with or employed in theatrical performances, specific details of *jāti*¹¹⁰ or melodic types or matrices, *śruti* or micro-intervals, *svara* or notes, *grāma*¹¹¹ or scales, and *mūrcanā* or modes (later known by the term *rāgas*) are provided in chapter twenty-eight. These concepts were further developed by other scholars leading finally to the current form of Hindustani classical music which became the most important source of Bollywood music. Chapter twenty-nine goes on to describe string instruments such as the ancient *vīnā* and intricacies of vocal and instrumental music. Chapters thirty to thirty-four introduce the bamboo flute and its playing techniques and most importantly perhaps for the first time in India’s musical history, the rhythmic concept of *tāla*.

¹¹⁰ The early concept of *jāti* developed into the *rāga* by the eighth century CE, as known from the famous text, *Bṛhaddesi* by sage Mātaṅga. This text also connected the *rāga* with sacred sound as *Nāda-Brahman*.

¹¹¹ Out of the notes of the *grāmas*, sixteen *jātis* or modes were formed which included some basic attributes, including *svaras* of emphasis, combinations of *svara*-phrase patterns, etc.

Features of the theatrical troupe and the allocation of performing roles are then examined, after which the spotlight rebounds to the inquiry of the divine origin of the art of the theatre.

Chapter twenty-seven is also of significant interest to me as a *sādhaka* musician, *rasika* and academic researcher at the same time. It deals directly with the audience's relation to a play, which can be relatable to a *rasika's* reaction to cinema and classical music concerts. It begins with describing the two kinds of *siddhi* (success) a *dramatic* production can achieve. It then goes on with a detailed description of all the elements that may prove to be obstacles to audience involvement: active interference by enemies of the playwright or acting troupe, thunderstorms, attacks of ants, actor's loss of memory, poor plot-construction, etc. Following this, a description of the ideal spectator (*prekśaka*) is presented and it is from here that the first working definition of the term *rasika* (though this term is not used in NS) is derived as someone who responds to representations of emotion with corresponding feeling.¹¹² Finally, a list of the various kinds of spectator drama draws a discussion of how a drama is to be judged and who the judges should be, followed by miscellanea including an appropriate time and place for a performance and the ideal qualities of an actor. Based on chapters six and seven, I will now go on to discuss the theories of *rasa* and *bhāva*.

1.3 The concept of *bhāva*

Kathleen Marie Higgins argues that the noncognitive metamorphosis in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is accentuated by the distinction between *bhāvas* and *rasa*, as suggested by Bharata.¹¹³ The phenomenon of *bhāva* has been of primary importance as far as ancient Indian spirituality-focussed psychology is concerned. There is a Sanskrit saying '*bhāvanā bhava-Vināsinī*.'¹¹⁴ This means that if a person manages to achieve the appropriate state of emotions/manifestation (*bhāvanā*) in the quest for a perceived state of salvation, it has the potential to destroy (*Vināsinī*) one's cycle of births and deaths (*bhava*). Abhinavagupta also refers to the issue in his *Abhinavabhāratī*, a commentary on the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. With respect to aesthetic experience

¹¹² Goodwin, R. E. (1989). Aesthetic and erotic entrancement in the Śakuntalā. Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, 43(1), pp. 99–123. Goodwin mentions sloka number 27.55 in this paper. However this seems to be a mistake as in the original

यत्सुटे वृष्टिमायाति शोके शोकमुपैति च ।

text, it is *śloka* number 27.52 as shown here -> दैव्ये दीनत्वमभ्येति स नाद्ये प्रेक्षकः स्मृतः ॥ ५२ ॥

¹¹³ Higgins, K. (2007). An Alchemy of Emotion: Rasa and Aesthetic Breakthroughs.

¹¹⁴ Chandraguptsuri. (1990). Bhavna Bhav Vinashini ane Panch Parmeshthi Gun Darshan.

and *bhāvanā*, he characterizes *rasa* as being revealed by *bhāvanā* (a special power assumed by words in poetry and drama, the power of revelation as distinguished from the power of denotation-consisting of the action of generalizing the determinants (i.e., *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas*, etc.). Abhinavagupta argues that this power has the faculty of suppressing the thick layer *moha* (mental stupor) occupying our own consciousness, consequently hastening spiritual progress.¹¹⁵

Bhāva (along with *rasa*) is central to the success of Hindi cinema. In Sanskrit drama, *rasa* is described as ‘a single, ineffable, transcendental joy, which can be subdivided only according to the nine emotions (*bhāvas*) which evoke it and are not in consonance with its own nature’.¹¹⁶ Ronie Parciack argues that several popular Hindi films are primarily concerned with a deep-seated friction between the basic human qualities of *kāma* (desire) and *dharma* (duty). He explains that most film characters are shown to be caught between their individual desires and their *dhārmic* commitments or societal pressures and this conflict may have proved to be an obstacle in the path of manifesting *rasa-bhāva*.¹¹⁷ Parciack’s argument is however debatable. Indian audiences (a majority of whom are immersed in Indian culture) are subconsciously aware of *rasas* and *bhāvas*.¹¹⁸ So, the conflict to which Parciack is referring to, does not matter in the audiences’ feeling and experiencing *rasas*.

According to Sanskrit grammar, *bhāva* is that phenomenon which becomes (from the Sanskrit root ‘*bhū*,’ ‘*bhava*’ means ‘to become’)¹¹⁹; and *bhāva* transforms to *rasa*. With respect to theatrical drama, according to the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the four aspects of *abhinaya* are *sāttvika* (temperamental), *āṅgika* (physical), *vācikā* (verbal) and *āhārya* (costume, make-up, etc.). Manomohan Ghosh uses a *śloka* from *Abhinaya Darpaṇam* to explain these four aspects: ‘Where the hands go, the eyes follow [*anubhāva*], where the eyes go, the mind follows [*sāttvika abhinaya*], where the mind goes, the mood [*bhāva*] follows and where the mood goes, there is *rasa* born’.¹²⁰ Thus, it may be argued that *rasa* is born from the womb of

¹¹⁵ Larson, G. J. (1976). The Aesthetic (Rasāsvadā) and the Religious (Brahmāsvāda) in Abhinavagupta’s Kashmir Śaivism. *Philosophy East and West* 26, no. 4, pp. 371–87.

¹¹⁶ Berriedale Keith, A. (1924). *The Sanskrit drama in its Origin, Development, Theory and Practice*. p. 316.

¹¹⁷ Parciack, R. (2016). *Popular Hindi Cinema: Aesthetic Formations of the Seen and Unseen*. p. 111.

¹¹⁸ Kudva, S. (2014). It’s Not All About Song and Dance: How the *Nāṭyaśāstra* Informs Contemporary Bollywood. p. 146.

¹¹⁹ m. (*bhū*-) coming into existence, birth, production, origin (equals *bhāva*- ; in fine compositi or ‘at the end of a compound’, with *f(ā)*-)= arising or produced from, being in, relating to) - [Sanskrit Dictionary](#)

¹²⁰ Ghosh, M. (1934) (Ed.) (Trans.) Nandikeśvara’s *Abhinayadarpaṇam: A Manual of Gestures and Postures Used in Hindu Dance and Drama*.

bhāvas. However, there is an interdependency between the two which will be explored in the further sections.

Bharata begins the chapter seven of the treatise by asking the question, ‘why are the *bhāvas* so called?’ He further asks whether it is so because they pervade (*bhāvayañti*) and are hence called *bhāvas*. He then replies by stating that they are so called, because through words, gestures, and representation of the *sattva* they infuse the meaning of the play (into the minds of the audiences). He further explains that *bhāva* is an ‘instrument,’ of causation; for words such as *bhāvita*, *vāsita* and *kṛta* are synonymous. There is also an alternative definition, according to which the fully alive part of the self, internal to the self, is *bhāva*, an existential, cognitive, or emotive state that *bhāvanā* is supposed to generate.¹²¹

Giving a practical example of substances being infused by or penetrated through owing to another substance’s smell, or moistened by another substance’s liquid, Bharata provides the following three definitions for *bhāvas*:

- When the meanings presented by determinants and consequents are made to infuse (*gam̐yate*) [the heart or minds of the audiences] they are known as *bhāvas*.
- As in these, the inner idea of the playwright is made to suffuse [the mind of the audiences] by means of words, gestures, colour of the face and representation of the *sattva*, they are called *bhāvas*.
- As they cause the sentiments relating to various kinds of melodramatic portrayals to permeate through to the hearts or minds of audiences, they are called *bhāva* (states) by those who produce a drama.

¹²¹ Lath, M and Shulman, D. (2018). Identity Through Necessary Change: Thinking About ‘Rāga-Bhāva,’ Concepts and Characters. *Journal of World Philosophies* 3/2, pp. 1-23.

On the basis of the above definitions, a total of forty-nine *bhāvas* (as shown in figure 1.1) have been distinguished and listed by Bharata and also in the commentaries (on the *Nāṭyaśāstra*) such as the one by Abhinavagupta.^{122 123}

The three categories of *bhāvas* are *sthāyī bhāva*, *vyabhicārī bhāva* (voluntary) and *sāttvika bhāva*. There are eight *sthāyī bhāvas*, thirty-three *vyabhicārī bhāvas* and eight *sāttvika bhāvas*. The eight *sthāyī bhāvas* are actually the eight *rasas*. The ninth *bhāva* which is the *śānta*¹²⁴ is incorporated by Abhinavagupta in his acclaimed commentary on the *Nāṭyaśāstra* titled *Abinavabhāratī*. Thus, a total of forty-nine *bhāvas* are the source of all expressions according to the theory expounded within the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.¹²⁵ It is however crucial to note here that in support of the growing *bhakti* movements in sixteenth century India, a tenth *rasa*, *bhakti* (devotional love), was introduced by the *Vaiṣṇava* theologian Rūpa Goswami in the sixteenth century CE which was widely adopted as the premium *rasa* among religious groups and practitioners of the *saguṇ-sākār* (one with a physical form and qualities) form of divinity. It was believed to envelop and metamorphose all the other *rasas*.¹²⁶ In the *Nārada-Bhakti-Sūtra* (ca. 100 BCE–400 CE) and the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* (ninth century CE), five strains of devotional love are chronicled, namely, *śānta* (meditational), *dāsya* (servitude), *sākhyā* (friendship), *vātsalya* (parental), *kāntā* (conjugal), with the highest being the *kāntā* as love between man and woman, which came to epitomize the adulation between the human and the divine.¹²⁷ The *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* outlined the path of devotion or *bhakti mārga* as being superior to the path of knowledge (*jñāna mārga*) and action (*karma mārga*). Nrisinha Bhaduri argues that according to traditional rhetoricians including Mammaṭa, etc., *bhakti* is equivalent to *devādiviṣayā rati* (love directed towards a deity or any such divine being) and hence

¹²² They are classified/divided categorically into three parts in a hierarchy such that each of the higher league embraces and incorporates the one below it. At the bottom of the *bhāva*-pyramid, Bharata places eight so-called involuntary emotional reactions (*sāttvikabhāvas*) like sweating, trembling, weeping, paralysis, horripilation, fainting, change of colour and change of voice. Above the author places what he feels are 33 No. momentary/transient mental states (*vyabhicāra bhāvas*) such as apprehension, stupor, joy, cruelty, anxiety, shame, etc., which represent minor inconsequential feelings. At the top of the hierarchy sit the permanent emotions or *sthāyī bhāvas* (*rati*, *hāsyā*, etc.). The 41 emotions (8 + 33) in the third and second leagues of the pyramid respectively, in various amalgamations, bolster and contribute towards the creation of each of the eight permanent emotions.

¹²³ I have sourced the original Sanskrit slokas from the website 'Sanskrit Documents Collection [Natya Shastra Chapter 6](#)' This is so because I was unable to obtain a clear pdf copy of the 'Natyastra: Sanskrit Text With Transliteration and English Translation (Set of 2 Volumes) Hardcover – 31 Mar. 2016 by Manomohan Ghosh (Author)' or any other version. I have also referred to *Nāṭyaśāstra* edited by Pandit Kedarnath Sahityabhusana (1943) to confirm the authenticity of the original Sanskrit text.

¹²⁴ Mukhopadhyay, D. (2022). Dancing with Nine Colours: The Nine Emotional States of Indian Rasa Theory.

¹²⁵ https://sanskritdocuments.org/doc_z_misc_major_works/natya06.html

¹²⁶ Nelson, L. E. (2004). The Ontology Of Bhakti: Devotion as 'PARAMAPURUṢĀRTHA' In GAUḌĪYA VAIṢṆAVISM and MADHUSŪDANA SARASVATĪ. *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 32(4), pp. 345–392.

¹²⁷ Gode, P. K. (1922). The Bhakti-SŪTRAS Of NĀRADA and the BHAGAVADGĪTĀ. *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, 4(2), pp. 63–95.

nothing more than a *bhāva* (emotion).¹²⁸ Viśvanātha is of a similar opinion and points out that *devādiviṣayā rati* fails to satisfy all the conditions of a separate and full-fledged sentiment and hence it should be called a *bhāva*.¹²⁹ However, Abhinavagupta admitted *bhakti* within the realm of the *śānta* sentiment. Accepting and incorporating a separate position for *bhakti* meant that he would then have to make provisions for some other sentiments like *sneha*, *lolya*, etc. However, according to an early *Vaiṣṇava* rhetorician, *bhakti* at one point in spiritual development, reaches the perfection of divine love. These terms are synonymously used by the *Purāṇas* and *Nāṭyaśāstra* according to the following sloka:¹³⁰

पुराणे नाट्यशास्त्रे च द्वयोस्तु रति भाव्ययोः समानार्थतया ह्यत्र द्वयं ऐक्येन लक्षितं ।।

(*Purāṇe Nāṭyaśāstre ca dvayostu rati-bhāvayayoḥ samānārthatayā hyatra dvayam-aikyena lakṣitam*) This *rati* or *bhāva* is self-manifested and as such identified with the mental state of the devotee experiencing it.

Original Sanskrit śloka	English translation	Important features
Nine <i>sthāyībhāvas</i> ¹³¹	Durable psychological states or stable emotions	
<p>Version 1: Nāṭyaśāstra – 6.18</p> <p>रतिर्हासश्च शोकश्च क्रोधोत्साहौ भयं तथा । जुगुप्सा विस्मयश्चेति स्थायिभावाः प्रकीर्तिताः ॥ १८ ॥</p> <p><i>ratirhāsaśca śokaśca krodhotsāhau bhayaṃ tathā jugupsā vismayaḥ ca iti sthāyībhāvaḥ prakīrtitāḥ </i></p> <p>Version 2: Nāṭyaśāstra – 6.18 (While this source from <i>Natya Shastra Chapter 6</i> mentions <i>ratihāsaśca</i>, it seems to be a grammatical error)</p> <p>रतिहासश्च शोकश्च क्रोधोत्साहौ भयं तथा । जुगुप्सा विस्मयश्चेति स्थायिभावाः प्रकीर्तिताः ॥</p> <p><i>ratihāsaśca śokaśca krodhotsāhau bhayaṃ tathā jugupsā vismayaḥ ca iti sthāyībhāvaḥ prakīrtitāḥ </i></p>	<p><i>rati</i> - Love <i>sāma</i> - Serenity <i>hāsyam</i> - Humour <i>utsāha</i> - Energy <i>krodha</i> - Anger <i>bhaya</i> - Fear <i>jugupsā</i> - Disgust <i>Vismaya</i> - Astonishment <i>śoka</i> - Sorrow</p>	<p>Nine principal human feelings which function as an ‘umbrella’ under which ancient Indian psychology classified all emotional activity. Manifestation is of a permanent nature. Owing to their superiority among <i>bhāvas</i>, they can generate <i>rasas</i>.</p>

¹²⁸ De, S. K. (1981). Some Problems of Sanskrit Poetics, Calcutta : Firma K L Mukhopadhyay. Pvt. Ltd.

¹²⁹ Dhanañjaya, D. (1969). Ed. by T. Venkatacharya, Madras: Adyar Library.

¹³⁰ Bhaduri, N. P. (1988). Bhakti (Devotion) As an aesthetic sentiment. *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 16(4), pp. 377–410.

¹³¹ Because there are discrepancies in the different versions of the text, I have included three versions of this śloka. Version 1 is from *Nāṭyaśāstra* edited by Pandit Kedarnath Sahityabhusana, Version 2 is from *Natya Shastra Chapter 6*, Version 3 is from ‘The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary’ by Vaman Shivram Apte.

<p>Version 3: ('The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary' by Vaman Shivram Apte. While the first line is the same as <i>Nāṭyaśāstra</i> – 6.18, the second line is different)</p> <p>रतिर्हासश्च शोकश्च क्रोधोत्साहौ भयं तथा । जुगुप्सा विस्मयश्चेत्थमष्टौ प्रोक्ताः शमोऽति च^{132 133} <i>ratirhāsaśca śokaśca krodhotsāhau bhayaṃ tathā </i> <i>jugupsā vismayaścetthamaṣṭau proktāḥ śamo'ti ca </i></p>		
<p>33 vyabhicārabhāvas</p>	<p>Voluntary bhāvas</p>	
<p>निर्वेदग्लानिशङ्काख्यास्तथासूया मदः श्रमः । आलस्यं चैव दैन्यं च चिन्तामोहः स्मृतिर्धृतिः ॥ <i>nirvedglāniśankakhyāstathāsūyā madaḥ śramaḥ </i> <i>ālasyaṃ caiva dainyaṃ ca cintāmoḥa smṛtidhṛtiḥ 19 </i></p> <p>व्रीडा चपलता हर्ष आवेगो जडता तथा । गर्वो विषाद औत्सुक्यं निद्रापस्मार एव च ॥ <i>vṛīḍā capalatā harṣ āvego jaḍtā tathā </i> <i>garvo viṣād utsukyāṃ nidrāparasmār aiva ca 20 </i></p> <p>सुप्तं विबोधोऽमर्षश्चाप्यवहित्थमथोग्रता । मतिर्व्याधिस्तथोन्मादस्तथा मरणमेव च ॥ <i>suptaṃ vibodhomarṣaścāpyavahatthimthogratā </i> <i>matirvyādhistathonmādistathā maraṇmeva ca 21 </i></p>	<p><i>nirveda</i> - discouragement <i>glāni</i> - weakness <i>śāṅkā</i> - apprehension <i>śrama</i> - weariness <i>dainya</i> - depression <i>augrya, ugratā</i> - cruelty <i>cintā</i> - anxiety <i>trāsa</i> - fright <i>īrṣyā</i> - jealousy <i>asūyā</i> - envy <i>amarṣa</i> - indignation <i>garva</i> - arrogance <i>smṛti</i> - recollection <i>maraṇa</i> - death <i>mada</i> - intoxication <i>supta</i> - dreaming <i>nidrā</i> - sleeping <i>vibodha</i> - awakening</p>	<p>They are placed above the <i>sāttvikabhāvas</i>. They represent transitory states of the human mind that reflect minor ancillary feelings (sub – <i>bhāvas</i>) In varied combinations with <i>sāttvikabhāvas</i>, they feed and contribute towards the creation of permanent states of moods. Their manifestation may be understood</p>

¹³² <https://www.wisdomlib.org/definition/sthayibhava>

¹³³ Apte, V.S. (1890). The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary.

	<p><i>vrīḍā</i> - shame <i>apasmāra</i> - epilepsy <i>moha</i> - distraction <i>matī</i> - assurance <i>alasa</i> - idleness <i>ālasya</i> - indolence <i>āvega</i> - agitation <i>tarka</i> - deliberation <i>avahitthā</i> - dissimulation <i>vyādhi</i> - sickness <i>unmāda</i> - insanity <i>viṣāda</i> - despair <i>utsuka</i> - restless <i>autsukya</i> - impatience <i>capala</i> - inconsiderate</p> <p>These are also known as <i>sañcāribhāva</i> (<i>saṃcāribhāva</i>) which may be translated as 'transitory emotion or mood.'</p>	<p>as ephemeral in nature.</p> <p>For example, a person having a permanent <i>bhāva</i> of <i>rati</i> may have temporary <i>vyabhicāri bhāvas</i> such as anxiety, envy, pride, depression etc. as its fading accessories in turn suggesting and preserving the <i>śṛṅgāra rasa</i>.</p>
Eight sāttvikabhāvas	Temperamental states	
<p>स्तम्भः स्वेदोऽथ रोमाञ्चः स्वरभेदोऽथ वेपथुः । वैवर्ण्यमश्रु प्रलय इत्यष्टौ सात्त्विकाः स्मृताः ॥</p> <p><i>stambha svedoṥtha romāñcaḥ swarbhedoṥtha vepathuḥ </i> <i>vaivarṇyamaśru pralaya ityaṣṭhau sāttvikaḥ smrutāḥ 23 </i></p>	<p><i>stambha</i> - paralysis <i>pralaya</i> - fainting <i>romāñca</i> - horripilation <i>sveda</i> - sweating <i>vaivarṇya</i> - change of colour <i>vepathu</i> - trembling <i>aśru</i> - weeping <i>vaisvarya</i> - change of voice</p>	<p>Their manifestation is of a sudden nature.</p> <p>They represent instinctive physical responses that appear as instant reactions.</p> <p>To induce them, the actors have made their representations life-like.</p>

Figure 1.1: Forty-nine *bhāvas*

1.4 The concept of *rasa*

kān pṛcchāmaḥ surāḥ svarge nivāsāmo vyaṃ bhuvī

kiṃ vā kāvyarasaḥ svādhuḥ kiṃ vā svādhīyasī sudhā

The deities reside in heaven and us on earth, so whom can we ask
which is sweeter, the *rasa* of poetry or the nectar of immortality?

-ANONYMOUS

With respect to etymology and context, the term *rasa* is known to have its origins in Sanskrit grammar. In this case, the root *ras* is the source of the word *rasa*, which may have multiple meanings like sound, to praise, to scream, to cry etc. However, the Sanskrit dictionary by M Monier Williams equates *rasa* to taste, relish, to feel, perceive etc.¹³⁴ Indian aesthetician Pravas Jivan Chaudhary suggests that *rasa* was originally a physiological term which appeared in ancient medical literature and meant the physical quality of taste including one of the six tastes: sweet, bitter, acidic, salty, astringent and insipid.¹³⁵ Also, the term *rasa* could not be translated into English. This fact is endorsed by several scholars including Dace.¹³⁶

According to the *Nāṭyaśāstra* verse 1.17, the word *rasa* was initially used in the Vedic literature, *Atharva* Veda. With the introduction of the Upaniṣads (900 BCE - 300 BCE), the meaning of *rasa* underwent its first transformation and became important as a concept and also more abstract. The treatise also calls *rasa* as a 'synthetic phenomenon' and the goal of any creative performance art, oratory, painting or literature.¹³⁷

The concept of *rasa* is known to have origins in the Upaniṣads, specifically the *Chāndogya* and *Taittirīya*. The *Taittirīya* Upaniṣad states 'He is indeed *rasa*. Having obtained *rasa* this one

¹³⁴ Barlingay, S. (2007). A Modern Introduction to Indian Aesthetic Theory: The Development from Bharata to Jagannātha.

¹³⁵ Chaudhury, P.J. (1956). Catharsis in the Light of Indian Aesthetics. The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, Volume XV No. 2, pp. 218.

¹³⁶ Dace, W. (1963). The Concept of 'Rasa' in Sanskrit Dramatic Theory. Educational Theatre Journal, 15(3), pp. 249–254.

¹³⁷ Benamou, M. (2010). RASA: Affect and Intuition in Javanese Musical Aesthetics. Oxford University Press. pp. 122, 172–194.

becomes blissful.¹³⁸ It is known to indicate juice, or essence, and is tantamount to gratification.¹³⁹ Mohan Thampi also supports this view and argues that it was used as essence, essence of everything, essence of the universe.¹⁴⁰ To this day, the most appropriate definition of *rasa* is debated. The meaning of the term could change based on who is experiencing and interpreting both written and performed texts.¹⁴¹

Rasa may be defined as a sovereign disposition that is demonstrative in nature and impregnates the mind to overwhelm it with ecstasy. It may also be understood as an expression that is suggestive of a particular type of emotion. However, Logan Beitman argues that *rasa*, being additive and not reductive, is not a single essence. He states that *rasa* is not a single pure substance, but a combination of many sensory inputs which collectively generate ‘a richly textured, emotionally resonant experience larger than the sum of its parts’.¹⁴² Maria Heim argues that at first, *rasa* seems to be something integral to the play or poem itself, either the poet’s own uninhibited aesthetic sense or that of the characters.¹⁴³ Over a period of time, however, Hein suggests that later theorists saw *rasa* as something relished by the audience or the reader.

A majority of Indian classical performers, dramatists, film makers and actors, are generally known to hold the opinion that the very purpose of an art form in the tradition of Indian aesthetics is to experience this essence of *rasa* by oneself. Catherine Butler Schofield argues that Hindustani music by itself as an entity embodied the *rasas*, and it is able to do so entirely independently of language barriers.¹⁴⁴ Giving the example of the *rāgamāla* tradition of painting the character of each musical mode of the Indian melodic system as a *nāyak* or *nāyikā*, Schofield further argues that *svara-nād* (musical sound) was a ‘primary vehicle of *rasa*’ in traditional Indic aesthetics. Even to this day, each *rāga* of the Indian musical system is said to incorporate at least one of the *navarasas*. The audience may experience it consequently,

¹³⁸ Rasa (theology). (2023, December 27). Wikipedia. [Rasa \(theology\) - Wikipedia](#)

¹³⁹ Theodor, I. (2005). *Rasa and personhood in the Bhāgavata Purāna* (Thesis). University of Oxford.

¹⁴⁰ Thampi, M. (1965). *Rasa ‘as Aesthetic Experience’*. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 24/1, pp. 75-80.

¹⁴¹ Coorlawala, U. (2016). “Writing out otherness”. *Studies in South Asian Film and Media*, 4/2, pp. 143-156.

¹⁴² Beitman, L. (2014). *Neuroscience and Hindu Aesthetics: A Critical Analysis of V.S. Ramachandran’s ‘Science of Art’*. Florida International University, pp. 30-31.

¹⁴³ Heim, M. (2022). *rasa: Taste; The Aesthetic Savouring of Emotions (Sanskrit)*. In *Words for the Heart: A Treasury of Emotions from Classical India* (pp. 241–245). Princeton University Press.

¹⁴⁴ Schofield, K. B. (2015). *Learning to Taste the Emotions: The Mughal Rasika*. In K. B. Schofield & F. Orsini (Eds.), *Tellings and Texts: Music, Literature and Performance in North India* (1st ed., pp. 407–422). Open Book Publishers.

before moving on to a deeper spiritual journey through the art. This understanding is historically rooted in the *Advait Vedanta* school of the Hindu spiritual thought. K S Sivakumar argues that in agreement with the Upaniṣads, *Advaita Vedanta* perceives *rasa-anubhava* as *ānaṇḍa*. (bliss) of the *Brāhman-ātman* (supreme self/pure consciousness or the soul that resides in everybody).¹⁴⁵ Sivakumar also informs us that the *Taittirīya* Upaniṣad (II.vii.1) states that *Brahman* is full of joy and the source of joy (*Raso vai saḥ*). The *Brhadāranyakopaniṣad* (II.iv.5) equates the ultimate truth of the self with universal love. The universal self, identified with love, is immanent in the individual as it is immanent in everything else. Pravas Jivan Chaudhury argues that *rasa* is realized when the self gets rid of its ego and assumes a kind of detached introspection and is thus a realisation of this impersonal introspective aspect of the self, which usually is buried deep under the other superficial ego-driven layers of life.¹⁴⁶

Any form of artistic creation measures its own success on the basis of the audience's response to *rasa*. The effect may be spontaneous or may gradually build up depending on the creative input of an artist and the receptive power of an audience. According to Sheldon Pollock, *rasa* may be analysed internally, in which case it may be perceived as a representation of human behaviour, and externally, where the focus would be on the reactions of the audiences to those behavioural representations.¹⁴⁷ Walter Kauffman argues that *rasa*, represents a deliberate reaction in the audience when its mind is attuned to the performance as well as the performer, while being stimulated by the dramatical, poetical or musical representations.¹⁴⁸

It is a universally recognised notion as far as Indian music, dance and drama are concerned that 'there is no *nāṭya* without *rasa*.' This notion was first expressed by Bharata as 'No [poetic] meaning proceeds [from speech] without [any kind of] Sentiment' (*'na hi rasād rte kaścid arthaḥ pravartate,*' – 'Indeed, nothing meaningfully results without coming from *rasa*).'¹⁴⁹ The below figure 1.2 illustrates the basic operation of the *rasa* concept.

¹⁴⁵ Sivakumar, K S. (2017). On Understanding *Rasa* in the Tradition of Advait Vedanta.

¹⁴⁶ Chaudhury, P. (1965). The Theory of *Rasa*. The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 24/1, pp. 145–149.

¹⁴⁷ Pollock, S. (2016). A *Rasa* Reader, pp. 25-26.

¹⁴⁸ Kaufmann, W. (1965). *Rasa, Rāga-Mālā* and Performance Times in North Indian Rāgas. Ethnomusicology, 9/3, pp. 272–291.

¹⁴⁹ Lutjeharms, R. (2018). 'On *Rasa*', A Vaisnava Poet in Early Modern Bengal: Kavikarnapura's Splendour of Speech. Oxford Theology and Religion Monographs, pp. 121–176.

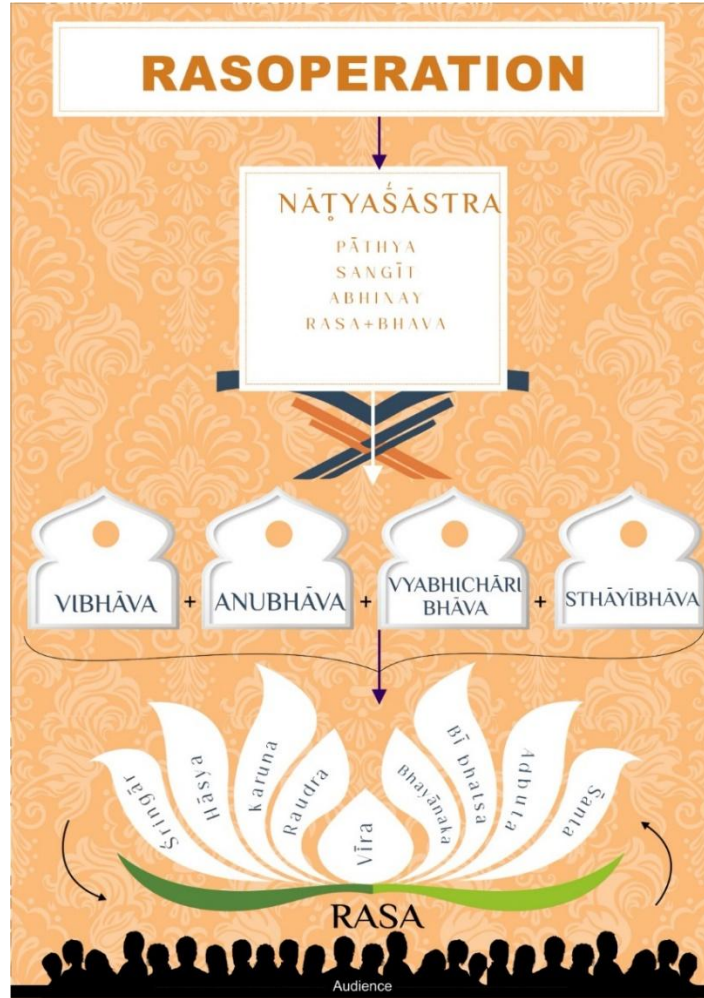


Figure 1.2: Illustration of the *rasa* process

According to the *Nāṭyaśāstra's* *rasa-sūtra*, '*Vibhāvānubhāva vyabhicāri saṁyogād rasaniṣpattiḥ.*' The *śloka* means that the union of *vibhāva* (determinant conditions) *anubhāva* (consequents) and *vyabhicāri bhāvas* (ancillary emotions), results in *rasa* realisation (aesthetic delight). Figure 1.2 shows a connection between the four elements of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the *bhāvas*, nine *rasas* and audience participation. I will now examine how these elements are implemented in a Sanskrit poem followed by analyses of selected scenes from a Hindi film. Both of these are based on the theme of the ancient Indian epic *Rāmāyaṇa*. This exercise will introduce the readers to the concept of manifestation of *rasa* through *śabda-racanā* (word-based composition) and *abhinaya* (acting).

1.5 ‘*Rasa-Bhāva-Consciousness*’: A Complex Case of Music Learning, Making and Listening

This sub-section addresses three crucial questions:

- How musicians and listeners define *rasa*, as opposed to how it appears in classical literary theory.
- How far the directors/actors/musicians are conscious of specific *bhāvas*.
- How confident can we be that there is any consensus among musicians about the particular *rasa* ascriptions to particular *rāgas*

Musicians are known to explicitly talk about *rasas* in relation to *rāgas* based on the moods of the *rāgas*. David Clarke argues for some of the ways in which *rāga* combines and colours tones to generate subtleties of mood and emotion—or *rasa*.¹⁵⁰ Clarke clarifies that in the absence of historical data on formal correlation between the terms, musicians are sometimes known to invoke *rasa* as a way of indicating the appropriate effect of a *rāga*. However, Clarke’s vocal guru Vijay Rajput specifically attributes certain *rasas* to certain *rāgas*. For example, Clarke reports how Rajput indicates that a *bandīś* in *rāga* Bhīmpalāsī composed by Paṇḍit Vinaychandra Modgal (1918–95) bears the pathos of the *karuṇa rasa*.¹⁵¹ Rajput then goes on to mention that the warmth of the romantic-aesthetic *rāga* Kedār comes partly from its sensitivity to the *śuddha madhyam svara*, thus attributing Kedār to the *śṛṅgāra rasa*.¹⁵² This implies that sometimes, a specific musical note of a *rāga* can define its emotional aspect. Rajput further associates another *rāga* Megh with the heroic and masculine *vīra rasa* as it evokes the feeling of ‘dark storm clouds, the rumbling of thunder, and dramatic lightening flashes’.¹⁵³ In yet another case, Mohan-Vīṇā maestro Vishwa Mohan Bhatt claims in a lecture-demonstration that every *rāga* has the potential to foment every type of *rasa*.¹⁵⁴ Sometimes, the unique presentation styles and *gāyakīs* of individual artists may manifest a different *rasānubhuti* from the same *rāga*. Abirlal Gangopadhyay reports that *rāga* Mārṅwā sung by

¹⁵⁰ Clarke, D. (2024). *Rāgs Around the Clock: A Handbook for North Indian Classical Music, with Online Recordings in the Khayāl Style*, p. 5.

¹⁵¹ Clarke, D. (2024). *Rāgs Around the Clock: A Handbook for North Indian Classical Music, with Online Recordings in the Khayāl Style*, pp. 66-67.

¹⁵² Clarke, D. (2024). *Rāgs Around the Clock: A Handbook for North Indian Classical Music, with Online Recordings in the Khayāl Style*, p. 81.

¹⁵³ Clarke, D. (2024). *Rāgs Around the Clock: A Handbook for North Indian Classical Music, with Online Recordings in the Khayāl Style*, p. 87.

¹⁵⁴ Pt. Arvind Parikh - All Inclusive Talim - Baithak. (2017). 21st Session, All-Inclusive Taleem, Pt. Vishwa Mohan Bhatt Part 1. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/Q5I9DraO93U?t=5292>

three different vocalists provided listeners with different emotional outcomes. The renditions of Pt. Mallikarjun Mansur of the *rāga* gave an experience of the *vīpralambha śṛṅgāra* (later *vīra/adbhuta*) *rasas* whereas in the case of Ustād Amir Khan Sāheb and Pt Bhimsen Joshi, there was the manifestation of *śānta* and sometimes *vīra rasas*.¹⁵⁵ All these examples constitute ethnographic evidence that illustrates how at least some musicians are operating an informal *rasa-rāga* correlation.

The concept of *rasa* is also employed in the Dāgar *gharānā* of Dhrupad singing to describe the aesthetic dimension of their *rāga*-focussed music.¹⁵⁶ Richard Widdess and Ritwik Sanyal argue that the *navarasas* fail to provide a complete vocabulary with which the aesthetic aspects of different *rāgas* can be described.¹⁵⁷ Also, musicologist S.N. Ratanjankar is of the view that musical notes are unable to express a specific *rasa*, an emotion or an abnormal state of mind.¹⁵⁸ Despite this major drawback with respect to *rasa-rāga* correlation, several Hindustani classical *rāgas* are characterized on the basis of the emotions that they are believed to manifest. For example, Sanyal and Widdess further report that Aḍānā and Sohīnī are described as *vīra rasa rāgas*, Jogiyā as *karuṇa* and Yaman as auspicious without reference to a particular *rasa*. Laura Leante reports her findings of descriptions associated with *rāga Śrī* which is traditionally considered a serious *rāga* conveying profound feelings, and which inexperienced musicians find difficult to get a grip of, let alone mastering it. Some of the most recurring images and feelings associated with it according to Leante include those of ‘an authoritative, calm and graceful figure, such as a sovereign, a hero, a warrior or a *yogī*’.¹⁵⁹ This indicates that the musicians particularly experienced the *vīra* and *śānta rasas* corresponding to the vivid depictions that were shared by them with Leante. It is particularly important to mention my guru Paṇḍit Nayan Ghosh’s explicit reference to *rāga Śrī* which demonstrates the correlation between the *rāga*, and the corresponding feelings experienced by a master musician:¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁵ Gangopadhyay, A. (2022). *Rasa Analysis of Sthūla-Paśyantī id est Non-Lyrical Non-Percussive Indian Pure Music: A Pragmatic Approach in Therapeutic Context*, p. 97.

¹⁵⁶ Widdess, R. & Sanyal, R. (2004). *Dhrupad: Tradition and Performance in Indian Music*. 1st Edition, p. 126.

¹⁵⁷ Widdess, R. & Sanyal, R. (2004). *Dhrupad: Tradition and Performance in Indian Music*. 1st Edition, p. 127.

¹⁵⁸ Ratanjankar, S.N. (1970). Individual notes and specific *rasas*. In *Aspects of Indian music* (Revised, pp. 48–52). Publication Division.

¹⁵⁹ Leante, L. (2009). The Lotus and the King: Imagery, Gesture and Meaning in a Hindustani Rāg. *Ethnomusicology Forum*, 18(2), pp. 185–206.

¹⁶⁰ While this note from Nayan Ghosh is reported by Laura Leante, I was also given a similar description of *rāga Śrī* as well as some other *rāgas* during the course of my learning from him.

‘Imagine the glowing pink sky and the setting sun ... Imagine yourself standing on the seashore and ... the vast expanse in front of you, the ... stillness of the water in the evenings. If you are standing on a hilltop, try to see the ranges of the mountains in front of you and the sun setting behind it and see the birds returning home ... [I]t is the way you ... take the *mīṇḍ* [glide] from Re to Pa ..., the way you feel for that glide and of course the ... character of the *rāga*, prayerful ... There's humility in it, but there is also a kind of virility in Śrī. There is a hidden warrior-like spirit, but after all *rāga* Śrī is a peaceful *rāga*... Imagine a warrior offering his prayers before he goes to the battle field ... , his meditation, his prayer, his complete devotion and surrender to God ... because the *rāga* has along with that peacefulness and the stillness, it also has a strong virility ... Śrī has a more direct attack on that Pa when you reach ... , though you take it with a glide, but you go with a certain confidence on the Pañcama.’ (Paṇḍit Nayan Ghosh, 23rd May 2005)

From the above arguments, it is certain that while *rasa-rāga* correlation is not straightforward, there is evidence in academic literature to suggest that the interdependence between melody and emotions in Indian classical music does exist even though quite subtly. To justify this claim, an experiment was conducted by William Forde Thomson and Balkwill in which two performers were requested to play the *alāp* portions of *rāgas* that they would normally choose if they wished to convey four specific emotions: joy/*hāsya*, sadness/*karuṇa*, anger/*raudra*, and peacefulness/*śānta*.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ Balkwill, L.-L., and Thompson, W. F. (1999). A Cross-Cultural Investigation of the Perception of Emotion in Music: Psychophysical and Cultural Cues. *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 17(1), pp. 43–64.

Musical Stimuli

Performer	Raga	Rasa	Instrument
1	Bhupali	Hasya	Bansuri flute
2	Khamaj	(Joy)	Sitar (stringed)
2	Bhupali		Surbahar (stringed)
2	Jogya	Karuna	Dilruba (stringed)
1	Bhairavi	(Sadness)	Bansuri flute
1	Bhopali-Todi		Bansuri flute
1	Hindol	Raudra	Bansuri flute
2	Adana	(Anger)	Sitar (stringed)
1	Sohini		Bansuri flute
1	Yaman Kalyan	Shanta	Bansuri flute
2	Yaman	(Peace)	Surbahar (stringed)
2	Bhilaskhani		Dilruba (stringed)

Figure 1.3: Emotional Response to *Rāga*-stimuli (taken from Balkwill and William Forde Thompson)

Following this experiment Balkwill and Thompson have reported that these four target emotions have a well-documented history in the psychological literature, and they are the nearest equivalents of four of the *navarasas* identified in Hindustani music. They further report that anger is not often conveyed in Hindustani music and the corresponding *raudra rasa*, is seldom used since it is often considered to be incompatible with the inherently peaceful impression of Hindustani classical music. However, their argument that the *śānta rasa* is considered the basic *rasa* embodied within nearly all *rāgas* may not be technically correct as there are *rāgas* like *Sohinī* which do not seem to offer this emotion. I have come across some musicians and *rasikas* stating that *rāgas* like *Pūriyā Dhanāsrī* and *Toḍī* have made them feel uneasy, emotionally heavy and even tired while singing or listening to them. One cannot feel peaceful at the same time as feeling such contrasting emotions.

José Luiz Martinez in his book *Semiosis in Hindustani Music*, focuses on extending the concept of temporal rhythms through lens of semiotics and classical Indian philosophy of aesthetics, viewing *rasa* and *rāga* as complex systems of significations.¹⁶² Martinez's work is a more direct contemporary extension of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* as it not only acknowledges and investigates this

¹⁶² Martinez, J.L. (2001). *Semiosis in Hindustani Music*, 1st ed. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publications, pp. 343-345.

distinct theoretical fabric of aesthetics, but it also attempts at downplaying the deep-rooted complexity of the system. Nevertheless, he includes crucial information regarding *rasa-rāga* interaction by presenting selected *rāgas* and their corresponding emotions including other relevant qualities as shown in figure 1.4. The three morning *rāgas* (Āsāvārī, Alhaiyā Bilāwal and Bhairav) and one night *rāga* (Bāgeśrī) presented in this figure cover six of the *navarasas*. This contradicts Prem Lata Sharma’s argument that in the absence of connection with drama, the *hāsya*, *raudra*, *bhayānaka* and *bibhatsa rasas* have to be excluded from the domain of musical representation.¹⁶³ This is so because according to Sharma, it is impossible to sustain them in music unrelated to drama and that they could only appear as transitory phases.

Great rāgas:	rasas	other meanings or related qualities	references
Alhaiyā Bilāwal		not gambhīr, but another kind of seriousness	SA 3.12
	śṛṅgāra, karuṇa		K&R 1991: 82
		peaceful repose	Kaufmann 1993: 119
Āśāvārī (śuddh reṣṭāvārī = jāunpurī)	tender śṛṅgāra	positive self-sacrifice	SA 3.82
	śṛṅgāra, karuṇa	tyāg	K&R 1991: 69-70
		quiet, gentle	Kaufmann 1993: 463
Bāgeśrī	vipralambha	sensitive feelings, pangs of separation, love	SA 2.67
		serious and great	Kaufmann 1993: 382
Bhairav	raudra	mature gambhīr	SA 3.158
	śānta, bhakti	very appealing in the morning	RN 1.75
	śānta, bhakti, vīra, karuṇa	gambhīr	K&R 1991: 32
		awesome grandeur, horror, fright, melancholy, tender adoration	Kaufmann 1993:233-34

Figure 1.4: Rāga-Rasa correlation from *Semiosis in Hindustani Music* (page 343)

While musicians are known to define *rasa* with technical virtuosity, listeners or *rasikas* on the other hand define it as the emotional response that the *bhāvas* inspire in them upon reacting to a musical or drama performance. From my experiences of attending several Hindustani classical concerts in India and the United Kingdom, I have been witnessed to a variety of emotional responses from audiences. Despite most of them being untrained in the art of

¹⁶³ Sharma, P. L. (1970). *Rasa theory and Indian music*. Sangeet Natak, pp. 57–64.

music or *rasa* theory, their facial expressions and exclamations following certain musical phrases indicated their respective experiences of *rasa*.

In my experience as a student of Indian classical music, my teachers placed considerable emphasis on being constantly aware of feelings while learning and performing both melodic and rhythmic music. According to them, without the emotional quotient, any music fails to produce effective response from the listeners. Emotion is thus the key to a listener's mind and hence musicians are taught to be conscious of *rasa-bhāvas* since early times in their learning careers.

Most music directors from the golden age of Hindi cinema were directly or indirectly trained in Hindustani classical music. Whether they were always conscious of specific *bhāvas* and had consensus amongst themselves as trained classical musicians about particular *rasa* ascriptions to particular *rāgas* may be debatable or at least challenging to establish. This observation is exemplified by an interview with music director Rahul Dev Burman by actress and host Tabassum.¹⁶⁴ Burman explains in all modesty that although exposed to classical music, he has not learnt much of it and that the songs that he made were not always thought about in the *rāga-rasa* landscape. However, there were many occasions during his composing career, when he did think about a specific *rāga* to suit a film situation in order to manifest a particular *rasa*.

As far as we know, then, most Hindi film music directors have not studied the *śāstras*. However, there were a few who did, and most of them were known to have at least intermediate to advanced knowledge of *rāga* and *tāla* music. I was informed several times by my teachers that musicians and music directors shared closed rapport amongst themselves and with contemporary Hindustani classical artists. For example, my *guru* Halim Jaffer Khan recounted to me how some music directors, including Roshan and Naushad, discussed *rasa-bhāva* manifestation while composing for films. The gestures of the actors further inform this process.

¹⁶⁴ Versatile Music Composer Pancham Da Aka R. D. Burman से बातचीत...(00.12.40) – Rahul Dev Burman in conversation with Tabassum with regards to music making in films (Youtube clip : [Versatile Music Composer Pancham Da Aka R. D. Burman से बातचीत...](#))

Hence, this entire aspect of *bhāva*-consciousness in them is mediated and is part of a culturally informed discourse in which artists and directors shared ideas with each other. This is an ethnographic observation based on my survey and experience, but the evidence is real. What I am doing here is ultimately an interpretative study, reading observations made by my teachers through a *śāstric* lens, in a way that is culturally congruent with the practice of composing and making music. I am interpreting what they do, as opposed to showing what they know. Hṛṣīkeśa calls *rasa* as the fusion of word and meaning that floods the minds of readers with the relish of euphoria.¹⁶⁵ While he is referring to *rasa* in terms of poetry, this same argument may be applied to *rasa* in music also. Hṛṣīkeśa further calls *rasa* as the ‘truth of poetry, shining without cessation, clear to the heart, it is yet beyond the words.’ If this is the case for poetry without music or drama, one may imagine the considerable effect the latter elements may have on audiences with respect to manifestations of different emotions.

1.6 *Rasa* in the Rāmāyaṇa

Poetry and emotions are intensely connected with each other. Through a crafty selection of words, rhyme, rhythm and imagery, poets are capable of pouring their emotions into their writing conceptually and communicating them to the readers. This also seems to invoke numerous emotional states in the readers’ minds. A study of these emotive states through a piece of Sanskrit poetry will be useful to demonstrate the manifestation of *rasa* through words. Gregory Booth argues that a concept often borrowed by Indian film makers is that of the triangular relationship, whether a love triangle or a non-romantic one.¹⁶⁶ Such scenarios expose the central emotional conflicts that the characters must resolve in the course of the storyline.¹⁶⁷ Although the Rāmāyaṇa involves a total of four brothers, it offers an archetypal model of three protagonists related to each other in a close-knitted manner. This triadic relationship essentially constitutes a central hero (Rāma), secondary male (Rāma's brother Lakśmana), and female (Rāma's wife Sītā). The three characters assume specific personality traits and roles within the narrative at particular instances as described in the following poetry. Their actions, depending on the situations they are in, correspond to different *rasas*.

¹⁶⁵ Hanley, W.S. (2012). Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (ed.). *Analecta Husserliana, Ingardeniana III: The Performing Arts, the Fine Arts, and Literature*. Springer. pp. 299–300 and pp. 295–309.

¹⁶⁶ Booth, G D. (1995). Traditional Content and Narrative Structure in the Hindi Commercial Cinema. *Asian Folklore Studies*, 54/2, pp. 169–90.

¹⁶⁷ Beck, B. E. F. (1989). Core triangles in the folk epics of India. In *Oral epics in India*, eds. S. H. Blackburn, P. J. Claus, J. B. Flueckiger, and S. Wadley, pp. 155-75.

Hence, I have chosen to compare a Sanskrit poem based on the Indian epic Rāmāyaṇa and a Hindi film also based on the same epic called *Sampūrṇa Rāmāyaṇa* (1961).

The following verses of the poem *Navarasarāma*, based on the Sanskrit epic Rāmāyaṇa demonstrate the formations of each of the *navarasas* effectively.¹⁶⁸

शृङ्गारं क्षितिनिन्दिनि विहरणे	<i>śṛṅgāraṃ kṣīti-naṅdinī-viharaṇe</i>
वीरम् धनुर्भञ्जने	<i>vīraṃ dhanurbhañjane</i>
कारुण्यम् बली भोजने अद्भुत-रसं	<i>kāruṇyaṃ bali-bhojane adbhuta-rasaṃ</i>
सिन्धौ गिरि-स्थापने	<i>siṅdhau girī-sthāpane</i>
हास्यं शूर्पणखा-मुखे भयं अघे	<i>hāsyāṃ śūrpaṇakhā-mukhe bhayaṃ aḡhe</i>
बीभत्सम् अन्या-मुखे	<i>bībhatsaṃ anyā-mukhe</i>
रौद्रं रावण-मर्दने मुनिजने	<i>raudraṃ rāvaṇ-mardane munijane</i>
शान्तं वपुःपातु नः॥	<i>śāntaṃ vapuḥ pātu naḥ</i>

Here, Rāma is the protagonist and, through the medium of selected episodes from his life, each of the *navarasas* has been depicted by the poet.

The following is a translation of the above poem, visually supported by screengrabs from the Hindi film, *Sampūrṇa Rāmāyaṇa* (1961). This will clearly demonstrate how *rasa* theory permeates the filmic medium also.

From Navarasa Rāma

Translation: May Lord Rāma who expressed love to the daughter of earth Sītā

Rasa: The *śṛṅgāra* (erotic) *rasa* is manifested (figure 1.5)

¹⁶⁸ The source of this poem is not known. The author learnt it orally from his grandmother.



Figure 1.5: Rāma and Sītā displaying the *śṛṅgāra rasa*

Translation: May Lord Rāma who displayed fortitude, in the act of disbanding the bow

Rasa: The *vīra* (heroic) *rasa* is manifested (figure 1.6)



Figure 1.6: Rāma displaying the *vīra rasa* in the act of breaking the sacred bow of Śiva

Translation: May Lord Rāma who showed compassion, in the pardoning of Bāli

Rasa: The *karuṇa* (compassion) *rasa* is manifested (figure 1.7)



Figure 1.7: Rāma expressing compassion

Translation: May Lord Rāma who displayed wonder at the rock bridge built by Sugrīva, Hanumān and his army

Rasa: The *adbhuta* (wonder) *rasa* is manifested (figure 1.8)



Figure 1.8: Rāma showing wonder at the rock bridge

Translation: May Lord Rāma induced laughter in conversing with *Śūrpaṅakhā*

Rasa: The *hāsya* (humour) *rasa* is manifested (figure 1.9)



Figure 1.9: Rāma smiling contemptuously at Surpanakha's advances

Translation: May Lord Rāma who is horrified realising his own sins

Rasa: The *bhayānak* (horror) *rasa* is manifested (figure 1.10)



Figure 1.10: Rāma displaying *bhayānak rasa* upon Sītā's disappearance into the earth

Translation: May Lord Rāma who showed disgust in looking at other (women's) faces

Rasa: The *bibhatsa* (disgust) *rasa* is manifested (figure 1.11)



Figure 1.11: Rāma showing disgust at the suggestion that he take another wife

Translation: May Lord Rāma exhibited fury while killing *Rāvaṇa*

Rasa: The *raudra* (anger) *rasa* is manifested (figure 1.12)



Figure 1.12: Rāma displaying the *raudra rasa* in the act of killing *Rāvaṇa*

Translation: May Lord Rāma who emblazoned tranquillity in his interactions with the sages

Rasa: The *śānta* (peace) *rasa* is manifested (figure 1.13)



Figure 1.13: Rāma portraying the *śānta rasa*

In addition to the visuals, *rasa* is also manifested sonically through the features of *rāga* and *tāla*. The interdependency between these musical features and *rasa* will be discussed further and analysed through a detailed case study of a classic Bollywood film.

1.7 *Rasa-Rāga-Tāla* – A case study on their interdependencies

As argued earlier in the Introduction, *rasa*, *rāga* and *tāla* are interdependent. *Rāga* and *tāla* may be considered as the wheels on which the cart of a musical composition rides. Without these two elements, which provide melody and rhythm respectively, a composition is not only incomplete but also bereft of *rasa*. While *rāga* and *tāla* will be dealt with in detail in the next two chapters, here we understand their definitions and importance for the purpose of this case study.

According to Richard Widdess, *rāga* is a concept of melodic organization in Indian classical music, operating between the levels of scale and melody as these terms are understood in Western music.¹⁶⁹ Widdess further argues that *rāga* is a noun derived from the Sanskrit root *rañj*, which means ‘to colour,’ especially ‘to colour red,’ and hence ‘to delight.’ Since the red colour signifies passion, the term *rāga* suggests the emotional content of a song, by which the listener may be delighted. Indian art music is broadly based on the melodic framework of *rāgas*. A *rāga* typically prescribes the *svaras* (musical notes and tones), *svara-padānukrama* (tonal hierarchy) and a set of *svara-sutras* (characteristic melodic motifs or phrases consisting

¹⁶⁹ Widdess, R. (2006). *Raga*, eprints.soas.ac.uk.

of *svara*-patterns). While the *svara-sutras* are only slightly labelled by *svara-sutras*, it is the *svarākār* or melodic shape including the constant pitch movement between *svaras* aided by the embellishing techniques that fully characterises its theme.

Tāla is a concept of rhythmic organisation in Indian classical music and is a combination of a fixed number of total strokes, played in cycles.¹⁷⁰ It is basically a musical measure and literally means clapping one's palm on one's hand or any other surface to measure musical beats.¹⁷¹ Kalapana Ram argues that via the *rāga-tāla* medium, various aspects of a musical performance generate the experience of 'emotionally enriching' among audiences.¹⁷² Artists include techniques such as playing with time by occasionally suspending the rhythmic flow of time embodied in the beats of *tāla*. Ram further points out that this consequently slows down the 'action' of the lyrics or the instrumental *bandīs* in order to focus on the improvisatory possibilities of a single melodic phrase.

The case study below demonstrates the interdependency between *rasa*, *rāga* and *tāla* and that there can be no *rasa* without *rāga* and *tāla* in a full-fledged talkie film. It is focussed on a dance sequence in which in the dancer, like the musician, uses movement to evoke particular emotive states through dance sequences and through interpretation in dramatic *abhinaya* of the song. The dancer weaves abstract geometrical patterns in space in a given metrical cycle to the words of the poem set to music in a specific *rāga*. She interprets the literary content of the piece through several stylized gestures. The *svara* and *tāla* patterns determine the *nṛtya* and the nature and composition of the *sāhitya* (literary piece) combined with music determines the interpretation of the *sthāyī bhāva* (permanent mood) and *sañcāri bhāva* (transitory states). In an eleventh-century work of Mahimabhaṭṭa, Bhaṭṭanāyaka states: 'Dramatic performances and the music accompanying them feed the *rasa* in all its fullness; hence the spectator, absorbed in the tasting of this, turning inward, feels pleasure through the whole performance. Sunk into his own being, he forgets everything (pertaining to practical life). There is manifested in him that flow of inborn pleasure, from which the

¹⁷⁰ Shete, S., and Deshmukh, S. (2021). North Indian Classical Music Tablā Tala (Rhythm) Prediction System Using Machine Learning.

¹⁷¹ Monier-Williams, M. (1899), A Sanskrit-English Dictionary, London: Oxford University Press.

¹⁷² Ram, K. (2011). Being 'rasikas': the affective pleasures of music and dance spectatorship and nationhood in Indian middle-class modernity. The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, 17, pp. 159–175.

yogins draw their satisfaction.’¹⁷³ Some indicators from Bhaṭṭanāyaka’s statement may be experienced through my next analysis.

Let us compare a clip from a film with and without the musical component in order to understand this point better. The clip in question is a song-dance sequence from acclaimed film-maker V Shantaram’s classic, *Jhanak Jhanak Payal Baje* (1955), the music of which was composed by music director Vasant Desai.

Video link to the song: [Viśvamitra Menakā Nrtya , Jhanak Jhanak Payal Baje, 1955](#)

One of the reasons for choosing this song known as ‘*Viśvamitra-Menakā Nrtya*’ (the *Viśvamitra-Menakā* dance) is that Vasant Desai shared an extremely close musical rapport with acclaimed innovative sitārist Halim Jaffer Khan, owing to which their combined creative inputs were known to produce melodies of a high quality.¹⁷⁴ Khan was given the freedom to select the melodic patterns and preludes after an initial briefing of the song was provided to him by Desai and Shantaram. Their combination resulted in two crucial outputs particularly relevant to this analysis. Firstly, there is an application of significantly stylised vocal and intricate yet effective instrumental techniques to embellish the sequence. This results in the manifestation of required *bhāvas* and *rasas*. Secondly, a multiple variety of music, such as subtle elements of the *khayāl* and *ṭhumrī* genres and various classical instruments coupled with an impressive application of compositional liberties (pauses, varying rhythmic patterns, changing *rāgas* etc.) is on display through this song. I have also chosen this song owing to the fact that both the protagonists, Gopi Kishan and Sandhya were virtuoso kathak (North Indian classical dance form) dancers. Hence, they were most appropriately qualified to do justice to a multi-faceted and complex song-sequence as this one.

The song is picturized¹⁷⁵ on actress Sandhya and Kathak exponent-actor Gopi Kishan as a part of a *nāṭya* (an act) within the film. It dramatically portrays the luring of the *Pauraṇic* sage

¹⁷³ Balkwill, L.L. and Thompson, W. F. (1999). A Cross-Cultural Investigation of the Perception of Emotion in Music: Psychophysical and Cultural Cues. *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 17(1), pp. 43–64.

¹⁷⁴ This information is based on my discussions with Halim Jaffer Khan between 1999 and 2003 in Mumbai.

¹⁷⁵ According to Neepa Majumdar, the definition of the term “Song Picturization” renders meaning to the image in “the terms set out by the song” (Mehta R B, Pandharipande R V. (2011). *Bollywood and Globalization, Indian Popular Cinema, Nation, and Diaspora.*)

Viśvamitra by the mythical *apsarā* (celestial nymph) Menakā. She disturbs the sage's penance, astonishes him with her celestial beauty and consequently makes him succumb to his carnal desires. The song and the dramatic element are an interplay between the *śṛṅgāra* and the *adbhuta rasas*. According to the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the former is derived from the dominant state of love and has its basis in shining and brighter aspects of the world such as white, pure, and beautiful. The latter finds its basis in the dominant state of astonishment and is derived from the determinants such as sight of heavenly being or events, attainment of desired object, entrance into superior mansion, temple, audience hall, seeing illusory and magical acts etc.¹⁷⁶ According to the verse 6.109 of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, '*Vibhāvānubhāv vyabhicārī samyogād rasa niṣpattiḥ*', meaning: out of the combination (*sāmayoga*), of the determinants (*vibhāva*), the consequents (*anubhāva*) and the transitory mental status (*vyabhicārī*), the birth of emotion (*rasa*) takes place. In other words, when there is a stimulus from the environment, i.e. *vibhāva*, it may cause a certain amount of excitation in a person (*anubhāva*). In this case, it is an *apsarā* who descends to the earth to lure the hermit. She starts off the scene with provocative glances and dance movements. This excitement may also include any of the *sāttvika* emotions, such as blushing, sweating, fainting etc. In this case, the hermit experiences astonishment that can lead to such side effects; a strong combination of these elements emerges collectively as *rasa*, or the relishable aesthetically experienced feeling or emotion. It may also be argued that even if there is evidence of only a single or two *rasas*, it can well have different *bhāvas* embedded in it. For example, in the dominant *rasa*, say, *śṛṅgāra rasa*, or love, there can be many *bhāvas* or sentiments as observed in this case. The interaction between this dominant state of love and astonishment is clearly evident in Gopi Kishan's expressions and related elements.

In the clip, starting at 00:00:10, the scene is introduced by a group of sitār players, musically welcoming the celestial nymph Menakā from the heavens to the earth where she arrives with an intention to break Viśvamitra's penance. He is seen in the meditating posture displaying the *śānta rasa* (figure 1.14) which is so until he is distracted by Menakā.

¹⁷⁶ Bhosale, B. (2016). Bharata's Natyashastra: Fundamentals of Dramatics and Aesthetics.



Figure 1.14: Viśvamisra in the lotus posture displaying *śānta rasa*

The musical score is set to *rāga* Paṭadīp with Khan on the sitār in a *jugalbandī* (duet) with the Santūr. Menakā arrives on the scene and stealthily moves towards the sage. She dances with a transparent veil which adds to her secret allure.



Figure 1.15: Menakā in a veil

These movements continue until 00:01:14 with Khan's sitār music that had a unique tonal quality in the background. Innovative plucking and pulling methods on the sitār such as *khaṭkās*, *murkīs*, *zamzamās* and subtle *mīṇḍs*, are employed by Khan to enhance the *śṛṅgāra rasa* focussed *abhinaya* of the dancer. These instrumental strokes of the sitār are types of special effects used for ornamentation and enriching the appeal of the music. These add a certain texture to the music and also provide a unique expressiveness to an otherwise simple melodic creation. These strokes are used by gifted artists based on their individual creative

abilities and imaginative prowess to complement and potentially heighten the effect of particular *rasas*. While it is difficult to pinpoint what exactly heightens the effect of *rasas*, the varying pressure of the strokes based on specialised techniques of the right hand and the corresponding changes in the amplitudes of the melodic outcome certainly play an important role in this process. So, it is generally achieved by adjusting the amplitude of the strokes and varying their speed as required.

The use of Hindustani instrumental techniques to create various moods and emotions has been prevalent since at least half a century. The sitār playing techniques mentioned above are recent developments as compared to the instrument's history of over six centuries. Ustad Abdul Halim Jaffer Khan explained to me during my learning sessions that a seasoned sitārist implements these to extract gestural information and emotions from within himself to transfer them as far as is reasonably practicable to the listeners. In this process, musical information such as pitch, pluck timing, thumb pressure etc. from the stroke-making is transferred from the musician to the listeners, thus creating immediate impacts on their minds. *Rasa-bhāvas* resulting from this process depends on various factors such as the appropriately executed musical strokes, the melody being played and the sensitivity of the listeners and the performer. However, in the case of the sitār, it is the collective spectrum of plucking and pulling methods including *khaṭkās*, *murkīs*, *zamzamās* and subtle *mīṇḍs* that act like a channel or bridge of transfer of musical nuances between the musician and the listeners. An emphasis on striking as if caressing the string is required when attempting to highlight pain, melancholy or even love. However, when highlighting emotions such as excitement, thrill, anger or fear, the sitārist may opt to vary the pressure of the strokes using the *khaṭkās* and *murkīs*, or even faster glides through the main string with additional striking of the *cikārī*.

From 00:01:14 onwards, there is the introduction of the *tāla* element through the beats of the pakhāvaj and the tablā as Menakā speeds up her movements swirling around the sage who is still attempting to resist the temptation. The dancer's movements are effectively mirrored and complemented by Khan's *tāna* movements on the sitār as the sequence

approaches 00:01:48 when the melody changes to *rāga* Jhinjhoṭī. The entire episode¹⁷⁷ of anticipation, anxiety and excitement ends with the introduction of the rather mild and soothing Jhinjhoṭī, as the *ṛṣi* (sage) finally opens his eyes at 00:01:52. Right after this point, the *rāga* is changed once again and this time Menakā starts singing a *bandiś* (composition) in *rāga* Bhīmpalasī as the *ṛṣi* is wide awake and astounded by her beauty (figure 1.16). The *bandiś* is set to a lively pace in the *drut* (fast paced) version of the 16 beats *tīntāla* (time cycle) till 00:02:57.



Figure 1.16: Viśvamitra staring at Menakā with astonishment

During the phase of this *bandiś* between 00:01:52 and 00:02:57, there are a few further crucial points to note. Vocal techniques such as fast paced *tānas* coupled with sitār and tablā strokes that intensify Menakā's gestures correspondingly reinforce their effect on the build-up of Viśvamitra's heightened state of desire. As an example, Khan's sitār strokes between 00:02:25 and 00:02:29, (during which he creates unique sounds through patterns played with a subtle combination of the left and right hands) may be viewed as a certain augmenting of *rasa-bhāva* initiated by Menakā's dance and vocals. As the sage is now portrayed to have nearly fallen for Menakā's irresistible beauty and there seems no further need for her to persuade him, at 00:02:57 the *bandiś* ends. The music is now transformed to a *ṭhumrī* based instrumental composition in *rāga* Pahāḍī which may have been used to signify a romantic climax.

¹⁷⁷ Menakā's descent, arrival and tempting the *dhyānast ṛṣi* - the hermit in a meditative state (being portrayed as an embodiment of the *śānta rasa*), complemented by Khan's background sitār based on Paṭadīp's varying melodic movements (coupled with strokes signifying an element of suspense).



Figure 1.17: Viśvamitra displays satisfaction and happiness through a smile

The composer uses known connotations of *ṭhumrī* and related improvisations to get a specific effect. Musical improvisation may be defined as ‘spontaneous singing or playing,’ which is ‘not pre-determined’ and comprises various nuances, variations, embellishments, and ornamentations sung by the performer during her or his recital.¹⁷⁸ Peter Manuel argues that in the 19th century, *ṭhumrī* and *ghazal* flourished as genres accompanying interpretive *kathak* dance, while also thriving as independent musical items.¹⁷⁹ This song can be seen as an interpretative form of Kathak, suggestive of primarily the *śṛṅgāra rasa* in nature. Through the implementation of subtle *ṭhumrī*-based nuances, the sitārist and the director along with the collective efforts of the actors successfully depict the succumbing of the sage to Menakā.



Figure 1.18: Viśvamitra succumbs to his desires for Menakā

¹⁷⁸ Nooshin, L. & Widdess, R. (2006). Improvisation in Iranian and Indian Music. *Journal of the Indian Musicological Society*, 36/37, pp. 104-119.

¹⁷⁹ Manuel, P. L. (2005). *Thumri, Ghazal, and Modernity in Hindustani Music Culture*, City University of New York (CUNY).

From this point onwards until the end of the clip, it is important to note the unmistakable variation in Khan's sitār strokes. The treatment of Pahādī through the sitār's *khaṭkās*, *zamzamās* and *murkīs*, in an attempt to manifest the *śṛṅgāra rasa* are the focal point of this part. Viśvamiṭra displays a relaxed romantic smile at this point as all the anxiety nears its end. Another example of an interplay between *abhinaya*,¹⁸⁰ *rasa-bhāva* and *rāga-tāla* is evident between 00:03.40 and 00:03.44 where Menakā (figure 1.19) portrays the *śṛṅgāra rasa* through facial gestures coupled with eye movements in her dance. Finally, at around 00:03.48, the helpless sage succumbs to his desires and rises to embrace Menakā as the dramatic sequence eventually ends.



Figure 1.19: Menakā's eye movements in the process of the manifestation of *śṛṅgāra rasa*

Now, I invite the reader to go through the entire clip with the sound muted and ponder regarding the effectiveness of *rasa-bhāva* manifested through its duration and the various acts of *abhinaya* while there is no *rāga-tāla*. One then realises how in this instance each of the *rāgas*, Paṭadīp, Jhīnjhoṭī, Bhīmpalasī and finally Pahādī (implemented for those particular durations along the sequence complemented by the various rhythmic movements), embellish the various dance and facial movements of the dancers. Right from the beginning until the end, the manifestations of each of the *śānta*, *śṛṅgāra* and *adbhuta rasas*, as convincingly and effectively as they occur, are only possible with the collaboration of *dhwani* (sounds) and *abhinaya* (acting). Simply *abhinaya* on its own, irrespective of the appropriateness of costumes, sets, lighting, and other technical showcasing could not have achieved these *rasa*

¹⁸⁰ The four types of *abhinayas* mentioned in the NS are (1) *āṅgika* (Gestures from the limbs), (2) *vācīkā* (Verbal utterance), (3) *āhārya* (Embellishment through dress and ornaments etc.) and (4) *sāttvika* (Temperamental).

manifestations. It is thus clear that there is no *rasa* without *rāga* and *tāla* in a sound based dramatical production, whether it is a movie or theatre. While the notions of *rāga* and *tāla* were explored in this case only for justifying their absolute importance and necessity in the manifestation of *rasa* in sound-based drama, they will be dealt with in detail further in the thesis.

The following last section of this chapter discusses and analyses some major milestones and events that have been responsible in shaping the very contour of Bollywood music and thus the success of its films.

1.8 Milestones and events that shaped Indian film music

My research focusses on the influence of Hindustani classical music along with its constituent elements (*rāga* and *tāla*) complemented by as well as intermingled with *rasa* theory on primarily Hindi cinema. However, it is crucial to identify and acknowledge some specific artists that made this happen. It is equally important to analyse how Hindi cinema got to that stage, where each of those artists, either individually or in teams, functioned to create what is popularly called the ‘golden era of Indian cinema.’ They were indirectly responsible in influencing multiple generations of musical minds that were to write, compose and direct iconic music. This section considers the milestones that have been responsible for shaping the quality, character, and extensive repertoire of Bollywood film music. There has been little prior scholarly analysis of this aspect of Bollywood. Also, not much has been written about the socio-political changes that influenced one of the biggest film-music industries in the world. Only those instances have been considered as milestones in my analyses, owing to which Hindi cinema benefited from Hindustani classical music. This music has been the primary resource for a galaxy of *rāga-tāla-rasa* enriched vocal and instrumental compositions in the form of diegetic as well as non-diegetic music.

The migration of Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, one of the most acclaimed vocalists of the twentieth century, from Pakistan to India, and the consequent spreading of the *gāyakī* of the Paṭiālā *gharānā* (which he represented) in various parts of Northern India, may be among the most important milestones in the context of this discussion. Bade Ghulam Ali’s eventual settlement

in erstwhile Bombay, had a major impact on the creative minds of a number of then upcoming artists who went on to create blockbusters in the future¹⁸¹. Khan lived in the Malabar Hill area of Bombay (present day Mumbai), which was in close proximity to the renowned Mangeshkar family's first residence at Grant Road and even closer when the family moved to the Walkeshwar area. Though playback singer Lata Mangeshkar had never formally learnt from Bade Ghulam Ali, she often spoke about the influence of his singing techniques on her own *gāyakī*. When not busy with concert tours across the country, he was present in Bombay, and this was a major boon for most singers and music composers in and around the city. They would get frequent opportunities to be in his company and indirectly learn the intricacies of classical music in general. Bade Ghulam Ali was known to be inspired by nature and would spontaneously create *bandīśes* in various *rāgas*, which in turn motivated several upcoming composers musically. Some of the most convincing precedents of this can be found in many of Lata Mangeshkar's songs composed by the likes of Naushad, Madan Mohan etc. The *Paṭiālā gharānā gāyakī* is known for its colourful nature. Apart from the openness of the voice, the *sargam* patterns are rendered aesthetically while further highlighting the salient features such as *ākārs*, *bol-banāvs* and *bol-bāntṣ*. These specialised vocal techniques exhibit the temperament of a painter while each phrase is rendered like colouring a picture, vivid with imagery.

The entry of the Mangeshkar family into Hindi film industry is perhaps the most crucial milestone in the history of Indian film music. Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosale, two of the most successful and popular of the five Mangeshkar siblings, were the most sought-after female playback singers for over four decades. Music director Naushad is known to have stated that the very heart of India throbbed in Lata's voice.¹⁸² Three generations of Indians know her as the 'quintessential and ideal voice of Indian femininity.'¹⁸³ According to Partha Chatterjee, Lata's *gayakī* had a sweet delivery with a young girl like feel to it; by contrast, Asha introduced a seductive and passionate singing style through her comparatively husky vocal timbre that 'registers as the carnal opposite to Lata's virginal tones'.¹⁸⁴ On many occasions,

¹⁸¹ Bombay had gradually started to gain reputation as a cultural and film-making hub of India at the time.

¹⁸² Bhimani, H. (1995). In *Search of Lata Mangeshkar*, Harper Collins, New Delhi, p. 16.

¹⁸³ Sundar, P. (2008). *Meri Awaaz Suno: Women, Vocality, and Nation in Hindi Cinema*. *Meridians*, 8(1), pp. 144–179.

¹⁸⁴ Chatterjee, P. (1986). *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, p. 34.

Lata and Asha were employed by leading music directors in the same movie to provide playback for heroines who exteriorized the contrasting *rasa-bhāvas*.¹⁸⁵

Following their father Dinanath Mangeshkar's untimely demise, Lata unwillingly entered the Marathi and then Hindi film industry to provide for her family as the sole bread earner at the time. While her initial training was under her father, she is known to have taken further *tālīm* (methodical training) from Aman Ali Khan of the *Bheṇḍī-Bazār gharānā* in erstwhile Bombay. Her strong grounding in Hindustani classical music and the long hours of *riyāz* (practice) that she engaged with led to an uncanny vocal precision.¹⁸⁶ She established a specific vocal style, which was widely acknowledged as an aesthetic marker of 'modern' Indian female identity.¹⁸⁷

Playback singer Mohammad Rafi's migration from Lahore to Bombay, is arguably one of the most important turning points as far as Bollywood music is concerned. Rafi has been credited along with another playback singer Manna Dey to have a *gāyakī* best suited for classical compositions. Although Rafi is acclaimed for his versatility owing to his rare ability to sing any genre of songs, it is his mastery over the Hindustani classical *gāyakī* that we are interested in here. His training under Bade Ghulam Ali and his brother Barkat Ali in the Paṭiālā *gharānā gāyakī* and the consequent application to film songs has been more prominent as compared to his *tālīm* under another Ustād Abdul Wahid Khan in the Kirānā *gharānā* style. With a natural vocal range spanning over three octaves backed with such solid training in the vocal *gharānedār* nuances, Rafi's voice was explored to its full potential by almost all music directors of his era. Although Rafi delivered a maximum number of songs for music director duo Lakshmikant-Pyarelal, it was mainly Naushad, amongst a few others, who consistently created *rāga* based numbers and challenged Rafi's vocal abilities.

A significant episode in the history of Hindi film song is Naushad's running away from his home in Lucknow and arriving in Bombay. He created some of the most memorable *rāga*-based film songs in Hindi cinema and can be credited with musical success of some of the top singers of

¹⁸⁵ Dawson, A. (2005). 'Bollywood Flashback:' Hindi Film Music and the Negotiation of Identity among British Asian Youths. pp. 161-176.

¹⁸⁶ Sundar, P. (2008). Meri Awaaz Suno: Women, Vocality, and Nation in Hindi Cinema. *Meridians*, 8/1, pp. 144-179.

¹⁸⁷ Srivastava, S. (2004). Voice, Gender and Space in Time of Five-Year Plans: The Idea of Lata Mangeshkar. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 39/20, pp. 2019-2028.

the industry. Naushad was also responsible for introducing contemporary Hindustani classical singers, including Bade Ghulam Ali, Dattatray Vishnu Paluskar and Ameer Khan, to the Hindi film industry for selected songs that required a level of mastery beyond the normal playback singing requirements.

While Naushad decided to move out of Lucknow to explore film-music making assignments in Bombay, there was another aspiring composer, Roshan, who made the journey to Lucknow. This decision was based on his desire to gain a firm grounding in Hindustani Classical music under the veteran *vāgyekār*-musicologist, SriKṛṣṇa Narayan Ratanjankar. This training under the *Āgrā gharānā* stalwart proved to be highly beneficial to Roshan's musical repertoire and also helped him evolve as a composer. He was able to learn rare *bandīśes* from his teacher which he cleverly crafted into mainstream cinema making them popular amongst the masses. Roshan's entry into Bollywood may be considered another milestone. His training in the nuances of selected *gharānās* of *khayāl* had a major influence on his film music composing style for several movies. It is also worth mentioning that Roshan had noted vocalist Dinkar Kaikini as his fellow colleague at Marris college, who may have well played some role in his learning and imbibing the qualities of mainly *Āgrā gharānā khayāl* style apart from other genres. In some instances, he used major *khayāl bandīśes* directly while at other times he used *rāgas* and *tālas* to create lilting melodies that could be hummed by common untrained music lovers.

The relationships that developed between Bollywood music directors and their contemporary practicing Hindustani classical instrumentalists and vocalists are also very significant here. This includes the relationships between sitār player Rais Khan and composer Madan Mohan, and the sitār player Halim Jaffer Khan and his relationships with Naushad, O P Nayyar, Madan Mohan, Vasant Desai etc. These collaborations were responsible not only for introducing the sitār as a major instrument in film songs and background scores, but also for exposing the masses to the art that was earlier only limited to royal patronages and music conferences.

The above-mentioned milestones are some of the most important ones to influence the development of Indian film music. The cultural heritage of classical music that each musician disseminated amongst their students and co-artists revolutionised and rejuvenated the

contemporary Hindi film music scene. On a more sweeping scale, the classical singers and instrumentalists from *mehfils* (soirees) moved into the gramophone era by recording their music, from where they got eventually absorbed into the film industry.

The entry of early Bengali music directors including Raichand Boral (commonly known as R.C.Boral), Timir Baran, Kamal Dasgupta and Pankaj Mullick into the film music world of pre-independent India in the 1930s and the 40s is a landmark in the history of Indian film music. Their contributions set the standards for a new generation of music directors of the post-independent era. Boral in particular is known to have experimented with music forms and orchestration with the help of state-of-the-art recording studios and equipment in Calcutta in the 1930s.¹⁸⁸ These Bengali musicians were highly influenced by Western music despite being firmly rooted in Bengali folk and Hindustani classical traditions. Their combined efforts led to the formation of the modern Hindi song genre which on several occasions included *rāga*-based melodies using Western orchestrations. They were however also connected with several contemporary Hindustani classical musicians.

Tablā artist and Hindustani music scholar Aneesh Pradhan provides crucial information which sheds light on the link between Indian cinema and the practitioners of Hindustani classical music at the turn of the last century.¹⁸⁹ Pradhan informs us that while the then-practicing Hindustani musicians were initially reluctant to record gramophone discs, they eventually took to the newly emerging Indian film industry. This they did as a means of sustenance mainly in the cities of Bombay and Calcutta, working as orchestra singers, singer-cum-actors, or film composers. This however cannot be claimed as true for all the big names in Hindustani classical music of that era. Some famed musicians like Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, Ameer Khan, D V Paluskar etc. agreed to lend their voices for very selected film scenes after considerable persuasion by some persistent music composers (mainly Naushad). They were very particular that their art should not be compromised in any way.¹⁹⁰ Sitārist Halim Jaffer Khan described how these musicians who had until then performed only live or sometimes recorded for gramophone discs, in the new setup were required to make music that was composed and

¹⁸⁸ Sen, B. (2008). The Sounds of Modernity: The Evolution of Bollywood Film Song. In S. Gopal & S. Moorti (Eds.), *Global Bollywood: Travels of Hindi Song and Dance* (NED-New edition, pp. 85–104). University of Minnesota Press.

¹⁸⁹ 'Classical music in Bollywood films' (Halim Jaffer Khan, Interview, December 2011)

¹⁹⁰ 'Classical music in Bollywood films' (Halim Jaffer Khan, Interview, December 2011)

arranged to suit the purposes of the film narrative.¹⁹¹ Khan was one of those musicians who went through this transition himself, while also parallelly maintaining a busy career as a solo instrumentalist. He often remarked on the challenge that this situation created for them, when they would have to compromise on the element of methodical elaboration of *svaras* that forms an integral part of Hindustani music. This lengthy part of a performance had to be obviously eliminated owing to the comparatively shorter durations of the songs. As a result of this, in a film situation, there would be only a few seconds, or at times minutes, available for the musician(s) to portray the mood of a particular *rāga*. Despite all such challenges, several vocalists and instrumentalists of the 20th century went on to implement their classical music expertise in Bollywood music either personally or through their disciples and even through the influence their music had on Bollywood playback singers.

¹⁹¹ 'Classical music in Bollywood films' (Halim Jaffer Khan, Interview, December 2011)

Chapter 2: *Rāga* and *Rasa*

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the following elements:

- What is meant by the term *rāga*
- What is the aesthetic and spiritual significance of *rāgas*
- How a *rāga* may be used to compose Bollywood songs of different moods, thus generating multiple *rasas*.

Following an exploration of the concept of *rāga*, this chapter looks in detail at how *rāga* Yaman is used to compose songs suited to varied situations in Hindi films. It examines in particular the phrases and nuances of Yaman most evident in the chosen songs to exemplify how the same *rāga* can create different melodic expressions leading to the manifestation of corresponding *rasas*. The chapter also presents a traditional *gat* composition by renowned sitār maestro Vilayat Khan to demonstrate the same idea but in a non-filmic context.

The *rāga* element caters to emotional needs of the listeners. It is through the modal form of the *rāga* that it is possible to evoke the patterns which represent the basic nature of melodic compositions. These can then be developed, scrutinized, understood in depth and aesthetically experienced. Without the backbone of the *rāga* and its appropriate treatment in the hands of seasoned composers and performers, the effects of the Bollywood songs would be nullified.

2.2 *Rāga*: An attempt at definition

The term *rāga* is a noun derived from the Sanskrit root *rañj* (to colour) especially ‘to colour red’, and hence ‘to delight’ and since red is traditionally seen as the colour of passion, *rāga* indicates the emotional character of a song, by which the listener is gratified. According to Mātaṅga’s 9th century A.D. treatise *Bṛhaddēśī*, that particularity of notes and melodic movement by which one is delighted, is *rāga*. Richard Widdess argues that musical treatises from Mātaṅga’s time onwards define *rāga* principally with respect to their tonal features including scale, melodic motifs etc. But around 1100 A.D., Nānyadeva observed that there

are far too many variants among *rāgas* that are too subtle and challenging to define just like the flavour of sugar or candies cannot be separately described but can only be experienced by the one who tastes it.¹⁹² Hence even in the view of experienced musicians and musicologists, which resonates with Widdess's views, the performances of those *gharānedār* musicians trained in the traditional *guru-śiṣya* paramparā, and the melodic compositions handed down in that tradition, are regarded as the true articulations or reflections of *rāga*.

W G Raffe calls *rāga* a key word of paramount importance within the Indian musical systems, because within its meaning and use one may consistently come across the pragmatic contact of music with both humans and nature.¹⁹³ Raffe argues that it cannot consist only of a chord, or a series of *svaras*; but manifests its complete individual character from its melodic progress and subtle tempo in the hands of experienced and talented musicians. His views resonate with those of perhaps all Hindustani classical musicians who see the concept of *rāga* from a similar perspective. Wade describes *Rāgas* as 'distinctive melodic shapes entailing a selection of ascending and descending pitches.'¹⁹⁴ He argues that during a performance, they are typically introduced in a slow extemporary manner in order to explore the possibilities of *svara* combinations within the given set of constraints including grammar, emotional appropriateness etc.

Wim van der Meer comments that technically a *rāga* is a musical entity in which the intonation of *svaras*, as well as their relative duration and order, is well defined.¹⁹⁵ However, the *svaras* have different importances in a tonal hierarchy, and play different roles in the melodic elaboration via their durations and frequencies of occurrence. Adrian McNeil argues that within the Hindustani classical music domain, *rāga* is a complex phenomenon as it brings together multiple elements which include melodic, performative, and aesthetic. These collective features of a *rāga* make its definition extremely challenging since different dimensions to it confront schematised or ordered methods of accounting for how it works in

¹⁹² Widdess, R. (1995). The ragas of early Indian music, Oxford: Clarendon, pp. 40–42.

¹⁹³ Raffé, W. G. (1952). Rāgas and Rāginīs: A Key to Hindu Aesthetics. The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 11(2), pp. 105–117.

¹⁹⁴ Wade, B. C. (1979). Music in India: The classical traditions. Prentice-Hall Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

¹⁹⁵ van der Meer, W. (1980). Hindustani music in the 20th century. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.

a concert setting.¹⁹⁶ In a simple manner, it may be explained as a collection of melodic gestures and a technique for developing these gestures, which are sequences of *svaras* that are often modulated with various micro-pitch alterations.¹⁹⁷ These are then articulated with an expressive sense of timing. Longer phrases are built by joining these melodic atoms together. Hindustani classical music incorporates a plethora of impetuses, educing a wide range of emotions in listeners.¹⁹⁸ *Rāgas* constitute specific sequences of tonic intervals potentially capable of generating noticeable emotions in the performers and listeners alike.¹⁹⁹ In a classical concert, a *rāga* is typically presented via two mechanisms, namely, *alāp* (a free-flowing, slowly progressing *svara* by *svara* delineation of a *rāga* bound by a slow tempo without any rhythm) and *gat* (a composition rendered at a faster pace on the basis of a rhythmic cycle). The emotional responses during both these presentation mechanisms are different and hence along with other elements inherent to a *rāga*'s nature, they are responsible for the manifestation of various *rasas*.

Therefore, in an attempt to portray the contour or configuration of the concept of *rāga*, Hindustani musicians have tried to simplify the process by making analogies to flavours or *rasa* derived from tasty food. In an encounter with late sitārist Vilayat Khan in Mumbai in 1997, he explained to me that the development of a *rāga* may be compared to the gradual production of a culinary dish from scratch with respect to manifestation of *rasas* while making it and while relishing its taste. Khan further explained that this simple, yet effective correlation arguably administers an alternate mode of pedagogical knowledge and artistic responsiveness for engaging with as mosaic-like a notion as *rāga*. Richard Widdess argues that this is a concept of melodic organization in Indian classical music functioning between the stages of what western music comprehends as scale and melody.²⁰⁰ It is indeed an organised melodic framework of a selected set of musical notes, being neither a melody nor a scale. This is because several tunes can be composed in one particular *rāga*. Also, one scale can have multiple *rāgas* associated with it. Widdess also observes quite aptly that there is no exact

¹⁹⁶ McNeil, A. (2017). Seed ideas and creativity in Hindustani raga music: beyond the composition–improvisation dialectic, *Ethnomusicology Forum*.

¹⁹⁷ Chordia, P et al. (2007). Understanding Emotion in Raag: An Empirical Study of Listener Responses. Georgia Institute of Technology, Department of Music.

¹⁹⁸ Valla, J. M., Alappatt, J. A., Mathur, A., & Singh, N. C. (2017). Music and emotion—a case for north Indian classical music. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8, p. 2115.

¹⁹⁹ Mathur, A. et al. (2015). Emotional Responses to Hindustani Rāga Music: The Role of Musical Structure. *Frontiers in psychology*, 6.

²⁰⁰ Widdess, R. (1993). The Geography of Rāga in Ancient India. *The World of Music*, 35/3, pp. 35–50.

equivalent of a *rāga* in Western music owing to it being an individual entity somewhere between scale and tune. Before going into an examination of Yaman, it will be appropriate to touch on the spiritual and aesthetic significance of the *rāga* concept.

2.3 Spiritual and aesthetic significance of *rāga*

The spiritual and aesthetic significance of *rāga* is crucial from *rasa* point of view. Each *rāga* is known to have a unique character and personality of its own. In Hindustani music, *rāgas* are classified on the basis of their moods, times, *ṭhāṭs*, and even natural seasons of the year. According to Sir Monier Monnier-Williams, the term *rāga* in Sanskrit refers to the act of colouring or dyeing. This matches with the classic Sanskrit definition *rañjayati iti rāgaḥ* (that which entertains, or colours is *rāga*). A majority of the musicians argue that the entertainment or colouring referred in the term *rañjayati* is for the self, the effect of which also remains in the mind and consequently shows via expressions through the medium of the physical body (such as eyes shutting down, head swaying etc.).

Musicologist Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande defined *rāga* in his Sanskrit *śloka* as follows²⁰¹:

योऽयंध्वनि-विशेषस्तुस्वर-वर्ण-विभूषितः
रंजको जनचित्तानां सः रागः कथितो बुधैः

Yoyāndhvani-viśeṣastu svara varṇa vibhūṣitaḥ
Rañjako jana cittānāṃ, saḥ rāgaḥ kathito budhaiḥ

In this case, *svaras* refer to melodic notes. and *varṇas* refer to *svara*-pattern-movements of one of the following types:

- *Sthāyī varṇa* – A *svara* is repeated or an artist keeps coming back to a *svara* after moving to any adjacent or nearby *svaras*
- *Ārohī varṇa* - ascending movement of *svaras*
- *Avarohī varṇa* - descending movement of *svaras*
- *Sancārī varṇa* - *Ārohī* + *Avarohī*

²⁰¹ Bhatkhande, V N. (1921). Abhinav Raga Manjari – A treatise on the Ragas of Hindustani music. p. 31.

However, although the term *jana cittānām* has been translated as ‘peoples’ minds,’ the word *citta* implies something more than simply the mind. According to the ancient *yoga-sūtras*, *citta* is the term used for the totality of mental functions. It is derived from the root *cit* (which means to perceive, to know, to be conscious of, and to be aware). This *citta* as a whole is known to be the seat of feeling, thinking and will power. The *citta* (mind-stuff) is made up of *manas* (mind), *buddhi* (intellect), *citta* (memory) and *ahaṁkāra* (ego). *Manas* is the recording faculty which receives external impressions gathered by the senses from the outside world. *Buddhi* is the discriminative faculty which classifies these impressions and reacts to them. *Citta* recalls past similar impressions and *ahaṁkāra* is the ego-sense which claims these impressions for its own. Hence Mātaṅga is referring to a *rāga* affecting this collective element known as *citta*.

Bhatkhande has not only written about the spiritual significance of Hindustani classical music but also striven to popularize it amongst the Indian masses by reclaiming the identity of the music as coming from the soil as it were. This also echoed with the struggle for Indian independence. He authored and published a four-volume encyclopaedia on North Indian classical music by the name of Hindustani *Rāga Paddhati*. Bhatkhande and Vishnu Digambar Paluskar made constant efforts to get back the control of *rāga* traditions from courtesans and musicians belonging to the Muslim hereditary. Both of them aimed to establish a Hindu, middle-class concert culture, increase the prestige of ‘Indian music’ and develop music as a symbol of Indian cultural nationalism. Particularly Bhatkhande’s effort to popularise music amongst the masses coincided with the goals of Indian nationalism as it developed in the early decades of the 20th century, with independence from British rule as its goal.²⁰²

However, Bhatkhande was educated in English apart from Sanskrit, Hindi, and Marathi. Hence, the influence of contemporary thinking in England, including its nationalism, evolutionism, and orientalism is evident from Bhatkhande’s methods of working for the cause of codifying and spreading Hindustani Classical music. He used Western methods of field work, data collection and musical notation with an Indian emphasis, thus expanding the spread of musical theory in India. At the beginning of the twentieth century, disgruntled with

²⁰² Moro, P. (2004). Constructions of Nation, and the Classicisation of Music: Comparative Perspectives from Southeast and South Asia. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 35/2, pp. 187–211.

the absurdity and paradoxes in the then existing *rāga-rāginī* system, Bhatkhande codified an altogether novel system based on earlier classical Sanskrit theoretical models related to the Carnatic classical *mela* notion of ten basic *ṭhāṭs* (scales) by which all North Indian *rāgas* could be organised.²⁰³ These *ṭhāṭs* are Asāvarī, Bhairav, Bhairavī, Bilāwal, Kāfī, Kalyāṇ, Mārṅwā, Pūrvī and Toḍī.

2.4 Range of *Rasas* in *Rāga* Music: A Limitation

The appropriateness of *rasa* theory to non-poetic and non-representational forms of art like music has been widely discussed in the context of Indian aesthetics.²⁰⁴ While generally, Indian classical music is thought to be deeply connected to emotions, there are some scholars who have pointed out limitations of the notion of *rasas* in *rāgas*. One such scholar was the late musicologist Prem Lata Sharma, a disciple of Hindustani classical vocalist Paṇḍit Omkarnath Thakur. She was of the view that since there is no declared situation of life in the background of music, *rāga* music is totally independent of drama. While this may be true for an independently performed piece of classical music, it may not be so for *rāga* music used in Indian film music. In this case, *rāga* music intertwines with drama and attempts to create meaningful melodies to suit various film situations. Sharma's reasoning is that since the verbal element in music is brief and unrelated to the aesthetic potential of a *rāga*, or is completely absent from instrumental music, the applicability of the *rasa*-theory to modern *rāga* music is problematic.²⁰⁵ She mentions that the four traditional *rasas* including *hāsya*, *raudra*, *bhayānaka* and *bibhatsa* must be excluded from the scope of musical representation since it is not practicable to sustain them in drama-less music and that they simply appear as transitory phases. Hence, she feels that although *rasa* in its essential form of aesthetic enjoyment is certainly present in music, its direct analysis in terms of traditional elucidation is neither possible nor required. She argues that 'the emotionally satisfying value of music should not be lost sight of in an attempt to glorify it with the crown of *rasa*.' This stance may be questionable since Sharma does not give importance to the inherent core nature of a *rāga* itself, which many times does not need to depend on words or drama for it to be associated

²⁰³ Katherine Butler Brown. (2003). The Ṭhāṭ System of Seventeenth-Century North Indian Rāgas: A Preliminary Report on the Treatises of Kāmīkhānī. *Asian Music*, 35(1), pp. 1–13.

²⁰⁴ Katz, J. (1996). Music and Aesthetics: An Early Indian Perspective. *Early Music*, Vol. 24, No. 3, Early Music from Around the World, pp. 407- 412 and pp. 415-420.

²⁰⁵ Sharma, P.L. (1970), *Rasa theory and Indian music*. Sangeet Natak, pp. 57–64.

with emotions. Perhaps, Sharma is not convinced of the *rasas* thought to be present in the melodic structures of *rāgas* and experience of the *navarasas* that the *svara*-patterns may offer. Also, each of the individual seven *svaras* themselves have been assigned to each of the *rasas* eight *rasas* by Bharata in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* as reported by Guy Beck.²⁰⁶ The *Nāṭyaśāstra* chapter 19, *ślokas* 38-40 associate the eight *rasas* with the seven individual *svaras* of the *saptak* (musical scaled comprising seven notes) known for the first time as Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni (cf. do re mi fa so la ti): erotic—Pa (fifth), comic—Ma (fourth), compassion—Ga (third) and Ni (seventh), disgust and fear—Dha (sixth), heroic, terror, and wonder—Sa (tonic) and Re (second).²⁰⁷ So if the *svaras* themselves have been considered *rasa*-personified, then the *rāgas* which are comprised of a combination of *svaras* cannot be considered deprived of *rasa*.

Wim van der Meer introduces a different perspective by shedding light on the problem of *rasa* with respect to the essence of *rāga*. He argues that that neither *rāga* nor the methods of presenting it represent 'static and well-defined phenomena, but on the contrary are dynamic and often without clear boundaries.'²⁰⁸ He further argues that since the *rasa* theory is complex and ramified, musicians generally tend to only have an elementary understanding of it. Not every musician or *rasika* realizes that *rasa* as argued by van der Meer has three primary components:

- A generalized aesthetic experience of the audience relating to the philosophical aspect of *rasa*
- One of eight or nine mental states relating to the psychological aspect of *rasa*
- An artistic process by which both the above points are affected

Based on van der Meer's arguments, *rasa-rāga* correlation becomes a highly complicated notion to comprehend without taking into account and having a deep understanding of several factors including the *rāga*, the artist's presentation style and the audience's mental states.

²⁰⁶ Beck, G. (2019). Sacred Music and Hindu Religious Experience: From Ancient Roots to the Modern Classical Tradition. Asian Studies and Philosophy, Tulane University, New Orleans.

²⁰⁷ Rangacharya, A. (2003). trans. *Nāṭyaśāstra: English Translation with Critical Notes*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, pp. 142-143.

²⁰⁸ van der Meer, W. (1980). The Essence of Rāga and the Problem of Rasa. In: *Hindustani Music in the 20th Century*. Springer, Dordrecht, pp. 99-100.

Dr Ajanta Jana's views resonate with Wim van der Meer's above-mentioned arguments. He argues that the *rāga-rasa* framework acknowledges *rāga*-music's potential in shaping and transforming emotions by influencing the listener's emotional landscape.²⁰⁹ However, Jana emphasizes that a sophisticated understanding of emotional nuances of music, cultural context, emotional intentionality and also the performers mental state is necessary to gain insight into the fundamental mechanisms by which *rāga* influences emotions. These factors are also required to comprehend the ways in which this ancient tradition can inform contemporary understandings of music's emotional significance.

Based on musicologist Mukund Lath's thoughts on music, David Shulman points out that Hindustani *rāga* in performance 'will always generate a miraculous coincidence of surface and depth'.²¹⁰ This phenomenon may be one of the important factors in *rasa* generation, when listeners are able to simultaneously relate to the dramatic presentations of artists and the subtle sounds of *alaṅkārs* embedded in *śrutis* as the raw resonance of the *śrutis* are transformed (*pariṇāma*) into *svaras*, just as milk becomes curd. Robrinda Lal Roy defines *rāga* as an aesthetic configuration which is a blend of incessant transitions and musical curves abiding by certain rules in the use of the tones constituting these transitions and curves, and has no relation to either *tāla* or *śabda*.²¹¹ Whether it has no relation to *tāla* or *śabda* overall is highly debatable, but *rāga*'s aesthetic configuration is certainly owing to *śrutis* that are transformed into melodic notes and becoming one of the factors responsible for *rasa* manifestation.

Mukund Lath's discussion of the relation between *rāga* (roughly, scales) and *alāp* (roughly, the impromptu process in an actual performance that in effect, develops the *rāga*) leads him to make the inference that we must consider music as thinking and vice-versa and that in this experience of nonduality, *rasa-bhāva* is manifested and experienced.²¹² Lath sheds light on

²⁰⁹ Jana, A. (2025). The Raga-Rasa Connection: Exploring the Intersection of Emotions, Indian Classical Music, and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (ijtsrd), Volume-9 | Issue-1, pp. 494-50.

²¹⁰ Shulman, D. (2018). Introductory Remarks to Mukund Lath, "Identity Through Necessary Change: Thinking about 'Rāga-Bhāva,' Concepts and Characters." Journal of World Philosophies 4, pp. 1-5.

²¹¹ Roy, R. L. (1934). Hindustani Ragas. *The Musical Quarterly*, 20(3), pp. 320-333.

²¹² Bhushan, N. (2017). [Review of The Bloomsbury Research Handbook of Indian Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art, by A. Chakrabarti]. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 75(2), pp. 201-205.

the apparent distinction between thinking and music as occupying two distinctive domains- 'the discursive and the nondiscursive- cannot upon reflection be sustained'.²¹³

W G Raffe's views also do not resonate with Sharma's arguments. He suggests that in Indian classical music (which he terms 'Hindu' music), *rāga*, which is as much instinct as conscious emotion, is constantly in a balanced state with *rasa* such that the melodic form itself implies feeling or emotion.²¹⁴ Raffe further argues that *rāga* is not an exclusive cluster of ordered musical notes, like European theme, derived directly from the instrument, 'nor is it simply a copy of the Greek modal form, related to a meter whose other half was spoken poetry or dancing feet'. It instead rivets upon a balance of *rasa* combined with natural mood or *bhāva*.

2.5 The basic twelve-*svara* system and melodic construction

The *svara* concept is found in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* chapter 28, verse number 21:

तत्र-स्वराः-

षड्जश्चक्रृषभश्चैवगान्धारोमध्यमस्तथा

पञ्चमो धैवतश्चैव सप्तमोऽथ निषादवान् ॥

Tatra svarāḥ :-

ṣaḍajasaḥṣabhaścaivagāndhāromadhyamastathā

pañcamo dhaivataścaiva saptamoḥa niṣādavān

This *śloka* mentions the seven *svaras*:

ṣaḍaja, ṛṣbha, gāndhāra, madhyama,

pañcama, dhaivata and niṣāda.

Further, I present the twelve-*svara* system and melodic construction in a tabular form for a better understanding of this system.

²¹³ Chakraborty, A. (2016). The Bloomsbury Research Handbook of Indian Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art. Bloomsbury Publishing, chapter 4.

²¹⁴ Raffé, W. G. (1952). Rāgas and Rāginīs: A Key to Hindu Aesthetics. The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 11(2), pp. 105–117.

<i>Svara</i> (Long)	<i>ṣāḍaja</i> षड्ज	<i>ṛṣbha</i> ऋषभ	<i>gāndhāra</i> गान्धार	<i>madhyama</i> मध्यम	<i>pañcama</i> पञ्चम	<i>dhaivata</i> धैवत	<i>niṣāda</i> निषाद
<i>Svara</i> (Short)	Sa सा	Re रे	Ga ग	Ma म	Pa प	Dha ध	Ni नि
Twelve Varieties or names	C (<i>ṣāḍaja</i>)	D _b (<i>komal re</i>), D (<i>śuddha re</i>)	E _b (<i>komal ga</i>), E (<i>śuddha ga</i>)	F (<i>śuddha ma</i>), F# (<i>tīvra ma</i>)	G (<i>pañcama</i>)	A _b (<i>komal dha</i>), A (<i>śuddha dha</i>)	B _b (<i>komal ni</i>), B (<i>śuddha ni</i>)

Table 1: *Svara* in Hindustani classical system of *Rāga* (Based on 'C' as the 'tonic Sa') ^{215, 216, 217}

These seven basic *svaras* are known to have their origins in nature. According to the *Nāradiya Śikṣā*: ²¹⁸

षड्जं वदति मयूरो गावो रभन्ति च ऋषभं ।
अजाविकेतु गान्धारं क्रौन्चो वदति मध्यमं ॥
पुष्प साधारणे काले कोकिला वक्ति पञ्चमं ।
अश्वस्तु धैवतं वक्ति निषादं वक्ति कुञ्जरः ॥

*ṣāḍajam vadati mayūro gāvo rabhanti ca ṛṣbham
ajaviketu gāndhāram krauñco vadati madhyamam
pushpa sādharmaṇe kale kokilā vakti pañchamam
ashvastu dhavataṁ vakti niṣādam vakti kuñjarah*

The above *ślokas* mean:

The *ṣāḍaja svara* originated from a peacocks crowing/wailing, the *ṛṣbha svara* originated from a bull's bellowing, the *gāndhāra svara* originated from a goat's bleating, the *madhyama svara* originated from a heron's cry, the *pañcama svara* originated from a cuckoo's call, the *dhaivata svara* originated from a horse's neighing and the *niṣāda svara* originated from an elephant's trumpeting.

²¹⁵ According to the *Nārada Purāna* (chapter 50 verses 47-48), The *ṣāḍja svara* has the lustre of the petals of the lotus; the *Ṛṣabha* note, the reddish yellow colour like that of the parrot; *Gāndhāra* note is gold-coloured; the *Madhyama* note is white like the Kunda flower, the *Pañcama* note is of black colour; *Dhaivata* is yellow in colour; and the *Niṣāda* has all the colours (Tagare, G.V. (1950). *Narada Purana* (English Translation - *The arrangement of Notes (Svaras) and Syllables (Varnas)* [Chapter 50])

²¹⁶ Randel, D. M. (2003). *The Harvard Dictionary of Music* (fourth ed.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, p. 815.

²¹⁷ Te Nijenhuis, E. (1974). *Indian Music: History and Structure*. BRILL Academic, pp 13-14, pp. 21-25.

²¹⁸ Bhattshobhakara. (1964). *Nāradiya Śikṣā* (Attributed to *Nārada Muni*), Shri Pitambar Peeth Sanskrit Parishad, 1st Edn, p. 28.

It is common knowledge amongst musicians that ‘Sā’ is the base or tonic note, and its absolute pitch is fixed according to the choice and melodic range of the instrumentalist or singer. This depends on whether they chose to play or sing from the western C, C sharp, D etc. as ‘Sa.’ Anna Morcom suggests that where absolute pitch is not relevant at times, Sa is conveniently represented as C, because the *śuddha*, *komal* and *tīvra svaras* translate into natural, flat and sharp notes.²¹⁹ Although a *rāga* mostly uses a set of five or more *svaras* from the fixed scale of seven to form a melody, it is not adequate to define it in terms of mode or scale alone, as several *rāgas*, despite having the same notes, maintain their respective individual musical characteristics.²²⁰ *Miyā-Malhār* and *Bahār* are classic examples as they consist of the same notes which include both the *niṣādas*, *komal gāndhār*, and the rest all *śuddha svaras*. Despite this both these *rāgas* sound and feel considerably dissimilar owing to their individual *pakaḍ*s or how the notes are approached and combined during execution. The *pakaḍ*s or characteristic phrases of a *rāga* are traditionally referred to in terms of *prastāra* or notation (in terms of *svara*-sequence) but can be realised/described only through practical acoustic actualization.²²¹ The performer solely depends on his knowledge of the *vyākaraṇa* (grammar) to interpret the *prastāra* when it appears in a written *bandiś* set to a specific *rāga*. However, musicians are of the generic understanding that the technical boundary of a *rāga* in performance is not explicitly specified by the grammar. It is instead implied by the notion that a performer can freely explore the tonal and melodic space as long as they are mindful of not trespassing into the territory of another closely related *rāga*.²²² For example, *rāgas* *Des* and *Tilak Kāmod* have very similar *svaras* and it is easy for a musician to mix both of them up during performance. However, it is the *pakaḍ* and *svara lagān* that sets them apart from each other. Other classic examples include the set of *rāgas* *Mārwā-Pūriyā-Sohinī* and *Bhūp-Deśkār*.

In theory, there is more focus on two notes as compared to the remaining ones in any *rāga*; and in practice, performers usually pause on these notes and display them prominently. These are known as the *vādi* (the most crucial note of the *pakaḍ*) and the *samavādi* (the note that

²¹⁹ Morcom, A. (2001). An Understanding between Bollywood and Hollywood? The Meaning of Hollywood-Style Music in Hindi Films. *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, 10/1, pp. 63–84.

²²⁰ Mathur, A. et al. (2015). Emotional Responses to Hindustani Raga Music: The Role of Musical Structure. *Frontiers in psychology*, 6, p. 513.

²²¹ Ganguli, Kaustuv & Rao, Preeti. (2021). A study of variability in raga motifs in performance contexts. *Journal of New Music Research*. 50, pp. 1-15.

²²² Vidwans, A., Ganguli, K. K., & Rao, P. (2012, July). Classification of Indian classical vocal styles from melodic contours. In Proc. of the 2nd compmusic workshop

is less frequently emphasised upon than the *vādi* but more than the other notes in the *rāga*). The *vādi* and *samavādi* could naturally fluctuate, depending on the *āroha* and *avaroha* of a *rāga*, as is the case with Yaman in which G and N are the *vādi* and *samavādi svaras* in the *āroha* (ascending) but P and R do the same duties in its *avaroha* (descending).

For my analysis, I have chosen *rāga* Yaman. This is because, Yaman is generally easy to learn, relatively uncomplicated to explain, practiced by experts, has a great depth, and is used extensively by Hindi film music composers. The motive in this case is not to analyse complete songs in detail but only those parts of them relevant to my arguments.

2.6 Yaman

Yaman has two types of *Jātis*: 1) *śāḍava saṃpūrṇa* and 2) *saṃpūrṇa saṃpūrṇa*. The *āroha* sequence of notes can be presented in the following three possible ways in Yaman: 1) S R G m D N S (m is *tivra madhyam*) 2) Ṇ R G m D N S 3) S R G m P D N S. The *avaroha* note sequence can be presented as: 1) S N D P m G M G R S 2) S N D P m G R S. According to most classical musicians when both the *madhyams* (M and m) are used and other rules of Yaman remain the same, the *rāga* becomes Yaman Kalyāṇ.

Yaman is mainly used to portray the *śānta rasa* especially when presented in the lower and middle octaves. It is widely accepted that *śuddha svaras* particularly sung in the higher octave make a *rāga cancal* in *prakṛiti* and the use of the *komal svaras* in the lower octave provides a *gambhīr* and *sānta prakṛiti* to it.²²³ According to this argument, Yaman can offer both of the suggested moods depending on the manner of its presentation even though it does not make use of any *komal svara*. Yaman however may be argued to manifest a different flavour of the peaceful mood in the right conditions. The reason for this is that compared to other *rāgas* which also portray the same *rasa*, such as Mālkauns and Mārṇwā, *rāga* Yaman's offering of peace may also have the elements of the *śṛṅgāra rasa*, and a sense of happiness one feels when sharing space with a beloved or even in solitude. Referring to *rāgas* Gurjarī Toḍī and Yaman, Arun Apte suggests that while the former has a capacity to cool down the liver, the

²²³ Mishra, Y. & Sharma, A.K. (2020). Effects of Music on Mental Health and Longevity. World Journal of Pharmaceutical Research, Volume 9, Issue 4, pp. 305-312.

latter boasts of *dhāraṇā śakti* (power of sustenance).²²⁴ Apte further argues that both *rāga* help to activate the *Svādhiṣṭhāna cakra*, one of the energy centres in the human body known to govern attention, aiding in stabilizing the wandering attention, which is crucial for *dhyāna*. Without the manifestation of the *sānta rasa*, calmness leading to *dhyāna* is almost impossible. Also, In a conversation with writer R Mehrotra, Paṇḍit Ravi Shankar suggests that *śṛṅgāra rasa* is also known as the *ādi* or the original *rasa*, since it has all the moods combined within its framework.²²⁵ Raviji's argument with respect to the universality and versatility of the *śṛṅgāra rasa* may also apply to some *rāgas* including Yaman, owing to the sheer emotional variety that it offers in song creations.

According to Hindustani classical vocalist, late Kishori Amonkar, 'Basically, note is a medium for the expression of *bhāva* and the concept of *rāga* has come in the need of creativity of *bhāva*.'²²⁶ This medium is not as simple as singing a musical note straightforwardly. The process of *śruti-yukta svara lagāva* or initiating and placing a note with minute subordinate notes (*śrutis*) makes the medium for the expression of *bhāva* an effective one and good enough for shades of different *rasas* to be manifested. Also, Paṇḍit Omkarnath Thakur researched the phenomenon known as *kāku-bheda* and applied it to *rāga* music. The *alāpa* usually begins with a sober movement of *svaras* gradually revealing the *rūpa* (elemental form) and establishing the *rasa* of a *rāga*.²²⁷ Though a single note is rendered repeatedly, an artist makes subtle micro-modifications in the production of notes according to their internal emotional states at the time of performance which is known as *Kāku-bheda* in musical terms. This is also one of the reasons that one *rāga* may have shades or tinges of multiple *rasas*. However, with respect to Hindi film music, I have recorded opinions of musicians like Halim Jaffer Khan, Tushar Bhatia etc. that indicate a problem with the exact specific reason of experiencing different *rasas* from the same song based on one *rāga*. There can be multiple reasons described above depending on the singer, the scene, the musicians, the actors and the perceptions as well as the emotional states of the audiences.

²²⁴ Apte, A. (1995). Music and Sahaj Yoga, p. 189.

²²⁵ Mehrotra, R. (2011). The Spirit of the Muse: Conversations on the Journeys of Artists. 1st ed. Haryana: Hay House India.

²²⁶ Marulkar, D. 2003. "Ganasaraswatee", Shripad Prakashan

²²⁷ Datta, V., & Lath, M. (1967). Improvisation in Indian Music / L'improvisation dans la musique / indienne Improvisation in indischer Musik. The World of Music, 9(1), pp. 27–34.

Experience of contemplative, meditative and peaceful emotions along with poetic-quixotic if not erotic sentiments have been reported commonly by listeners and performers of this *rāga*. In experimental studies focussing on music, the *śānta rasa* (calmness) is observed to be inversely proportional to the erotic feeling.²²⁸ However, the intrinsic nature of Yaman offers a blend of emotions that oppose this observation. Not only does the *śānta rasa* of Yaman blend with the romantic flavour but it also gives a different dimension to feelings of devotion. There is considerable evidence to justify the above statements in the compositions of some music directors of Hindi cinema, who explored this versatile *rāga* in film situations. A *rāga* is not defined or recognised by its *svaras* but by its *calan* and *pakaḍ* or the stylistic pattern consisting of an arrangement of notes exposing its characteristic-innate nature. The most important *pakaḍ* of Yaman is the phrase N-R-G. Also, P to R has a typical *mīṇḍ* or glide which is a special feature of Yaman.

Bearing these grammatical and aesthetic aspects of Yaman in mind, consider the following three Bollywood songs and their respective melodic notations.

1) *Jab dīp jale ānā*

The song is taken from the film *Chitchor* (1976) directed by Basu Chatterjee with Ravindra Jain as music composer. It is a simple love story between Geeta, a girl from a village (played by Zarina Wahab) and Vinod, a city lad (played by Amol Palekar) who comes to work in her village. The song is focused on this young couple (figure 2.1) in a twilight setting, which is also ideal for listening to *rāga* Yaman.

²²⁸ Labbé, C., Trost, W., & Grandjean, D. (2021). Affective experiences to chords are modulated by mode, meter, tempo, and subjective entrainment. *Psychology of Music*, 49/4, pp. 915–930.

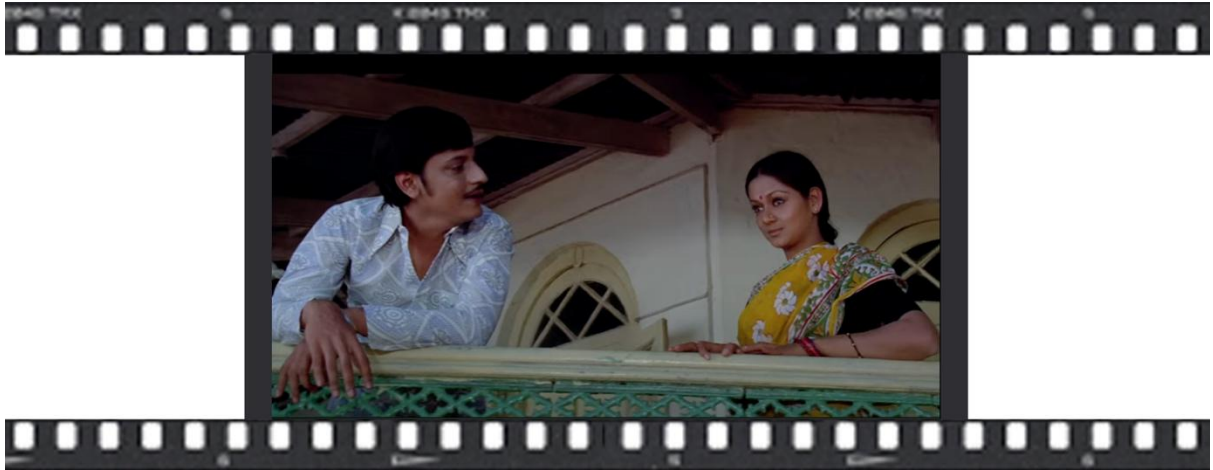


Figure 2.1: Amol Palekar singing to Zareena Wahab

Video Link to the song: [Jab dīp jale ānā, Chitchor, 1976](#)

Jab dīp jale ānā is a romantic melody conveying the *śṛṅgāra rasa* with shades of the *śānta rasa*, owing to three main factors. Firstly, music composer Ravindra Jain employs *rāga* Yaman (known to manifest multiple moods including that of romance, solitude and tranquillity) to suit a scene set in a peaceful rural backdrop. Secondly, playback singer Yesudas' smooth vocal timbre and *gāyakī* produce a calming effect on listeners' minds. Finally, although the central theme of the lyrics is romantic, it has elements of solitude and peace in them.

Vinod is transferred on a civil project to a village and is put up in a house by an acquaintance Pitamber Chaudhri (played by actor Avtar Kṛṣṇa Hangal). His daughter Geeta and Vinod meet and fall in love. It is at this point that this song is picturised on Vinod. Phrases such as '*saṅket milan kā bhūl nā jānā*' (do not forget the signs of union) and '*mañ palakana ḍagar buhārūṅgā*' (I will sweep the path with my eyelids), '*terī rāh nihārūṅgā*' (I will watch the path and wait for you) suggest that he is alone and eager to meet Geeta. However, there seems to be a certain restfulness in his yearning for her which he expresses through the song. Yaman's interplay of *svaras* involving accentuations of *niṣāda*, *gāndhār* and *tīvra madhyam* during ascent and phrases as shown in (figure 2.2) effectively embellish the lyrics.

Keherva tāl

^x	1	2	3	4		^o	5	6	7	8
									N ja	R ba
G	m	P	P			^G _R	-	S	N	
di	-	p	ja			le	-	ā	-	
R	-	-	-			-	-	N	R	
nā	-	-	-			-	-	ja	ba	
G	m	P	P			^G _R	-	S	N	
śa	-	ma	dha			le	-	ā	-	
S	-	-	-			-	-	P	m	
nā	-	-	-			-	-	san	-	
m	m	D	Ś			N		P-	PP	m
ke	-	ta	mi			la		na	ka	-
m	D	<u>NR</u>	<u>SN</u>			D	<u>DP</u>	<u>PPP</u>	<u>PP</u>	
bhu	-	la	na			ja	na	me	ra	
m	-	<u>GR</u>	N			N	R	G	<u>PPPP</u>	
pya	a	ra	na			bi	sa	ra	-	
<u>mm</u>	<u>RR</u>	S	N							
na	-	-	-			-	-			

Figure 2.2: *Jab dīp jale ānā*, svara notation

Bharata illustrated the relationship between performers and audience through *rasa-bhāva anubhāva* as established in the earlier sections of my thesis. This relationship comes alive through the use of Yaman in the case of *Jab dīp jale*. The *rāga* caters to both the romantic element and the relaxed atmosphere of the village which manifests the *śānta rasa*. The *gāyakī* of singer Yesudas creates both these *rasas* through the treatment given to the *svaras* Ṇ-R-G-m-P-R in the very first line of the song. Note the typical *svara saṅgatīs* of the *rāga* employed by music director Ravindra Jain, viz. Ṇ-R-G, typical of Yaman, and P-R, which is typical of all Kalyāṇ *ṭhāt rāgas*. The *rasa-bhāva* experience is initially transformed from Yesudas's *gāyakī* based on Jain's composition to the actors enacting the song. They then transform this experience to the audiences who are looking at the whole package on the screen.

2) *Nigāhē milāne ko jī cāhatā haī*

This song is taken from the film *Dil Hi To Hai* (1963) directed by C.L. Rawal and P.L. Santoshi with Roshan as music composer. It is a film about star-crossed lovers who get to be with each

other in the end. *Nigāhē milāne ko jī cāhatā haī* is picturised on actress Nutan who sings for her lover played by Raj Kapoor, who goes to meet her in the disguise of an old man during a function at Nutan’s bungalow.



Figure 2.3: Actress Nutan enacting the words *Nigāhēn milāne ko*

Video link to the song: [*Nigāhē milāne ko jī cāhatā haī, Dil Hi To Hai, 1963*](#)

The song mainly manifests the *śṛṅgāra rasa*. However, it is not the use of Yaman alone that achieves this. Through her *abhinaya*, Nutan (figure 2.3), attempts to draw her lover’s attention by singing *Nigāhē milāne ko jī cāhatā* – ‘My heart desires to connect my gaze (with yours).’ The song’s *rasa* is further deepened by the play that is going on between the two lovers, where one is pretending to be an old man in disguise. Thus, the *abhinaya* and lyrics accentuate the romanticism of the *rāga*. While subtle emphasis on the notes Ṇ Ṇ R R G by singer Asha Bhosale explores the erotic side of Yaman, the *ṭhumrī-aṅg gāyakī* treats the first two words such that the listener immediately anticipates an erotically charged scene. Bhosale’s *gāyakī* is in stark contrast to Yesudas’ *gāyakī* in the previous song, which makes the same notes of the same *rāga* sound very different: on the one hand, romantic with a tinge of the erotic playfulness; on the other, romantic with a tinge of tranquillity.

Keherva tāl

x				0			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Ṇ Nī	Ṇ gāhē	RR mi	G lā	- -	G ne	RG ko
R Ji	Ṇ -	R cā	R ha	GR tā	- -	S haĩ	S -

Figure 2.4: Svara notation for *Nigāhēn milāne ko*

3) *Zarā sī āhaṭ hotī haĩ*

This song is taken from the film *Haqeeqat* (1964) directed by Chetan Anand, with music by Madan Mohan. This film is shot in the backdrop of the 1963 Sino-Indian war. It is about a Ladhaki girl, Angmo, played by actress Priya Rajvansh, who is in love with a soldier, Captain Bahadur Singh, played by actor Dharmendra. A hopeful song, *Zarā sī āhaṭ hotī haĩ* presents Angmo anticipating the arrival of her lover (figure 2.5).



Figure 2.5: Actress Priya Rajvansh

Video link to the song: [Zarā sī āhaṭ, Haqeeqat, 1964](#)

The song is focussed on the *karuṇa rasa* with shades of *śṛṅgāra*. Although there is an element of tranquillity, the focus is on the female protagonist's agony of missing her beloved. *Zarā sī*

āhaṭ hotī haĩ, to dil socatā haĩ, kahĩ ye woh to nahĩ translates as ‘even a slight sound makes my heart wonder, could it be him?’

Keherva tāl

	x				o			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
						SS Zarā	G sī	
P ā	P haṭ	P -	mm ho	GR tī	GR haĩ	S to	ṄR dil	
RG so	PGPM c	GR tā	SRGRS hai	- -	Ṅ ka	Ṅ hī	R ye	
G woh	GG to na	G hī	- -	- -	ka-			

Figure 2.6: Svara notation for *zarā sī āhaṭ hotī haĩ*

Here I have focussed on the *svara* pattern used for the line *kahĩ ye woh to nahĩ*. The notes, G-Ṅ-R-G sung by Lata Mangeshkar, bring out her agony as she hopes that every approaching sound is bringing her beloved. In this song, it is Lata Mangeshkar’s treatment of *rāga* Yaman that gives it a quality of anticipation. While in the song *Nigāhē milāne ko* Asha Bhosale brings out playfulness through Yaman, Lata Mangeshkar in *zarā sī āhaṭ hotī haĩ* manifests hopeful expectation.

All the three songs discussed above, demonstrate the use of the typical phrase Ṅ-R-G in the first lines, which nevertheless create three different and distinct moods. There are certain grammatical rules that a composer or singer must adhere to for maintaining the purity and true essence of any *rāga*. In case of Yaman, the *vādi* and *samavādi svaras* are *śuddha gāndhār* and *niṣāda*, respectively. Hence if these two notes are not given prominence in any *bandīś* whether it be classical or light, the form and character of Yaman are compromised with. Nevertheless, sometimes, film music directors take the liberty of not strictly focussing on

these rules while composing light melodies which can still be inspired by a classical *rāga*. In all the three songs, there is evidence of thoughtful weaving of the melody in accordance with the *rāga's* grammar.

Ravindra Jain creates a melody suited to singer Yesudas' sublime and mellifluous *gayakī* based on the requirements of the lyrics and scenario and makes Yaman sound gentle and romantically persuasive. Roshan in *Nigāhē milāne ko jī cāhatā* rather craftily makes use of Asha Bhosale's voice with a husky and sensual voice to compose a romantically teasing Yaman. Madan Mohan's composition *zarā sī āhaṭ hotī haī* based on the same *rāga* brings out a near perfect musical expression through Lata Mangeshkar's flawless *gāyakī*, creating a romantically sombre Yaman. While credit must be given to the music directors, singers and lyricists, it is in fact the versatility of Yaman that allows for this level of creativity and variety in melodic expression. One must however have the ability to recognise the prowess of a *rāga* and associated elements including its grammar, mood, etc. in order to create something meaningful and impactful.

Next, I will examine two more songs based on Yaman, but with some other features that are not to be found in the three songs analysed above.

4) *Nām gum jāyegā*

This song is from the film *Kinara* (1977) directed by Gulzar with music by Rahul Dev Burman. It is about a young famous dancer Aarti Sanyal, played by actress Hema Malini, and her relationship with architect Inder, played by actor Jeetendra. Aarti and Inder sing *nām gum jāyegā* (figure 2.7), which is an expression of their pain. They both have had a painful past and are beginning to come to terms with mortality.



Figure 2.7: Jeetendra and Hema Malini

Video link to the song: [Nām gum jāyegā, Kinara, 1977](#)

The song beginning with the words *nām gum jāyegā* (the name shall be lost) is philosophical in nature and conveys the impermanence of human life, name, fame etc. Music director Rahul Dev Burman composed it with this awareness. Hence, he ensures that the aesthetic treatment goes beyond the romantic to include the philosophical.

Singers Lata Mangeshkar and Bhupinder Singh place emphasis on the word *jāyegā* through the notes *tīvra madhyam*, *gāndhār* and *ṛṣbha* followed by an extended glide starting from *pañcama* and ending on the *ṣāḍaja*. However, R D Burman has taken the liberty of not engaging much with the *samavādi svara*, *niṣāda* – which is acceptable in light songs that are loosely based on classical *rāgas*. In this case, he engages more with *pañcama* and *ṛṣbha* before resting on *ṣāḍaja* to create a nostalgic mood (figure 2.8).

Keherva tāl

x					o			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
P- Nām	Pm gum	Mgrg jā	mmG ye	G- gā	PGG -	GR -	RS -	

Figure 2.8: *Svara* notation for *Nām gum jāyegā*

Through these *svaras* in the Yaman framework, the singers express the philosophy that a person's name is temporary, and it will definitely get lost in the realms of time sooner or later. Lata's silky and Bhupinder Singh's sonorous voices, and the associated elements of pathos and calmness makes an additional impact in bringing about the the *karuṇa* and *śānta rasas*.

5) *Abhī nā jāo choḍkar*

This song is taken from the film *Hum Dono* (1961) directed by Amarjeet and Vijay Anand with music composed by Jaidev. The film is set in India during the second world war. It involves twin brothers, played by Dev Anand, and their respective love interests, played by Nanda and Sadhana. *Abhī nā jāo choḍkar* is picturised on Dev Anand and Sadhana where he is urging her not to leave, as his heart is not content yet.



Figure 2.9: Dev Anand and Sadhana in a playful romantic moment

Video link to the song: [Abhī nā jāo, Hum Dono, 1961](#)

Dadra tāl

X				O		
1	2	3	4	5	6	
GG	M	G	RG	R	-	
Abhī	nā	-	jā	o	-	
S	Ṇ	ḌṆ	ṆR	-	-	
cho	-	ḍ	kar	-	-	

Figure 2.10: Svara notation for *Abhī nā jāo choḍkar*

Music director Jaidev makes the lyrics and the sequence as aesthetically pleasing as possible. While employing *rāga* Yaman, he uses the note *śuddha madhyam* instead of its *tīvra* variant, and this changes the flavour of the song completely. The lyrics *abhī nā jāo* is set to tune using the notes G-M-G, R-G-R, S-Ṇ-Ḍ-Ṇ-R. While *tīvra madhyam* has been ignored in this composition, it still maintains the Yaman Kalyāṇ ang by focussing on the *vādi gāndhār* and other prominent *svaras* including *niṣāda* and *ṛṣbha*. This is because, except for the *śuddha madhyam*-laden tonal construction in the *pūrvāṅga* portion of the *rāga*, the rest of the structural outlines of Yaman Kalyāṇ are consistent with Yaman's original grammatical layout. The lovers are having a romantic back and forth, with the man expressing his longing, and the woman responding coquettishly.

The usage of *tīvra madhyam* in this case would have created a feeling of displeasure rather than creating a romantic mood in the song. As opposed to romantic pleading, it would feel like an ugly demand. The awareness and understanding of subtle liberty that Yaman offers to be used in its Kalyāṇ form is crucial for film music direction. This is because even subtle variation of notes in a *rāga* causes vital mood changes. Playback singer Mohammad Rafi's delicate *gayakī*, full of finesse and showing impeccable command over *svaras*, and Asha Bhosale's flirtatious and charming singing, together succeed in conveying the *rasas* intended by Jaidev's composition.

While the first three songs had the N-R-G *svara* combination in each of their first lines, these two show different shades of Yaman. While *nām gum jāyegā* engages with P, G and R with the *tīvra madhyam* link, *abhī nā jāo choḍkar* omits the *tīvra madhyam* altogether, preferring instead its *śuddha* variant. However, all the five songs, despite their varied applications, fall under the Yaman umbrella and once again underline the importance of the *rāga*'s versatility.

2.7 Conclusion

The intent of this analyses was not to look at entire compositions, but to demonstrate the subtle capability of a *rāga* to create *rasa* when implemented appropriately to even single lines of lyrics. By building phrases as described in the chosen songs, certain moods are created by *svara*-patterns within the *rāga*. These *svara*-patterns along with the *gāyakī* of the singers and the music directors' visions are jointly responsible for the manifestation of various *rasa-bhāva* combinations. In all the five songs, Yaman produces unique moods. The analyses demonstrate what a *rāga* can offer and what a composer and a singer can do to use it in the best possible way to suit a film situation.

However, some challenges with respect to the phenomenon of *rasas* generated by *rāgas* were addressed in this chapter. Literally embodying this challenge are musical encounters involving musical instruments where visual and auditory sensations rendezvous with material culture and symbolic meaning especially in the case of Hindi film music. Anthropologists and musicologists have not dealt with Hindustani classical *rāga* music in the context of practice, where the collective *rāga-rasa* paradigm emerges as an articulator of socio-cultural dynamics through an aesthetic lens. By grounding in both personal music-making experience as well as bona fide classical theory the way melody makes meaning and generates *rasa*, I emphasize the emergent and well-heeled quality of both my argument and ethnography through well illustrated examples from Hindi film songs. In other words, I am rendering and disseminating cultural learning as well as sensory, fervent engagement with the objective of conveying not mere words, but their embodiment in practice through actual analyses of film music compositions and highlighting the role that *rāgas* plays in their success.

Chapter 3: *Tāla-Tablā-Rasa*: A Study of Rhythm

3.1 Introduction

Just as I have looked at *rāga* and how melody is important in *rasa*, so I now look at how rhythm creates expression in film music through its principal means of organisation, *tāla*. *Tāla* literally means a rhythmic-musical measure indicated by either clapping with both hands or tapping one's hand on any other solid surface. According to the *Saṅgīta Darpaṇ* treatise, the origin of the word *tāla* is attributed to the combination of the *bols* 'tā' (from *tāṇḍava* dance of Lord Śiva) and 'la' (from *lāsya* dance of Śiva's consort Pārvatī)²²⁹. This etymological interpretation of the word *tāla* is a *nirukti*. The *nirukti* is a notional etymology that indicates an understanding of essential meaning but rarely stands up to historical philological analysis.

Tāla also means 'being established'²³⁰ and is as important as *rāga* or melody with respect to a Hindi film song's completeness and an overall musical experience for a listener. It is an ancient music notion traceable to the *Sāma* Veda, a Vedic era text originating in ancient India, and to techniques of reciting Vedic hymns.²³¹ *Tāla* is the term used for the Indian metric system as a whole, and also for each of many meters.²³² It denotes in musical terminology, both rhythmic organization in general, and specific patterns of this organization.²³³

While a *rāga* gives character and vibrance to the melodic aspect of a song, the *tāla* provides its rhythmic structure. One may ask, what has *tāla* provided to enhance *rāga* music and why does it have to exist? From my own study of *tāla* music via the medium of the *tablā* drums, I note that *tāla* provides five crucial elements that hold *bandiśes* together:

- A skeletal structure.
- *Anuśāsan* or discipline (rhythmic discipline in this case). One must follow the rules of a particular *tāla*. If playing the *tīntāla*, then the discipline of playing within 16 beats must be followed without fail.

²²⁹ Anantha Rao, D. (2023). Tala and its Significance. Naad-Nartan Journal of Dance & music, 2/1.

²³⁰ Caudhuri, V R. (2000). The Dictionary of Hindustani Classical Music. Motilal Banarsidass.

²³¹ Alves, W. (2013). Music of the Peoples of The World. Cengage Learning, p. 266.

²³² Wade, B. C., and Hood, M. (1980). Some Principles of Indian Classical Music. In E. May (Ed.), *Musics of Many Cultures: An Introduction*, 1, pp. 83–110.

²³³ Widdess, D. R. (1980). Rhythm and Time-Measurement in South Asian Art-Music: Some Observations on "tāla." *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 107, pp. 132–138.

- *Āvartan* or cyclic movement of the *tāla* which repeats till the end of a composition.
- *Sam* or the first beat of a rhythmic time cycle which is the most important beat of a *tāla*.
- *Mukhaḍā* or a set of *bols* used to arrive on the *sam* to enhance the musicality of a *bandiś* appropriately.

Rhythm is no less than the heartbeat of any Bollywood song apart from a very few which are purposely only *ālāp* based. This chapter aims to discuss how the phenomenon of *tāla* has influenced Bollywood music and the capabilities of it through the *tablā* drums, to produce various *rasas*. According to the *Saṅgīta Ratnākara* and *Nāradārtha Rāgamāla* treatises, just as the face is the most important feature of a human body and a nose is the most important feature of a human face, *tāla* is the most important feature of music and thus, music without *tāla* is like a face without a nose. *Rāga*, *vādyā* (instrumental music) and *nṛtya* are collectively compared to an intoxicated elephant and *tāla* is compared to an *aṅkuśa* (sharpened goad) used for controlling the elephant.²³⁴

Rasa manifestation, through rhythm as also with melody, and the feelings it evokes in the listeners, is deeply connected to music perception and cognition. In this respect, Henkjan Honing argues that the physical making and emotional awareness of rhythm and timing has been studied rather parsimoniously in music theory.²³⁵ The reason for this, Honing feels, may be that existing theories of rhythmic structure are limited to music as written in a certain composition. As a result, these theories tend to abstain from making statements/academic arguments about rhythmic music as it is performed by musicians, and perceived and appreciated by listeners which might explain a frequently heard criticism on the relative underdevelopment of rhythmic theory.²³⁶ Having said this, analyses of rhythmic theory is not completely absent in Indian and Western music. Clayton engages with theoretical debates on the nature of ‘meter’ and ‘rhythm’, using Kolinski's²³⁷ representation of meter as a ‘background for rhythm’, Lerdahl and Jackendoff's idea of meter as ‘interacting pulse

²³⁴ Sen, A. K. (1994). *Indian Concept of Rhythm*. Delhi: Kanishka Publishers & Distributors. pp. 13-14.

²³⁵ Honing, H. (2013). *Structure and Interpretation of Rhythm in Music*. In D. Deutsch (Ed.), *The psychology of music*, 3, pp. 369–404.

²³⁶ Cooper, G. and Meyer, L. (1963). *The rhythmic structure of music*. 7th edn. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

²³⁷ Kolinski, M. (1973). ‘A Cross-Cultural Approach to Metro-Rhythmic Patterns.’ *Ethnomusicology* 17(3), pp. 494-506.

streams', and Justin London's provision for unequal pulse duration.²³⁸ Clayton's writing includes references to Lerdahl and Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*, which represents a major contribution to the understanding of rhythm and metre in western music which builds on Cooper and Meyer.

In the case of rhythmic variations through the *tablā*, the process is not limited to music written. It also depends on the extempore improvisation of the *tablā* player. However, in the process of improvising, the *tablā* player uses traditional *bols* and phrases, or parts of entire *bandīśes* innovatively. This very performativity, either live or recorded, and the resultant perception of it in the minds of listeners, is deeply connected to the manifestation of *rasa-bhāva*.

An endeavour to examine these themes has not been made academically. I attempt to fill this gap through a study mainly via the *tablā*, a pair of Indian drums, which have been the primary source of rhythm in Hindustani classical music as well as in Bollywood film music. The *tablā* has some unique characteristics which will be highlighted and analysed through selected case studies from different periods of Indian cinema that cover a wide range of styles and genres. I have also included two examples in the forms of a traditional *tablā* composition and a television advert. These are certainly digressions but useful for a quick grasp of complex *tablā bols* and in terms of understanding and appreciating the overall impact of *tablā* on visual media. A summary of my main arguments is as follows:

- The *tablā* signifies through its own language known as *bols*. These are further used to form phrases, and eventually the phrases are used to design various compositions. (This is particularly highlighted in the *Gaṇeś paran* (a type of *tablā* composition dedicated to the deity Gaṇeś).
- The *tablā* signifies culturally: Connotation and semiological coding are evident in the way that the expressions possible through it are interpretative. Musical semiosis, in general terms, is a complex amalgam of meanings, and its reality is dependent on

²³⁸ Clayton, M. (2008). *Time in Indian Music: Rhythm, Metre, and Form in North Indian Rag Performance*. Oxford University Press. 1st edn.

interpretation.²³⁹ Thus, various *tablā* compositions can have different impressions, interpretations, and convey meaning, depending on individual perceptions.

- *Tablā* is an expressive instrument and affords a direct evocation of *bhāva* and *rasa*. For example, *bols* like *terekeṭa*, *takiṭa-dha* and *dhere-dhere*, can express emotions depending on the way they are executed.
- *Tablā* supplies mimetic function and rhythmic excitement through its patterns and compositions. In other words, it can not only evoke emotions directly but also has the potential to imitate them. The same *bols* mentioned above can imitate different *rasas* through their execution with precision and control.

The study investigates the various ways in which *tablā* engages with the moving images of Bollywood, to influence the overall aesthetics of its music, often resulting in manifestations of *rasa-bhāva* elements. It is known that the three pillars of *rāga-saṅgīta* are *rāga* (melodic matrix), *tāla* (rhythmic cycle) and *pada* (lyrics).²⁴⁰ While *rāga* and *tāla* are the two main concepts, the origins of which may be credited to Indian music,²⁴¹ *pada*, or lyrics, is considered as extramusical. Some musicologists and musicians state that this is not technically a part of music, according to Padurath.²⁴² The relationship between *tāla* and *rasa* has not been widely investigated as per existing research on the topic. Denise Nuttall makes a crucial comparison between *rasa-bhāva* creation through Indian classical dance and drama and the art of *tablā* playing.²⁴³ She suggests that in the former case, it is the training of acting which is implemented as a methodology of telling a story where a performer's *bhāva* is responsible for the possibility of *rasa* manifestation in the audiences' minds. However, in the latter case, *tablā* players attempt to produce *bhāvas*, based on their respective piquant memories and performance techniques that each artist learnt from their gurus over several years of *sāadhanā*. This latter case of *tablā* players' possible correlation to *rasa-bhāva* creation then becomes extremely challenging though not impossible. Although Nuttall is of the view that the relation of rhythm to *rasa* is complicated and even highly contested by scholars and

²³⁹ Martinez, L. J. (2000). Semiotics and the Art Music of India, 6/1, pp. 1-7.

²⁴⁰ Pudaruth, S. K. (2016). A Reflection on the Aesthetics of Indian Music, With Special Reference to Hindustani Raga-Sangita. SAGE Open, 6/4.

²⁴¹ Gautam M. R. (1980). The Musical Heritage of India. New Delhi, India: Munshiram Manoharlal. p. 45

²⁴² Pudaruth, S. K. (2016). A Reflection on the Aesthetics of Indian Music, With Special Reference to Hindustani Raga-Sangita. SAGE Open, 6/4.

²⁴³ Nuttall, D. (2013). Rhythm embodied: Training Rasa in Hindustani *tablā*? Studies in South Asian Film and Media, 5/1, pp. 69–79.

musicians, it is to establish not only a relation but a natural force that exists between the various patterns, bols and consequent sounds produced via them to a variety of selected *rasa-bhāvas*.

The *bhāva* of any *tablā* playing is actually meant to set the stage for a *rasa* moment with the audiences' imaginations. While it does depend on the receptivity and interpretation of the audiences with respect to the meaning each listener gives to the sounds produced by the *tablā bols* within a *tāla* structure or even randomly, *rasa-bhāva* is manifested. There may be an element of ambiguity, as this deals with something intuitive, complex, and related to individual perceptions. Martin Clayton goes on to suggest that a convincing explanation of how *rāgas* afford the awareness of corresponding plausible *rasas* has not yet been given by any scholar or even an Indian musician to date.²⁴⁴ This may be quite true also in the case of a correlation between *tāla* and *rasas*, but that does not in any way mean that *rāga-rasa* or *tāla-rasa* correlation cannot exist in terms of an audio-visual experience engaging with Hindustani classical music. Only a musician with a scholarly temperament can undertake such a study. But it may be the case that scholar-musicians have either not focussed on the depth of *tablā* sounds and their possible relationships with emotions, or that they are not as well trained *tablā* players with technical knowledge to be able to have the imagination to undertake such a study.

It is this aspect on which I intend to focus upon through the current chapter which will cover discussions on why the *tablā* is chosen as the preferred percussion instrument to represent *tāla* followed by the importance of the relationship between *laya* and *rasa*. Further, I have presented relevant case studies to support my argument in relation to *rasa* through rhythm, starting with a traditional *tablā* composition and four sequences from Bollywood films of different eras before presenting my conclusions on the topic.

²⁴⁴ Clayton, M. (2001). Introduction: Towards a theory of musical meaning (in India and elsewhere). *British Forum for Ethnomusicology*, 10/1, pp. 1–17.

3.2 A brief history

While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to delve into the tablā's detailed history and development, it is crucial to mention the relation to the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and offer a summary of its stylistic traditions before proceeding to the analysis.

The earliest references to a percussion instrument similar to the modern-day tablā are found in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* which also includes instructions on how to play it as well as descriptions of black paste-patches (*syāhī*) found on a tablā.²⁴⁵ According to the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, tablā is classified in the *avanādha vādya* category of rhythmic instruments which are known to be constructed by settling leather surfaces over round empty wooden or clay or metallic vessels.²⁴⁶ These are known as membranophonic instruments which act as skin-vibrators owing to the production of sound-waves by vibrations of a stretched skin or membrane when struck.²⁴⁷ The stone sculpture carvings inside the Bhaja caves represent a woman playing a pair of drums, which according to some is clear evidence of the tablā being originated in ancient India.²⁴⁸ However, there also exists a Muslim and Mughal origin theory²⁴⁹ of these drums based on the etymological links of the word tablā to the Arabic word *tabl* which means an instrument facing upwards and having a flat surface.²⁵⁰ In any case, several years after the occurrence of the above-mentioned possibilities, ultimately the era of Amir Khusrau and beyond (13th Century CE) is considered as the most important in tablā's history which witnessed the initiation of sitār by Khusrau, *khayāl* by Hussain Shakri and tablā by Siddhar Khan.²⁵¹ Aban Mistry confirms that the Delhi *gharānā* started by Siddhar Khan was the first stylistic tablā tradition to be ever formulated which in turn influenced the making of the other five known *gharānās*, which are Farrukhābād, Lucknow, Punjāb, Ajrādā and Banāras.²⁵² Although created afresh with every improvised performance and propagated globally through airline travel and digital mediation, Hindustani classical music preserves significant emotional devotedness to historical towns/cities from India's past where it thrived and developed under

²⁴⁵ Gottlieb, R S. (1993). Solo Tablā Drumming of North India. Motilal Banarsidass. pp. 2–3.

²⁴⁶ Naimpalli, S. (2005). The Theory and Practice of Tablā. p 10.

²⁴⁷ Poudel, P P. (2021). Classification of Music Instruments: An overview. IRJMMC, 2/4, pp. 1–10.

²⁴⁸ Prajnanananda, S. (1981). A historical Study of Indian music. Munshiram Manoharlal. p. 82

²⁴⁹ Gottlieb, R S. (1993). Solo Tablā Drumming of North India. Motilal Banarsidass. pp. 1–3.

²⁵⁰ Kasliwal, S. (2004). Classical Musical Instruments. p. 36 – 44.

²⁵¹ Sharma, N. (2021). Historical Background of Tablā and Emergence Of Various Gharanas. 12/6, pp. 1-8

²⁵² Mistry, A. (1956). Pakhawaj aur Tablā Ke Gharane evam Paramparye. p. 175

royal patronage.²⁵³ The names of these places eventually became the *gharānā* names. The entire repertoire of compositions collectively belongs in one way or the other to these six stylistic schools of *tablā* playing. It may be safely said that all the *tablā bols* one may have ever heard in Indian film music, are directly or indirectly sourced from one or more of these schools via the associated *tablā* artists. It is beyond the scope of my research to explore intricacies of all these *gharānās*. However, in the case studies and excursions that I have presented further, I explore some aspects of selected styles as and when deemed required.

3.3 Why *tablā*?

James Kippen throws light on the fact that since India's independence, the *tablā* has been used extensively in the country's nation-building projects (Kippen 1988: xi). Since India's independence in 1947, the national A.I.R. (All India Radio) began broadcasting traditional Indian classical music. According to Nayan Ghosh, *tablā* solo recitals by contemporary *tablā* maestros like Ahmed Jan Thirakwa, Allah Rakha, Amir Hussain Khan, Habibuddin Khan etc. (alongside other nationally recognized instruments including the sarod, santūr, śehnāī, and flute) led to a near-exponential rise in the instrument's popularity.²⁵⁴ Allah Rakha, known to be one of the most popular *tablā* artists internationally, commenced his musical career as an accompanist in Lahore, and later was appointed as a staff artist for A.I.R. Delhi in 1936. He went on to finally settle in Bombay in 1940 and play the radio station's first ever *tablā* solo, thus promoting *tablā*'s position as a solo classical percussion instrument in the process.²⁵⁵ Ghosh claims that these solo recitals were eventually responsible for transforming the *tablā* into one of the most prominent percussion instruments of the country.

The *tablā* is a pair of harmonically complicated, tonally rich, pitched Hindustani drums of North Indian origins, usually recognized by the black *syāhī* (circle of tuning paste) applied to the centre of each of the two drumheads.²⁵⁶ Unlike other high-tension drums of a similar size, like the bongo or djembe which generate a short snapping sound upon striking and that too

²⁵³ Katz, M. (2014). Sites of Memory in Hindustani Music: Yusuf Ali Khan and the Sitar Shops of Lucknow. *Ethnomusicology Forum*, 23(1), pp. 67–93.

²⁵⁴ This was from one of my learning sessions with Nayan Ghosh in Mumbai in 2002

²⁵⁵ Alla Rakha. (2023, March 25). Wikipedia. [Alla Rakha - Wikipedia](#)

²⁵⁶ It must be clarified that *tablā* is both the name for the set and for the right-hand drum. To avoid confusion the right and left drums can also be called *dāyā* (right) and *bāyā* (left) and the set can be referred to as a *jorā* (pair). Also, *tablā* is the proper orthographical pronunciation guide for the name of this instrument.

with negligible sustain/resonance, the *tablā* produces a loud, alluring, ringing tone which arguably has a unique character and universal appeal. Scientifically speaking, the rich harmonic overtones of the *tablā* do not reflect/duplicate the harmonic series but rather approach it and this gives its primary *cāṅṭī/kinār*²⁵⁷ sound a ‘ringing bell’ like effect.²⁵⁸ Also, the planar *tablā* surface as opposed to a linear one allows the production of a wider variety of vibratory nodes than exist on stretched strings, consequently accounting for the mathematical complexity of its pitch and harmonic ratios as well as the enchanting melodic aspect within the rhythmic syllables that it offers.

Some of these above-mentioned features of the popular Indian drum set make it the percussion instrument of choice in Hindustani classical music and associated genres including Indian film music. It is also the instrument of choice for accompanying Indian dances, mainly *kathak*. This is owing to its versatility in producing a variety of sounds corresponding to the *rasas* portrayed by the dancers. Its twin drums are usually assumed to be imperative to appropriate performances of Indian music, and no other percussion instrument except for the *pakhāvaj*, can be substituted for its role in providing percussive accompaniment. However, compared to the *tablā*, the *pakhāvaj* is only capable in producing a heavy bass sound whereas the *tablā* can produce a much wider variety of sounds. It is hence preferred over the *pakhāvaj* except for in some forms of traditional classical music including *dhrupad*, *dhamārs* and as an additional optional accompaniment to other instrumental and vocal forms of music. You might hear other percussion instruments in the diegetic sense, but semiologically *tablā* signifies across a whole range of genres, including folk, classical and an amalgamated genre of film music. Views of Daniel Neuman are typical of the rhetoric surrounding the tightly coupled relationship between the *tablā* and popular definitions of Indian music. He writes that the ‘*tablā* is mandatory as the drum accompaniment for all Hindustani musical performances except *dhrupad* and *śehnāī* performances.’²⁵⁹ This view suggests not only that Indian music traditions require a *tablā* in order to be performed correctly, but also that Hindustani music performance cannot rightly be called Indian music without the inclusion of

²⁵⁷ The edge area of the drum at which with the index finger is struck while resting the ring finger on the edge of the *syāhī* to produce the *nā* or *tā bols*.

²⁵⁸ Roda, P. A. (2015). The *Tabla* Past and Present: Analysis of Materials in India’s Most Iconic Drums. *The Galpin Society Journal*, 68, pp. 193–186.

²⁵⁹ Neuman, D. M. (1980). *The Life of Music of North India*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, p. 123.

the *tablā*. Simply stated, the *tablā* indexes a relationship with India both musically and culturally. *Tablā* has a certain cultural resonance, signifies Indianness and may be called the heartbeat of Bollywood as it is a national identity.

Furthermore, most Bollywood songs are based on Hindustani classical *tālas* like *keherwā*, *dādrā*, *rupak*, *jhaptāla*, *tīntāla* and *ektāla*. *Tablā* compositions and even shorter permutations in these *tālas* have captured listeners' imaginations owing to their innovativeness, appealing sound production and the capability of the bols to mimic a range of emotions while also being able to embellish dramatic scenes.

3.4 Laya and rasa

According to Harold Powers, '*laya* is extended to cover the semantic field of 'rhythm and tempo' in the same way that 'rhythm' in the West covers a semantic field comprising 'rhythm and metre.'²⁶⁰ *Laya* is one of the most crucial rhythmic concepts in not only Hindustani classical music, but Indian music as a whole, for two main reasons. Firstly, it is accountable for the control and regulation of musical time, such that without it in place, metered songs, instrumental and dance compositions seem to lose their very character. It is also widely acknowledged that without *laya*, the aesthetic flavour of Indian music remains largely unfulfilled, and this point is of primary interest with respect to Indian film music.

Laya is a notorious term to define but can be approximately translated as tempo and can also imply pulse. The three main states of *laya* in Hindustani classical music are, *vilāmbit*, *madhyā* and *drut*, which refer, to slow, medium, and fast tempos, respectively. There are other variants of these three tempos implemented in classical music, but in film music we mainly come across songs or background scores set to the medium and fast tempos. As far as the aesthetics of Indian film music is concerned, it is the tempo of a song, or a rhythmic pattern implemented in a film sequence that principally determines the manifestation of *rasa-bhāva* elements. Generally, when Indian musicians refer to somebody possessing a 'good sense of *laya*,' they mean that the person has an innate ability to produce attractive rhythmic alterations, while being particularly conscious of *tāla* and in complete control of tempo.

²⁶⁰ Powers, H S. (1980). 'India 2, 5: tala' in *The New Grove dictionary of music and musicians*. (ed. S Sadie), p. 118.

3.5 The skeletal structure of a *tāla* (*ṭhekā*)

While the portion without a rhythmic accompaniment in *rāga* music is referred to as an *ālāp*, the actual *bandīś* is based on a specific *tāla*. It is a skeleton of a certain number of *mātrās* or beats that define the type of *tāla* which is being employed by the composer to suit his *bandīś*.

The sequence of bols in a cyclical pattern that a *tāla* in its unmodified form comprises, and by the virtue of which it is universally recognised, is called *ṭhekā*. As an example, the *ṭhekā* of *tīntāla* is shown in (figure 3.1). In this case, a *tāla* or clapping is done on beats 1, 5 and 13 whereas on beat 9, *khālī* or empty space is indicated, while demonstrating the *tāla* through the palms.



The diagram shows the *ṭhekā* for *Tīntāla* over 16 beats. The title "TĪNTĀL ṬHEKĀ" is at the top, with an arrow pointing to a table of 16 beats. The table lists the bols for each beat, with clapping points (Dha) on beats 1, 5, and 13, and an empty space (khālī) on beat 9.

Beat	Bol	Beat	Bol
1	Dha	9	khālī
2	Dhin	10	Dhin
3	Dhin	11	Dhin
4	Dha	12	Dha
5	Dha	13	Dha
6	Dhin	14	Dhin
7	Dhin	15	Dhin
8	Dha	16	Dha

Figure 3.1: *Tīntāla ṭhekā*

When a musician, arrives on the 1st beat of the *ṭhekā*, it is known as arriving on the *sam*. The concept of *sam* is crucial as it has huge expressive implications with respect to the music and corresponding *rasa* manifestation. Martin Clayton argues that in most *layakārī* (improvising with the *laya*), the soloist, in the process of improvising or manoeuvring his ways around the rhythmic patterns of a composition, often wishes to successfully end a *rāga* development exercise by returning to the *mukhaḍā* of the *bandīś*, by reaching a rhythm on *sam*. This occurrence often gives a sense of satisfaction to the performers and the audiences owing to experiencing a complete time cycle. In a live performance, the musicians move their bodies to signify the *sam*.

This terminology reflects the traditional method for keeping time using your hands while you sing. On the *tablā*, *tāla* beats are played with a resonating effect, while *khālī* beats are played with a dry or metallic sound. Strung together, the different types of beats give texture and accentuation to the *tāla* pattern as well as providing aural clues as to which part of the *tāla* cycle is currently being played. This process is important to keep track of, so that one can return to the *sam* correctly on the correct syllable.

All the discussions up to this point in the chapter aim to aid the reader in better appreciating the analyses involving complex technicalities associated with *tablā* compositions and their applications in film and media scenarios.

3.6 Excursus: A traditional Gaṇeś *paran* and *rasa*

It is the rhythmic complexity along with the variety of sounds possible through the *tablā* that contributes significantly to the manifestation of *rasa*. To demonstrate the manifestation of *rasa-bhāva* through *tablā*, I will start by presenting, demonstrating, and analysing a traditional *tablā* composition shown in (figure 3.2) below:

x	2										0										3										
ga	ṇā	-	nā	-	ma	ga	ṇa	pa	ti	ga	ṇe	-	ś	lam	-	bo	-	da	ra	so	-	he	-	bhu	jā	-	cā	-	r	e	ka
dan	-	ta	can	dra	-	ma	-	la	lā	-	ṭ	rā	-	je	-	brah	-	mā	-	viś	-	nū	ma	he	-	ś	tā	-	l	de	-
dhu	ra	pa	da	gā	-	ve	-	a	ti	vi	ci	-	tra	ga	ṇa	nā	-	tha	ā	-	j	-	mir	dan	-	ga	ba	jā	-	ve	-
dha	ṭa	dha	rā	-	na	dha	ra	dha	ra	kra	dhyā	-	na	di	na	di	na	di	na	nā	ge	nā	ge	nā	ge	dha	na	dhana	-	ti	na
ti	na	tā	ke	nā	nā	tā	dri	gī	na	dr	ga	dr	ga	di	nā	dī	na	di	na	ga	di	nā	ge	tā	-	kr	dhā	-	na	kiṭa	taka
dha	rā	-	na	ta	rā	-	na	dhā	-	kiṭa	taka	dha	rā	-	na	ta	rā	-	na	dhā	-	kiṭa	taka	dha	rā	-	na	ta	rā	-	na

Figure 3.2: A traditional *tālabadh* Gaṇeś *paran*

While it is not a part of any film, this *paran* and associated discussion bears upon the central theme of the chapter indirectly. The term *paran* is derived from the Sanskrit term ‘*perṇ*,’ referring to a leaf. It is ‘a type of composition with typical diacritic characteristic *bol*s which generally ends with a *tihāī* and can be compared to the structure of a leaf: a main vertical axis which ‘branches out’ into veins on both sides’.²⁶¹ Timothy Francom argues that *paran* was originally played on the *pakhavaj*, since this form of composition carries the typical language

²⁶¹ Paran. <https://www.tablalegacy.com/paran>

of the drum such as *dhāgetiṭe*, 'tāgetiṭe,' 'kḍadhātīṭe' etc.²⁶² Out of the two main types of traditional *parans* which are the *gat-paran* (uses the *bols* of a *gat*) and *stuti-paran* (composed to honour various deities associated with Hindu mythology and mainly exist in the Banāras *gharānā* of *tablā*), I have presented and analysed a *stuti-paran* composition set to the *tīntāla* of 16 beats. It is dedicated to the deity Gaṇeś from the Indian tradition and is known to be composed by one of the *tablā* maestros from the Banāras school of *tablā* playing. Its uniqueness lies in the fact that each word of the poetry can be reproduced by certain distinctive *tablā* *bols*, through innovative and thoughtful fingering techniques. When done correctly, the *bols* nearly replicate the sound of the spoken words and consequently produce expressions filled with certain emotions. I will first present the lyrics and translation of the *stuti-paran* which may understood to be in two parts as follows:

Part 1: *Gaṇāṇām Gaṇapati Gaṇeś Lam̐bodara sohe bhujā cār eka daṅt chaṅḍramā lalāṭ rāje Brahmā Viśṇu Maheś tāla de dhrupad gāve, ati vicitra Gaṇanāth āj mṛdaṅg bajāve*

Translation: *Gaṇeś* with four arms, one tooth, adorned with the moon is playing mysterious *mṛdaṅg*, while *Brahmā Vishnu Maheś* sing *dhrupad* providing rhythmic claps.

Part 2: *dhaṭa dharān, dhara dharakṛa dhyāna, dina dina dina, nāge nāge nāge, dhana dhana tina, tina tāke nā nā, tā dṛ ge na, dṛiga dṛiga, dināge dināge tā kṛa dhān, (kiṭa taka dharā na tarā na dhā) x 3* – *Tablā bols* composed purposely to also have philosophical meanings.

Part 2 is untranslatable as it consists of abstract *tablā* syllables and reflects a philosophical meaning when recited together with, and in context to part one. Hence, I have provided the analysis below which then translates and explains the entire *paran*.

²⁶² Francom, T. (2012). "A Sociomusical Analysis of the Paran." PhD diss., University of Toronto, pp. 4-5.

Analysis

The first line of the poetry within the *paran* personifies the *śṛṅgāra* and *adbhuta rasas* through the depiction of the deity Gaṇeś having four hands, one full tusk and the symbolic moon situated on his forehead. The *śṛṅgāra rasa* is further enhanced by references to spring, garlands, ornaments and other elements including melodious music and poetry.²⁶³ On the other hand, Gaṇeś's exclusive and inimitable physical features evoke a sense of curiosity, mystery, and astonishment which are characteristics of the *adbhuta rasa*. The deity's physical features have been arguably imagined to be no less than attractive embellishments to the eye of the composer of this *paran* and hence the personification through *tablā bols* of both these *rasas*.

The next line states that the other deities, Brahmā, Viśṇu and Maheś sing *dhrupad* by demonstrating the rhythm (through the traditional clapping of palms), while Gaṇeś plays *atī vicitṛa* or extremely bizarre *mṛdaṅg*, thus manifesting the *adbhuta rasa*. The last portion of the poetry, which actually consists of *tablā syllables*, explains why the *mṛdaṅg* played by Gaṇeś is bizarre. It is so because these syllables are not only *tablā bols* but also carry within themselves some Hindi words and hence have a double application in this *paran*. The lines have a particular philosophical and spiritual message. The bols '*dhaṭ dharā*' means that who has taken the spiritual path. *Dhara kra dhyāna* means that who has meditated. *Dina dina, nāge nāge nāge* signifies that who has not given up on the spiritual path and *dhan dhan tina* means may glory be to (that person). Further, the phrase *tina take nā nā* signifies that who has not looked there (towards the spiritual goal) yet. Then, *tadṛigena dhṛig dhṛig*, convey that his eyes are not worthy of praise. Further, the bols *dina dina dināge dināge* mean that he has wasted day after day. Finally, the bols *kiṭataka dharā na tarā na dhā* signify that such a person could neither get satisfied nor cross the ocean of birth and death. This *paran*, through the medium of *tablā* and focussing on Gaṇeś playing the *mṛdaṅg*, caters to the Hindu way of spirituality and devotion. The poetry which starts with *śṛṅgāra rasa*, follows on into the *adbhuta rasa* and ends with *bhakti* infused with *karuṇa rasa*. This *paran* uncovers the *tablā's* and through it, the *tāla* medium's innate capability of manifesting emotional expressions.

²⁶³ Joshi, J. (2020). Shringar and the Karuna Rasas in the Secret of the Nagas. 12/3, pp. 98-116.

This unique aspect of *tablā*, through the means of a variety of permutations and combinations of long and short *bols* as well as entire phrases of customised *bols*, has been implemented by Bollywood music directors in a majority of films. This has been done in both background scores as well as mainstream film songs with the help of some well-known *gharānedār*²⁶⁴ *tablā* maestros as well as lesser known *tablā* artists with skills limited to only lighter versions of the *tablā* repertoire.

In this chapter, my chosen approach has been to analyse only portions of different songs and background scenes instead of entire pieces. I have done this in order to avoid analysing repeated *tablā* phrases in a song or sequence (which is often the case). I also intend to cover a variety of instances within Bollywood, where the medium of *tāla* through *tablā* has been experimented with, to manifest certain *rasas*.

3.7 Case Study: *Madhuban mē Rādhikā* (Kohinoor, 1960)

I will now analyse parts of the song '*Madhuban mē Rādhikā nāce re*' from the film *Kohinoor* (1960) directed by S. U. Sunny with music by the legendary Naushad. The film is about a prince and a princess of different kingdoms, played by Dilip Kumar and Meena Kumari respectively, involving a lot of sword fights, songs and dances. I have analysed the same song with respect to its overall compositional content and Naushad's music-making skills and *rasa* in a later chapter on music directors. Here, I will be discussing selected portions of the song focussing on the *tāla* element and the manifestation of *rasa-bhāva* through rhythmic sound production on the *tablā*, as opposed to its melodic variant.

There is a specialised well-directed process between different individuals including actors, singers, and the musicians for which there is no written evidence in any available literature. I have based my analysis on time spent with two principal instrumentalists who were engaged by music director Naushad during the making of the song. One of them was my guru, the acclaimed *sitār*ist Abdul Halim Jaffer Khan under whom I trained directly for four years, and the other one being acclaimed *tablā* artist Nizamuddin Khan who was also a close associate of Halim Jaffer Khan, being his *tablā* accompanist for several years.

²⁶⁴ Trained in particular *gharānās* of *tablā*

Video link to the song: [Madhuban mẽ, Kohinoor, 1960](#)

The scene

Dilip Kumar portrays the role of a young king who randomly comes across a musical assembly or *jalsā* on one of his travels to the countryside outside of his kingdom. A dancer, played by actress Kumkum, challenges anyone from the audience to do a vocal performance so complex that it would be impossible for her to match her dance moves appropriately to the emotions of the song. Dilip Kumar then sings '*Madhuban mẽ Rādhikā*' to the delight of the surprised onlookers while Kumkum dances *kathak* to his tune. Shakeel Badayuni's lyrics is based on the traditional Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa theme which makes it a *śṛṅgāra rasa* focussed item.

One of the most remarkable relationships that have been established between *tāla* and *rasa* in this song is evident from the very first *āvartan* of the song's *sthāyī* in the execution of the *tīntāla ṭhekā* starting at 00:00:09 in the video clip. The *sam* or the first beat has been set on the word *nāce*. The *ṭhekā* of the 16-beat rhythmic cycle which is *tīntāla* has been purposefully played in a unique manner in the song. If carefully listened to, from 00:00:09 onwards in the clip, the *tablā* player has rather successfully attempted to mimic as well as embellish the dancer's *kathak* moves which are clearly suggestive of the *śṛṅgāra rasa*. While this 'feeling' may be argued to be perceptive, interpretative, and intuitive, there is clear evidence of subtle acoustical adjustments and manoeuvres of the fingering and palm techniques with respect to the *tablā* throughout the song. The striking of the left-hand drum (*bāyān*) by moving the wrist back and forth with subtle pressure (figure 3.3), creates an appealing bass sound. It makes the overall *ṭhekā* indicative of a lively, almost erotic dance movement. This is evident throughout the course of the song.



Fig 3.3: Hand-Palm-Finger coordination on the *bāyān*

A normally played *tīntāla ṭhekā* without any sound effects and one with the effects will have different emotions and reactions. While the former will not inculcate any particular feeling and will seem dull to listen to, the latter will bring in fresh energy and a blend of emotions that can be felt by a sensitive listener and interpreted to suit a range of physical dance motions or facial expressions.

Coming back to the song, note the moves of the dancer Kumkum starting at 00:00:23 till 00:00:34 during which she performs *nṛtya + abhinaya* (dance combined with acting) to the lines '*Giridhar kī muraliyā bāje re*' attempting to manifest the joy felt when Kṛṣṇa's (*Giridhar's*) flute is played. Now in sync with the dance and the exhibition of her emotions, observe the *tablā ṭhekā* which embellishes the flow and consequent expression of these emotions. At 00:02:20, the song takes a different pathway in terms of rhythmic arrangements and intensities although limited to the 16-beat cycle. The 14-beat *tihāī* designed using the *bols* '*teṭe kata gadagin dhā dhā dhā*' marks the end of the first phase of the song after which the *laya* of the *tāla* cycle is raised.

Then at 00:02:30 from the 9th beat of the *tīntāla*, the *tablā* imitates the lyrics '*mṛdaṅg bāje tirakiṭadhum tirakiṭadhum tā tā, nā caka chum chum thā thay thā thay tā tā, chum chum chana na na chum chum chana na na, kṛān ta kṛān ta kṛā dhā, dhā dhā dhā*. These lyrics are

imitated skilfully by first choosing *tablā* bols carefully such that they match the resonating words used in this case as musically as possible. These are then executed keeping in mind the musicality of the lyrics. For example, while the words *nā*, *tā*, *kṛān* and *dhā* have exact *tablā* bols to work with, the words *chaka chum* and *thay* would have had to be improvised to sound as similar as possible on the *tablā*. Although the lyrics mention the word *mṛdaṅg*, Nizamuddin Khan explained that it was the *tablā* which was primarily used and the *mṛdaṅg* rather sparingly. Further, till the end of the song, the *tablā* continues to provide the required lively, lyrical accompaniment as the *laya* increases and ends with the *drut* *sitār* composition in the concluding section. Despite an exhilarating composition set to *rāga* *Hamīr*, the overall orchestration, imaginative lyrics and impeccable *gāyakī* of Mohammad Rafi to Dilip Kumar's strong screen presence amongst other nuances of the song, it would sound comparatively dull without the rhythmic support of the *tablā*.

The *tablā* infuses life into the melody and is also responsible for manifesting emotions to a certain extent with its various syllables, and playing techniques as discussed above. There is no stringent of rules that is taught to us in the application of *rasa* theory as disciples of the Hindustani *tablā* traditions. We, as students of the *tablā* art form, are advised by our gurus that it depends on the performers' individual decision and judgment, to employ specific *bols* or patterns that can manifest certain *bhāvas*. The evidence of this traditional practice can be seen throughout the song. The rhythmic improvisations made in the song contributed significantly towards a novel way of writing and thinking about song and dance in Hindi cinema at the end of the 1950s decade. These were times when music directors like Naushad started to look for more innovative methods to incorporate classical music in Bollywood songs. One of the outcomes of these efforts was this first and only *caturaṅga*²⁶⁵ implemented in Hindi cinema. But it required careful musical handling if it were to be made appealing to the masses. Nizamuddin Khan's *tablā* from the basic *ṭhekā* to the speedy variations almost redefines this classical dance number, in the middle of the 20th century. Never before had such innovation been heard in Indian cinema. Through the technicalities of the *ṭhekā* and the other *tablā* phrases used, it is the right combination of actual *nikās* or execution of the bols with appropriate *vazan* or weight and extempore adjustments in amplitudes, which is

²⁶⁵ Refer to chapter five for a detailed analysis and explanation of the *caturaṅga*

responsible for sounds that are perceived to be manifesting certain *rasa-bhāvas* in listeners. This combination is usually referred to as the musicality of a *tablā* player, which in its prime form, elaborates the emotional aspect of a song rhythmically.

However, where the *tablā* has been deployed in films, it is often the case that the choice of *bols*, volume modifications etc. would not be of the performer alone but also of the music director and other relevant collaborators. These may include the actors and producers as well, if known to possess a good sense of music. This information is based on some discussions I had with artists who played extensively for Hindi films, including Ustād Allah Rakha, Ustād Halim Jaffer Khan, Ustād Nizamuddin Khan and Ustād Rais Khan. As an example, if a *tablā* player deployed for a film is supposed to imitate sounds of thunder and lightning as special effects for a certain scene, he would first present his ideas to the music director, director and may be others like lead actors and the producer. These ideas would be in the form of *bols* selected and executed in a pattern of his choice to best suit the scene. However, if any of them are not impressed or convinced of its effectiveness, the *tablā* player would then be requested to try something else and so on and so forth, till the team comes to an agreement. This is not common if the *tablā* player deployed is of the calibre of a renowned *Paṇḍit* or *Ustād* and highly accomplished and recognised in the field.

3.8 Case study: A *relā* from *Sholay* (1975) and Samta Prasad's contribution

Following is a case study of a *relā* from *Sholay* (1975) directed by Ramesh Sippy with music composed by Rahul Dev Burman. The film is about two friends (played by actors Amitabh Bacchan and Dharmendra), and their adventures associated with capturing a dacoit (robber) in rural India. They both have love interests. Dharmendra's lover is played by actress Hema Malini. The following case study is about a scene in which she is riding a horse carriage with the *relā* as the primary background score. Here the *tablā* is used memetically to imitate sounds at very high speeds to demonstrate a thrilling effect.

It is commonly known amongst *tablā* players that the idea of a *relā* may have been conceived by one of the *tablā* maestros from the times when the train was introduced in British India. Inspired by the rhythmic sound-pattern made by the coal-fired train, the *tablā* player may

have thought of a similar sounding pattern using the *tablā bols* and named it as *relā* (since the train runs on rails, so *relā*). However, *tablā* player Chhotelal Mishra and some other musicologists are of the firm view that the train story behind *relā*'s origins is nothing but a myth since the term has been in use in Hindustani classical music since before the invention of trains.²⁶⁶ According to James Kippen, the term *relā* seems to get its name from the literal meaning of the term which is a 'rushing stream' or 'torrent.'²⁶⁷

In modern times, the *relā* is known to have gained mass appeal owing to its unique characteristics and performed by nearly every *taīyyār* or well-practiced *tablā* player as an important part of the repertoire. In this well-known sequence from *Sholay* (1980), actress Hema Malini is seen riding her horse cart and chased by dacoits. The highlight of the background score for this scene is the attempted heightened tension and thrill created by Samta Prasad's *tablā* playing along with the other instruments. At 00:00:14, Hema Malini becomes aware of the dacoits on horsebacks behind her and starts to flee from the spot, at which instance, Samta Prasad starts with the *bols tak tak tak tak* which he plays by striking the first finger on the *kinār* portion of the *tablā*. This is done till Hema Malini boards her *ṭāngā* (carriage). The seemingly straightforward striking of the *kinār* with the *tak tak bol* has immense potential to create emotions like excitement and tautness while providing the audiences with the feeling of anticipation regarding impending danger or something suspenseful as observed and felt throughout this sequence. It should be noted that the *bol* itself does not do the trick, but the appropriate intensity with which it is struck and the balance which it maintains with the other instruments makes the real difference. This carries on till 00:00:24 after which Samta Prasad introduces some other syllables to intensify the proceedings as Hema desperately smacks her mare Dhanno and urges her to go faster by literally conversing with her desperately till 00:00:34. In these 10 seconds or so, Samta Prasad's aim is to match the desperation in Hema's voice with *tablā bols*. This he does by adding the bass through the *bāyān* drum, and beyond 00:00:34, he starts playing the phrase *tak tak terekeṭa tin tin terekeṭa* at high speeds, thus transforming it into a *relā*. It may be argued that Samta Prasad has two main goals in this sequence: to create thrill to enhance the overall effect of the sequence; and to match the sounds created by the horses in the chase.

²⁶⁶ Misra, C. (2006). *Tablā Granth*. New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers.

²⁶⁷ Kippen, J. (1988). *The Tablā of Lucknow – A Cultural Analysis of a Musical Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

All of this he does successfully till 00:03:03 when the *tāngā* eventually falls by accident. Throughout the scene, one may note the accelerating tempo of the moving images focussing on Malini, the Dhanno-driven-*tāngā* and the frenzied dacoits, all of which may be looked upon as the visual analogue to the increasing intensity of Samta Prasad's *tablā* that envelopes the overall musical soundtrack. The thrilled audiences who, when watching the scene in a cinema hall, would have emphatically and even animatedly in some cases, mimicked Malini's emotions through the manifestation of *rasa-bhāva*.

The point to be noted from the above analysis is the capability of the *tablā*, played by a skilled artist, to produce the *vīra*, *adbhuta* and *raudra rasas*. According to Denise Nuttall, any attempt to make connexions between *rasa* and rhythms should ideally be built upon the fact that *rasa* is something that is 'experienced', instead of it being a concept or an object.²⁶⁸ Nuttall references to scholars like S. C. Pande who have promoted the notion of thinking about *rasa* as primarily existing in the performative moment. It may also be considered as something that takes place in time, since *rasa* phenomenon flows. Hence, it forms a process of 'liquification of whatever is solid till at last it remains in the form of essence.'²⁶⁹ Samta Prasad's attempt at embellishing this famous chase sequence from *Sholay* is a classic example highlighting both Nuttall's and Pande's takes on *tablā*'s relationship with *rasa*. The 'flowing' aspect of *rasa* as stated by Pande is felt in the exquisite rhythmic patterns generated by Samta Prasad through his *relā* manifestations from seemingly simple *bols* and phrases like *taka taka* and *taka terekeṭa taka*, respectively.

While in this case he demonstrates the *bhāvas* of thrill, fear, anticipation, and suspense through his *tablā* playing, in the following song, from the film *Meri Surat Teri Ankhen* (1963), Samta Prasad demonstrates contrasting emotions.

Video link to the song: [Nāce man morā, Meri Surat Teri Ankhen, 1963](#)

²⁶⁸ Nuttall, D. (2013). Rhythm embodied: Training Rasa in Hindustani *tablā*? *Studies in South Asian Film and Media*. 5. 10.1386/safm.5.1.69_1

²⁶⁹ Pande, S. C. (2009). 'Introduction', in S. C. Pande (ed.), *The Concept of Rasa With Special Reference to Abhinavagupta*, Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, pp. 9-18.

There are manifestations of the *hāsya* and *śṛṅgāra rasas* and associated *bhāvas*. This song takes the shape of a live dance performance by actress Asha Parekh accompanied by Ashok Kumar who sings the song ‘*Nāce man morā magan.*’ The main reason for bringing up this song is the *ṭhekā* deployed by Samta Prasad to accompany the first line of the song. It literally translates to ‘my mind in a trance dances (with the rhythm) *tik dhā dhī dhī dhī dhī.*’ The song is quite obviously *śṛṅgāra rasa* focussed and Samta Prasad’s *tablā* brings out this emotion quite effectively. In the beginning of the song, he plays the *sitārkhāni*²⁷⁰-styled *ṭhekā* within the eight beat *keherwā tāla* framework with noticeable emphasis on the bass *bāyān*. Later he changes the *ṭhekā* to approximately *dhegenā dhegeti nā nā*²⁷¹ and also adds a few other variations but keeps the emphasis on the *bāyān* with every ‘*dhā*’ stroke constant throughout. At 00:01:26, it is remarkable that for just two seconds between lines he deploys the same *tak tak tak* series of bols on the *kinār* of the *tablā* that he would use about seventeen years later for Sholay’s chase sequence. However, in this case, these bols exemplify not tension, fear, anxiety or suspense as was case the in Sholay, but instead a lively happy feeling, embellishing the words which signify the cheerful rhythmic steps of a danseuse that sways her heart out. This, he has managed to achieve by craftily adjusting the pressure on the *kinār* to achieve a sweeter expression instead of a tense one with increased amplitude through a much stronger striking. At 00:04:27 the *tāla* changes to sixteen beat *tīntāla* where once again the bass emphasis on the *bāyān* makes the *ṭhekā* sound exude a certain element of romance. While analysing these notable aspects of the song’s rhythmic designs, I would like to draw the readers’ attention to Pandey’s notion of *rasa* existing in the performative moment. Samta Prasad’s *tablā* in ‘*Nāce man morā magan*’ justifies this notion through its intuitive and interpretative accompaniment as discussed above.

3.9 Excursus: *Tablā* and *rasa* in a TV commercial

Consider the following commercial advertisement from the Indian television industry in which, a direct deliberate improvised demonstration of the *hāsya rasa* through vocals accompanied by the *tablā* is evident. I make this digression from cinematic analysis since this

²⁷⁰ A variation of the traditional *tīntāla ṭhekā*.

²⁷¹ It is not possible to figure out the exact bol played by the *tablā* player owing to its complex rhythmic structure and nature. Hence a reasonable approximation has been made.

is one of the best examples found in Indian media to demonstrate the use of Indian rhythm through the *tablā* to signify the *hāsya rasa*.

Video link to the advertisement: [Centre Fruits Advertisement, *Tablā* competition](#)

This advert attempts to sell a chewing gum named ‘Centre Fruit’ with a tangy filling that is meant to pleasantly astonish the taste buds. It claims through the dramatic presentation that because of the chewing gum’s taste, the tongue can experience a certain uncontrolled movement, affecting the speech in a funny manner. Thus, at the end of it, we hear a voice saying ‘*kaisī jīb laplapāyī*’ which literally translates to ‘just how the tongue started chattering uncontrollably.’

The theme of this advert is based on the traditional *savāl-javāb* concept widely used in Hindustani classical-solo instrumental and on occasions in vocal recitals. It involves one of the artists (usually the principal solo performer) initiating a string of melodic or rhythmic patterns that are to be matched by the accompanying artist (usually a *tablā* player) as closely and aesthetically appropriate as possible. The purpose of the technique is to enhance the mood of an ongoing performance and attract the attention of the audiences, some of whom may have got bored owing to the slow, meditative pace of an instrumental or vocal recital. In the advert under scrutiny, a *tablā* player is seen attempting to match the melodic patterns of a singer with appropriate rhythmic patterns.

The setting is such that the singer and the *tablā* player are seated opposite each other with many others sitting beside them both to cheer along with the musical outputs. At 00:00:09, the singer starts with the musical phrase *m-g-m-s*, the response to which is a witty *terekeṭa tak dhā*. The *terekeṭataka bol* is played at a fast speed and the *dhā* has an elongated bass resonance to it through the gliding of the left wrist over the *bāyān*. The execution of this seemingly simple phrase on the *tablā* carries immense weight in the context of the scene such that it immediately strikes a chord with the listeners with the manifestation of arguably two main emotions, one being the *hāsya* and the other *bhayānak*. The singer then sings the phrase *s-s-s-s, g-d, m-g-m-s* which happens to be an extension of the previous phrase and

comparatively more challenging. The *tablā* player responds with *dhāṭṛakadheteṭakatāgadegena dhāṭṛakadheteṭakatāgadegena dhā, dheteṭa dhā*, once again producing the same two *rasas*. The singer throws the next challenge which is even more complicated in terms of a rhythmic ‘response’ from the *tablā*. He sings the long phrase, *m-g m-g-s-r, s-g-m-p, g-m-p, g-d-s, m-d-s, m-g-p-d-n-n-s, n-n-s, n-n-s-s-s-s-s*. As a response to it, at 00:00:24, the *tablā* player executes a pattern which transforms into a *relā* on the basis of the bols *dhā terekeṭa tak dhin terekeṭa tak*. As the scene continues at 00:00:34, the *tablā* player removes a hair comb and quite comically starts combing his hair with the left hand while still playing high speed *terekeṭa* with the right hand. This part may be interpreted in two ways. It indicates the *terekeṭa bol’s* effect on *hāsya rasa*. It also shows the immense potential a single syllable has in engaging with human emotions. At 00:00:38 till the end of the advert, the singer recites nonsensical gibberish syllables. As a reaction to this recital, the *tablā* player is confused and shown to give up. At 00:00:48, we hear the statement in Hindi, translated to mean, ‘centre-fruit, how the tongue got twisted.’

The message of the advertisement has been presented cleverly with the use of Hindustani classical music. There is an engagement between the physical taste or *rasa* and the emotions or *rasa-bhāva* through music and *abhinaya*, where the focus and manifestation of *hāsya* and excitement is clearly through the *tablā* players facial expressions and his music.

In this short yet effective and humorous advertisement, it is crucial to note what the *tablā* is capable of doing. It draws the attention of audiences with subtle improvisations which are not limited to any particular *gharānā* or stylistic tradition but instead depend upon the creative ability of the artist. As evident from this advert, a witty artist with a heightened sense of emotional transmission and reception through rhythmic engagement coupled with a high level of *taīyyārī* is able to explore the *tablā* and take it beyond just the techniques, traditions, and mathematics of it to further realms where emotions are manifested and felt by the listeners. This advert also indicates that the cultural place of Hindustani classical music in a popular medium such as television adverts is still very important, where millions of youths in India are influenced by and to an extent even prefer western music to its Indian counterpart.

3.10 Creative example

We have examined how tablā syllables, phrases and compositions are used to embellish different film music songs and sequences. Here I present a more speculative concept. It attempts to make meaning out of some abstract tablā phrases and relate them to real life and imagined situations. In the process, it also examines the *rasa-bhāvas* that can be perceived through these phrases. I demonstrate this through a traditional *ṭukḍā* originating in the Farrukhabad *gharānā* of tablā. A *ṭukḍā* is a fixed tablā composition with impactful syllables and phrases and a *tihāī* (a phrase that is repeated thrice) at the end of it. Expert tablā players have traditionally engaged creatively with *ṭukḍās* and related them to express simple anecdotes such as a tiger following a deer for food, or a ball thrown into the air coming down to be caught by a child. This trend of engaging with traditional tablā compositions creatively as described above was popularized in recent times by one of the modern tablā maestros, Ustād Zakir Hussain. He used it as a way to attract contemporary audiences to the art of Hindustani classical percussion. Consider the following *ṭukḍā* composition in *tīntāla*.

1	2	3	4
X			
dheredhere kiṭataka	tā	kata- gheghe	dhin

5	6	7	8
2			
naga-dhet	teṭe	ghin-tarān	dhā

9	10	11	12
0			
tin-nā	ka te	ṭa dheredhere	kiṭataka terekeṭe

13	14	15	16
3			
dhā dhere dhere	kiṭataka terekeṭe	dhā dhere dhere	kiṭataka terekeṭe

Figure 3.4: A traditional *tīntāla ṭukḍā* notation

The *bols* of this composition can hypothetically relate to an episode in the life of a couple. This concept is based on Hussain’s imagination of a *sawāl-jawāb* (question-answer) theme. A husband comes home late after partying with his friends. So, the wife asks him, ‘where were

you’? This question is represented by the *bols* ‘*dheredhere kiṭataka tā.*’ The husband replies, ‘I was with friends’ (*kata-gheghe dhin*). She then asks, ‘what did you do there?’ (*naga-dhet teṭe ghin-tarān dhā*). To this, he replies, ‘nothing!’ (*teṭe katā*). The wife understands that he is lying. So, in anger, she tells him off. (*dhere dhere kiṭataka terekeṭa dhā X 3*).

This is an innovative method to present a traditional *tablā* composition by making it interesting for not only connoisseurs, but also for newer audiences globally, unexposed to Hindustani classical percussion. Hussain’s perception, followed by an appropriate method of playing the composition and finally presenting it in an amusing manner, manifests the *hāsya rasa*. It may be possible to relate these *bols* to other imagined scenarios resulting in the perception and experience of other *rasas*. However, it depends on the *tablā* player’s skills to be able to extract the required sound by stressing on relevant syllables as mentioned previously in the chapter. Only then, the desired outcome is achieved, and the intended *rasa* is experienced by the audiences. The process of a playing a composition is not simply limited to translating it from a notation. Notation not only aids the study of music, but it also helps represent and preserve musical pieces. Ruckert argues that Indian *tablā* music is ‘a feast for the scholar: an interplay of hoary rhythmic traditions featuring complex mathematics and syncopations played with effortless joy by eccentric personalities whose training and artistic heritage weaves them into an ancient and variegated society.’²⁷² However, especially with respect to *tāla*, there are certain challenges in the notation process owing to the different characteristics of *tablā* playing. These include *gamaks* (intricate gliding modulations produced by subtle manoeuvring of the wrist on the *bāyan* drum) and other dynamic expressions at high speeds produced by specialised fingering techniques. These elements need to be included within the notation spectrum so that they can be preserved and used by future music composers and students to grasp the subtleties of *tablā* compositions applicable to different film scenarios. Thus, there is a need for further research and development in this area.

3.11 Conclusion

Through my discussions above, I have demonstrated that rhythm is indeed a core element of Indian film music, and that no Bollywood song is really complete without its presence. I have

²⁷² Ruckert, G. (1995) Review: [untitled] Reviewed work: Solo Tabla Drumming of North India by Robert S. Gottlieb. Source: Asian Music, 26/1, Musical Narrative Traditions of Asia (Autumn, 1994 - Winter, 1995), pp. 221-225.

also exhibited the effectiveness of skilful *tablā* playing used in background scores of Hindi films through specialised compositions such as the *relā*. My study may change the perception of some individuals who think that the *tāla* element by itself through the medium of a percussion instrument is unable to manifest *rasas*. This is not the case as seen from my examination of various *tablā bols* and compositions. My persistent musical enculturation into the aesthetic sensibilities relevant to the *tablā* has raised new questions about music as a tactile medium that is far more multifaceted than the conventional Western notion of music as a 'language of feeling'.²⁷³

However, there are some discrepancies between the *paḍhānt* (recitation of *bols*) and their actual execution. Many a times, *paḍhānt* may not match exactly with the *bols* played. This may be to sanction flawless and eloquent *paḍhānt* expression of complex *tablā bandīśes* particularly in the *drut laya* and recited at ultra-high speeds. These often prove to become tongue twisters for novice students. Mostly, the intended *bols* or phrases are discernible for experienced players, but beginners struggle to be able to do recognize these complicated syllables. My analyses also illustrate some of the difficulties in relating the theoretical structure of the *tāla* to melodic rhythm. As seen from the examples of the Gaṇeś paran and the creative example, It is clear that conclusions about Indian rhythm cannot be exclusively based on clap patterns of a *tāla*. In both cases, the rhythms are also defined by the rhythmic pattern of each of the compositions themselves along with the *tablā*, rather than by just the *tablā* as a percussion instrument. This is also the case with *tāla* patterns used in film music through intricate *tablā bols*. Also, an emotionally fulfilling experience from the rhythmic music generated by the *tablā* depends on many factors including the quality of the performer. For example, players of the *Baṅarās gharānā* are known to generally implement more *mīṇḍ* or pitch bending via subtle use of the left hand compared to *tablā* players of other lineages. They also have a reputation for striking the drums more powerfully compared to players from other *gharānās*, resulting in a louder, vibrant and consequently *rasa*-generating performance. So, the same Gaṇeś paran may sound different and as a result produce different emotions in the minds of listeners when heard from the hands of different *tablā* players. The resultant *rasa* output may thus not be consistent with compositions and artists.

²⁷³ Qureshi, R. (2000). How Does Music Mean? Embodied Memories and the Politics of Affect in the Indian "sarangi." *American Ethnologist*, 27(4), pp. 805–838.

It is now evident that the *tablā* offers a high degree of versatility with respect to creating various emotions when its *bols*, phrases and compositions are executed by *tāyyār* and *gharānedār* *tablā* artists. While there is much more to be comprehended about *tablā*'s potential in creating meaningful and emotionally enriching music for various occasions and situations, this chapter presents a maiden endeavour into unleashing a colossal territory for future research, in the process raising more questions than providing answers.

Beyond strengthening hypotheses or defending proposals, I also hope to have opened a window into the lifeworld of practical music making in the rhythmic realm as part of a wider creative landscape that transcends the borders of Hindustani classical music to reach out to contemporary film music and further. Through ethnographic description of *tāla* nuances and demonstrating practical examples of *tablā* compositions, I have shown that *tablā* playing has in some ways diversified and in other ways remained consistent. *Tablā* remains a part of a vibrant musical tradition, constantly innovating and developing while at the same time grounded in long-standing historical practices inspired by maestros of traditional *gharānās*.

Chapter 4: *Khayāl* and *Ṭhumrī*

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines *khayāl* and *ṭhumrī* which are the two principal and most popular genres of Hindustani classical music, with respect to their influence on the music of Hindi cinema. While Indian music may be categorised into North Indian (Hindustani) and South Indian (Carnatic), Hindi film songs are mainly influenced by North Indian classical music.

North Indian music may be broadly categorised as below (figure 4.1):

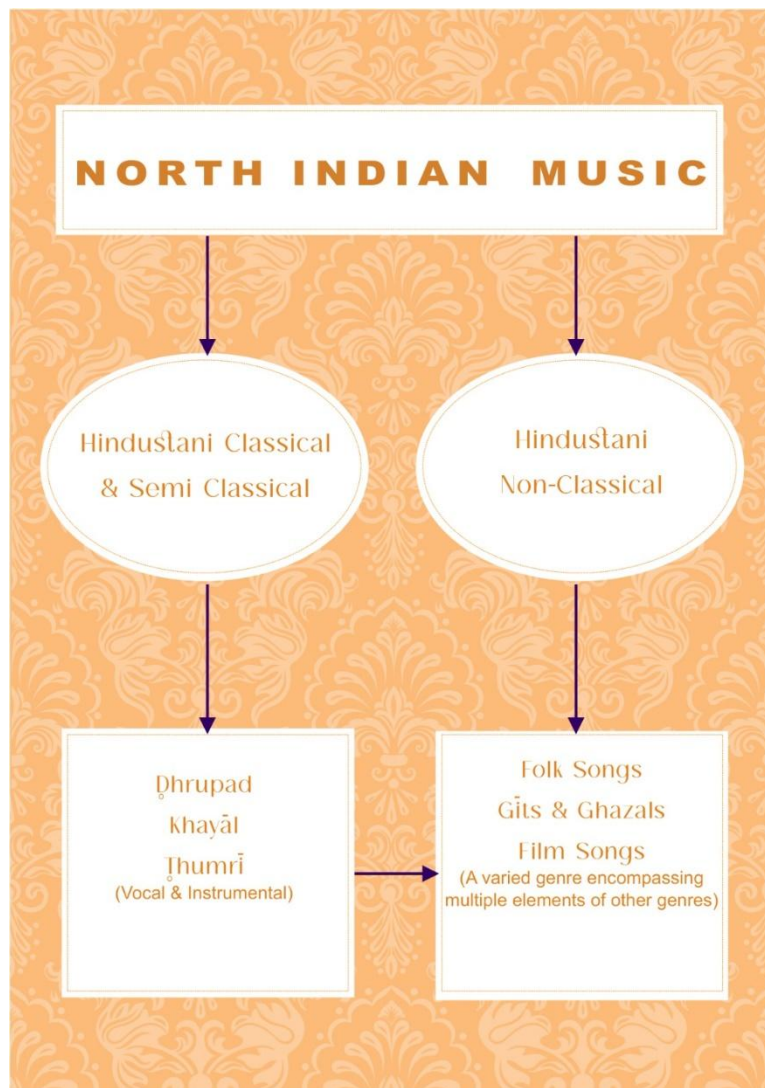


Figure 4.1: Categorisation of North Indian music

While *dhrupad*, *khayāl* and *ṭhumrī* are based on *rāgas* and supported by *tālas*, instrumental music can be further classified as melodic and rhythmic. Melodic music is known as *rāga-saṅgīta* and is an extension of the vocal genres through the medium of mainly stringed and wind instruments, supported by *tāla* music during rhythmic elaboration part of the melodic presentation. *Rasa* manifestation is a common outcome of all the genres and styles mentioned above. Rhythmic music is known as *tāla-saṅgīta* which involves instrumental solos on percussion drums such as the *pakhāvaj* and *tablā*. These percussion instruments are also used to accompany *rāga-saṅgīta*. A group of *bols* or patterns pertaining to these percussion instruments have been used individually to create *rasa*-based impacts in theatre and films without being confined to a particular rhythmic cycle. Collectively, *rāga* and *tāla* comprise the chief defining elements of North Indian Classical music (Hindustani *śāstrīya*). These have been responsible for influencing and shaping Indian film music, particularly that of Bollywood and various other regional films of India. While the non-classical category of North Indian music consists mainly of folk songs, *ghazals* and *gīts*, Bollywood film music has the potential of being considered as a separate unique sub-genre which has been deriving productive inspiration from all the other genres.

Although Indian classical music as a whole has been known to exist since Vedic times and its origins have been attributed to the *Sām Veda*²⁷⁴, Hindustani classical music we hear today, originated and developed in the early modern period, which is in a considerably later period of a long history of the Indian sub-continent. Tejaswini Niranjana argues that although the genres and associated musical filaments that today form the Hindustani classical chronicles have existed since several centuries, the unification and advent of a discernible and distinct body of music occurred over the last four centuries.²⁷⁵ According to Meilu Ho, contemporary scholars of classical Hindustani vocal music have drawn attention to the multiple sources contributing to the evolution of the three main genres of today; *dhrupad*, *khayāl*, and *ṭhumrī*.²⁷⁶ From these three genres, *dhrupad* is the oldest to evolve and start a gradual development thus far with respect to its compositions and stylistic elements. Ho further elaborates on Richard Widdess' comment that *dhrupad*, in the form that most closely

²⁷⁴ More, A S. (2013). Origin and Development of Indian Music in The Early Periods: A Bird's Eye View. 2/3, pp. 5-15.

²⁷⁵ Niranjana, T. (2013). Music in the Balance: Language, Modernity and Hindustani Sangeet in Dharwad. Economic and Political Weekly, 48(2), pp. 41–48.

²⁷⁶ Ho, M. (2013). Connecting Histories: Liturgical Songs as Classical Compositions in Hindustānī Music. 57/2, pp. 207-235.

resembles contemporary practice, evolved in the region of Āgrā-Gwalior, a Braj language area which is geographically located approximately to the south of current New Delhi, in the 15th or 16th century. However, in the context of this research, the other two genres of *khayāl* and *ṭhumrī* are of particular interest. Hence, a brief history of their birth, evolution and development to date shall be concentrated upon through this chapter. Since many Bollywood compositions have been directly or indirectly influenced by *khayāl* and *ṭhumrī*, it becomes crucial to understand their origins from historical, ethnomusical, compositional, structural, and aesthetic perspectives. However, since I have included detailed discussions of selected *khayāl* inspired Hindi songs in the chapter five on music directors, I here concentrate more on the *ṭhumrī* genre, following a brief discussion of *khayāl*.

4.2 *Khayāl*

The name *khayāl* is held to be imitative of the Persian-Arabic word *khayāl*, which means imagination.²⁷⁷ The genre's development to the current state of style and content is indebted to the much older art form of *dhrupad*, which predates *khayāl*, and which was the preeminent vocal art form of North India at the time. *Khayāl*, however, is also associated with romantic poetry depending on its regional origin, unlike the *dhrupad bandīśes* which are often dedicated to Hindu deities or philosophical notions. It thus grants the performer greater freedom of expression than its predecessor. *Khayāl* is a genre that grew and refined itself in the hands of various musicians belonging to different geographical regions of the Indian subcontinent. There were regional, linguistic, poetical, cultural, and religious influences on musicians. Many of these musicians borrowed even from the regional folk music styles. In one of vocalist Bade Ghulam Ali Khan's live concert recordings, he is heard stating that some *rāgas* such as Pahādī, Jhinjhoṭī, Pīlū, Deś etc. most certainly have their origins in the folk music traditions of Northern Indian regions.

Peter Fletcher argues that in *khayāl*, *rāgas* are significantly adorned with several vocal techniques, and hence this style demands technical virtuosity over intellectual rigour.²⁷⁸ However, several Hindustani classical vocalists including Ameer Khan, Bade Ghulam Ali Khan,

²⁷⁷ Caudhuri, V R. (2000). Dictionary Of Hindustani Classical Music. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers. p. 54.

²⁷⁸ Fletcher, P. (2001). World Musics in Context: A Comprehensive Survey of the World's Major Musical Cultures. Oxford University Press. pp. 258–259.

Bhimsen Joshi etc. have suggested that highly effective *khayāl* singing goes beyond both technical virtuosity, and intellectual rigour. This is owing to a third vital dimension, which is *rasa-bhāva*. This notion is reflected in the *khayāl*-influenced renderings of Bollywood compositions particularly by singers like Lata Mangeshkar, Manna Dey, Asha Bhosale and Mohammad Rafi. Although their songs did boast of technical and intellectual prowess, what made them almost everlastingly popular, was their ability to manifest emotions effectively. It is a strong belief primarily of the Muslim classical musician community that *khayāl* came to India from Persia or some other region of the Middle East, and this view is backed and supported by vocalist Chand Khan of Delhi.²⁷⁹ Van der Meer further states that Khan claims to be a descendant of musicians in Sultan Mohammad bin Qasim's troops (the one which conquered Sind in 712 CE), and hence believes his Delhi *gharānā* to be the origin of *khayāl*, 'which is therefore much older than *dhrupad*' according to his Interview conducted around Oct.-Dec. 1970. This seems to be a controversial claim, which may well be exaggerated, as most musicologists and historians are of the view that *dhrupad* certainly predates *khayāl*. Amlan Das Gupta, on the other hand is of the opinion that most probably, the current art form of *khayāl* may not be older than a maximum of 250 years, and although agrees that the term is of Persian origins, it seems to have been used to denote a style of musical performance from the time of Amir Khusrau (approximately 1253-1324). Khusrau is supposed to have introduced elements of Persian music in India, including several other innovations that are also credited to his name.²⁸⁰ Completely contradicting the claims of Chand Khan, is the view of Thakur Jaidev Singh (as quoted by Kumarprasad Mukhopadhyay), a renowned scholar of music and philosophy. Singh argues that the so-called *khayāl* style of musical composition is nothing but a natural development of *sādhāraṇ gīti* or ordinary vocal style, which on implementing exquisite features of prevalent styles, created the *khayāl* style.²⁸¹ Singh's view is supported by some of the Bollywood songs adopted from famous *khayāl baṇḍīśes* such as *garajat barasat sāwan āyo re*, which simply means 'the monsoon has arrived with thunders and rains.'

²⁷⁹ W. van der Meer. (1980). Hindustani Music in the 20th Century, Performing a Raga (2): Khayal, pp. 51-52.

²⁸⁰ Das Gupta, A. (2020). Reflections on the Early Khayal.

²⁸¹ Mukhopadhyay, K. (2006). The Lost World of Hindustani Music

Singh further emphasises the fact that *khayāl* was not imported from Persia or Arabia, but already prevalent before the advent of Amir Khusrau. When he arrived on the scene in the 13th century and heard the very ornate style complete with various embellishments such as *khaṭkās*, *mīṇds*, *murk*, *karṁpan*, *āṇdolan*, etc, Khusrau could perhaps not think of any other term to describe this unique style. Hence, he must have most probably used the term *khayāl*. Mukhopadhyay also quotes Rajyeshwar Mitra, (who translated Abul Fazal's *Ain-e-Akbari* from Persian to Bengali) and who is of the opinion that the anecdotes which credit the origin of *khayāl* to Khusrau are nothing but 'products of sycophantic imagination of his followers.' From the above arguments, at least one point is clear that there is no certainty regarding the origin of *khayāl* music. Instead, the findings revolve around individual opinions of selected researchers that may occasionally not be based on scientific or historical evidence.

On the basis of these arguments, despite multiple theories and claims with respect to the origin of *khayāl* music, it may be argued that the genre evolved progressively in the last few centuries from the time of Khusrau in the 13th century and then during the Mughal rule. Musicians from those times, found refuge in several smaller *riyāsats* or states ruled by *mahārājās*. These rulers provided royal patronage in the form of shelter, generous salaries, and occasional gifts to talented musicians. The individual creative endeavours of some of these musicians stationed at locations across north India and resulting *gāyakī* that was born as an outcome of their vision, led to the birth of various *gharānās* or households of *khayāl* music.

In the renditions of *rāga*-based melodies of Indian cinema, particularly by singers like Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosale, Mohammed Rafi and Manna Dey, reflections of the characteristic elements of some of the *gharānās* such as Paṭiālā, Kirānā and Gwalior are unmistakably evident. Hence, in order to better appreciate the subtle technical and aesthetic nuances of these songs, it is essential to discuss the major *gharānās* of Hindustani vocal music.

The major traditional *gharānās* of North Indian classical music include Gwālīor, Āgrā, Jaipur-Atrauli, Delhi, Paṭiālā, Kirānā, Mewātī and Banāras. There were also some others that originated at later stages in regional India. Samarpita Chatterjee Mukherjee points out that *gharānā* is a term used to signify the singing style of a Hindustani Classical musician that is

studied and mastered by a group of disciples in a traditional *guru-śiṣya paramparā* that is carried forward. Katherine Butler Schofield argues that India’s musical cultures, (which includes *gharānās*) experienced a significant reconstruction to endure modern challenges while absurdly claiming ancient origins.²⁸² Schofield, by introducing a large new set of historical writings on Indian music in different genres, establishes that Hindustani music attained its modern classical form during the crucial 19th century of transition from Mughal to British rule. She argues that ‘the Mughal influence is still resounding in Hindustani music today through Sadāraṅg’s, *khayāl* compositions, in Begum Akhtar singing a *Saudā ghazal* just as Khanum Jān did, in the way *tablā* players count *tīntāla*, in *Ustād* Irfan Muhammad Khan’s *sarod* playing – in the enduring belief that if sung correctly at midnight, *rāga* Mālkauns can still raise the *jinnns*.’²⁸³ According to Daniel Neuman the concept of *gharānās* was created in the middle of the 19th century and they were actually formed in the 20th century. Neuman further observes that despite being not that old, they assumed an appearance of being so.²⁸⁴ Their significance then started declining since many vocalists pursued *tālīm* from multiple gurus who were from different *gharānās*. However, traditionally acclaimed gurus were contemptuous towards institutional training as music schools and colleges did not have the capacity to produce superior quality performing artists.²⁸⁵ Instead, the established *paramparā* of in person *tālīm* through the *guru-śiṣya* mode with hereditary *khāndānī* musicians was highly rated.

Bollywood playback singers like Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosale, Mohammad Rafi and Manna Dey were amongst the few known to have had methodical *tālīm* in classical *rāga-saṅgīta*. The Mangeshkar sisters were initially trained by their father Dinanath Mangeshkar and then Lata also learnt from Aman Ali Khan of the Bhendi Bazar *gharānā* (one of the later *gharānās*) after moving to Mumbai in 1945.²⁸⁶ Rafi learnt from Abdul Wahid Khan of Kirānā and Bade Ghulam Ali of the Paṭiālā *gharānās*. Manna Dey was trained by his uncle Kṛṣṇa Chandra Dey whose stylistic tradition is not known. However, it is evident from the songs they have sung that each

²⁸² Schofield, K. B. (2010). Reviving the Golden Age Again: “Classicization,” Hindustani Music, and the Mughals. *Ethnomusicology*, 54/3, pp. 484–517.

²⁸³ Schofield, K. B. (2023). *Music and Musicians in Late Mughal India: Histories of the Ephemeral. 1748–1858*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

²⁸⁴ Neuman, D. M. [1980] 1990. *The Life of Music in North India: The Organization of an Artistic Tradition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

²⁸⁵ Katz, M. (2012). Institutional Communalism in North Indian Classical Music. *Ethnomusicology*, 56/2, pp. 279–298.

²⁸⁶ ‘Biographies of Maestros’. Swaramandakini.com. Archived from the original on 21 July 2017. Retrieved 5 August 2017.

of the singers have gone beyond the confinements of their respective *gharānās* and imbibed aspects of various traditions to suit the requirements of film compositions. However, since most of the music composers were primarily influenced by Bade Ghulam Khan, the Paṭiālā style stood out the most in Hindi film music. Singers in the Paṭiālā *gharānā* are known for their emotionally reminiscent and sensual recital style with a particular accentuation on clear diction and expression.²⁸⁷ All the above-mentioned features are to be found in each of the four Bollywood singers under scrutiny.

One of the modern Paṭiālā exponents Raza Ali Khan reportedly states: ‘the voice culture in this *gharānā* has a particularly emotive aspect, and you will see that in all the vocalists who sing this *gāyakī*. You can hear elation, sorrow, and mischief, among others, all in the voice.’²⁸⁸ For example, Lata’s rendition of ‘*Lag jā gale se*’ portrays the *śṛṅgāra* and *karuṇa rasas* and engages with techniques usually found in the Paṭiālā *gāyakī* despite it being a non-classical song composed in *rāga* Pahāḍī. Most of Rafi’s earlier songs composed by the likes of Naushad, O P Nayyar, Roshan and other music directors were infused with similar qualities. However, alongside the full-throated Paṭiālā *gāyakī*, Abdul Wahid Khan’s training in the Kirānā style, steeped in softer denotations of lyrics which is typical of Kirānā singers, was also evident in several *ghazals* and other types of songs rendered by him. Asha Bhosale’s *gāyakī* is principally influenced by her father’s singing style. But from her songs, it is evident that she also imbibed several other vocal styles into her singing. This is also the case with Manna Dey who was primarily taught by his uncle K.C. Dey but went on to imbibe the various nuances of multiple *gharānās* through auditory self-learning.

However, *khayāl* got overshadowed by the more flexible *thumrī* in film music. According to S M McIntosh, *khayāl*, arose in response to changing musical requirements over the course of time in Northern India, but the style was ‘overburdened with the complexities of form and technique’ and consequently did not satisfy the growing demand for a musical style of a lighter or more affectionate nature.²⁸⁹ As a result, McIntosh argues, *khayāl* went through a degree of simplification and consequently its literary as well as musical emphasis shifted

²⁸⁷ Sharma, M. (2006). Tradition of Hindustani Music. APH Publishing. p. 94.

²⁸⁸ A life in music". The Indian Express. 13 December 2019. Retrieved 23 April 2022.

²⁸⁹ McIntosh, S.M. (1993). Gamaka and Alamkara : concepts of vocal ornamentation with reference to Bara Khayal. (Unpublished Doctoral thesis, City University London)

further towards passion. It may be said that the focus was now *rasa-pradhān*, and a new musical genre, the *ṭhumrī*, was born.²⁹⁰ The sensuous nature and passion-driven significance of the word became crucial in the disposition of this genre, and these are two elements that may be most suited to and required for an effective portrayal of emotions in Hindi films. A more popular theory is *ṭhumrī* is derived from the folk forms of the North Indian Indo-Gangetic plains of modern-day Uttar Pradesh and Bihar (referred to as *pūrab*²⁹¹ (east)). The lilt, themes and pace make the *ṭhumrī*, more accessible to the untrained listeners who can relate to it effortlessly.

4.3 *Ṭhumrī*

The *ṭhumrī* genre is an integral part of Indian cinema. One cannot escape the tremendous influence that *ṭhumrī* has had on Bollywood cinema, especially when focussing on the amalgam of Hindustani classical music and *rasa*. It would not be an exaggeration to state that at least one song or one dance number in most Bollywood films are directly or indirectly influenced by elements of *ṭhumrī*. The various feminine aspects of this musical genre like expressive coyness and movements, costumes and ornamentation, and the *rasa-bhāva* that this semiclassical genre affords have attracted audiences.

This section aims to highlight the fact and demonstrate that Indian filmmakers have not only incorporated the genre to design dance sequences but also in diegetic and nondiegetic film music compositions. It is illustrative of my novel approach to examine the influence of the genre on Bollywood cinema by combining the technical, aesthetic, literary and melodramatic ‘potential’ of *ṭhumrī* in enhancing the narrative and bringing emotional expressions of actors to life. Although it is not within the purview of this study to widen *ṭhumrī*’s scope to its historical, technical, literary or performance development, it is however pertinent to discuss, albeit concisely, its entwined compatibility with drama and consequently with Indian cinema.

The term *ṭhumrī* acknowledges intimate leaning towards dance owing to the fact that the Hindi word *ṭhumak*, from which *ṭhumrī* is derived, refers to a dance step and also indicates a

²⁹⁰ Deshpande, V.H. (1986). The Relation Between Dhrupad, Khyāl and Thumrī Bansuri 3, pp. 23-28.

²⁹¹ It is known as *pūrab* or east to distinguish itself from the other form of *ṭhumrī* which came from the Punjab region that lies in the Northwest of the Indian Subcontinent which evolved at a later stage of the genre’s development

small stature.²⁹² Swati Sharma further explains that the letter ‘rī’ of *ṭhumrī* is once again borrowed from another Hindi word *rijhānā* which means to gratify or entertain. Hence, the name of this genre would literally mean step by step movements meant to delight the audience through its balletic and charming features.

Vidya Rao argues that while the *ṭhumrī* genre seems to have ancient roots, its origins lie in the *desi* (regional, or folk) music of the *pūrab* (modern day eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar states of India) region, it was only in the nineteenth century that it was elevated to *mārgī* (classical) status, though it never really lost its strong *desī* flavour.²⁹³ ²⁹⁴ Regarding the inspiration behind the evolution of this genre, Sunil Bose traces it to the cult of Vaishnavism, especially to the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa theme which is known to portray the divine aspect of the *śṛṅgāra rasa*. Perhaps it is because of this reason that *ṭhumrī*'s literary content, despite being erotic or *śṛṅgāra pradhān* in nature, is also associated with the *bhakti rasa*. *Ṭhumrī* offers considerable freedom to its practitioners to experience the *bhakti rasa*. As an example, to justify and demonstrate this claim, let us take an example of a *ṭhumrī* in *rāga* Tilak Kāmod: *Māi kaise dharū dhīr, din-rāin more naino se bahe nīr* (How do I have patience, my eyes are weeping every day and night). For the words *naino-se bahe nīr*, let us hypothetically imagine that a singer implements the *svaras*, M-G-R, S-S-R, S-N for each of the three words/expressions, respectively. The singer may now shift gears and use the *svaras* (M-G-R-G-N-S) of *rāga* Deś (melodically very close to Tilak Kāmod) for the same words *naino-se bahe nīr*. Deś is traditionally associated with the rainy season and the mood of the *rāga* does seem to manifest emotions one may feel during showers. Vidya Rao explains that through this experiment, the singer may associate the tears (*nīr*) with rain and while rendering the *ṭhumrī* loses oneself in *bhakti* to as if ‘submerge the village of Gokul (associated with Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa) with the deluge of the artists’ tears.’ Thus, *svara* and *śabda/pada* along with the associated creativity and *bhāvas* of an artist combine to create further such opportunities/spaces of intricate vocal expressions. The interplay between *svara-saṅgatīs*, *rāga-aṅg*, *śabda* and *rasa-bhāva* is thus one of the remarkable offerings of this genre.

²⁹² Sharma, S. (2019). Thumri Singing in Kolkata: A New Dimension of Stylization And Application, International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, 9/2.

²⁹³ Rao, V. (1990). “Thumri” as Feminine Voice. Economic and Political Weekly, 25(17), pp. WS31–WS39.

²⁹⁴ There is no historical evidence available to suggest that anyone ever called it either *desī* or *mārgī* at that time, though these terms are found in selected texts starting with the *Nāṭyaśāstra* as argued by Vidya Rao.

This aspect of the genre, developed in the times of Jayadeva, Ramanuja and Ramanand, reached the peak of its popularity during the times of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in the 16th century CE.²⁹⁵ Lalita Du Perron argues that one of the prime innovative characteristics of the *bhakti* movement was its emphasis on emotional experience instead of ritualistic methods as a mechanism of self-realisation or finding God. A notion of the devotee having a close personal and loving relationship with God is central to *bhakti*, and theories relating to the aesthetic experience corresponding to the emotion of love gradually made their way into the religious realm. This, as Bose pointed out, culminated in the 16th century when the *Gauḍīya saṁpradāya*,²⁹⁶ took as one of its fundamental tenets, the idea that *śṛṅgāra* is the supreme *rasa* because it corresponds to love, the highest emotion. Chaitanya's disciple Rupa Goswami formulated a complete synthesis of the devotional and the aesthetic, explicitly articulating the connection between *bhakti* and *rasa* theory.²⁹⁷ In the times to come following this period, both *Vaishnavism* and *Sufism* were responsible for further development of *ṭhumrī* and *kathak*.

According to Shivani Gupta, to understand *ṭhumrī* as a genre, one may begin by classifying it in two phases of its performance and development. One that was performed in the Mughal and Colonial period and the other that started to be performed in post independent India and continues to enjoy popularity thus far.²⁹⁸ There were some differences between both kinds of *ṭhumrīs*. These were with respect to lyrics, singing techniques and pronunciation of the lyrics. Towards the end of the Mughal period, *ṭhumrī* started to get popular amongst courtesans who carried forward the legacy of the genre into the new forming Indian film industry.

Nihira traces the roots of *ṭhumrī* in the Hindi film industry to a musician named *Bhaiyya* Rao Saheb Ganpat, an illegitimate son born in 1852 to Maharaja Jayarao of the Scindia royal family of Gwalior from a *tawāif* called Chandrabhaga Bai, who was an accomplished singer and dancer.²⁹⁹ (This crucial non-academic reference is used, as this information is not found to be found in any of the academic literature on *ṭhumrī* that I came across). She further points out

²⁹⁵ Bose, S. K. (1976). Evolution of Thumri. *India International Centre Quarterly*, 3/4, pp. 291–293.

²⁹⁶ A sectarian tradition inspired by the Bengali mystic Kṛṣṇa Chaitanya

²⁹⁷ du Perron, L. (2000). The lyrics of Thumri: Hindi poetry in a musical genre. PhD thesis. SOAS University of London.

²⁹⁸ Gupta, S. (2015). Performance and Subversion in Kathak. *Subversions*, 3/1.

²⁹⁹ Nihira. (2023, September 27). Tawaif Ki Boli Na Bol. Medium. <https://medium.com/@nihira./tawaif-ki-boli-na-bol-33b2723a95d3>

that it was Bhaiyya Ganpat who taught Hindustani semi-classical music to the likes of Gauhar Jan and Jaddan Bai (the mother of the famous actress Nargis), who were both early pioneers of semi-classical film music. Jaddan Bai, in turn established a company she named Sangeet Movietone, which launched iconic actresses like Suraiya. Jaddan Bai, Gauhar Jan, Zohra Bai Agrewali were courtesans, trained in Hindustani music and associated with early Bombay cinema. However, neither Gauhar nor Zohra lent their voices to cinematic productions as not every *tawāif* was concerned with pursuing cinematic projects. Musicologist Thakur Jaidev Singh believed that Gauhar's *ṭhumrī* singing was without peer. It may then be of no surprise if Bollywood singers of the time were directly or indirectly inspired by her *gāyakī*. One such example is of the renowned *ṭhumrī* and *ghazal* exponent Begum Akhtar, who after listening to Gauhar sing, gave up the thought of working in films and chose to train in Hindustani classical music, following which she did end up lending her voice to films in the 1940s. It is also important to note that Maujuddin Khan, another disciple of *Bhaiyya* Ganpat, recorded a famous *ṭhumrī* '*Pī kī bolī nā bol*' in 1908. A version of it was first sung by actress and playback singer Suraiya in *Parwana* (1947) and then by playback singer Shamshad Begum in *Dulara* (1949) before Lata Mangeshkar sang a final filmic version of it for *Aan Baan* (1956).

The career of the *tawāif* as a woman who entertained men was treated as unworthy of respect in India. It is only through recent research-work and documented records on the life of the *tawāif* that scholars have realised that these women were the portents of *ṭhumrī*, *kajrī*, *horī*, *dādrā* and *ghazal* and the classical dance form of *kathak*. It may thus also be argued that till the early years of Indian cinema, it was the courtesans or *tawāifs* (known with various names like *Begums*, *Jāns*, *Bājīs* and *Nāikins*), who were learning, experimenting with, developing, and perfecting the genre of *ṭhumrī* singing.

The influence of the character of *tawāifs*, their deep association with *ṭhumrī* and the *ṭhumrī* genre itself have found their way into Bollywood. Sometimes, *tawāifs* themselves appear as characters in Hindi films. Some examples include Madhubala playing a courtesan in *Mughal e Azam* (1960) and enacting the *dādrā*, '*Mohe panghaṭ pe nañd lāl*', a nautch girl singing '*Jhumkā girā re*' in *Mera Saya* (1966) and Meena Kumari playing a *tawāif* and enacting the Lata Mangeshkar rendered *dādrā*, '*Inhī logo ne*' for *Pakeezah* (1972). Both *Mohe panghaṭ pe* and *Inhī logo ne* are songs of the traditional *koṭhā* culture, sung by trained *tawāifs* way earlier

than their refurbished film versions. It may thus be argued that without the courtesan Chandrabhaga Bai's training imparted to her son *Bhaiyya* Ganpat and their lineage of disciples, *ṭhumrī* would have most probably not made a way for itself into Indian cinema.

4.4 What does *ṭhumrī* afford?

Richard Widdess argues that as compared to the intellect, the *ṭhumrī* genre is directed more towards the stimulation of *rasa-bhāva* manifestations and responses.³⁰⁰ In this section, I will explore what the components are of a *ṭhumrī* recital and the various structural and grammatical elements it affords to express *rasa-bhāva*.

Peter Manuel, in his work 'Ṭhumrī in Historical and Stylistic Perspectives' gives a comprehensive account of the genre in relation to the wider Hindustani classical music as an entity. Manuel surveys the literary characteristics of *ṭhumrī* poetry, which he relates to classical and *bhakti* models;³⁰¹

- Its history traced through documentary evidence from ancient times to the court of Wajid Ali Shah, and thence via early gramophone recordings to the present day;
- Its stylistic features, formal structure and rhythmic modality of nineteenth-century *Bandīś kī ṭhumrī* and twentieth-century *bol banāv ṭhumrī*;
- The associated *dādrā* genre, and the comparatively modern instrumental *ṭhumrī* style;
- Finally, the common *rāgas* employed in the performance of this genre.

The below figure 4.2 shows the components of a *ṭhumrī* performance. The two main types of *ṭhumrī* are *bol banāv* and *bandīś kī ṭhumrī*. *Bandīś kī ṭhumrī*, also called *bandhī ṭhumrī*, is a compositional form within the domain of the larger *ṭhumrī* genre. Its delineating feature is the manner in which the syllables of the lyrics are closely interweaved to the *mātrās* of the *tāla*.³⁰² Usually, this type is presented in *sitārkhānī* or *addhā tāla*³⁰³ and in *tīntāla*. Both are

³⁰⁰ Widdess, R. (1991). [Review of Ṭhumrī in Historical and Stylistic Perspectives, by P. Manuel]. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1(3), 434–435.

³⁰¹ Manuel, P. (1989). *Ṭhumrī in Historical and Stylistic Perspectives*. Motilal Banarasidass, pp. 20-25.

³⁰² Pradhan, A. (2019, April 6). Listen: Bandish ki thumris by Mahadev Prasad Mishra, Shobha Gurtu and Shruti Sadolikar Katkar. Scroll.in. <https://scroll.in/article/918969/listen-bandish-ki-thumris-by-mahadev-prasad-mishra-shobha-gurtu-and-shruti-sadolikar-katkar>

³⁰³ A form of the 16-beat time-cycle in *tablā*

16-beat *tālas*, having different *ṭhekās* or the structured syllables that represent the rhythmic cycle.

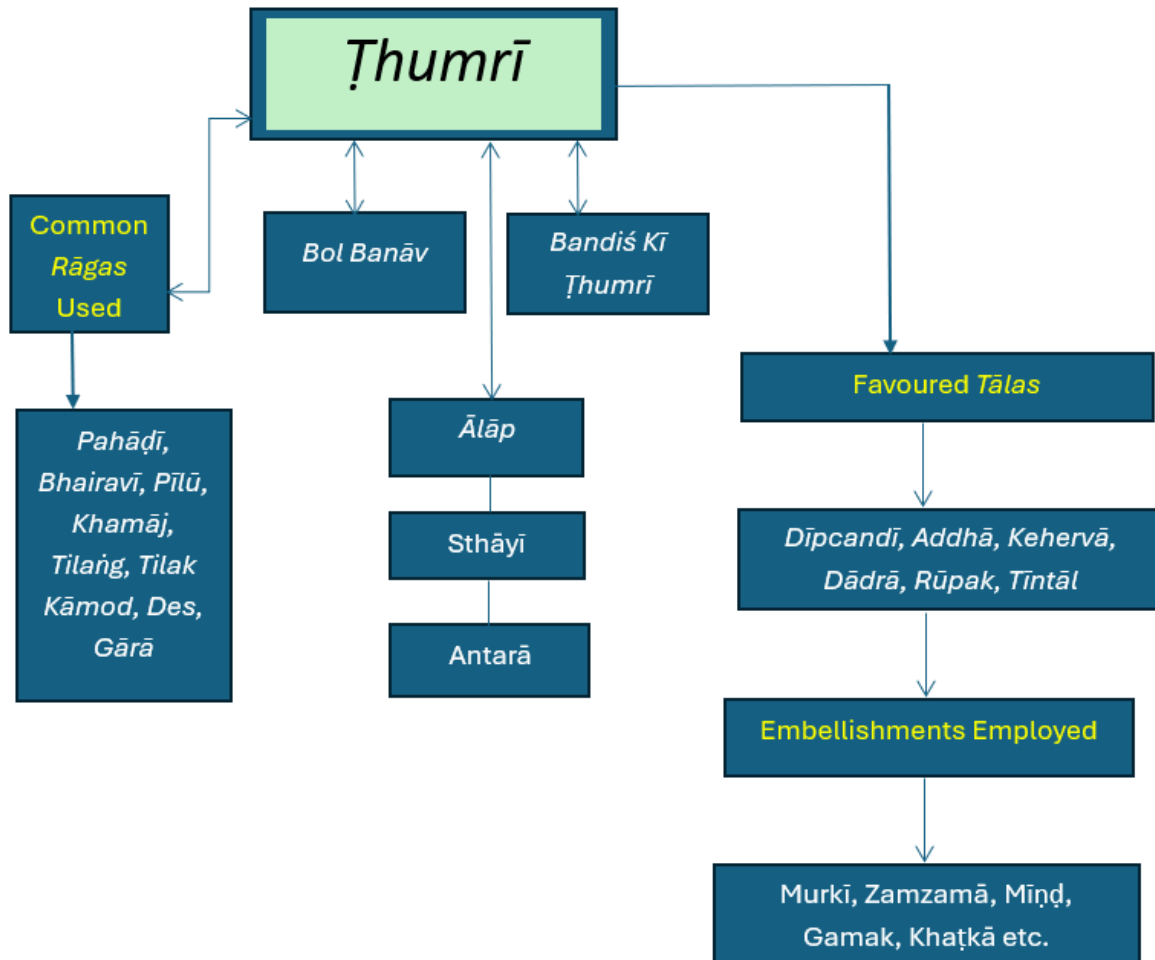


Figure 4.2: Components of a *ṭhumrī* performance

Ṭhumrī renditions usually involve an introductory *alāp* followed by the *sthāyī* and *antarā* of selected traditional lyrics. It is embellished by techniques including *murkī*, *zamzamā*, *mīṇḍ*, *gamak* etc. The *ṭhumrī* genre and other sub-genres associated with it like *horī*, *chaitī*, *rasiyā*, *kajrī*, *dādrā*, *jhūlā* and *sāvan* are mostly composed and sung in *rāgas* such as Pahādī, Bhairavī, Pīlū, Khamāj, Tīlaṅg, Tīlak Kāmod, Deś, Gārā and sometimes even in a *miśra rāga* (a *rāga* in which leniency is allowed with respect to its grammar and *calan*). Although there are known to be exceptions, this is the case generally. Professionally trained Hindustani classical singers

like Begum Akhtar, Shobha Gurtu, Nirmala Devi, and Bade Ghulam Ali Khan have rendered *ṭhumrīs* based on some of these *rāgas* in Hindi and regional films.

Kundan Lal Saigal's renditions of two of the most renowned *ṭhumrīs* for films in the 1930s, caught the attention of the masses in the initial days of Hindi cinema.³⁰⁴ The first one that Saigal sang was '*Piyā bin āvat nāhi cañ*', a traditional piece set to *rāga* Jhinjhoṭī, for the film *Devdas* (1935) originally sung and recorded by classical singer Abdul Karim Khan. The second was, perhaps the most well-known Bhairavī *ṭhumrī*, '*Bābul morā*' for the film *Street Singer* (1938). It was the popularity of these two renderings that set the scene for *ṭhumrī*'s promising future in Hindi films. However, there is not much literature on this aspect of this genre.

The current academic literature associated with the research and pedagogical approaches of this genre focusses mainly on the traditional, historical, technical, and literary aspects of *ṭhumrī*. Little material is available on its impact on Indian and particularly Bollywood film-music. Further, while researchers have mentioned its engagement with Bollywood through the means of courtesans, kathak and literal *ṭhumrī* renditions in films, there is no notable work done on its subtle and indirect influence on certain other important aspects of Bollywood film-music. These aspects include *ṭhumrī*'s impact on the *gāyakī* of playback singers coupled with its tremendous potential and time-tested capability in *rasa-bhāva* manifestation to go beyond its association with the *śṛṅgāra* *rasa* it is typically known for. This has the potential to give way to new dimensions of investigating the genre and its repertoire.

Ṭhumrī has an expressive palate that taps into *rasa-bhāva* like no other genre of Hindustani classical music. Despite the obvious obligations of technicalities such as voice control, *laya* control and a literary repertoire that the genre demands of its practitioners, it is mainly expression and consequently the manifestation of *rasa-bhāva* leading to drama that listeners appreciate. A competent exponent is able to contrive and shift the voice and make even the simplest of lyrics sound enthralling. The exponent can invoke multiple emotions throughout the narrative, even on the same lyrical content, through *svaras*, *laya* and even silence. The

³⁰⁴ Kashalkar, S. (2015). *Thumri's Undying Affair with New Age Indian Cinema*, International Conference on Indian Cinema and Social Reality.

singer also uses movements of the eyes, hands and even the entire torso at times along with vocal modulation techniques.



Figure 4.3: Meena Kumari and Siddeshwari Devi

The figure 4.3 shows traditional *ṭhumrī* exponent Siddeshwari Devi to the left and Bollywood actress Meena Kumari to the right are using their eyes, hands, and torsos in the process of suggestive gestures to produce *rasa-bhāva* during their respective performances. Devi's photograph is from one of her concert performances (details unknown) whereas Meena Kumari's photograph is from a scene in the film *Pakeezah* (1970).

From a literary point of view, *ṭhumrī* introduces an element of intertextuality. Quite often, singers are heard interweaving verses from literary sources such as poetic couplets from Urdu and Brajbhāṣā literature known as *śers* and *dohās*, respectively. While this serves to make the literary content of a performance richer, it also brings together a variety of structures and fabrics to the original lyrics, augmenting its overall mood and emotional value in the process. These couplets provide an opportunity to the singer to play with two meanings. One of the *dohā* and the other the *dādrā*. The singer emphasises the meaning of one while playing with the ambiguity of the other text, thus creating ambiguities and certitudes in the dramatic process.

Ṭhumrī needs to be explored also primarily because of what it has to offer in terms of freedom of expression with respect to *rāga* grammar. As opposed to *khayāl*, an artist is allowed the

liberty to deviate from a particular *rāga* in which the *ṭhumrī* is composed in, for creating a certain mood. This depends on factors including the creative prowess of the performing artist, mood of the lyrics, audience response and sometimes even the overall ambience of the concert set-up. For example, if a *ṭhumrī* or *dādrā* is set to *rāga* Pahāḍī, the artist may sing some of the lyrics in *svaras* outside of the *rāga*'s grammatical structure and manoeuvre their way through the composition, depending on the above-mentioned factors. I present an example that explains the above with a recital of a delightful *dādrā* set to *rāga* Miśra Pahāḍī, by the famous Paṭiālā exponent Ajoy Chakraborty.

Video link to the *dādrā*: [Miśra Pahāḍī *dādrā*](#)

Following a brief *ālāp*, he starts off with the words '*mār ḍālā najariyā milāi ke rām*' at 00:00:04. Till 00:02:27, he sings this line in various ways implementing the usual Pahāḍī *svara* patterns. However, at 00:02:24, he changes the *svaras* in phrase '*mār ḍālā*'. He places emphasis on these words to shift the musical mood as they portray an important message; '(she) killed me' (*mār ḍālā*) foregrounding the *karuṇa rasa*, deviating it artfully from the previous *śṛṅgāra rasa* manifesting Pahāḍī.

Ṭhumrī offers the luxury of expressing the bounteous shades of *śṛṅgāra*. While a *khayāl* exponent takes time to build up the mood of a composition, a *ṭhumrī* singer dives straight into the sea of emotions, often being able to touch the impassioned core of a *bandīś*. Being romantic in essence, the genre, which requires an agile and seasoned voice coupled with a sensitive heart, to reveal its charm and elegance is thus often in contrast to what a *khayāl* demands off its singer.

The following sections comprise case studies of *ṭhumrī* that examine different aspects of the genre in selected Hindi film settings.

4.5 Case Study 1: Bade Ghulam Khan's stylistic influence

According to the late sitārist Halim Jaffer Khan³⁰⁵, Bade Ghulam Ali went on to improvise upon the traditional Kasur-Paṭiālā *gharānā tālīm* he received from his uncle and father. Khan further explained that with the intention and zeal to break the age-old tradition to match the susceptibilities of the then contemporaneous audience, Bade Ghulam Ali went on to experiment and create a unique style which had foundations in the *Kasur-Paṭiālā gharānā*. However, his singing had subtle infusions from other styles such as elements of *dhrupad*, *khayāl* embellishments of Gwalior and the intricacies of Jaipur *gharānās*. Peter Manuel notes that *sargam* and *tāns* also appear in *ṭhumrīs* rendered by singers associated with the Paṭiālā *gharānā*, including, its most famous exponent, Bade Ghulam Ali Khan.³⁰⁶

It is known that the stylistic approach taken by Khan was a result of his realisation that the tastes of the music lovers at the time was on the verge of decline and that in order to re-ignite the fire of interest in the audiences, something very interesting would need to be manifested. Bade Ghulam Ali's refined *gāyakī* as justified by his several available recordings, is known to have transcended the '*bol-banāv*' tradition of *ṭhumrī*. It is known that no other singer from his *gharānā* had attempted to manoeuvre around the traditional form and experiment to create a distinct style. This distinct style can be discerned in singers like Mohammad Rafi, who has had some *tālīm* from Bade Ghulam Ali and singers like Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosale, and Manna Dey, who have had no direct connection with the Paṭiālā *gharānā*. They show evidence of Bade Ghulam Ali's approach to the genre in their recitals of not only classical, but also lighter romantic melodies.³⁰⁷ For example, Rafi's '*Zīndaqī bhar nahī̃ bhūlegī woh barsāt kī rāt*' a seemingly simple romantic song to the untrained ears, actually justifies my claims mentioned above.

Video link to the song: [Zīndaqī bhar nahī̃, Barsaat Ki Raat, 1960](#)

³⁰⁵ Halim Jaffer Khan was my sitār guru from whom I gathered this information during my learning days between 1998 and 2003. He was a regular performer and part of the major concert-music conference circuit from the 1940s till the 1980s during which time, he had several close interactions with Bade Ghulam Ali, his son and disciples.

³⁰⁶ Manuel, P. (1986). The Evolution of Modern Thumrī. *Ethnomusicology*, 30/3, pp. 470–490.

³⁰⁷ These four singers have had a maximum number of classical based songs to their credit in Bollywood.

At 00:00:08, the short humming of the *ālāp* followed by the first line, has been sung by implementing a triple-embellishment of *kaṇ-svara+murkī+mīṇḍ* together, which was a rarity as far as film songs were concerned. This was mainly found in Bade Ghulam Ali's repertoire outside of Bollywood. Just the one word '*bhūlegī*' sung at 00:00:22 and then repeated at 00:00:39 has different feels to it. It is not just the subtle change in *svaras* but also the intricate modification in the stressing of the notes through vocal techniques that causes the different emotions that may be felt. These aspects may be typically attributed to Bade Ghulam Ali's inestimable impact on the singer's musical personality. Further, Rafi's refined and vocally stylised notes, raise the emotional quotient of the lyrics while manifesting the *śṛṅgāra rasa* with immediate effect.

Lata Mangeshkar's rendition of the Madan Mohan composition '*Naino mē badarā chāye*' from *Mera Saaya* (1966) set to Bhīmpalasī is another striking example, featuring subtle characteristics of the Paṭiālā style of *ṭhumrī* singing. Each melodic phrase boasts of vocal expressions layered with multiple *svara*-sequences, embellished by distinct *mīṇḍ*, *harkat-murkīs* and relevant *tāns*. At the very first line, the song paints a picture of the *śṛṅgāra rasa* by the means of all the above-mentioned elements.

Video link to the song: [Naino mē badrā, Mera Saaya, 1966](#)

The *mīṇḍ-murkī* embellished notes N S g M P P P D S ni D D P for the line *naino mē badrā chāye* at 00:00:38 to 00:00:42 (the eyes are filled with clouds (of tears)), potentially evoke the *karuṇa rasa*. At 00:01:09 to 00:01:12, the execution of the words *garvā lagā le* show evidence of the colourful Paṭiālā treatment of *svaras* in semiclassical songs. In this case, along with the influence of the *ṭhumrī* genre, it is also Lata's soulful *gāyakī* that makes the song as poignant and stirring as it is.

These are just minor examples to demonstrate the heavy influence of Bade Ghulam Ali's methods of enriching a *ṭhumrī* with techniques, exquisitely crafted by himself, based on the Paṭiālā school of thought. Musicologist Ashok Ranade made a crucial observation with respect

to Bade Ghulam Ali's unambiguous enunciation of the lyrics of a *bandīś*.³⁰⁸ Taking an unhurried approach to the articulation of words, Khan *sahāb* distinctly pronounced all their vowel sounds and consonants. Maintaining this remarkable discipline even in the *tār saptak svaras* across three and a half octaves of his vocal span was his speciality.³⁰⁹ One can particularly mark these aspects of the maestro's *gāyakī* in both the examples of Rafi and Lata shown above. While there are shades of vibrance and sprightliness in this style, the emotionality is not overshadowed by them which is pivotal in a semi-classical rendering with respect to *rasa-bhāva*.

However, the Paṭiālā style has not passed without some criticism. Chloe Zadeh points out that musicologist Mohan Nadkarni's views of the Paṭiālā style were not particularly encouraging but rather critical of most of the *gharānā*'s singers (except for Bade Ghulam Ali and his brother Barkat Ali) who according to him were more interested in impressing the audiences as compared to concentrating on expressing the appropriate emotions of the *ṭhumrī*.³¹⁰ Chloe suggests that the gist of Nadkarni's criticism is that the technical difficulty of *tāns* may actually hinder the emotional expression which he feels is necessary in a *ṭhumrī* rendition. Also, the ruddy ornamentation of this style seemed to prioritise technical brilliance over *rasa-bhāva* manifestation through emotional expression. This argument, however, may not always be true. This is so because in the first place, the very intention of the florid ornamentation is to create expressions that may be possible in their absence but perhaps not as impactful enough to be able to pull the masses towards Hindustani music. Secondly, it is simply an opinion regarding the style's priority of showcasing virtuosity over emotions and not a proven fact. Through various examples and case studies presented here, I have demonstrated that some elements of this style woven into film songs have only proven to make them more impactful and widely accepted without hindering the emotional expression, especially with respect to classical music's increase in popularity through film music. Below is a more detailed analysis of his *ṭhumrī* '*Kā karū sajanī*' in comparison with a modern adaptation of it.

³⁰⁸ Ranade, M. Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan (1901-1968).pdf

³⁰⁹ This information was also provided in a seminar on *ṭhumrī* which was conducted at the National Centre for Performing Arts in Mumbai in 2001.

³¹⁰ Alaghband-Zadeh, C. (2013). Analysing *ṭhumrī*. PhD Thesis. SOAS, University of London.

'*Kā karū sajanī*' is a popular Bollywood song rendered by K J Yesudas in the film *Swami* (1977) by Basu Chatterjee with music by Rajesh Roshan. The film is about a young woman Soudamini (known as Mini) enacted by Shabana Azmi, her love for her rich neighbour's son, Naren, enacted by Vikram and her arranged marriage to Ghanshyam, a middle-aged wheat-dealer widower from a neighbouring village, enacted by Girish Karnad. The song is picturised on the wedding night when her husband's stepbrother Nikhil is singing to a group of friends. An anguished Mini is listening from her room.

Music director Rajesh Roshan borrowed the first two lines and the general theme of the original *ṭhumrī* rendered and recorded by Bade Ghulam Ali Khan. Both the compositions are based on the *rāga* *Siṅdhu Bhairavī* with shades of *Kirwanī* and set to the *Keherwā tāla* of 8 beats. However, there are some remarkable differences between the original traditional rendition and the one by Yesudas.

The original *ṭhumrī*:

kā karū sajanī, āye na bālam
taḍpat bītī morī un bin ratiyā(n)
āye na bālam
rovat rovat kal nāhī āye
taḍpat taḍpat mohe Rām kal nāhī āye
nis din mohe birhā satāye
yād āvat jab unkī batiyā(n)
āye na bālam

I will now briefly analyse Khan's rendition, followed by a brief comparison of it with Yesudas' version before its detailed analysis in the context of the film. This aims to give a clear picture of the original, its influences, emotions captured, its usefulness in the film setting and eventually the modern version.

Video Link to Khan: [*Kā karū sajanī*, Bade Ghulam Ali Khan](#)

From 00:00:08 to 00:00:16, Khan starts with a short yet impactful *ālāp*, as if preparing the listener for the poignant melancholic cry of a desperate lover that would follow. The lamenting *pukār* '*kā karū sajanī āye na bālam*' from 00:00:17 to 00:00:31 boasts of expressions that can arguably make a listener visualise the words and actually feel the pain through the subtle drift in vocal amplitude and pressure from word to word, painting a dramatic picture in the process. The emphasis on the phrase '*āye na bālam*' has been sung in a manner such that the anguish of the lover is not only evident but almost transfers to a sensitive listener. Ideally, a *ṭhumrī* is exactly meant to do that. From 00:00:31 till 00:00:44, Khan takes his grief-filled saga further by mournfully expressing '*taḍapata bītī morī un bin ratiyā,*' the execution of which demonstrates the despondency of a lover who is suffering in the pain bequeathed upon him by the *vīpralāmbha śṛṅgāra rasa*. So far *svaras* are similar in both the versions. However, what is unique is the considerable difference in approach to the song and technical emphasis on the notes with respect to the *pukār* or the throw of words, subtle vocal techniques. It is after this point that both the versions take different paths.

The below figure 4.4 shows the Yesudas-rendered film song *mukhaḍā* with notations.

Kehervatāl

x	1	2	3	4	o	5	6	7	8
				S Kā	-	S ka	R ru	-	-
	-	-	-	g sa	P ja	MgR nī	-	-	-
	-	-	-	MgRMg ā	-	R ye	-	S na	-
NS	bā	-	-	dP lā	-	-	S ma	-	-
	-	-	-						
				P kho	-	P j	-	P ra	
P	hī	-	d hai	-	-	P pi	M yā	-	-
				g pa	R ra	R de	R -	R sī	
g	a	P	M	-	g	M	P	-	-
		-	khi	-	ya	-	-	-	-
				MgRMg ā	-	R ye	-	S na	
Gp	bā	-	-	Mg lā	-	-	R ma	-	-
	-	-	-						

Figure 4.4: Kā karū sajanī – Lyrics with svaras

Video link to the song: [Kā karū sajanī, Swami, 1977](#)

The first *antarā* is skilfully composed as they represent two *rasas*, the *vipralambha śṛṅgāra* and *virah*. Yesudas sings this in an emotionally style bringing to life the romanticism of separation on screen.



Figure 4.5: Mini looking on with longing as Nikhil sings

To show both these *rasas* effectively in terms of the lyrical content and with respect to the *rāga* as well as the rhythmic component, Rajesh Roshan directs Yesudas to start with SS Rgg RSS RMM for the first line which mean ‘whenever there is a sound’, followed by PdP Gr SS for the line which means ‘my mind starts to rush (in anticipation)’. In the first line, the emotional aspect is emphasised by the *komal gāndhār* ‘g’ and in the second line, the *komal dhaivata* ‘d’ does the job. The next two lines indicating the uncertainty of love (which sometimes does not last) are composed to the same notes as the first two. The other ‘*śuddha*’ notes through their combination within the spectrum of Sindhū Bhairavī have been implemented to manifest the romantic *rasa* which also has a rather sad mood owing it being associated with separation in the song. Further, when Nikhil sings the lines to indicate ‘our love is unique such that it cannot be hidden even if attempted to and you represent the monsoon while I am your cloud’, Mini is shown with an expression that manifests the *karuṇa rasa* with undertones of sadness, pity (on her own self), and most importantly in this case, the feeling of utter helplessness. The lyrics and the music foreground the desperation Mini feels as she longs for her lover Narendra. Yesudas’s sublime gliding from *komal gāndhār* to *komal dhaivata* and then using *śuddha dhaivata* and *madhyam*, all enhance the predicament of her unique love. The next two lines may be argued to have probably posed a challenge for the music director. In terms of narrative, it is a wedding celebration. But the bride is pining for her former lover. Thus, the words, ‘*chupe nā chupāye*’ (what cannot be hidden), signifies different things to different people. Romantic secrecy versus a transgressive secrecy. Thus, to keep intact the romantic element of the *ṭhumrī* and the feeling of helplessness, a melodic pattern is skilfully carved out

for the words ‘*sāwan ho tum maĩ hūn torī badariyā*’ (you are rain, and I am your cloud). Rain and clouds are often included in many *ṭhumrīs* as they strongly associate with the *śṛṅgāra rasa* generally. Both Rajesh Roshan and Yesudas have combated the challenge quite effectively. Roshan makes good use of Yesudas’ wide vocal range and directs him to express ‘*chupe nā chupāye*’ with a distinct *pukār* or throw of the voice, via the *svara* pattern RM P Dpp-nndPM, almost as if he is making the most crucial statement in the context of the *ṭhumrī* and the sequence. This ends with an upsurge like pattern focussing on the *pañcama* for the word ‘*sāwan*’ and ending with the *svara* pattern Rg PM gR to depict the ‘*badariyā*’ before coming back to the *sthāyī*.

The prelude to the second *antarā* makes use of the *bānsurī* to portray some imaginary romantic scenes between Mini and Narendra. The second *antarā* of the song is composed to a different tune even though it is in the same *rāga*. This is very different from the original version. This has been craftily done to suit the lyrics and within the sequence, portray Mini’s emotions which by this point in time have started to reach overwhelming heights with regards to her sadness. While there is an element of playfulness in Bade Ghulam Ali’s rendition with all its innovative technicalities, Yesudas’s film song has less erratic florid embellishments. It has a comparatively smooth character suited to the film’s narrative.

4.6 Case Study 2: Drama-infused *ṭhumrī*

This case study investigates a rare use of *ṭhumrī* where in the dramatic element of a Hindi film narrative is emphasised. The lyrical content of *ṭhumrī* typically comprises either appeals such as *mose nā rūṭho* (please do not be cross with me) or desperate forms of interrogations such as ‘*kaun galī gayo Śyām*’ (which lane did you take oh *Śyām*). These songs represent the emotions of lovers drenched in love either when separated from their beloveds or united and have two primary *rasas* associated with them: *śṛṅgāra* and *karuṇa*. Although several male singers have sung *ṭhumrī* since its inception, the anxious voice spilling its heart out through *ṭhumrī* is feminine, one who is heard speaking to and tackling her male lover. This lover is portrayed as the one who anguishes this female with either some form of pestering or then punishing her by denying his company and going away to a distant place or even showing romantic inclination towards another woman, often referred to as the female’s ‘*sautan*’(co-

wife). However, *ṭhumrīs* rendered by male singers traditionally and in Bollywood have had a crucial role to play with respect to creating *rasa-bhāva* and in a film, make the narrative more intriguing through its literary content.

To justify this claim, I will now explore another film *ṭhumrī* sung by Manna Dey in the film *Buddha Mil Gaya* (1971) directed by Hrishikesh Mukherjee, with music composed in *rāga* Khamāj by R D Burman. The film is about an elderly gentleman Giridharilal enacted by Om Prakash who murders his cheating associates. He is also a good singer and occasionally teaches a young woman Deepa, enacted by Archana.

Video link to the song: [Āyo kahā se, Buddha Mil Gaya, 1971](#)

This is a unique example of a *ṭhumrī*-styled song serving two purposes: portraying a *guru-śiṣya* relationship and enhancing the intrigue surrounding a secret serial murder plot. Innocent romance is not the purpose of this song here. After every murder, this *ṭhumrī* is taught to Deepa by Giridharilal. Two unemployed lazybones named Ajay and Bhola note this pattern.

A part of the lyrics of the song reads as follows:

Āyo kahā se Ghanaśyām

From where do you appear oh Śyām?

Rāīnā bitāyī kis dhām

Where was the (previous) night spent?

Rāt kī jāgī re, an̄khiyā haīn torī

Your eyes look like they were awake
all night.

Ho rahī galī galī, jiyā kī ćorī

The heart is being stolen on every street

Ho nahī jānā badnām, hāy Rām

Do not get blemished, Oh Lord

Giridharilal sings as if addressing himself sarcastically by the means of addressing the *ṭhumrī* to Kṛṣṇa as a majority of the genre's tradition does. The romantic pranks of Kṛṣṇa celebrated in traditional songs and poems is cleverly portrayed here by Giridharilal to elicit the contextual double-meaning hidden in the *ṭhumrī*. With respect to the *śṛṅgāra rasa* portrayal, it is as simple as an annoyed Rādhā questioning her lover Kṛṣṇa regarding his past-times of the

previous night. However, in the context of the narrative of the film, Giridharilal is the protagonist who is literally telling his own tale associated with each murder episode involving himself each time one occurs, and the innocent Deepa has no clue about it. This example focuses on the literary and psychological aspects of the genre with respect to *ṭhumrī*'s incorporation in a situation like the one described above. It may not have been imagined before this that a '*śṛṅgāra rasa-pradhān-baṅdīs kī ṭhumrī*' could have the potential to evoke suspense and for that matter even the element of thrill in a murder-mystery oriented Hindi film.

4.7 Case Study 3: A comical *dādrā*

As discussed earlier, *ṭhumrī* style of singing evolved from the seasonal folk songs of eastern Uttar Pradesh state of India.³¹¹ These songs include *caitī*, *sāwan*, *jhūlā*, *kajrī* and *dādrā*.

While *ṭhumrī* is sung at a slower pace, the *dādrā* is sung at a faster pace in both the eight beat *keherwā tāla* and the six beat *dādrā tāla*. In this section, I focus on one of the famous *pūrab-aṅg dādrās*, '*Calo kāhe ko jhūṭhī banāo batiyā*' originally made popular by Fayyaz Khan of the *Āgrā gharānā*. It was transformed into the Bollywood film song '*Haṭo kāhe ko jhūṭhī banāo batiyā*' for the film *Manzil* (1960), directed by Mandi Burman, with music composed by Sachin Dev Burman, and rendered by Manna Dey. This song is arguably the only *dādrā* used in films, portraying the *hāsya rasa* in the context of the narrative - one that is directly influenced by a traditional '*śṛṅgāra rasa-pradhān dādrā*' set to *rāga* Bhairavī. The term *aṅg* refers to a particular style of rendering a piece of Hindustani classical or semiclassical music. It basically reflects the tradition to which an artist belongs to and demonstrates unique features of that tradition with respect to voice culture, tonal modulations, *layakārī*, *tānkārī* etc. Hanz Utter argues that the term *aṅg* refers to a comprehensive collection of expressive techniques and aesthetic goals coupled with an extensive repertoire of presentable items.³¹² The two known *aṅgs* are the *pūrab aṅg* and the *Punjab aṅg*. The *pūrab aṅg* literally translates to Eastern style, which is a traditional school of *ṭhumrī* singing that evolved in the region spanning modern day states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, based upon varied expressions of text through musical interpretation. There are two sub-styles to it: a) Lucknow style (*bol-bānt*): The Awadhi dialect and Urdu language popular in and around Lucknow were used and interesting patterns were

³¹¹ Bose, S. K. (1976). Evolution of Thumri. India International Centre Quarterly, 3/4, pp. 291–293.

³¹² Utter, H F. (2011). Networks of Music and History: Vilayat Khan and the Emerging Sitār.

created using words in a rhythmic framework. *Bandīś kī ṭhumrī* was also used in this style. b) Banāras style (*bol-banāo*): The *bhāva* contained in the lyrics of the *ṭhumrī* were used in different tonal combinations and melodic phrases to to evoke subtle shades of corresponding emotions. Siddeshwari Devi, Girija Devi, Akhtari Bai, Bade Ramdas, Bindadin etc. were famous *ṭhumrī* exponents of this style.

In the figures 4.6 and 4.7 below, comedian Mehmood portrays *abhinaya* on the lyrics:

<i>Gair kā sāth haĩ aur roz mulāqātē haĩ</i>	You are with another everyday
<i>pyār haĩ us ke liye aur ham se faqat bātē</i>	You love him and for me have only words
<i>are haṭo kāhe ko jhūṭhī banāo batiyā</i>	Stop it, why do you make false promises
<i>are haṭo kāhe ko jhūṭhī banāo</i>	Stop it, why do you make false promises



Figures 4.6 and 4.7: Actor Mehmood's *rasa-bhāva* manifesting expressions

The gist of the lyrics is that actor Mehmood is basically complaining light-heartedly to the girl he likes, by telling her not to fool him by false promises, when she is actually seeing another man instead. The crucial point here is that one would imagine anything but comedy when listening to the original *dādrā* sung by Fayyaz Khan presented in the following link.

Video link to the original *dādrā* sung by Fayyaz Khan: [Calo kāhē ko, Fayyaz Khan](#)

Throughout the rendition of the *dādrā*, one can feel the seriousness of the singer's 'complaint' to his lover, and the sheer distress in the voice to complement his feelings of *vipralambha śṛṅgāra* that transform into *karuṇa*. Fayyaz Khan's singing is full of pathos. From 00:01:39 till 00:02:38, there is an unhurried approach and purposeful stressing of *svaras*.

However, Manna Dey's singing and Mehmood's *abhinaya* have transformed the *dādrā* and added a comic twist to it.

Video link to the song by Manna Dey: [Haṭo kāhē ko, Manzil, 1960](#)

Note the *ālāp* from 00:00:01 till 00:00:07, which is sung in an unusual way, as compared to a conventionally done *ālāp* in a concert performance. Manna Dey directly sings the *tār saptak svaras* hurriedly, instead of initiating the *ālāp* with lower, and middle octave notes. He sings three rounds of *pukārs* through the *ālāp* and then begins the song with the words, 'rain kā sāth haĩ aur roz mulākatē haĩ' (There are meetings every night). The elongated *mīṇḍ*s implemented while stressing on the words 'sāth', 'haĩ' and 'mulākatē' already start infusing the comic flavour to the song from 00:00:08 to 00:00:18. Further, he sings the lines, '*pyār haĩ us ke liye aur ham se faqat bātē haĩ*' (You love him and for me have only words) from 00:00:19 to 00:00:26. The word 'haĩ' is sung with a twist of humour by making it sound funny. Then, at 00:00:27, Manna Dey's expression of the word 'haṭo' perfectly matches Mehmood's slapstick moves. Further, at 00:00:36, note Manna Dey's way of singing '*banāo batiyā*' which indicates humour instead of an expression of indignation. From 00:00:57 to 00:01:25, some extra dramatic elements are added to make the song more effective. For example, at 00:01:03, Manna Dey sings with a giggle-like expression. There are several such instances till the end of the song. The *dādrā tāla* is also used in an unconventional way to accompany the

song. This is done with the use of clever gap-fillers to express comedy at regular intervals throughout the course of the song. Thus, as observed in this example, such is the potential of the *ṭhumrī* genre especially with respect to engagement with a creative drama-focused domain like Bollywood that it has made music directors, filmmakers, lyricists and playback singers think out of the box in order to deliver impactful songs. Manna Dey has attributed his capability to render such complex compositions to the training received from his uncle and singer Kṛṣṇa Chandra Dey who was known to possess mastery over several Hindustani musical genres like *dādrā*, *ṭhumrī*, *kajrī* and *ghazal*. His training is particularly evident in this *dādrā* rendition which in turn creates a greater impact on the audience owing to its capability of manifesting a vast array of *rasas*.

4.8 Case Study 4: Contemporary film *kajrī*

The song, *āoge jab tum sājnā* has been directly influenced by the traditional *kajrī* 'Sāwan kī ṛitu āyī re sajanīyā' to create the *vipralambha śṛṅgāra rasa* in the film *Jab We Met* (2007) directed by Imtiaz Ali with music composed by Sandesh Shandilya (guest composer for this song only). This song is perhaps the only *kajrī* inspired song in 21st century Bollywood. It is also the first time that the classical musician Rashid Khan sang for a Hindi film. Since he also specialised in *ṭhumrī* it gives a special status to it.

The film is about an impetuous young woman Geet, played by Kareena Kapoor and Aditya played by Shahid Kapoor who is an heir to a rich industrialist. Geet believes she is in love with another man, Anshuman played by Tarun Arora before the film goes on to explore the relationship between Geet and Aditya.

Video link to the song: [Āoge jab tum, Jab We Met, 2007](#)

It is a song which is picturised on Geet and Aditya when he returns in search of the missing Geet. Earlier in the film, he had helped her elope to meet her lover Anshuman. He was unaware that Anshuman rejected her, and that Geet was missing. As he pieces the story together, this song comes as a background score to feature his horror at realising the truth juxtaposed with Geet's painful, lonely and hidden life.

The theme of a traditional *kajrī* is usually centred around the *vipralambha* aspect of the *śṛṅgāra rasa* which is exactly the requirement of this particular part of the film narrative. Despite *śṛṅgāra* being the principal *rasa*, we can see a manifestation of the *karuṇa rasa* in both the protagonists' expressions. This combination of *rasas* is supported by *rāga* Māñjh Khamāj's nature of sadness-infused romance. Rashid Khan being a trained Hindustani singer known for his delicate touch in semi-classical singing, has been able to reproduce the melody with all the appropriate expressions required to make a *kajrī* most effective. However, the choice of adapting the original *kajrī* and then further improvising the film song with novel combinations in Māñjh Khamāj is in my view, the key to its popularity. The song starts with a *bānsurī* prelude as follows with the lyrics and its *svara* patterns as in figures 4.8 and 4.9:

S-GG RG....M GRS |

S P MMM ...G RGMG RS |

Keherva tāl

x	1	2	3	4	o	5	6	7	8
				Ṇ	Ṇ	Ṇ	Ṇ	Ṇ	
			Ā	-	o	-	ge		
S	-	S	-	-	S	S	S		
ja	-	ba	-	-	tu	m	ho		
^M G	^M G	-	S	Ṇ	-	-	-		
sā	-	-	ja	nā	-	-	-		
				-	M	-	M	M	G
				añ	g	nā	-		
R	-	-	G	S	Ṇ	-	S		
-	-	-	phū	-	la	-	khi		
S	-	S	-						
len	-	ge	-						

Figure 4.8: Svava notation (mukhaḍā)

Let us compare the first two lines of this film song to the *svava* combinations used in the first two lines of the original *kajrī*.

Video link to the original *kajrī* rendered by Shobha Gurtu: [Sāwan kī rtu, Shobha Gurtu](#)

It may be observed that the lines ‘*sāwan kī rtū*’ are also composed to the same *svaras* as ‘*āoge jab tum.*’ The mood however changes slightly when the lines ‘*āyī re sajaniyā*’ are sung as compared to the lines *o sājanā*. The next line *pṛitam ghar nahī āye* also uses nearly the same *svaras* as *aṅganā phūl khileṅge*. The original composer (unknown or traditional) of the *kajrī* is also calling out to his/her lover and so is the writer of the new song. The way of calling out to the lovers is slightly different through a subtle variation in the *svaras* which then brings about two flavours of the *śṛṅgāra rasa*. In Shobha Gurtu’s version, when she sings the lines ‘*pṛitam ghar nahī āye*’ (my lover does not return come home), there is an element of sadness and distress in the musical expression, which is full of pathos and *karuṇa rasa*. From 00:00:35 till 00:01:00, she sets the mood by stressing musically on the words *āyī re sajaniyā* through some variations in the *svaras*, deviating slightly from *rāga Māñjh Khamāj*. She repeats the lines to indicate that the ‘monsoon has arrived, but you have not.’ Finally, at 00:01:00 she sings *pṛitam ghar nahī āye* which brings about that element of *karuṇa* more effectually. However, in the film song, for the first lines, Rashid Khan sings a happy line ‘*aṅganā phūl khileṅge*’ (flowers will blossom at the doorstep) to complement the preceding lines which mean ‘when you (my lover) will arrive). Here, Khan sings the *svaras* of *Māñjh Khamāj* with intricate *harkats* for the words ‘*aṅganā*’ and ‘*phūl,*’ manifesting the *śṛṅgāra rasa*. Gurtu’s version is further improvised and melodically enhanced, as at 00:01:30, she switches to *rāga Miyā Malhār* to portray the word *sāwan* and create a monsoon depicting seasonal ambience. She also switches to the sombre, pathos filled *rāga Kaliṅgrā* for the words ‘*dil kī duniyā ḍol rahī hai*’ (the world of my heart is shaking) at 00:04:01 till 00:04:20. While such improvisations suit a traditional *kajrī* rendition, whether they sound appropriate in a modern film song is debatable. Rashid Khan also improvises, but not far from the melodic reaches of *Māñjh Khamāj* to extend to *rāgas* of other *thāṭs* and contrasting moods.

In the first *antarā* of the film song, the lyrics and the composition lean towards the film’s situation and transforms the traditional *kajrī* into comparatively modern song, hummed by a lover of the 21st century cosmopolitan India.

x	2	3	4	0	6	7	8
1				5			
	S nai	R nā	G te	R re	S -	S ka	G ja
G rā	- ā	R re	R haī	- -	- -	- -	- -
- -	Ṇ nai	R no	Ṇ se	Ḍ hum	- -	Ṗ dil	- -
S hā	- ā	S re	S haī	- -	- -	- -	- -
-	S an	R jā	G ne	R hi	S -	S te	G re
G nai	M -	GG no	R ne	- -	- -	- -	- -
- -	Ṇ wā	R de	Ṇ ki	Ḍ ye	- -	Ṗ ka	Ṗ yi
S sā	- -	S re	S haī	- -	- -	- -	- -
-	G sā	P so	P kī	D lay	- -	- -	- -
-	G madh	P yam	P cha	^s D le	- -	- -	- -
-	G to	D se	^N D ka	P he	- -	- -	- -
-	-	-	P ba	P ra	R se	- -	G gā
G sā	-	M van	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	D ba	N ra	D se	-	M gā
P sā	- -	P van	- -	- -	S jhū	P -	D m

M jhū	G -	G -	G m	G ke	MG -	R -	S -
-	-	-	-	^R PM do	-	M dil	G -
-	R -	-	^G RG ai	-	S se	-	N mi
S le	- -	S ge	-				

Figure 4.9: Svara notation (*antarā*)

One may observe that the central theme of both the original *kajrī* and its filmic adaptation revolves around longing or waiting for the lover. The original words ‘*sāwan kī ṛtu āyī re sajaniyā, prītam ghar nahī āye*’ mean that while the rainy season has arrived, my beloved has still not. On the other hand, the filmic words ‘*āoge jab tum sājanā, aṅganā phūl khileṅge*’ means that when you, my beloved, will come, flowers shall bloom in my courtyard. As compared to the traditional *kajrī*, the film song is written to suit the narrative. But one may wonder why it was used in the film. Chinmoyee Das suggests that *kajrī*, a communicative musical tradition to express love and affection, was mostly performed by female villagers to primarily communicate their feelings and expectations of love.³¹³ It also had the ability to liberate the spirit of these women with simple vernacular expressions in local dialects of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. This allowed the rural masses to engage with the genre and respond to the appeals highlighting an array of human emotions like happiness, cohesion, excitement, humiliation, repulsion, fear etc. It may be argued that considering these qualities of a *kajrī*, music director Sandesh Shandilya may have probably intended to keep the genre alive in modern times through the medium of Bollywood. This, he achieved not only without disturbing the narrative, but by proving that its implementation enhanced the entire sequence. In this case, both the male and female protagonists have expressed *rasas* through facial expressions and successfully carried the true essence of the genre forward.

³¹³ Das, C. (2020). *Kajri: A Communicative Musical Tradition to Express Love and Affection*, International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews, 1/1, pp. 43-45.

4.9 Case Study 5: Contemporary film *ṭhumrī*

This final case study looks at a classic example of an adaptation of *ṭhumrī* in contemporary Hindi cinema. The song '*Ān milo sajanā*' from the film *Gadar* (2001) directed Anil Sharma with music composed by Uttam Singh is pictured on Saqina enacted by Amisha Patel. The film is a cross-country love story set during the partition of India. The song is sung by two prominent contemporary Hindustani classical singers Ajoy Chakraborty and Parween Sultana. After the resounding success of the song '*Humeĩ tumse pyār kitnā*' (*Kudrat*, 1980) in the *ṭhumrī aṅg*, Sultana was singing again for Hindi film.

The song begins as follows:

<i>ān milo sajanā... sajanā re</i>	Come meet me my lover ... Oh lover
<i>ān milo sajanā</i>	Come meet me my lover
<i>aṅkhiyon mẽ nā āye niṅdiyā</i>	My eyes do not get sleep
<i>aṅkhiyon mẽ nā āye niṅdiyā</i>	My eyes do not get sleep
<i>mohe nā bhāye kājāl biṅdiyā</i>	I have antipathy towards my kohl and bindi
<i>sūnā paḍā aṅganā ... aṅganā</i>	My courtyard is empty ... my courtyard
<i>sūnā paḍā aṅganā ... aṅganā</i>	My courtyard is empty ... my courtyard
<i>sūnā paḍā aṅganā re ... aṅganā re</i>	My courtyard is empty ... my courtyard
<i>ān milo sajanā ... sajanā re</i>	Come and meet me my love ... my love
<i>ān milo sajanā ... sajanā re</i>	Come and meet me my love ... my love
<i>ān milo sajanā</i>	Come and meet me my love

The main reason to choose this modern *ṭhumrī* for analysis is that it stands out from its counterparts with respect to form, structure, *gāyakī*, and last but not the least, it is the only known duet- *ṭhumrī* in films thus far.

Saqina is a Pakistani girl in love with Tara Singh, an Indian who she meets and marries during a visit to the newly formed India. However, when her father finds out about this alliance, he

hatches a plan to conspire against their marriage. He succeeds in bringing her back to Lahore. This song appears during her forced engagement to a Pakistani.

Video link to the song: [Ān milo sajanā, Gadar, 2001](#)

The *ṭhumrī* starts with an *ālāp* for the first part of the scene throughout which it is used, which shows Saqina's father breaking out the news to his daughter that she must forget her Indian husband Tara Singh and never expect to meet him again. The most striking point to note here is the presentation of the *ālāp* by singer Ajoy Chakraborty which has been deliberately done in a way that the usual sprightly and energetic flavour of Khamāj is transformed into a melancholic one to reflect the immense grief being experienced by Saqina.

Referring to the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Leena Cheriyan points out that the four primary sentiments mentioned by *Bharata* are the *śṛṅgāra*, the *raudra*, the *vīram*, and the *bibhatsa*, and the other four arise out of these basic sentiments.³¹⁴ The *śṛṅgāra* *rasa* has *rati* or love as its *sthāyī bhāva* which in turn has two forms, love in union or *sambhoga* and love in separation or *vipralambha*. Khamāj is known to be almost an epitome of both these types of *śṛṅgāra rasas*. The singers in this case deliberately attempt to manifest the *vipralambha śṛṅgāra rasa* to portray the sorrow felt by Saqina owing to her separation from Tara Singh.



Figure 4.10: Saqina's father breaking out Tara Singh's news to his daughter

³¹⁴ Cheriyan, L. (2017). The Psychological and Physiological Relevance of Bharathamuni's Theory of Rasa: A Study on the Basis of Colorgenics.

Just as the father leaves her alone, a tearful Saqina is seen heartbroken and engulfed in grief at which point the accompanying instruments join in to engage with the *mukhaḍā*, 'ān milo sajnā.'

From 00:01:46 to 00:02:00, the *sāraṅgī* accompaniment is deployed cleverly to portray the scene in which Saqina's mother is shown disrupting the telephone conversation that Saqina attempts to make to speak with her husband Tara. *Sāraṅgī* is known to be the instrument most suitable to imitate the human cry which it does with near perfection in this case of a brief solo, manifesting pathos followed by the entry of Parveen Sultana's vocals. The *sāraṅgī* is able to reproduce a majority of the ten characteristics of musical manifestations enumerated in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* including melody, capability of enchanting the listeners, aesthetic expressions of moods and sentiments, producing a wide range of notes, harmony of notes etc.³¹⁵



Figure 4.11: Saqina's unsuccessful attempt to Call Tara

From 00:02:00 till 00:02:23, Parveen Sultana introduces an *ālāp* in the backdrop for a particular sequence of interest here. She sings as if standing up for the feminine voice (which a *ṭhumrī* quintessentially represents) for a scene showing Saqina attempting to leave her home while her maid is trying to stop her at 00:02:15. The *ālāp* portrays the emotional drama developing between Saqina and her maid from 00:02:00 till 00:02:20 as if singing aloud both their feelings.

³¹⁵ Raj, S V. (1984). *Sarangi in the modern context*, pp. 26-34.



Figure 4.12: Saqina being stopped by her maid

From 00:02:20 onwards, Parveen sings the same *sthāyī* as Ajoy till 00:02:40 when she starts the *antarā* ‘*caṅdā āye tāre āye, āne wāle sāre āye*’ which has been written ruefully with a poetic liberty to express that all ‘others’ including even the moon and the stars have arrived. At 00:02:53 while these lines are sung, Saqina’s groom-to-be arranged and a friend are shown along with other guests as shown below (figure 4.13).



Figure 4.13: Saqina’s Pakistani groom with a friend

Parveen then continues to finish the *antarā*, ‘*āye tumhī saṅg nā,*’ lamenting that only the one who Saqina had been waiting for, did not arrive. At 00:03:09, Saqina is seen entering the hall where the mehfil is going on, dressed as a bride, and looking out for her beloved who obviously has not made it. These lines in Parveen’s voice represents Saqina’s desperate gaze at 00:03:09 as shown below (figure 4.14).



Figure 4.14: Saqina being brought to the ceremony hall

At 00:04:16, Ajoy's final *antarā* '*bītī jāye yunhī umariyā, kis raṅg se maī raṅgū cunariyā*' (years are passing by (without the beloved)) is emblematically enacted by the swirling of the courtesans, while the swirls represent the passing of years as shown below (figure 4.15).



Figure 4.15: The courtesans' swirls

Towards the end at 00:04:54 when Ajoy elaborates on the phrase '*bhāye koī raṅg nā,*' Saqina's expressions as part of her disgusted gaze towards her father, indeed depict her feeling of 'not liking any colours' as shown below (figure 4.16).



Figure 4.16: A shocked and disgusted Saqina

The song finally ends with some climax-focussed *laggīs*³¹⁶ on the *tablā* and an anguished Saqina leaving the party scene to be in her room alone with her tears at 00:05:09 as shown below (figure 4.17).



Figure 4.17: A heart-broken Saqina

What we have discovered through this case study is something that has gone beyond the realms of a straightforward *ṭhumrī* rendition. A seemingly simple *śṛṅgāra-rasa-pradhān ṭhumrī* has been able to paint a complex emotional picture for its audiences.

³¹⁶ Short, repetitive patterns on the *tablā* performed at high speeds, mostly accompanied light-classical genres like *ṭhumrī* and *ghazal*.

4.10 Conclusion

The above analysis provides answers to some important debates around *ṭhumrī* in film music. For example, would singers like Mohammed Rafi, Manna Dey, Lata Mangeshkar, and others have the same approach to their *gāyakī* without the influence of *ṭhumrī*? Would the music composers have had the same approach without exposure to *ṭhumrī*? Would lyricists be able to write with effective and attractive vocabulary without *ṭhumrī*? And finally, would Bollywood cinema be the same without the influence of *ṭhumrī*?

Ṭhumrī has given a special identity to a major style of Hindi film music that is not given due credit. In fact, some compositions are direct copies of traditional *ṭhumrīs*. The ethics of borrowing without giving due credit to the original source of music is an ongoing phenomenon. The value and beauty that Hindustani semi-classical music as an over-arching genre has added to Hindi film music, is undebatable. Even in this day and age, when Bollywood film makers and actors are known to prefer songs with a western or world-music touch, one can hear the echo of *ṭhumrī andāz/aṅg* in selected compositions. Hindi film music has also prevented this expressive genre from disappearing into the dust of time. While listeners may not have an understanding or appreciation of the *gāyakī* of Bade Ghulam Ali or the court music of Wajid Ali Shah's or the folk songs of Northwest India, it is fact that they are aurally aware of *ṭhumrī* because of Bollywood.

It may thus be argued that the overwhelming popularity of Bollywood, which is neither accidental nor coincidental owing to ample efficacy accorded to its productions through various means, is also partly because of the implementation of semi-classical Hindustani classical music at regular intervals throughout its history. *Ṭhumrī* plays an important role in forming ideas about, and attitude to, the 'Indian' world, perhaps also in setting agendas, and enabling (or not) supplementary ways of envisioning emotions and aesthetics in society.³¹⁷ From the evidence produced in this study, it may be safely said that the genre is not merely an appendage to Bollywood, but a distinguished part of the very spirit of it, which is still alive in some form or another.

³¹⁷ Perkins, T. (2000). Who (and what) is it for? in Gledhill, C. and Williams, L. (Eds.) (2000), *Reinventing Film Studies*. New York: Arnold.

PART 2: FILM SONGS AND FILM NARRATIVES

This part of the thesis aims to apply the *rasa-rāga-tāla* paradigm to film songs and film narratives through a focus on the role of music directors/composers and the film makers in the Bombay film industry. Through chapter five, I have examined the works of selected legendary Hindi film music directors and composers and also discussed their individual contributions that shaped Indian film music history. Through chapters six and seven, I have analysed *Jalsaghar* (1958) by Satyajit Ray and *Devdas* (2002) by Sanjay Leela Bhansali. I have selected *Jalsaghar* for analysis despite it being a non-Bollywood film owing to its heavy implementation of Hindustani classical music embedded within *rasa*-infused representations of some key Indian actors. *Devdas* is considered to be a modern masterpiece in Indian cinematic history. Its much-celebrated imaginative theatrical presentation and musical content echoes not only early Indian cinema but takes us back to the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. I end my thesis with a conclusion, glossary and bibliography.

Chapter 5: Hindi Film Music Directors and Classical Music

5.1 Introduction

Through this chapter, I aim to highlight the works of music composers and directors that have made a significant impact on the lives of connoisseurs, musicians, and music lovers. My selection is based on artists who:

- Took an individual stylistic approach to composing film music
- Created novel melodies by adherence to principles of Hindustani classical and semi-classical music
- Introduced popular Hindustani classical vocalists and instrumentalists to Hindi film music
- Took *rāga-saṅgīta* from the princely courts and aristocratic soirees to the masses
- Created imaginative background music scores

Although there are numerous renowned music composers in the history of Indian cinema, I aim to focus on the work of four of them who in my opinion relate the most to the above-mentioned criteria: Naushad Ali, Roshan, Madan Mohan and Rahul Dev Burman. The aim is not to analyse every line or phrase of the chosen songs but only those parts, which are sufficient in aiding the exploration of each music director's compositional approach through a particular *rāga*. The purpose of this chapter is not to provide detailed musical notations of all the compositions selected for analyses. While notations are presented for complete songs in some cases, others use notations only where deemed necessary. While the focus is on music compositions, the chapter will also look at each music director's personal history of engagement with Hindustani classical music and their efforts of promoting it in various ways.

A production house in India does not begin with a story or a script, nor does it begin with acquiring a successful director or with signing a superstar.³¹⁸ Rather, most producers start their productions by recording a song, and storywriters weave the lyrics of the songs into the stories as productions progress. As Tyrrell et al. put it, 'With a national and diasporic audience speaking over 500 languages, Bollywood must operate as a 'universal' cultural form, and

³¹⁸ Rahman, S. (2016). The Role of Music in Indian Cinema.

music is the primary means by which the films achieve this pan-cultural status'.³¹⁹ Such is the importance of music in Indian cinema that without it, a film may not perform well at the box office. Music directors are responsible for the songs which are composed and recorded before filming begins, so that actors can dance and mime to the recordings during filming and for the film's background music, which is usually composed after filming is completed in response to the images.³²⁰ Peter Manuel states that film music is by far the single largest category of popular music in South Asia, of which India is the biggest player.³²¹ Film music has become the music most listened to in India. Bollywood's music is known as *filmī-saṅgīta* of which *filmī-gīt* is a subset. *Filmī-saṅgīta* (Hindi for film music) consists of the underlying or elemental score of a movie including the title score and the background music apart from the individual film songs known as *filmī gīt* (Hindi for film song). These *gīts* are made to occur at regular intervals by the film director, to complement the film plot.

The artists primarily responsible for making this happen are the music composers and directors, whose creations are then orchestrated by music arrangers and performed by playback singers. The lyricists often write to the meter of the composed music. However, in a few instances composers create the tune for a pre-written piece of poetry. In whichever way the songs were created, their composers ensured that every film had at least a few numbers that would leave an impression on the hearts and minds of listeners of various cultural and traditional backgrounds. James McConachie states:

As India marched into an uncertain future in 1947, film songs offered something unique: they helped create a sense of belonging to one nation, something that the divisive right wingers in India chanting 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' could never achieve. When Hindi Film Singers sang, nobody cared, whether Mohammad Rafi was a Muslim or Lata was a Hindu Brahmin. Its great music bridged the gap between Hindus and Muslims, better than any politician (read Gandhi or Nehru) ever could.³²²

³¹⁹ Tyrrell, H., and Dudrah, R. (2006). MUSIC IN THE BOLLYWOOD FILM. In I. Conrich and E. Tincknell (Eds.), *Film's Musical Moments*, pp. 195–208.

³²⁰ Beaster-Jones, J, Sarrazin N. (2017). Music in Contemporary Indian Film: Memory, Voice, Identity, p. 29.

³²¹ Manuel, P. (1988). Popular Music in India: 1901-86. *Popular Music*, 7/2, pp. 157–176.

³²² Broughton, S. et al. (1999). *World Music-The rough guide*. Harper Collins, 2, pp. 106.

One of the prime examples justifying McConachie’s observation is a *Hari-Bhajan* (a devotional song dedicated to Lord Kṛṣṇa) by the trio of Naushad, Shakeel Badayuni and Mohammad Rafi, who all belong to the Islamic faith by birth. In spite of their religious backgrounds (which is in stark contrast to the principles of the Hindu Philosophy), lyricist Shakeel Badayuni penned a *bhajan* in *śuddha* Hindi (an unadulterated ‘Sanskritised’ form of the Hindi language which does not include words from any other languages) flavour of the Brajbhāṣā in praise of Kṛṣṇa, which was composed in *rāga* Mālkauns by Naushad and sung with an exquisite *bhāva* of devotion by Rafi, bringing about a plethora of *rasas*.

There has always been a symbiotic relationship in India between the success of a film and the popularity of its songs. Western influences on Indian film music had been there from the very beginning and live orchestras that accompanied silent films had a fair mix of Indian and Western instruments, as is evident from various soundtracks. Hindi film song itself has received focussed critical attention from scholars and academics of Indian cinema and has been studied for its rather convoluted linkage with the film’s narrative, as a personification of excess, to express *rasa-bhāva* that the ordinary cannot contain.³²³ However, let alone sustained attention, not even minimum effort has been taken to academically scrutinize how the Hindi film song managed to achieve this externalisation of feelings and emotions in the context of the film diegesis.

While *Rāga-saṅgīta* was mainly the fundamental source of motivation and even raw material in the process of creating music, the approach of its creators (music directors/composers) should not be neglected as it forms a crucial element of Hindi film music studies. Evidence of this may be seen in various songs, some of which I will be discussing further in the chapter.

5.2 Madan Mohan

In this section, I examine two songs by composer Madan Mohan: *Hum haĩ matā-e-kūcā-o-bāzār kī tarah* from *Dastak* (1970) directed by Rajinder Singh Bedi; and *Merī awāz suno* from *Naunihal* (1967) directed by Raj Marbros. My discussion considers Madan Mohan’s sentimental nature and its effect on his music leading to creations evoking mainly the *virah*,

³²³ Tanvir, K. (2025). A Necklace of Songs: Transmediating Hindi Film Music. In J. Llamas-Rodriguez (Ed.), *Media Travels: Toward an Atlas of Global Media*, pp. 109–119.

karuṇa śṛṅgāra rasas. It also takes into account his passion for Hindustani Classical music and an ability to compose and present *rāga* based melodies with a distinct flavour despite never being trained formally in either vocal or instrumental music.

Madan Mohan's compositions were mostly wistful and demonstrated glimpses of a unique approach in their creations with respect to *rāgas*, rhythmic patterns, instrumentation and the *gāyakī* itself. Raju Bharatan argued that Madan Mohan was a composer of the classes and not masses. The day after Madan Mohan's demise, Bharatan reported: 'he was the last of our class composers. Now the "fight composers" have the field all to themselves'.³²⁴ While Ashok D. Ranade observes that composers tend to follow certain formulae without contravening broad dictates of the storyline while dealing with typical content,³²⁵ this may not hold true in the case of Madan Mohan, as can be seen from a variety of his tunes and musical arrangements.³²⁶

My own study of Madan Mohan's music and discussions with other experts in the field of Hindi film music, such as Tushar Bhatia and Halim Jaffer Khan, confirm that two particular qualities of Madan Mohan were responsible in aiding him create his music. First, there was his emotional and sensitive nature, about which his son Sanjeev Kohli has spoken.³²⁷ Secondly, he was also known to be extremely attached to Hindustani classical. His close contacts with contemporary maestros, including Ustād Ameer Khan, Begum Akhtar, Rais Khan, Vilayat Khan amongst others, his attendance at their soirees, and his regular engagement in musical discussions with them all bear testimony to his passion for the art form.

Joel Douek suggests that while most lay people possess the capacity to feel emotions and have them triggered or enhanced by musical cues, music composers need to have a higher

³²⁴ MADAN MOHAN... The Musical Legend | The Official Website of Madan Mohan. (n.d.). www.madanmohan.in. Retrieved May 15, 2024, from https://www.madanmohan.in/html/tribute/guest_articles/raju_bharatan1.html

³²⁵ Ranade, A. (2006). *Hindi Film Songs: Music Beyond Boundaries*.

³²⁶ Although his music was arranged by a music arranger named Sonik, it was done under the main composer's direction. In earlier days, most Bollywood composers employed a music arranger. The crux or essence of a song-tune, or composition, and its notation along with the nuances of the *rāga-tāla* comprises of the complete melody which is generated by the music director. Next comes the role of the arranger who may decide in liaison with the music director what instruments, including singing voices, to use, followed by a formation of a methodology to notate the music, including the meter of the music. The music director and the arranger along with occasional suggestions from the film directors, lyricists and rarely even lead actors then collectively decide on interpretation(s) of the melody in terms of rhythmical and tonal variations, phrasing, embellishments, articulation etc.

³²⁷ From an encounter with Kohli in 1998 in Mumbai.

level of response to this stimulus.³²⁸ They need to have something similar to an open conduit between feeling and fingers. Douek feels that they also need to have a channel to move a complex, wordless inner experience toward an outward expression. Madan Mohan showed exemplary evidence of this rare quality, often in the form of highly sophisticated, stylistic, and mystical melodic statements particularly through his *ghazal* compositions in films.

5.2.1 *Hum haĩ matā-e-kūcā-o-bāzār kī tarah (Dastak, 1970)*

The *ghazal* genre is such that it requires its writer, composer, and singer to have all the above-mentioned qualities in order to do justice to its form and last for generations to come. One of the examples which demonstrates these skills of Madan Mohan is the first song that I analyse (*Hum haĩ matā-e-kūcā-o-bāzār kī tarah*) which is one of the most acclaimed *ghazal* compositions of *Hindi* film music and a complex one to render effectively. The song is from the film *Dastak* (1970) directed by Rajinder Singh Bedi.

Dastak is a film about romantic dreams of young hopeful lovers. A young couple find their dreams crashing in their search for a home. Hamid (played by ace actor Sanjeev Kumar) and Salma (played by Rehana Sultana) are the young couple misled by the agent Akhtar Maratiwale (played by Anwar Hussain). They are trapped into renting a small apartment amid a red-light area whose earlier occupant is a prostitute Shamshad who has also been a talented singer. Due to this, the couple are frequently disturbed by Shamshad's old customers. The knocks on the door increase day by day disturbing the terrified couple. Salma is a trained Hindustani classical singer who is enthusiastic about her art and maintains a regular *riyāz* routine. This adds to the couple's agony as passers-by mistake her as the replacement for Shamshad. Unstable financial circumstances force Salma to pick up the *tānpurā* and sing for an old, rich client of Shamshad, Seth Brij Mohan (played by Kamal Kapoor). She sings out her agony and the feel of her tortured state through the song '*Hum haĩ*' and its poetry.

Video link to the song: [Hum haĩ, Dastak, 1970](#)

³²⁸ Douek, J. (2013). Music and emotion-a composer's perspective. *Frontiers in systems neuroscience*, 7, p. 82.

I shall first discuss the lyrics and their meaning. This information may be used as a reference to further understand the musicality aspect.

<i>Hum haĩ matā-e-kūcā-o-bāzār kī tarah</i>	I am like a commodity in markets for sale
<i>Uṭṭhī haĩ har nigāh kharīdār kī tarah</i>	Every eye gazing at me like a customer
<i>Woh to Kahīn haĩ aur magar dil ke ās pās</i>	He is elsewhere but close to my heart
<i>Phirtī haĩ koī śaye nigāh-e-yār kī tarah</i>	Like my lover’s eyes a shadow follows

Cinematically, there are three characters in this scene. First, a frail young woman with her *tānpurā* lost in her music with *karuṇa*-filled poetic expressions. This also signifies Meerabai of the famed 15th century *bhakti* movement (figure 5.1). Second is her husband Hamid (figure 5.2) and third is *seṭh* Brij Mohan (figure 5.3). This scene with shot-counter shot shows three emotional states. While *seṭh* Brij Mohan is relishing the song and the singer with a layer of eroticism, Hamid is fuming helplessly.



Figure 5.1: Rehana Sultana’s face radiating the *karuṇa rasa* and the *bhakti rasa*



Figure 5.2: Sanjeev Kumar staring in *bhayānak rasa*



Figure 5.3: Seth Brij Mohan's erotic expression

Here, Madan Mohan deploys *rāga* Bhairavī to create a unique melody without disturbing its grammatical borders. There are no fixed performance rules for this *rāga*, and it is generally accepted that an artist may create melodic patterns within the approximate framework of Bhairavī to create aesthetically pleasing phrases. This is true for classical vocal and instrumental performers. However, as far as film music composition is concerned, more liberties have been taken leading to songs that may show glimpses of more than one *rāga* in its structure. In this case, Madan Mohan brings about a unique colour of Bhairavī through an unconventional combination of *svaras*. He avoids the usual patterns of the *rāga* such as S-g-m-P-m-g-m-r-S, or g-m-P-d-P, or m-g-S-r-S. For example, he composes the first two words of the *sthāyī* by sliding from S to M for the expression 'hum haĩ.' Before this composition, one may have never heard a Bhairavī *bandīś* or even a lighter *cīz* that starts this way (with a slight

kaṇ from S to r before sliding to M). The *sthāyī* may be translated as, ‘With every person eyeing me as a buyer would see a market (*bazār*) item, I feel like I’m a commodity sold in the market.’ The expression ‘*hum haī*’ (I am) composed to the notes S-M strike an almost instant connection between the *nāyikā*’s pain and helplessness (in expressing that she is nothing more than a commodity) and the audiences’ expectation of a satisfying dramatic effect. Infused with the *karuṇa rasa*, she expresses her grief through poetry tuned to the melancholic notes of Bhairavī.

5.2.2 *Merī āwāz suno (Naunihal, 1967)*

While in the above song, we see Madan Mohan’s unique approach to a *rāga*, in another song, ‘*Merī āwāz suno*,’ from the film *Naunihal* (1967) directed by Raj Marbros, we see him engaging with a *rāga* rarely used in Hindi film. He employs *rāga* Jansammohinī to melodically embellish an extremely emotional poem by lyricist Kaifi Azmi and rendered by playback singer Mohammad Rafi. The scene depicts the funeral procession of the then Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru. A young boy who has travelled to Delhi from his far away village to meet the prime minister discovers that he is no more. This Madan Mohan melody plays in the backdrop of this situation which shows the actual historical footage of Nehru’s funeral. The song is penned as if Nehru is himself singing to the boy who could not meet his idol. Madan Mohan’s selection of this particular *rāga* to portray the *karuṇa rasa* (conveying sadness and nostalgia) is surprising, since Jansammohinī has no *komal* or *tīvra svaras* apart from the lone *komal niṣāda*. Usually, r, g and d *svaras* are responsible for inducing the *rasa-bhāvas* manifesting the *karuṇa* element; but here he chooses a *rāga* that does not include these three *svaras*. Jansammohinī is derived from another *rāga*, Kalavatī, by introducing *śuddha ṛṣbha* into its scale, and manifests the *rasas* of sadness and nostalgia. However, these *rasas* are not manifested by simply reproducing its ascending and descending notes grammatically but by creatively engaging with the permutations and combinations of its *calan*, *pakaḍ* and exploring the *svara* combinations. How Madan Mohan achieves this can be seen from the compositional analysis, in figure 5.4.

Video link to the song: [Merī āwāz suno, Naunihal, 1967](#)

Dadra tāl

x				o		
1	2	3		4	5	6
		SG me		P rī	Ś ā	- ā
n wā	- ā	D z		P su	G no	- o
		SG pyā		P r	Ś kā	- ā
n rā	- ā	D z		P su	G no	- o
		Ś me		Ś rī	n ā	- a
Ś wā	Ś ā	Ś z		Ś su	Ś no	- o
		Ś maī		Ś ne	ṚṚ ek	-
Ġ phu	- -	Ġ l		Ġ jo	Ġ si	Ṣ -
Ġ n	ṚŚŚ -	nn se		Dn la	PD gā	- -
Ś ra	- -	Ś khā		- -	Ś thā	- -
		Ś us		Ś ke	Ṛ pa	Ṛ ra
Ġ de	- -	Ġ meī		Ġ tum	Ġ he	Ṣ -
Ṣ dī	Ġ il	ṚŚ se		Dn la	PD gā	- -
Ś ra	- -	Ś khā		- -	Ś thā	- -
		Ś thā		Ś ju	Ś dā	Ṛ -
n sa	n ba	n se		n me	Ś re	n -
D i	- ś	D q		D kā	D a	- n
D dā	n -	Ś z		P su	P no	D -
P -	- -					

Figure 5.4: Merī āwāz suno svāra notations

In the first two lines as shown below, Madan Mohan engages with the SGP and DPG *svara-saṅgatīs* (grouping of notes) to depict Nehru’s imagined invitation to the child to listen to his voice in all its softness. In this case, *komal niṣāda* acts as a link between two expressions. Madan Mohan uses a series of *ṣāḍaja svaras* with *komal niṣāda* in between to start a call to the nation (figure 5.5).

	x			o		
	1	2	3	4	5	6
			SG	P	Ṣ	-
			me	rī	ā	ā
n	-	D		P	G	-
wā	ā	z		su	no	o

Figure 5.5: *Merī āwāz suno svāra* notations continued

The third line goes on to a higher pitch to emphasise the call (figure 5.6):

	x			o		
	1	2	3	4	5	6
			Ṣ	Ṣ	n	-
			me	rī	ā	-
Ṣ	-	Ṣ		Ṣ	Ṣ	-
wā	ā	z		su	no	-

Figure 5.6: *Merī āwāz suno svāra* notations continued

Nehru is further depicted as saying that I had a flower stuck to my chest. He was known to wear a red rose on himself owing to his fondness for the flower. Kaifi Azmi uses this historical fact to symbolically portray a unique approach to love that the former peace-loving PM possessed.

Madan Mohan’s expertise in this composition is evident through two elements. First, he brings an additional flavour to *rāga Jansammohinī* by engaging with the *śuddha madhyam* which is omitted traditionally. *Ṣāḍaja*, *ṛṣbha*, *gāndhār*, and *pañcama* are the *nyās svaras* (the

main notes) of the *rāga* such with which they are mainly engaged. While *dhaivat* and *ṛṣbha* are usually elongated in their use, *Niṣāda* may be implemented with the combination D S' as a passing note (D n S' or S' n D). Madan Mohan maintains the rules of this *rāga* throughout the composition along with the additional *madhyam*, as seen from the melodic patterns of the *sthāyī* (figure 5.4). Secondly, while maintaining the purity of the *rāga* with an additional *madhyam*, he ensures the *karuṇa rasa* manifestation to its fullest throughout the song and justifies the use of the *rāga* to suit Kaifi's poetry. Consequently, he depicts the painful event in the film with great effect. He composes this final pattern before arriving on the *sam* at *ṣāḍaja* for the line which means 'my style of love was unique from all the rest' (figure 5.7).

		Ś	Ś	Ś	Ṛ
		thā	ju	dā	-
n	n	n	n	Ś	n
sa	ba	se	me	re	-
D	-	D	D	D	-
i	ś	q	kā	a	n
D	n	Ś	P	P	D
dā	-	z	su	no	-
P	-				
-	-				

Figure 5.7: Merī āwāz suno svara notations continued

This example highlights Madan Mohan's creative ability in composing with a unique style to suit some challenging film situations and make tunes for lyrics which required careful handling musically such that they do not lose their focus and the intended meaning.

5.3 Naushad

Naushad is one of the most famous composers of Indian film music. His role is crucial in expanding the scope of film music by introducing classical singers and songs from Hindustani music. Born and raised in Lucknow, Naushad studied Hindustani music under Ustāds Ghurbat Ali, Yusuf Ali, Babban etc. and was also known to repair harmoniums. Following his early years

in Lucknow, Naushad travelled to Bombay as a young man where he had to struggle for a few years by assisting other important music directors of the time including Khemchand Prakash and Jhande Khan. However, he got his first break to compose songs as the main music director for the film *Rattan* (1944) following which his work got the deserved recognition and further opportunities create songs based on the traditional Hindustani music system.

As claimed by himself in numerous interviews, he was the one who persuaded and convinced three of the most well-known vocalists of his times, namely Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, Ameer Khan and Dattatray Vishnu Paluskar, to render their services for Hindi films.³²⁹ According to Naushad, to persuade each one of them at different times in his career was an extremely difficult task. During those times, a profession in films was not considered a noble one. Hindustani classical musicians did not have a very good impression of Bollywood either. Naushad was determined to change the perception of these vocalists and what followed became some of the most musically important instances of Indian film-music history.

During the making of *Mughal-E-Azam* (1960), director K. Asif consulted with Naushad as the film's composer, regarding who would sing for the character of Tansen. Naushad suggested the vocalist Ameer Khan who had worked for him in *Baiju Bawra* (1952). Asif however was adamant on Bade Ghulam Ali Khan instead as he felt the artist was matchless. Naushad agreed and they both approached him. Khan refused at first but when Asif would not take no for an answer, he demanded Rs 25,000 for just one song hoping this would get rid of the stubborn director. To the amazement of all present there, not only did Asif agree, but he paid the Ustād an advance on the spot and promised to pay the remaining amount at the completion of the recording.

Another important instance of such collaborations is that between Naushad, and singer Dattatray Vishnu Paluskar. Halim Jaffer Khan (my own guru and a close associate of Naushad) recounted to me that when Naushad approached Paluskar to sing for his upcoming film *Baiju Bawra*, he simply refused and advised that he would not like to associate with the film industry. Naushad would not give up, as he wanted Paluskar to sing a duet with another

³²⁹ Bhatia, D. (2021, December 3). Naushad s̄ab on Mughal-e-Aazam and Bade Ustad Ghulam Ali Khan Sahab. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9edWjVtghw>

vocalist Ameer Khan to be picturised as a competitive duet between Tansen and the protagonist Baiju Bawra. Just one question from him changed Paluskar's perception. He asked Paluskar how many people he could possibly reach out to through his live performances, to which the response was a few hundred. Naushad then acquainted the vocalist with the immense benefits of recorded media, through which Paluskar's music would be able to reach millions of listeners and for an unlimited period. Not able to deny this, Paluskar recorded the duet with Ameer Khan, the song '*Āj gawat man mero jhūm ke*' (set to *rāga* Desī Toḍī), which went on to become one of the most famous classical *jugalbandīs* of Indian film music.

These historic collaborations are of great importance for several reasons. Had it not been for composers like Naushad, listeners would have been left unexposed to the heritage of Indian classical music and the variety and depth that it has to offer. Naushad and others made a successful effort to introduce Indians to their own musical heritage. Apart from All India Radio (A.I.R.), film music was the only way in which lay audiences could be introduced to Hindustani classical music. *Mehfils* and music conferences of those days were limited to royalty and other selected classes of people from affluent backgrounds, whereas watching films or owning a radio was considerably more affordable for the common people of India. Also, in this process, Indian film music got enriched by compositions that generate *rasa-bhāvas*, creating a lasting effect on listeners.

5.3.1 Caturaṅga: Madhuban mẽ Rādhikā (Kohinoor, 1960)

Naushad's composition '*Madhuban mẽ*,' taken from the film *Kohinoor* (1960) directed by S. U. Sunny.³³⁰ The film is about a prince and a princess of different kingdoms, played by Dilip Kumar and Meena Kumari, respectively. This song however features Dilip Kumar and another actress Kum Kum who appears as a dancer. It has three distinct features highlighted below which makes it almost a cult-classic in the history of Hindi film music.

Halim Jaffer Khan's sitār is one of the crucial technical aspects of this song. The sitārīst created a distinctive playing style which he named after his father as the '*Jāffer-Khānī bāj*.' At its core is a creation of fractions within a *mātrā* or beat, and their embellishment with multiple

³³⁰ The film is introduced previously in the *tāla* chapter and hence a description is not repeated here.

notes produced through a variety of techniques, some new, some known but rarely used, and some known and used.³³¹ Having spent almost three years with Khan and his son Zunain Khan, I have had the opportunity to imbibe this distinctive *bāj* into my own playing as well as analysing those film music compositions which have been decorated by Khan's sitār embellishments. Zunain and other contemporary Hindustani classical musicians are of the view that Halim Jaffer Khan blended various existing stylistic elements to invent a *bāj* which reflected his thought process, technical dexterity, and his unique musical and overall personality. Khan's nature and character were ingrained with particularly the *hāsya*, *vīra* and *śṛṅgāra rasas* and these are precisely evident in his execution of the sitār *gat* and the *ṭhok jhālā* that he performs for this song. In the view of practicing musicians, the effect and *rasa* of *rāga* Hamīr (on which the song is based) is meant to be *ākramak*, *utsāh-varḍhak* and *ānaṅd-dāyak* (attacking, enthusiasm-increasing and pleasure-giving). These effects are represented effectively through the song as a whole as well as separately by the sitār *gat*.

Lyricist Shakeel Badayuni wrote this song in the traditional *khayāl* style of Hindustani vocal music but with two *antarā* and the other elements of the *caturaṅga*. An important characteristic of the song is that it reflects an amalgam of the *bhakti* and *śṛṅgāra rasas* owing to its *śabda-racanā* (lyrical composition) and has an added *vīra rasa* on the basis of its *svara-racanā* (melodic composition).

This song is the only *caturaṅga* composition of Indian cinema. *Caturaṅga* is a type of *racanā* (arrangement) in Hindustani classical music. The word basically means that which has four limbs (elements). These elements are as follows:

- *Bol* - poetry set to the selected *rāga*
- *Sargam* – The actual *svara* patterns
- *Trivat tablā bols* - *tablā* or *pakhāvaj* bols set to tune
- *Tarānā* – Although it was thought that *tarānā* consisted of nonsense syllables set to a brisk *laya*, vocalist Ameer Khan researched into the subject almost all his life and educated the

³³¹ Ganesh, K. (2017, January 17). The Jafferkhani Bāj: a tribute to Ustad Abdul Halim Jaffer Khan. *The Hindu*. <https://www.thehindu.com/entertainment/music/His-baaj-had-no-boundaries/article17028084.ece>

world regarding the true meaning of *tarānā* singing. He claims that the Persian words used in *tarānā* carry meaning as illustrated below:

Persian word	Meaning
<i>Nādir dāni</i>	Nādir knows
<i>To dāni</i>	You know
<i>Tan dar dāni</i>	The knower of insider the <i>tan</i> (body)
<i>Dar ā</i>	Come in
<i>Tana dar ā</i>	Come inside the <i>tana</i> (body)
<i>Tom</i>	I am yours

Caturaṅga is usually sung at a fast pace and is predominantly a Gwalior *gharānā* style according to Tushar Bhatia, who was himself trained in the Āgrā and Gwalior *gharānā* traditions. It may be sung in both *khayāl-aṅg rāgas* as well as *ṭhumrī-aṅg rāgas*. However, Ravindra Bharali gives a slightly different historical perspective on the *caturaṅga* in his book *The Forgotten Forms of Hindustani Music*.³³² Bharali states that *caturaṅga* is sung with four *aṅgas* (limbs) – *padas* (similar to bols or verbal text), *bols* of the *tarānā*, *sargam* (musical note patterns) and finally the *palaṭās* (variation of *bols*) of *mṛdaṅg* or *pakhāvaj*. Bharali further informs us of the 8th century work *Bṛhaddēśī* by Mātaṅga in which the *Caturaṅga Prabaṅdha* is mentioned for the first time. According to *Mātaṅga*, the *caturaṅga* form may be summarised by the following *śloka* in Sanskrit:

रागताल चतुष्केण यत्न भाषा चतुष्टयं
गीयते गीत चतुरः च चतुरङ्गः स उच्चते।।

*Rāgatāla catuṣkeṇa yatna bhāṣa catuṣṭhayaṁ
Gīyate gīta caturaḥ ca caturaṅgaḥ sa uccate ||*

The above *śloka* states that the four sections of a *caturaṅga* are sung in four *rāgas*, four *tālas* and four languages. However, modern day *caturaṅga* may not necessarily consist of multiple *rāgas*, *tālas* and languages. It can be set to one *rāga* and *tāla* and still the four *aṅgs* or limbs as listed above. An example of this is Naushad's composition set to *rāga* Hamīr in *tīntāla*.

³³² Bharali, R. (2008). *The Forgotten Forms of Hindustani Music*, p. 76.

Below (figure 5.8) is a presentation of the lyrics and details of the various *aṅgs* in the song after which I will analyse it further.

<p><u>First come Bols</u></p> <p><i>Madhuban mẽ Rādhikā nāce re</i></p> <p><i>Girdhar kī muraliyā bāje re</i></p> <p>Antarā 1</p> <p><i>pag mẽ ghūṅghar bāṅdhke</i></p> <p><i>ghuṅghatā mukh par ḍāl ke</i></p> <p><i>nainan mẽ kajrā lagāke re</i></p> <p><i>madhuban mẽ Radhika nāce re</i></p> <p>Antarā 2</p> <p><i>ḍolat cham-cham kāminī</i></p> <p><i>camakat jaise dāminī</i></p> <p><i>caṅcal, pyārī chab lāge re</i></p> <p><i>madhuban mẽ Rādhikā nāce re</i></p> <p><u>This is followed by Trivat</u></p> <p><i>Mṛdaṅg bāje...</i></p> <p><i>Tirikiṭa dhum tirikiṭa dhum Tā Tā</i></p> <p><i>Mṛdaṅg bāje</i></p> <p><i>Tirikiṭa dhum tirikiṭa dhum</i></p> <p><i>Nācata chum chum</i></p> <p><i>Tāthay tāthay tātā</i></p> <p><i>Chum chum chana nana</i></p> <p><i>Chum chum chana nana</i></p> <p><i>Dhā tirikiṭa dhā-kḍ-dhā– dhā-</i></p> <p><i>Dhā dhā dhā</i></p> <p><i>madhuban mẽ Rādhikā nāce re...</i></p>	<p>In the honey gardens, Rādhā dances</p> <p>As the flute of Kṛṣṇa plays</p> <p>With anklets tied to her leg</p> <p>A veil placed upon her face</p> <p>With kajal applied to her eyes</p> <p>In the honey gardens, Rādhā danced</p> <p>The beautiful lady sways <i>cham-cham</i></p> <p>Sparkling like lightening</p> <p>Frolicking and lovable</p> <p>In the honey gardens, <i>Rādhā</i> dances</p> <p>The drum plays (thus)...</p> <p>[Traditional <i>trivat</i> syllables which are a mixture of <i>tablā</i> and <i>pakhāvaj bols</i> set to a particular tune and rhythmic pattern]</p>
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This is followed by a brief **Tān** pattern

tān: ākār tān pattern taken by Fayyaz

Ahmed Khan of Kirānā *gharānā*

madhuban mẽ Rādhikā...

madhuban mẽ Rādhikā nāce re

madhuban mẽ Rādhikā...

This is followed by **Sargam**

Ni Sa Re Sa Ga Re Ma Ga Pa Ma

Dha Pa Ni Dha Sa Ni Re Sa

RE SA Ni Dha Pa Ma Pa

Dha Ni SA RE SA Ni Dha Pa Ma Pa

Ga Ma Pa Ma Ga Ma Re Sa

madhuban mẽ Rādhikā nāce re...

SA - SA SA Ni Dha Pa

Ma Pa Dha Pa Ga Ma Re Sa Ni Re Sa

Sa Sa Ga Ma Dha Dha Ni Dha SA

madhuban mẽ Rādhikā nāce re

madhuban mẽ Rādhikā...

This is followed by **Tarānā**

Ode NāDir DiTā NiTā DhāRe Dhim, Dhim

Tā Nā Nā

Nādir DiTā NiTā DhāRe Dhim, Dhim Tā Nā

Nā

Nādir DiTā NiTā DhāRe Dhim, Dhim Tā Nā

Nā

JUGALBANDI:

NāDir DiTā NiTā DhāRe

(These are phrases formed of musical notes. The notes are sung instead of words in this case)

(These are *tarānā* syllables that use words from older traditional *tarānā* compositions)



Figure 5.10: Dilip Kumar



Figure 5.11: Kum Kum



Figure 5.12: Kum Kum

The first *antarā* sheds light on Naushad's subtle musicality. In figure 5.11, the dancer performs the movement to personify the phrase '*pag mẽ ghūghar bāndh ke*' (wearing anklets) while in figure 5.10, Dilip Kumar through his *abhinaya* enacts the lines '*ghuñghaṭā mukh par bāndh*

ke' (wearing a head-scarf) and then in figure 5.12, the dancer enacts the lines 'nainan mẽ kajrā lagā ke' before coming back to the *sthāyī* at 00:01:20. It is crucial to note that *caturaṅga* allows for enhanced *abhinaya* and resulting *rasa-bhāva*. This is because each of its respective *aṅgs* offer a unique medium of musical expression individually and collectively as a part of the composition, which is not found in conventional songs normally used in Hindi films. For example, the execution of the *sargam* patterns can create a different *rasa* experience for the audience as compared to vocals rendered without the use of *sargams*. These patterns boast of varied levels of speed and intensity based on the usage of techniques including *gamakas* while singing the *sargams*. The immense versatility, imaginativeness and *nikās* (tonal credibility) of *tablā bols* are already demonstrated in the chapter on *tāla* and it is through either the *tablā* or *pakhāvaj* that the *trivat* bols are played. *Tarānā* singing, through the employment of unique words and syllables is often done at a brisk tempo, which conveys melodic and rhythmic sundries at the same time. The musical outcomes from each of the above *aṅgs* of a *caturaṅga* are thus unique and may resonate in the minds of the listeners to create an amalgam of *rasa-bhāvas* owing to this assortment in sounds, tonal amplitudes, speeds and expression that it offers. However, when such a musically diversified composition is enacted out in a highly decorated film setting like this one, its aesthetic appeal seems to be considerably more effective with respect to an all-encompassing emotional experience for the audience.

Let us consider the *antarā* as a mini romantic scene between a singer and a dancer supported by musicians as part of a live performance. Naushad has thoughtfully enhanced the scene mainly through two mediums: Rafi's voice and the *tablā*. He has not used any heavy orchestration throughout the duration of the *antarā* with the purpose of not disturbing the aesthetics of the lyrics and the *abhinaya* of the actors. It is evident that he would have instructed the *tablā* player to improvise the *tīntāla thekā* in such a way that it embellishes the mood of the song and the slow dance movements in the first two *antarās*. Known to get the minutest of details implemented appropriately to his preferences based on his creative thinking and justifications, Naushad makes sure that the *tīntāla thekā* is executed with the required sweetness and an element of swing to it through the improvised bols *dhā dhina dhin dhā* instead of the normally played *dhā dhin dhin dhā*. Through this sequence alone, Naushad demonstrates two crucial compositional attributes when dealing with classical music in films.

Primarily, composers must realise the importance of *samajhdār saṅgat* or prudent accompaniment particularly to *bandīś* based songs and even otherwise. He also sheds light on how not to disturb the principal vocalist's expressions by unnecessary orchestration so that the lyrics are clearly heard, and the singer can do justice to the mood of the *rāga*.

5.4 Roshan

Amongst music composers from the golden era of Hindi cinema, Roshan Lal deserves a special mention for more than one reason.³³⁴ Blessed with a highly imaginative and sensitive musical temperament, Roshan is known for some of the most lilting melodies ever composed in Hindi films. However, his association with Hindustani classical music and musicians is not commonly known. His *tālīm* in classical *rāgas* was often reflected in his musical scores. I aim to highlight and analyse these two aspects of Roshan's music through a brief historical account followed by an analysis of two of his *rāga*-based compositions.

Director Kidar Sharma gave Roshan a career opportunity in 1949 as the music director of his film *Neki aur badi* (1949). Although the film flopped at the box office,³³⁵ Sharma kept his faith in Roshan's talent and gave him another composing assignment for his film *Bawre Nain* (1950) which became an instant hit. Thereafter, although he provided musical scores for very few films until his premature death in 1967, Roshan left some technically noteworthy compositions, often based on *rāgas*. This feat can be mainly attributed to the crucial *tālīm in rāga saṅgīta* that he obtained from three of the learned gurus of both Hindustani vocal and instrumental music of his times including Allaudin Khan, Bundu Khan and Sri Kṛṣṇa Narayan Ratanjankar.

Allaudin Khan, one of the most prominent gurus of Hindustani classical music, had several disciples who went on to become renowned musicians. His son, *sarodiyā* (sarod player) Ali Akbar Khan, his son-in-law and sitārīst Ravi Shankar, and *sarodiyā* Timir Baran were mainly instrumentalists who also composed for selected films. However, Roshan was his only disciple who accepted film music direction as a full-time profession without specialising in any single

³³⁴ The period between 1950s and 1970s is popularly known to be the golden era of Hindi film music.

³³⁵ Neville, P. (2018, January 5). Remembering music director Roshan. The Hindu. <https://www.thehindu.com/entertainment/movies/remembering-music-director-roshan/article22368074.ece>

instrument (at least to a concert performance level).³³⁶ He also obtained training in the art of Sāraṅgī playing under Bundu Khan.³³⁷

Roshan was also a student of musicologist, *bandīś*-composer, and vocalist of the Āgrā *gharānā*, Sri Kṛṣṇa Narayan Ratanjankar while studying at the then Marris College of Music, Lucknow.³³⁸ According to Tushar Bhatia, he began his musical training under Manhar Barve before seeking the discipleship of Ratanjankar, followed by a stint at the A.I.R. Delhi as staff artist and finally moving to Bombay in 1948 to compose music for films.

5.4.1 *Garajat barasat sāwan āyo re* (from two films)

Roshan had the opportunity to learn several Āgrā *gharānā bandīśes* from his vocal teacher Paṇḍit Ratanjankar. His wife was also a disciple of another important vocalist of the time, Fayyaz Ahmed Khan who belonged to the Kirānā *gharānā* of vocal music. The combined effect of all the training he received and the musical atmosphere in the family had a deep impact on his creative abilities, leading to a heavy influence of the *khayāl* genre of music in most of his creations as a film music composer-director. One of these Āgrā *gharānā bandīśes*, *Garajat barasat bhījat* (set to *drut tīntāla* in *rāga* Gauḍ Malhār) was used by Roshan in the films *Malhar* (1951) directed by Harish and *Barsat Ki Raat* (1960) directed by P.L. Santoshi. In *Malhar*, Lata Mangeshkar sings in this *bandīś* in the traditional *choṭā-khayāl* style; the song was used as the title score of the film. The lyrics and its *svara-līpi* are shown in figure 5.13.

Video link to the song: [Garajat barasat, Malhar, 1951](#)

³³⁶ This information is based on discussions with musicologist Tushar Bhatia, Nayan Ghosh and Halim Jaffer Khan

³³⁷ As told to me by Tushar Bhatia, who in turn was given this information by his own guru, Dinkar Kaikini

³³⁸ Marris College was later renamed as Bhatkhande Music Institute Deemed University

Tīntāl

Sthāyī

X	1	2	3	4	2	5	6	7	8	O	9	10	11	12	3	13	14	15	16
M	R	M	M	P	P	M	P	DN	S	D	P	M	P	M	G				
Ga	ra	ja	ta	ba	ra	sa	ta	bhī	-	ja	ta	ā	yī	lo	-				
M	N	D	P	M	P	M	G	M	R	G	-	M	M	M	R				
Tu	ma	re	mi	la	na	ko	-	a	pa	ne	-	pre	-	ma	pi				
S	R	S	-	-	-	-	MG	M	N	D	P	M	M	-	R				
ya	ra	wā	-	-	-	-	leho	ga	ra	wā	la	gā	-	-	y				
M	R	M	M																
Ga	ra	ja	ta																

Antarā

X	1	2	3	4	2	5	6	7	8	O	9	10	11	12	3	13	14	15	16
P	-	P	-	Ś	D	Ś	Ś	Ś	Ś	Ś	Ś	Ś	Ś	Ś	Ś	R	Ś		
Jo	-	lo	-	ha	ma	tu	ma	e	ka	dhin	ga	ra	hi	lo	-				
D	D	D	D	Ś	Ś	Ś	-	Ś	R	Ś	Ś	Ś	D	n	P				
so	-	lo	-	ra	hi	lo	-	hi	ya	rā	sa	mā	-	-	n				
M	R	M	P	P	P	Nm	P	DN	S	D	P	M	P	M	R				
sā	-	wa	na	ā	yī	lo	-	lā	-	l	cu	na	ri	yā	-				
M	n	D	P	M	M	-	R												
dī	-	ho	ran	gā	-	-	y												

Figure 5.13: Garajat barasat bhijat – Bandīs in Rāga Gauḍ Malhār

Then after nine years after the previous film's release, in *Barsat Ki Raat*, Roshan made playback singers Suman Kalyanpur and Kamal Barot sing a modernised version of the same traditional *bandīs*.

Video Link to the song: [Garajat barasat, Barsaat Ki Raat, 1960](#)

In this version, there is an intricate interweaving of the santūr, sārāṅgī and jaltaraṅg from 00:00:01 till 00:00:20 at which point the vocalists start singing. Usually, the *jhālā* element of Hindustani classical music is executed towards the end of a recital. However, Roshan initiates this song by a brief *jhālā* played on the santūr accompanied by tablā in the *drut tīntāla* which then merges with a piece on the Jaltaraṅg. The *laya* of the tablā is then changed to half of the previous *jhālā laya* with a piece on the sarod followed by the sārāṅgī joining in before culminating into the *mukhaḍā* of the song. This is in fact the main tempo of the song, so the *laya* in the introductory part is briefly in double tempo. Roshan has Suman Kalyanpur improvise towards the ending of the *mukhaḍā* which is a diversion from the typical style of a

bandiś rendition. What follows is a brief sarod and sārāṅgī duet as an interlude before the first *antarā*. Both singers basically follow the same *svara*-patterns of the original *bandiś* apart from the fact that Roshan has kept the pace or *laya* slightly faster than the traditional choice of *laya* for it.

An instrumental performance in Hindustani classical music usually starts at a slow (*vilāmbit*) tempo and the artist then builds it up in stages, with the fastest section (*jhālā*) being played at the end. Roshan does it the other way round in this song to arguably create an instantaneous interest in his listeners, who were mainly cinema lovers untrained in classical music or its intricacies. Famous sitār player Rais Khan told me in 1999 that music directors from the 1950s till the 1970s often attempted to attract laymen to classical music through film songs. In the process, they tried to modernise traditional genres like *khayāl* and *ṭhumrī* so that listeners could be drawn in to them through the cinematic medium and consequently get interested in exploring these further. Khan pointed out that amongst the film music composers of that era, Naushad, Roshan, Madan Mohan and the duo of Shankar-Jaikishen were particularly successful in popularising Hindustani classical music. In this case, Roshan did not simply copy a traditional *bandiś*. He re-imagined it through classical music techniques and converted it into a more relatable song for the layman. In the process he introduced and ingrained a rare seasonal *rāga* like Gauḍ Malhār in the minds and hearts of the lay cinema lovers of India. It is from episodes of this nature that several aspirants of classical music were known to explore possibilities of a profession in film music composing or learn the art as a personal hobby.

5.4.2 *Man re, tū kāhe na dhīr dhare (Chitrlekha, 1964)*

This song is taken from the film *Chitrlekha* (1964) directed by Kidar Sharma starring Pradip Kumar and Meena Kumari as the leads. It is a historical drama about a young soldier's love for a courtesan in the Mauryan period of Indian history. The lyrics of this song were inspired from the central idea of a *racanā* (lyrical composition) penned by the medieval Indian poet *Goswami* Tulsidas. Lyricist Sahir Ludhianvi modified the poem to suit the film's sequence.

I will first present the lyrics of both these compositions, their translations and then compare the original and the film versions:

Man, tū kāhe na dhīr dharat ab: Tulsidas's original poetry.

*Man, tū kāhe nā dhīr dharat ab
Dhīr dhare sab kāraj sudharat
Jā ke sar Raghunāth birājat
Vā ke sab hī kāraj sādhat
Tulsīdās Raghunāth kripā tein
Bighan sab tāra*

Oh mind, why don't you be patient
Patience improves all tasks
On whose head *Raghunāth (Rāma)* sits
His all tasks are successfully completed
Tulsidas, with the help of *Rāma*
All difficulties are resolved

Man re, tū kāhe na dhīr dhare: Sahir Ludhianvi's adaptation

*Mana re, tū kāhe na dhīr dhare
Wo nirmohī moh na jāne, jinkā moh kare
Is jīvan kī cadhatī dhaltī dhūp ko kisne
bāndhā
Raṅg pe kisne pehre ḍāle, rūpa ko kisne
bāndhā
Kāhe ye jatan kare
Utnā hī upkār samajh koī jitnā sāth nibhā de.
Janam maraṅ kā mel haī sapnā, ye sapnā
bisarā de.
Koī nā saṅg mare*

Oh mind, why don't you remain calm
The one you long for is desireless
Who has restrained the coming and
going of sunlight in this life
Has anybody shackled colours or
beauty
Why do you make these efforts
Consider the time somebody
supported you a favour
The play of life and death is a dream,
let go of it
Nobody dies with you

Bhakti poet Tulsidas advises the constantly wavering human mind to try and be at rest. One of the central themes of the Indian philosophic thought is a control over the mind. There are several pieces of prose and poetic works such as this poem by Tulsidas revolving around this theme. Tulsidas further says that if one remains calm and keeps his faith in Raghunāth (Lord Rāma) then all his tasks shall be accomplished. This is a classic example of a *bhakti-rasa-kāvya*.

Almost 500 years later, lyricist Sahir Ludhianvi took inspiration from this poem to create the song *man re* to picture the predicament of the protagonist in the film. A comparison of the two poems shows that while there may be differences in wording, they fundamentally convey a similar meaning. While Tulsidas' poem portrays *bhakti* towards Rām, Sahir conveys the same meaning without referring to any deity and taking a purely philosophical route.

The film version *man re* is set to *rāga* Yaman-Kalyāṇ. It has the potential to bring about multiple *rasas* of the *rāga*, primarily the *śānta rasa*. As explained earlier in chapter 2, a *rāga* does have the potential to manifest multiple *rasas*. While it must be acknowledged that *rasa* experience is achieved collectively through lyrics, drama/*abhinaya*, mood, temperaments of the actors/singers/audiences and associated dynamics, even pure classical *rāga* performances can evoke multiple emotions owing to factors including the effect of *svaras*, presentation etc. Makarand Velankar and Parag Kulkarni argue that *rāga* association with specific emotion is a challenging task since multiple musical dimensions including timbre, tempo, rhythm etc. influence the listener perception.³³⁹ In a separate yet relevant investigation, Parag Chordia and Alex Rae did an empirical study of listener responses for the purpose of understanding emotions in *rāgas* in which participants were asked to respond to five *rāga* (with one of them being Yaman) excerpts in terms of how listening to each *rāga* made them feel.³⁴⁰ The responses obtained after listening to Yaman were: 'I feel like a butterfly. The wind is streaking past me, and colours are awash in the air. Melodious colours. A combination of moods. It looks relaxed most of the time and ruminating about something. It seems to turn a little angry occasionally as though an unhappy event was inadvertently recollected.'³⁴¹ These responses provide a reasonable justification for Yaman's ability to generate a range of emotions in listeners.

Coming back to the song under scrutiny, its uniqueness lies in a few novel melodic and lyrical experiments. Roshan's choice of using only the Sarod and the Bānsurī as two primary instruments for complementing singer Mohammad Rafi's vocal rendition of it happens to be

³³⁹ Velankar, M. and Kulkarni, P. (2017). Study of Emotion Perception for Indian Classical Raga Music. Proceedings of the 10th International Conference of Students of Systematic Musicology (SysMus17), London, UK.

³⁴⁰ Participants were recruited from online Hindustani classical music forums, as well as through the Georgia Institute of Technology music department. 29% of the respondents were female and 71% male, with a median age of 24. The respondents described their familiarity with NICM as "none" (11%), "a little" (24%), "somewhat" (29%), "very" (32%) and "expert" (4%).

³⁴¹ Chordia, P and Rae, A. (2007). Understanding Emotion in Raag: An Empirical Study of Listener Responses. Computer music modelling and retrieval. Sense of sounds, pp. 110-124.

one of those novelties. Never had a music director relied mainly on these two instruments for an entire Hindi film song.³⁴² It must however be noted that these instruments are meant to be more noticeable and weightier as compared to the other ones in the background such as the *tablā*, *tānpurā*, harmonium and side rhythms.

By the 1960s, both the sarod and *bānsurī* were well established as full-fledged Hindustani classical instruments capable of not only producing folk music but also having a range which was sufficient to play a detailed and lengthy *dhrupad* or *khayāl* recital depending on the skill of the instrumentalist. It is not known but it is highly likely that the *bānsurī* in the song is played by either of the two famed flautists, Hari Prasad Chaurasia or Pannalal Ghosh. Some of the famous music directors of the times including Madan Mohan and Roshan heard Chaurasia play at the Radio Station and impressed by his recitals, contracted his services for their films.³⁴³ Thakur also informs us that Chaurasia filled the void caused by the sudden death of the pioneer of the bamboo flute, and senior of the two masters, Pannalal Ghosh. He almost single-handedly resurrected the tradition of solo *bānsurī -vādan* as well as started a new era of providing background music, flute interludes and preludes as well as main music for films.

Video link to the song: [Man re, Chitrlekha, 1964](#)

In this song, Roshan initiates the song with a *bānsurī* prelude consisting of the phrase: GRSN, RG, RG, R-S. Mohammad Rafi then commences the vocals as follows (figure 5.14):

³⁴² This observation is based on the author's own study of an entire gamut of well-known and lesser known Bollywood songs from his personal collection.

³⁴³ From a discussion with Hari Prasad Chaurasia in Mumbai in 1999.

Keherva tāl

x	2	3	4	o	6	7	8
1				5			
						S Ma	S na
G re	- -	- -	G tū	<u>GN</u> kā	<u>RS</u> -	<u>SN</u> he	<u>SS</u> na
<u>N</u> dhī	<u>Ḍ</u> -	<u>NR</u> ra	S dha	<u>N</u> re	-	<u>Ḍ</u> -	<u>P</u> -
-	<u>P</u> wo	<u>ND</u> ni	<u>N</u> ra	S mo	<u>N</u> -	R hi	-
-	<u>GRG</u> mo	<u>RN</u> ha	R na	<u>RG</u> jā	<u>PMPM</u> -	G ne	R -
-	mm jin	D kā	N -	Ś mo	N o	<u>PPP</u> ha	G kā
P re	-	Ś -	P -	<u>RRR</u> -	S -	man	re

Figure 5.14: Man re svara notations (mukhaḍā)

The end of the *mukhaḍā* is followed up with the following *bānsurī* interlude: S' NDP' R-S
Roshan further launches a violin and sarod duet before Rafi commences the first *antarā*
(figure 5.15).

					<u>PP</u> is	N jī	D -
N va	Ṣ na	<u>ND</u> kī	<u>PG</u> -	P -	<u>GG</u> c	P ḍha	G tī
P ḍha	P la	P tī	- -	- -	P dhū	P pa	P ko
P kī	<u>ND</u> sa	M ne	P -	G bā	M -	P -	M ān
G dhā	- -	- -	- -	- -	<u>PP</u> ran	N ga	D pe
N kī	Ṣ sa	<u>ND</u> ne	<u>PG</u> -	P -	<u>GG</u> phe	P re	G -
P ḍā	P -	P le	- -	- -	P rū	P pa	P ko
P kī	<u>ND</u> sa	M ne	P -	G bā	M -	P -	M ān
G dhā	- -	- -	- -	- -	P kā	P he	P ye
Ṣ ja	Ṣ ta	N na	P ka	<u>GP</u> re			

Figure 5.15: Man re svara notations (antarā)

This is followed once again by a *bānsurī* interlude: S NDP R-S after which the *mukhaḍā* is repeated. The song ends here.

Sheraf Rehman argues that many films songs in Bollywood are written to develop the plot and to intensify emotions in a dramatic scene.³⁴⁴ However, Rehman also insists that popular songs gain the status of self-containing units, with their lyrics and melody offering a satisfying experience with respect to *rasa-bhāva* that does not require any images. Roshan's two compositions discussed above may fall under this category of songs where the moods are created by the *śabda-racanā* embellished by effective *svara racanā*.

5.5 Rahul Dev Burman (R D Burman)

Rahul Dev Burman created tunes and rhythms that Bollywood was not accustomed to before his arrival on the scene. Despite becoming a household name in India for peppy dance

³⁴⁴ Rehman, S.(2016). The Role of Music in Hindi Cinema, 12, pp. 314-329.

numbers, Burman composed some of the finest songs based on Hindustani classical music, dating mainly from the 1970s. He was exposed to the art of *tablā* early in his life, followed by a stint of learning the Sarod from Ustād Ali Akbar Khan and later from Khan's son Ashish Khan.³⁴⁵ He also learnt under *tablā* maestro Samta Prasad of the Banāras *gharānā*, who had played for one of his father's famous compositions *Nāce man morā magan* and later for his own background score of the film *Sholay* (1975). These learning episodes of RD's early musical life had a major impact on his film music scores. In defence of this argument, I shall analyse one of his complicated compositions that demonstrate not only his ability to use *rāga-saṅgīta* meaningfully, but also establish innovative combinations of *svaras*, and *ṭhekās* to suit the melodic designs.

5.5.1 *Rainā bītī jāye: Amar Prem (1972)*

This song is taken from the film *Amar Prem* (1972) directed by Shakti Samanta. The film is about an unhappily married man Anand *bābū* (the male protagonist played by Rajesh Khanna) and a woman, Pushpa (played by Sharmila Tagore) sold to a brothel. It portrays the decline of human values and relationships.

This haunting melody sung by Lata Mangeshkar is pictured on Sharmila Tagore. It is a pensive song that lifts into one of hope when Rajesh Khanna enters the scene. The song has two noteworthy features: the fusion of two contrasting *rāgas* and a unique version of the eight beat *keherwā tāla*. With respect to the fusion of the *rāgas*, RD manifests the *tirobhāva-āvirbhāva* effortlessly. In Hindustani classical music, the process of masking a *rāga* temporarily is termed *tirobhāva* or divergence, and returning to the original *rāga* form following a brief deviation is called *āvirbhāva* or coming back. RD merges the serious and sombre sounding morning melody *Toḍī* with an absolutely contrasting night *rāga* *Khamāj*. The feel of *Khamāj* is created through the *antarā* and its merging with the *sthāyī*; and the actual notes of *Khamāj* have been cleverly deployed to embellish the *antarā*. In fact, even before the *antarā* begins, RD starts to create a melodic bridge between *Toḍī* and *Khamāj* through the lines *niṅdiyā na āye* in the *mukhaḍā* itself by employing the prominent *pañcama svara* as a *tirobhāva* trait. These points are illustrated in the following discussion.

³⁴⁵ This information was obtained from one of my *gurus*, Nayan Ghosh (July 2019, Mumbai).

Video link to the song: [Rainā bītī jāye, Amar Prem, 1972](#)

The song starts off with a structured *ālāp* in *rāga* Toḍī with the following *svara* combinations:

s.....r g d.....m.....

d-m g-m d-d | d-n-d....m |

m d m g....m | r-g r-m-g r-s-N-d |

N-s-s-d-s |

The *mukhaḍā*, continuing the Toḍī elaboration is shown below (figure 5.16):

Keherva tāl

x	1	2	3	4	o	5	6	7	8
				S Rai	SṆ nā	d bi	P -	d ti	
N jā	- -	- -	Sr -		N -	Sr -	N -	- -	
SrS -	- -	N ye	S Śyā		- -	rg ma	- -	g na	
mḡḡg ā	- -	- -	ṛ -		- -	- -	mḡḡg -	- -	
- -	rS ye	- -							

Figure 5.16: *Rainā Bītī Jāye mukhaḍā* (showing Toḍī)

The *Khamāj āṅga* is introduced at this point for the following two lines:

			P nin	P di	P yā	- -	D na
M ā	- -	- -		G -	R -	S ye	N -
- -	- -	- -					

Figure 5.17: *Rainā Bītī Jāye* (showing *Khamāj āṅga* bridge)

The phrase *nīndiyā na āye* at 00:01:17 already starts to diverge and cross the boundaries of Toḍī to create the *tirobhāv-avirbhāv* effect using *pañcama* as the bridge to cross over to *rāga Khamāj* in the *antarā*. RD then deploys *śuddha gāndhār* to compose each line of the *antarā* as shown below and Khamāj blossoms almost out of nowhere without disturbing the mood of the *mukhaḍā* and its sombre melancholic *rasa-bhāva* effect. Also, the *ṣaḍaja svara* is used as a *kaṇ svara* for emotive effect.

Following the completion of the *mukhaḍā*, Sharmila Tagore is interrupted as Rajesh Khanna arrives. RD seems to take this situation into consideration and transforms the sad ambience created by Toḍī to a slightly more hopeful and happier one through Khamāj, as the joy within her is apparent through her blush. The following (figure 5.18) illustrates the Khamāj transition.

			G	-	G	-	G
			śā	-	ma	-	ko
P	G	P	-	M	M	G	P
bhū	-	-	-	lā	-	-	-
M	G	R	GM	GM	GRGR	-	P
-	-	-	śā	-	ma	-	kā
P	-	-	P	P	D	P	M
vā	-	-	-	dā	-	-	-
P	G	-	G	M	D	-	D
-	-	-	sa	an	ga	-	di
D	-	-	-	n	D	S	n
ye	-	-	-	kī	-	-	-
Dn	D	P	m	-	P	-	-
-	-	-	jā	-	gī	-	-
m	P	m	P	D	P	D	P
rā	-	-	-	dhā	-	-	-
M	P	G					
-	-	-					

Figure 5.18: Rainā bītī jāye antarā

Further, the *mukhaḍā* is repeated before the end of the song and the scene.

Before this creation by R D Burman, there is no evidence of a song that was composed using an amalgam of a melancholic sounding morning *rāga* like *Toḍī* and a cheerful evening *rāga* like *Khamāj* in the history of Indian cinema. While there are *rāga-mālā* (garland of melodies) compositions which are fundamentally *khayāls* set to multiple *rāgas*, mainly from the Gwalior school of Hindustani music, there is no evidence of such melodic themes applied to romantic film songs. Arguably, this is something different from a *rāga mālā*, as it involves the interaction of just two *rāgas*. A Hindustani classical purist may frown upon such an experiment even if it is in films, but RD challenged the norms and produced a song which defied all odds and stood the test of time. What this analysis demonstrates is RD's innovative abilities within the domains of a musical tradition that has strict boundaries of grammar. Despite this, he inspires its practitioners to think differently, composing a novel piece that stands out in Hindi film music.

5.6 Conclusion

Through this chapter, I have analysed those songs which I believe demonstrate best the influence of North Indian classical music on Hindi cinema. From the various discussions presented, one of the important conclusions is that composers of the golden period of Hindi cinema recognised that Indian audiences needed to be united with their own musical heritage. Apart from the All India Radio and All India Music conferences, there was no other medium that could actually make this happen. Equipped with a far-sighted vision, an imaginative approach, formal training in Hindustani music and cultural influences, these music directors took the onus on themselves to bring *rāga* and *tāla saṅgīta* to the forefront. In the process, they created timeless film songs that are still not only remembered fondly in nearly every corner of India, but more importantly even referred to for their compositional technicalities for learning purposes. Each of these composer-directors epitomized the way an existing continuous tradition can be taken forward to suit modern tastes. This they did without disturbing its basic framework and creating original compositions which may sometimes be offbeat but were certainly appealing. As seen in each of their selected compositions, such is the exuberance and abundance offered by Hindustani classical music that its various concepts can be interpreted and elucidated uniquely by each composer depending on the fecundity of their artistry, insight, and resourcefulness. Their experiments

with instrumentation, the use of melody based on *rāgas* and *tālas* led to songs for generations to follow and learn from.

Creating a *rāga*-based melody requires specialist skills. Allyn Miner argues that using *rāga* as a template, a composer must create a melody that conforms to scale, *svara*-patterns, and tonal embellishments as well as to the rhythmic metre of the lyrics.³⁴⁶ The composers that I have scrutinized in this study fulfill these requirements mentioned by Miner through their thought-provoking pieces of works, and set an example for future aspiring practitioners of the art form. The songs analysed here may not be sufficient for making any substantial claims or detecting labyrinthine dominations of this form of music on the cultural order of Hindi cinema. Nevertheless, my analyses have revealed some facts about the application of Hindustani classical music in the production of film songs. In each, I have also attempted to identify *rasa-bhāva* manifestations within the songs.

³⁴⁶ Miner, A. (2015). Raga in the Early Sixteenth Century. In F. Orsini and K. B. Schofield (Eds.), *Tellings and Texts: Music, Literature and Performance in North India*, 1, pp. 385–406.

Chapter 6: *Rāga-Rasa-Bhāva* in Action: Analysing Ray's Films

6.1 Satyajit Ray: An introduction

Ray has invariably preferred the intimate story to the grand epic and is the poet par excellence of the human-scale, life-sized comedy or tragedy of ordinary men and women, journeying, as we all journey down little but unforgettable roads.

Salman Rushdie

Satyajit Ray is considered to be one of the greatest and most influential filmmakers in the world. A multi-faceted genius, Ray created a name for himself with his very first film *Pather Panchali* (1955) which he made after being inspired by Vittorio de Sica's neo-realist film *Bicycle Thieves* (1948) in London. He went on to make many celebrated works like *The Apu-trilogy*, *Charulata* (1964), *Jalsaghar* (1958), *Devi* (1960) and so on. From Scorsese in the West to Kurosawa in the East, Satyajit Ray had admirers all around the world. And yet his world was what he knew intimately – the Bengali world of ordinary people and innocent children, political idealists and earnest men, suppressed women and struggling villagers. Known for his humanism, eye for detail and humour even when capturing sour and dour realities, Ray held complete control over his craft and was completely involved in every aspect of filmmaking. Never more so than in music.

The dominant Indian cinema in the 1950s was beginning to get formulaic. If the films were not based on Indian mythologies, then they had a clear formula in which was mixed romance, violence, tragedy, comedy and songs and dances. Ray broke this trend and emerged like a breath of fresh air; liberal-humanist values were responsible in moulding his craft.³⁴⁷ He engaged with traditional and cultural arts of India to inform his filmmaking. Amaresh Misra argues that form and content seemed to dissolve in the *rasa*-focussed strictures of Ray's filmmaking, as he established overreaching narratives capable of presenting human sagas at multiple levels of emotions.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁷ Cooper, D. (2000). *The Cinema of Satyajit Ray: Between Tradition and Modernity*, p. 12.

³⁴⁸ Misra, A. (1992). *Satyajit Ray's Films: Precarious Social-Individual Balance*. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 27/20-21, pp. 1052–1054.

David Robinson, veteran critic and biographer of Charlie Chaplin wrote, ‘To discover or to revisit the world of Satyajit Ray is one of the supreme pleasures of the cinema. The ten years since his death give us the perspective to see more clearly that he was by any reckoning - not just for the cinema - one of the world's great artists.³⁴⁹ Ray was Inspired by the Italian filmmaker Vittoria De Sica and by the neo-realist movement in cinema. He was also inspired by the French film director Jean Renoir with whom he got acquainted when Renoir was filming *The River* in India. Ray made his first film, *Pather Panchali* in 1954 and went on to make many more impactful films which often portrayed the real struggles of ordinary people. Steve Vineberg is of the view that there wouldn't be a more powerful or creative allegory for the ‘tug of war’ between parents and children, the struggle between old and new values, than the conflicts presented in one of his films, *Devi* (1960).³⁵⁰

To emphasize Ray's persisting influence on the Indian film industry, film maker Shyam Benegal divided its remarkable history into two aeons; before Ray and after Ray.³⁵¹ Benegal also argued that though the mainstream Indian cinema had multiple entertainment elements (a bit of everything) like the popular Indian dish biryani, it lacked the reflection of reality. By reflection of reality, Benegal's statement may be interpreted as referring to the realistic day-to-day life of the common man of India. Contrivances rather than actuality have been a regular recipe of the biryani which is mainstream Indian cinema, also popularly referred to as a *masālā* film - a genre pioneered in the early 1970s by filmmaker Nasir Hussain.³⁵² Just as different spices are combined to achieve an actual spice-based *masālā*, similarly various dramatic ingredients such as romance, action, comedy, tragedy etc. are combined to give an all-round entertainment effect in a film and hence the term *masālā* film. Ray's works however reflected his realistic, meaningful, and practical approach to film making, far from the fantasy world of mainstream *masālā* cinema.

Ray's films have been pre-dominantly studied and analysed on the basis of their intellectual content, his unrelenting focus on individuals and complex human relationships, often

³⁴⁹ Robinson, A., and Hood, J. W. (2010). Beyond the world of apu: The films of Satyajit Ray. *Modern Asian Studies*, 44(3), pp. 671-673.

³⁵⁰ Vineberg, S. (1990). Home and the World: Reflections on Satyajit Ray. *The Threepenny Review*, 43, pp. 33–35.

³⁵¹ “Films are pre-Satyajit or post-Satyajit”: Shyam Benegal remembers Satyajit Ray. (2021, October 20). *Frontline*. <https://frontline.thehindu.com/cover-story/interview-shyam-benegal-remembers-satyajit-ray-films-are-pre-satyajit-or-post-satyajit/article37018577.ece>

³⁵² Joshi, P. (30 March 2017). How film-maker Nasir Husain started the trend for Bollywood masala films. *Hindustan Times*.

overlooked by most other film makers before him. However, there is limited study of the nine *rasas* and their effects on Ray's characters, situations and ultimately the overall story of his films; and there is no analysis of the influence of Hindustani classical music on his works. Using samples of North Indian Classical *rāgas* that have been used in the film as well as *rasa* theory, I will here explore how Ray practically implements each of these elements to create heart wrenching emotions in one of his most acclaimed films, *Jalsaghar*. I will study how Ray collaborated with sitārist Vilayat Khan who was his music director. Together they engaged the services of other prominent Hindustani classical musicians, including maestros Bismillah Khan (śehnāī), Roshan Kumari (kathak), Begum Akhtar (vocal), Salamat Ali Khan (vocal) and Wahid Khan (Surbahār).

6.2 Introduction to *Jalsaghar*

Jalsaghar is perhaps the most concentrated of all Ray's films. It is an intense study of the last stages in the anachronistic life of an old mandarin figure. A wonderful combination of patrician arrogance and sensitivity, he maintains his role as a patron of music while the order crumbles around him. Greater restriction in emotional range and physical milieu, and greater engagement between these elements, have intensified the film's emotional yield.³⁵³

The year 1958 witnessed the creation of Ray's fourth masterpiece by the name *Jalsaghar* (The Music Room). It was based on a short story by Bengali writer Tarashankar Bandyopadhyay. National and international recognitions were bestowed upon the film. The prominent French magazine 'Cahiers du Cinema' voted it as one of the 100 best movies of all time placing it at the 20th, in 2008. Such was its effect on the world-wide audience that the film was ranked 27th, 146th and 183rd in the Sight and Sound list of Greatest Films in 1992, 2002 and 2012, respectively. The British Film Institute placed it at 270th rank in their list of 360 Classics. It was also ranked at the 350th place in '1001 Movies You Must See before You Die'. The film also achieved the 7th spot (jointly with few other films) in the list of Cinemaya's Greatest Asian Films (1998). The 20th Busan International Film Festival held in 2015 at South Korea's Busan Cinema Centre, featured it at no. 18 in their list of 100 Best Asian Cinema. The film was given

³⁵³ Flaus, J. (2014). The world of Satyajit Ray. <https://www.sensesofcinema.com/2014/john-flaus-dossier/the-world-of-satyajit-ray/>

the best music award at the 1st Moscow International film festival by the president of the Jury Sergei Gerasimov of the then USSR. The most important and prominent Indian award it got was the National Film Award for best Bengali film in 1959.

Several film reviewers including Ebert have analysed *Jalsaghar* from the point of views of cinematography, character portrayals, and movie sets. The complex human psychology portrayed through the film as well as its highly imaginative musical score has also been written about but not to the extent to which it thoroughly deserves. I will explain the reason behind referring to the musical score as ‘highly imaginative’ in further paragraphs by exemplifying through melodic interpretations and their relevance as well as each musical piece’s perfect harmony with the respective scene.

I will analyse all the important scenes and sequences of *Jalsaghar* with regards to two particular aspects: *rasa-bhāva* and adaptation of elements from Indian classical and folk music (which primarily sources from *Hindustani rāga saṅgīta*). I will focus on scenes that are critically acclaimed for its aesthetic features.

6.3 The Plot

Jalsaghar is set in the 1920s, during the pre-independent years. In those times, the *zamīndārī* system was prevalent in the undivided Bengal region, where *zamīndārs* were feudal landowners who were granted their holdings and, often, a noble rank, such as *huzūr* or *Raja* first by the Mughal *Badshah* and then by the East India Company. These landowners acquired most of their wealth from taking a portion of the farmers’ produce from their lands or by collecting revenue for their Mughal and later British bosses.

Jalsaghar is about a *zamīndār* by name Bishwambher Roy played by the famous Bengali actor Chhabi Biswas. The film is set in a huge mansion or *havelī* in his estate. The *havelī* has a unique music room which translates to the title *Jalsaghar*. This *Jalsaghar* is Roy’s passion and obsession. Roy is a connoisseur of Indian classical music, and he hosts regular *mehfils* or musical soirees in his music room around which the film revolves. The other key characters in the film are his son Khoka, his wife Mahamaya, his servant Ananta and his rival Mahim

Ganguly. Roy is an ageing man and is shown as being lost in his musically gratifying illustrious past. In regularly hosting grand *mehfils*, Roy not only manages to deplete himself of his ancestral and personal wealth but also loses his wife and son. Ray creatively portrays the character of Roy, showing two major phases of his life: before and after losing material wealth, fame and family.³⁵⁴

6.4 Scene-by-scene analysis

Video link to the film: [Jalsaghar, 1958](#)

Title scene - Toḍī and the dark room³⁵⁵ (Track timing - [00:00:16](#) to [00:02:33](#))

Video link to the title scene: [Jalsaghar \(1958\) Bengali Movie by Satyajit Ray Part- I](#)

Ray's innovative and offbeat style as well as his ability to create an impact is evident right from the beginning. The title score of the film is set to *rāga* Toḍī.

Ustād Wahid Khan's performance of Toḍī on the surbahār is a perfect score to the opening shot of a chandelier seen hanging in a dark room, preparing the audience for the grief of a heartbroken Roy. The way Wahid Khan captures the character of Toḍī, which is mostly infused with a contemplative, and anguished *rasa*, is a poignant prelude to what is going to unfold.

I had the privilege of meeting the film's composer Ustād Vilayat Khan briefly in 2002, where he shared his experiences of creating music for *Jalsaghar*. Khan, being a sitār maestro and a learned musician-cum-musicologist himself, mentioned that he convinced his uncle Wahid Khan to play the Surbahār for selected portions of the film. He went on to tell me why he thought Toḍī was the most appropriate *rāga* for the title track. Wahid Khan's mastery and soulful rendering ensured that the subtle operation of notes with progress from *komal ṛṣbha*

³⁵⁴ The phases referred to are intertwined in the film. I have identified them for the purpose of clarity. However, the film is neither divided nor demarcated in such a manner.

³⁵⁵ I have used a separate link for this opening scene, because this scene has been cut in the video link of the full film provided in the beginning. For the rest of the film's analyses, please refer to the video link of the complete film provided.

(flattened 2nd) to *komal gāndhār* (flattened 3rd) and with the employment of the *nyās*³⁵⁶ sensation on the *gāndhār* brought about the initial pathos. In the *avaroha*, Wahid Khan's slide from the *gāndhār* to *ṛṣbha* dawdles on the *ṛṣbha* and then climactically disappears on the tonic note *Sa*. This *ṛṣbha-gāndhār* interaction or inter-mingling of *svaras* captures the initial jittery or rather apprehensive mood of Toḍī, especially relevant to the next scene in sequence, setting a foundation for Ray to build upon his *rasa*-animated plot.

The Introductory scene (track timing - 00:00:03). In the introductory scene, Roy with a woebegone expression sits on his exquisite but frayed armchair. He is holding his walking stick in a rather pensive mood. Ray portrays Roy through a tight frame to allow the slightest of expressions to convey meaning. Ananta, the family's loyal servant then makes an entry to give his master the traditional *hukkāh*. Just as Ananta begins to leave, Roy asks what the current month and season of the year are. Ananta is puzzled by his master's question and thinks for a moment before responding that it is the onset of spring and the month of Fālgun (the month of February as per the Gregorian calendar). At this point in time, the audience is unaware of the reason why Roy looks so withered and exhausted. As Ananta begins to leave, the distant sound of the *śehnāi* is heard. Roy is stirred up from his languishing state and asks Ananta where the music is coming from. Ananta responds that it is being played at their neighbour Ganguly *bābū*'s residence. He explains that it is for the occasion of Ganguly's son's *upanayana saṁskāra* (traditional Hindu thread ceremony).

Let us now examine the interplay of *rasas* with music and acting in the above scenes. Based on Bharata's enumeration of 49 *bhāvas*, when a complex (*rasa-bhāva* evoking acting) event is enacted on stage, the viewers similarly experience *rasa*, depending upon their empathy and the success of representation.³⁵⁷ Kumar explains that particularly with respect to the *karuṇa rasa*, compassion may overflow the hearts of those who experience the *śoka* (grief) as manifest in a performer. A number of *vibhāvas* such as death etc are the source of grief which is more or less intense according to the *viśaya* (male protagonist), *āśraya* (female protagonist) and *uddipana* of the *vibhāva* (determining circumstance that causes a character to experience *rasa*). *Uddipana* are contributory determinants including place, time and circumstances and

³⁵⁶ A note in a *rāga* that can be held for a longer period of time

³⁵⁷ Kumar, R. (2021). *Rasa theory and its application in translation with reference to Shakuntala of Kalidas*.

their purpose is to nurture an aroused sentiment. For example, *uddipana* for the romantic *rasa* may include fragrance from flowers, soothing cool breeze, a view of the full moon etc.

In the opening scene, Roy's state of mind in the *uddipana-vibhāva* environment arouses the *Karuṇa rasa* and stimulates the emotions of grief.



Figure 6.1: Roy's lifeless expression

Ray's direction further enhances the *abhinaya* of the talented Chhabi Biswas in his portrayal of Roy especially in executing those subtle facial expressions that relate to *rasa-dhwanī* theory (a Sanskrit critical theory that developed during the post-Vedic classical period). Gupteshwar Prasad refers to *ānāṇdvardhana* (adding to joy) as the chief exponent of the *dhwanī* theory and informs us that he classified *dhwanī* (a linguistic potency that generates emotion) into three broad categories viz: *vastu-dhwanī*, *alaṅkāra-dhwanī* (figurative language and speech that embellish a text and shape how meaning is conveyed) and *rasa-dhwanī*.³⁵⁸ While *vastu-dhwanī* focuses on ideas as facts, where the suggestion of that idea is most crucial, *rasa-dhwanī* refers to the creative experience of an artist. In this case, *rasa-dhwanī* is dominant. John A. Taber in his review of Amaladass' book also refers to *ānāṇdvardhana* and informs us that according to him, *dhwanī* is the essence or 'soul' of poetic language.³⁵⁹ We can also relate this essence to drama and cinema and claim that a series of such *rasa-dhwanī* implied by Roy's

³⁵⁸ Prasad, G. (1994). I.A. Richards and Indian theory of Rasa. Prasad Sarup And Sons, p. 165.

³⁵⁹ Taber, J. A. (1987). Philosophical Implications of Dhvani: Experience of Symbol Language in Indian Aesthetics (book review). 37/4, p. 455

face is the source of the *karuṇa rasa*. Actors on stage evoke emotional states through bodily gestures and sensitive spectators can taste the flavour of the depicted love (in this case the depicted sorrow).³⁶⁰



Figure 6.2: Ananta's *Adbhuta rasa* is captured

An experiment in *rasa* with Basant-Mukharī (track timing - [00:01:37](#)). Amidst the on-going sub-plot, Bismillah Khan provides the background music on the *śehnāi* through a rarely heard *rāga* called Basant-Mukharī. *Śehnāi* virtuoso Khan was the obvious choice of performer. Bismillah Khan was the only *Śehnāi* player at the time of the making of Jalsaghar who almost single handedly advanced this wind instrument to the classical stage. Before him, it was only used for playing light/folk music on auspicious occasions such as weddings and other traditional ceremonies, mainly in North India. This *rāga's* uniqueness lies in the fact that it has no connection with *rāga* Basant nor is there such a *rāga* known as Mukharī. This means that the melodic identity of the *rāga* does not reflect that of Basant or any of its *prakārs* (types). The late Halim Jaffer Khan³⁶¹ explained to me that Basant-Mukharī has been extensively and unquestionably recognized as the Hindustani adaptation of the Carnatic *rāga* Vakulabharanam. He further mentioned that it was because of the efforts of eminent musicologist and composer S N Ratanjankar that the *rāga* developed stylistic modifications to

³⁶⁰ Greene, R., and Cushman, S. (2016). The Princeton Handbook of World Poetries, p. 74.

³⁶¹ Halim Jaffer Khan was one of the few Hindustani musicians who has been credited to adapting *rāgas* of the Carnatic origin to the Hindustani domain and popularizing them. Along with Basant -Mukharī (performed it by the name of *Hijāz*), he adapted and popularized Kirwanī, Kanakāṅgī, Latāṅgī, Karaharapriyā, Mānavatī, Gaṇamūrtī, and others into the sitār repertoire and gave it a distinct Hindustani flavour.

suit the Hindustani *khayāl* style. Interestingly, the emotional component of the scene is a blend of the *karuṇa*, *śānta*, *bhakti* and *śṛṅgāra rasas*; this amalgam may also be the constituent of the overall personality of Basant-Mukharī.

While the melancholic Roy and his confused state of mind combined with his anguished or dull gestures hint towards the *karuṇa* and *śānta rasas*, the ongoing celebrations at the Ganguly's residence are redolent of the *bhakti* and *śṛṅgāra rasas*. The lower part of the octave of the *rāga* known as the *pūrvāṅga* has dominance of *rāga* Bhairav, whereas the upper region of the octave or the *uttarāṅga* is monopolized by Bhairavī. This fascinating composite forms the *rāga* Basant Mukharī. While Bhairav's melodic persona is engulfed with all those emotions, directly relating to the characteristics of Roy's psyche and behaviour discussed above, Bhairavī's *svaras* resonate with a certain brightness and hopefulness in anticipation of a promising knowledge-gaining phase that is about to embark in Ganguly's son's life. Bismillah Khan concentrates on the *pūrvāṅga* structure of the *rāga* and hence the Bhairav part is more prominent providing importance to Roy's position in the scene. Musicologist and sitār player Deepak Raja is of the opinion that the majority of musicians endorse a Bhairav family bias in their treatment of the *rāga*, with shades of melodically close *rāgas* such as Jogiyā and Ahīr-Bhairav being accepted as legitimate.³⁶² We can feel the shade of Ahīr-Bhairav lingering for a while, which adds to the on-going melancholic ambience. Raja also points out that the administering of Basant-Mukharī by master musicians evinces a far-reaching spectrum. Hence, it is treated as seriously as the Bhairav family of *rāgas* to even giving it a liberal semi-classical touch, going beyond the melodic liberalism of the contemporary standing of Bhairavī's lyrical treatment.

In summary, Ray's and Vilayat Khan's creative mastery and imaginative artistry are demonstrated once again in this shot. Ray assures the audience of a *rasa-bhāva* spectacle through his adept characters, while Khan embraces the essence of the shot and selects an engrossing piece of music for it. The *uttarāṅg* portion of the *rāga* then acts as a bridge between the on-going and the next shots.

³⁶² This information was obtained by me from Deepak Raja (July 2001, Mumbai).



Figure 6.3: Roy's bewildered expression is captured

Roy further questions if he was invited for the ceremony and when told in the affirmative, he is not happy to find out that it was not a personal invite but via a letter. In the next shot after the servants leave him alone, Roy starts reminiscing (figure 6.4) about an instance in his life about four years in flashback, when he rides back to his mansion for his own son's *upanayana saṃskāra*.



Figure 6.4: Roy getting pleasantly nostalgic

From figure 6.4, it can be clearly seen that Chhabi Biswas portrays the *śānta* and *hāsyā rasas* as a combination; his facial *bhāva* coupled with that gesture, immediately takes the viewer into the past. The *śānta rasa*, is not forced on Roy's character but is shown to have come naturally to him, as the pleasant thought of his own son's thread ceremony first calms him down momentarily from the on-going turmoil. A smile consequently emanates from him

which represents a form of the *hāsya rasa* (not to be confused with a full-fledged laughter in this case). Basant-Mukharī with shades of Ahīr-Bhairav in the background now transforms to a more happy and auspicious sounding Bhairavī, still through the *śehnāi* of Bismillah Khan. But why Bhairavī?



Figure 6.5: Bismillah Khan playing the *śehnāi*

Bhairavī and festivity (track timing - [00:04:39](#)). Vilayat Khan used to often conclude his concert recitals with a statement that there is no better *rāga* than Bhairavī to mark festive and auspicious occasions. So, it is no surprise that in keeping with the traditions, Khan does not choose to steer away in the name of innovation. Could he have chosen another *rāga* to give a similar effect? This point is debatable. Also, could any other *rāga* do justice to the shot? This is also debatable. According to Halim Jaffer Khan, Bhairavī exploits all the twelve *svaras* which is its exclusive attribute. This particular feature of Bhairavī and its inherent ability to generate pathos while producing a whole spectrum of *rasas* makes it a worthy choice for musically embellishing the scene.

Also, for instance, most musicians consider the *rāga* Bhairavī to express devotion, which is reflected in some miniature paintings including the one in figure 6.6.³⁶³

³⁶³ Khan, A.A. (ed.) & Ruckert, G. (1991). *The Classical Music of North India: The Music of the Baba Allauddin Khan Gharana as Taught by Ali Akbar Khan*. Saint Louis, East bay Books. Kerman, Joseph.

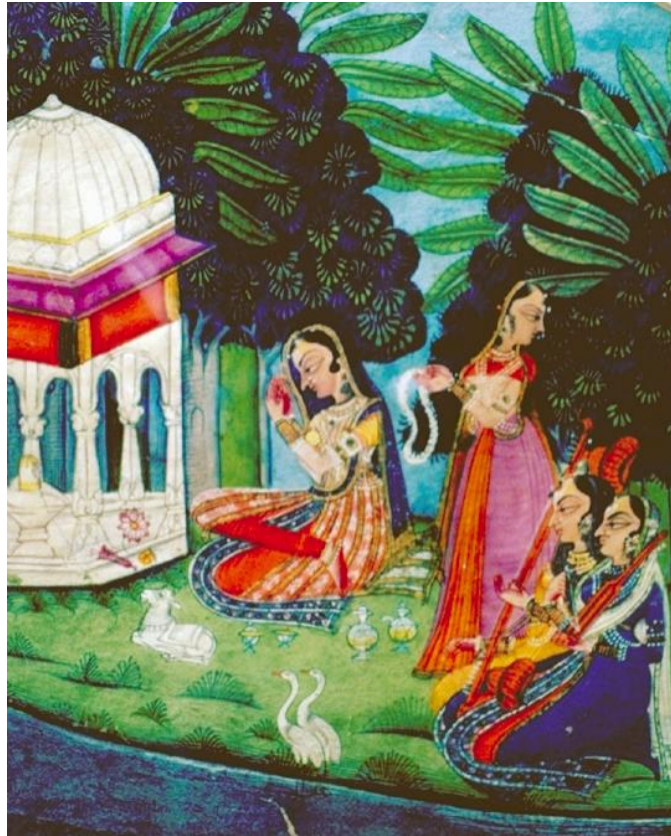


Figure 6.6: *Rāga Bhairavī* (photo by Wim van der Meer)

Festivities and the *rasa* of *bhakti* resonate with each other and go hand in hand in a country like India where most festivals are directly or indirectly related to a spiritual/religious event. Figure 6.6 depicts a portrayal of a lady worshipping the *liṅgam* (symbol of Śiva) with garlands in a small temple. Bhairavī is also the spouse of Bhairav (Śiva). Interestingly, Wim van der Meer sheds light on this extra-musical relation with respect to the name of the *rāga* Bhairavī.³⁶⁴

Alhaiyā Bilāwal, *rasa* and Roy (track timing - 00:05:49). As Roy enters his palatial *havelī*, he is greeted by the servant, and the musicians. He seems to be in a happy mood. However, this turns out to be only momentary, as Roy receives an unpleasant piece of news via an official letter that the bank authorities have declined to lend him more money. At the same time, the servant informs Roy that Janardan Ganguly's son Mahim, would like to meet him in order to discuss a business proposal to use Roy's land near the river. When Roy is hesitant about this, the servant reminds him that funds are low, and the business may prove to be fruitful.

³⁶⁴ van der Meer, W. (2005). *Visions of Hindustani Music*. The World of Music. 47, pp 105-118.

Partially convinced, Roy asks for Mahim to be sent to the jalsaghar to conduct a meeting. Roy enters the jalsaghar and starts looking around in pride at its splendour, the décor and portraits of his ancestors (figure 6.7).



Figure 6.7: Roy proudly re-exploring his Jalsaghar and its décor

Roy starts gazing around the Jalsaghar to Wahid Khan's surbahār playing in the backdrop, this time executing the late morning *rāga* Alhaiyā Bilāwal. Here, the surbahār is joined by the violin and together, these instruments generate a calm, yet exuberant mood. As Roy settles down in an armchair, a few caressing phrases are introduced on a flute in tandem with the on-going melody, while signifying the conclusion of Roy's mini exploration of the Jalsaghar and his readiness to now receive Mahim. Alhaiyā Bilāwal seems to blend in entirely with Ray's attempt of displaying a myriad of emotions in a less than two minute-long shot. Alhaiyā Bilāwal conveys the *śānta* and *virah rasas* at the same time. However, the dominance of one of these *rasas* would depend upon the treatment of the *rāga* and the nature of the composition. In Roy's case, the characteristic of *virah rasa* is that it expresses a desire tinged with the pathos of separation from his beloved Jalsaghar which he re-visits after a seemingly long gap. This is evident from the scene as some of its furniture has been covered at Roy's arrival and some servants are shown busy tidying up the room for an upcoming soiree. The feelings of contentment, fulfilment, pride, and the correspondent subtle *bhāvas* on Roy's face suggest the culmination of the *virah* and resultant *śānta* and *hāsya rasas*. Roy's feeling of joy is also evident from his gesture of *adbhuta rasa* (figure 6.7), after being pleasantly surprised

at knowing that his servant added the petals of a certain type of flower (*Muchkuṇḍa*) to his *sherbet*.



Figure 6.8: Roy's display of the *adbhuta rasa*

Amidst all this, Mahim arrives in the room, performs the customary bowing down as a sign of respect to *zamīndār* Roy and begins the business proposal conversation. Ray makes it clear through his direction that this is a serious talk and has no background music at all. From figure 6.8 it can be seen that Mahim displays a combination of the *bībhatsa* and *hāsya rasas* as a response to Roy's stern questioning with regard to payment conditions. While there are signs of worry and anxiety on the face of Mahim, he also makes a nervous attempt to hide his feelings with a (fake) smile.



Figure 6.9: Mahim's *Bibhatsa+ Hāsya rasa*

It is vital to note the intricacy of Ray's thought process behind the making of the shot. There is no music until Roy is convinced that all his business conditions regarding the borrowing are agreeable to Mahim; the *śehnāī* starts pouring out *Bhairavī* only after that.

Begum Akhtar's *ṭhumrī* and associated scenes (track timing - 00:11:19) Now we go back to the past. The music is strategically placed to link it to the next scene in which Roy's son's sacred thread ceremony is conducted in a traditional manner. *Bhairavī* continues to play right into the auspicious ceremony until the beginning of a lavish firework-display prior to the first soiree in the film. Just before the ceremony, Roy inquires of his servant whether Durga Bai, the courtesan-singer is arriving to perform that evening. He also orders the servant to invite Mahim for the occasion. While Ray and Khan ensure that *Bhairavī* is played on throughout the ceremony, the music switches to an orchestrated western melody for the celebratory fireworks demonstration for Roy and his guests. This instance once again points to the creative genius of Ray, who cleverly portrays the liking of the aristocratic landlords towards also western music as an influence of the East India Company personnel.

It is now time for Durga Bai's much awaited vocal performance at the Jalsaghar. One of the most acclaimed vocalists of India and a rave during the 1950's, Begum Akhtar performed the role of Durga Bai and lent her voice for the first soiree scene in the film. She was endowed with a sonorous voice which produced a magnetic effect on her listeners owing to her rare ability of generating a variety of *rasas* through her *gāyakī*. Also known as Akhtari Bai Faizabadi, the semi-classical vocalist possessed a formidable repertoire of various light classical forms such as *ṭhumrī*, *dādrā*, *horī*, *kajrī*, *caitī* apart from her expertise in *ghazal* singing. Vilayat Khan reported that it was a difficult task to persuade Begum Akhtar to sing for a film. She was of the opinion that her *rasābhivyakti* (expression of *rasa*) and *bhāvābhivyakti* (expression of *bhāva*) were meant for a higher purpose rather than mere entertainment. Vocalist *Paṇḍit* Jasraj shared his own personal experiences of spending time in Begum Akhtar's company. This was when she used to have long conversations with Jasraj's elder brother, *Paṇḍit* Maniram, while a young Jasraj watched them both with awe. Jasraj informs us that *unhonē gham se hī dostī kar lī thī* (she had befriended sadness itself).³⁶⁵ Owing to her

³⁶⁵ Doordarshan archival recording

experiencing immense pain and personal losses in life, Begum’s inner pathos would reflect in her soulful *gāyakī*. This would consequently transform her singing into a divine experience for the listeners. As a bonus, she was gifted with a deep sonorous voice unlike her counterparts of the time, and possessed a regal personality as seen in figure 6.9. Considering these exceptional characteristics of the singer, Ray was insistent that she should sing for the film in the role of Durga Bai.



Figure 6.10: Begum Akhtar as Durga Bai

Peter Manuel argues that it would be challenging to understand *ṭhumrī* without delving into the details of the particular set of *rāgas* in which it is rendered.³⁶⁶ He also suggests that Mānjh Khamāj and Pīlū are two of the invariable *rāgas* which are performed in *ṭhumrī* and *dādrā* styles. There are a few other popular *rāgas* for presenting these semi-classical genres, such as Deś, Tilak Kāmod, Pahāḍī and Gārā. In this case, Begum chooses Pīlū to present her *cīz* in front of Roy and his guests.³⁶⁷ She starts off with a brief yet colourful and *vazandār* (weight-bearing) *ālāp* prior to entering the mainframe of the *ṭhumrī*, beginning with the words *bhar-bhar āyī morī an̄khiyān, piyā bin* (my eyes filled with tears in the absence of my beloved). The nature of a *ṭhumrī* is usually known to be *cancaḷ* and possesses a flirty or coquettish flavour, with *śṛṅgāra* being the dominant *rasa*. However, *ṭhumrī* in Durga Bai’s presentation has more *ṭhehrāv* and appears to be portraying a mix of the *virah* and *śṛṅgāra rasas*. She is seen to emotionally bedeck the lyrics, treating each word of each phrase with unique embellishments

³⁶⁶ Manuel, P. (1989). *Thumri* in Historical and Stylistic Perspectives, p. 193.

³⁶⁷ A traditional vocal item in this context or any item

and ornamentations generating subtle variations through her *alaṅkāras*, *behlāvās* and *jamjamās*.

Shanti Hiranand, one of her prime disciples, said in an interview that she had a charming way of connecting with her audience.³⁶⁸ This fact is evident from her approach to playing Durga Bai, portraying a dignified and well-respected courtesan as well as making an instant rapport with Roy and the rest in the soiree. This she is able to accomplish in two ways: through an outstanding technical ability to execute *ṭhumrī* and *dādrā* and through striking an emotional-chord with her audience through intricate expressions that seem to arise from the deepest corners of the soul, going above and beyond mere technicalities of *sur* and *tāla*. Elaborating on the spiritual aspect, G Ghosh asserts that the relationship between the performer and audience is remarkably distinct from how the word ‘audience’ is signified in the western scheme of things.³⁶⁹ He gives an example by indicating the presence of elements of *darśan*, stating that there is a visual connection with something holy or auspicious in the soirees of the nature such as one held at Roy’s *Jalsaghar*. This can also be elucidated in terms of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* principles as portraying not only the *śṛṅgāra rasa* through the medium of an erotic expression of *ṭhumrī*, and also the *bhakti rasa*.



Figure 6.11: The response to Durga Bai’s *ṭhumrī*

³⁶⁸ Singh, A. (2012, December 13). 2Begum’s thumri soars again. BusinessLine. <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/variety/begums-thumri-soars-again/article23030459.ece>

³⁶⁹ Ghosh, G. (2017). Nobility or Utility? Zamindars, businessmen, and bhadrakalok as curators of the Indian nation in Satyajit Ray’s *Jalsaghar* (The Music Room). *Modern Asian Studies*, 52, pp. 1-33.

Amidst all this, Mahim Ganguly who has also been invited to attend the soiree is flustered and agitated throughout the duration of the recital. Instead of savouring the imperial *hukkāh* or finest of alcohol on offer, Mahim is busy consuming tobacco, cigarettes and the nose-snuff which were all considered rather inferior or unstylish forms of intoxication. Mahim’s obvious feeling of being somewhat out of place is evident from his various expressions, which in turn give rise to primarily the *bībhatsa* and *hāsya rasas*.



Figure 6.12: Mahim Ganguly portrays the *bībhatsa rasa*



Figure 6.13: Mahim’s portrayal of *hāsya rasa*

A glimpse of Ray’s unorthodox approach to filmmaking is seen at this instance as he manages to display unexpected emotions and extract subtle human behaviours through a completely unique situational interpretation. In simpler terms, where one would expect only the traditional or usual reactions and acknowledgements in a soiree such as this one, Ray

manages to display completely contrary emotional flavours through the medium of Mahim and weaving the plot around his awkward situation.

Consider figure 6.14 below. Ray focusses on Mahim's various *mukh-mudrās* and gestures particularly during that phase of the *ṭhumrī*, where Durga Bai is elaborating melodically through emphasis on the lyrics, 'ghir-ghir āyī, kālī badariyā' (the dark clouds have gathered), 'dhaḍkan lāgī morī chatiyā' (my heart started beating intensely). These lines indicate the *virah* or even the *viyog-śṛṅgāra rasa* with elements of anxiety (leading to Mahim's instant-abnormal changes in portrayal of *rasas* and the resulting *bhāvas*), fear and sadness at the same time. Ray once again demonstrates his unique yet masterly deliberation through Mahim, by connecting the music and some bizarre human reactions in a thought-provoking way.



Figures 6.14: *bībhatsa* and *hāsya*

It may be inferred that Ray implements an artistic amalgam of the actual *ṭhumrī* recital, portrayal of *rasas* and *bhāvas* and a cleverly crafted plot.

The music-less scene: Dreams, myths and literature (track timing - [00:14:59](#)) The scene that follows next is a conversation between Roy and his wife Mahamaya, during which there is no background music. Since Roy pawned her jewellery to organise Durga Bai's soiree, Mahamaya is hurt and annoyed. However, in spite of disagreement over the matter with her husband,

her expression of exasperation is extremely mild in nature. This scene reflects a certain level of respect that a wife had to have for her husband in the *bhadralok* society during those times. Following the display of brief animosity between the couple, Ray creates a little sub-plot that although digressing slightly from the storyline, still fits in to display a varying dimension of human imagination. Mahamaya shares the details of an ominous nightmare with Roy, relating to which she recalls that their estate comprised of a garden and a river that no longer exists. As a response to this, Roy retaliates saying that when he dreams, it is of a heavenly Jalsaghar. By correlating the characteristics of Roy's Jalsaghar and the Indian concept of *swarg* (Heaven), Ray manifests a fascinating sequence. Roy starts falling asleep while murmuring that in a grandiose soiree Rāmbhā is singing and Ūrvaśī is dancing. Before he can express what the third *apsara*, Menakā, is doing in his fanciful imagination, Roy doses off. The references to Rāmbhā, Ūrvaśī and Menakā have been extracted from the ancient Indian mythological literature. All the three major branches of the *sanātan dharma*; *śramaṇa* tradition (roots of Jainism), Vedic tradition (roots of Hinduism) and Buddhist tradition comprise literature that mention the existence of the *swarg-loka*.³⁷⁰ Indra is known to govern the *swarga* and its various beings such as the *Devatās* and nymphs. The three *apsarās* mentioned here are traditionally portrayed as skilled dancers and singers of unparalleled beauty. There are various references in Indian mythological literature where Menakā is summoned by Indra to attract the attention of *yogīs* and *ṛṣīs* to sabotage their penances and trick them into the longing for mundane gratification of the senses. Ray effectively refers to this aspect of Indian literature while successfully attempting to relate it to a common man's imagination.

Tilak Kāmod, Khoka and innocence (track timing - 00:23:41) Just as Roy falls off to sleep (figure 6.15), composer Vilayat Khan plays a short *ālāp* in *rāga* Tilak Kāmod in the background, indicating the culmination of the previous scene and an introduction to the next one. Khan cleverly deploys this *śṛṅgāra rasa*-infused *rāga* in the *ālāp* form to complement Roy's fancying the celestial nymphs in his process of dozing off gradually.

³⁷⁰ *According to Indian mythology, *swarg-loka* is a location where the *ātman* (soul) takes birth as a heavenly being (*devatā*) and has all the facilities to enjoy surreal pleasures but only up to a certain time limit. After that the soul will continue its journey in other forms leading to birth, pain and death. However, *mokṣa* is that abode, where once reached, the *ātman* (soul) merges with the *paramātmā* (God).



Figure 6.15: Roy falls off to sleep while Mahamaya looks on

He then, along with the sarod played by Ustād Ali Akbar Khan, slips into a *jugalbandī* of one of the most popular³⁷¹ self-composed *gat* compositions in Tilak Kāmod, set to *tīntāla* in *drut-laya*.³⁷² Compared to the romantic and passionate *ālāp* section, this piece is intended to enhance the effectiveness of the scene in which his son Khoka goes for a horse ride, followed by some time spent in the company of an elephant. The Tilak Kāmod *gat* complements the picturization of Khoka’s horse riding in the initial part of the scene. The rhythm of *addhā*³⁷³ variant of the traditional *tīntāla* (to which the composition is set), the graceful galloping of the white horse and the sheer joy on Khoka’s face along with the *gat* itself are in perfect harmony with each other. The *gat* continues in the background where the elephant is being bathed in a lake by the mahout which Khoka is enjoying with an innocent smile. Khoka’s expressions from an innocent smile (figure 6.16) transitioning into a laughter are a classic example of an amalgam of the non-erotic variant of the *śṛṅgāra rasa* along with the *hāsya rasa*. All three of them (Khoka, the mahout and the elephant) then return to the *havelī*, while the *gat* continues to portray the on-going moments of joy and peace. Khan temporarily halts the *gat* music at the juncture where an artist is seen painting a portrait of Roy while Khoka looks on.

³⁷¹ Most sitār players take an opportunity to perform this piece at concerts thus far owing to its captivating and addictive flavour.

³⁷² Refer to the video demonstration of the *gat* played by the author.

³⁷³ Refer to the video demonstration of the *Addhā tīntāla* variation played by the author.



Figure 6.16: The innocent smile of Khoka

Khan once again plays the same *gat* composition for a final time, as background to the scene where Khoka and his mother are seen taking leave of Roy for their journey to Khoka's maternal grandparents' village.

Salamat Ali Khan, Miyā Malhār and emotions (track timing - 00:34:50) For the second soiree of the film, Ray and Vilayat Khan invited one of the most celebrated vocalists of the time, Salamat Ali Khan to lend his voice to his film. Even though there was no shortcoming of quality classical vocalists in India during those days with stalwarts such as Bade Ghulam Ali, D V Paluskar, Ameer Khan, etc being around and active, Ray called for Salamat Ali Khan³⁷⁴ from Pakistan to explore the unique *gāyakī* of the Śāmacaurāsī *gharānā*.³⁷⁵ This style was not heard in an Indian film before it was used in *Jalsaghar*. Salamat Ali was particularly known for a wide range of super-fast *tāns*. During the song, this characteristic of Salamat Ali's *gāyakī* is particularly evident from 00:39:50 till 00:40:52. At 00:40:00, Roy starts showing expressions indicating a disturbed state of mind, thinking about his family. He then leaves the soiree and is shown hurriedly walking down the steps to the river as the pace of Salamat Ali's *tāns* increase rapidly to match Roy's heightened emotions. At 00:41:24, Roy asks his servant whether the boat carrying his family has arrived. The servant informs him that the boat drowned owing to bad weather in a whirlpool. Kali the boatman is seen carrying Khoka's dead

³⁷⁴ Salamat and his brother Nazakat had settled in Pakistan after the partition of India.

³⁷⁵ This Gharana had its roots in the small town of Śāmacaurāsī near Hoshiarpur, Punjab. It was made famous by the duo of Nazakat-Salamat Ali Khan. Salamat' son Shafqat informs during an interview with the Hindu newspaper that "The gharana is named after king Śāma, who had eighty-four (*Caurāsī*) villages under him,"

body and handing it over to a shocked Roy at 00:42:15. Vilayat Khan's choice of strategically placing the soiree at this point in the film and arranging for Salamat Ali to sing the *drut tīntāla* composition in *rāga* Miyā Malhār points to two critical creative innovations. Firstly, both Ray and Khan ensure that the soirees happen at Roy's Jalsaghar at regular intervals and the musical tradition of the *rasika zamīndār* is maintained. However, even more significantly, the cleverly and sensitively rendered seasonal *rāga* Miyā Malhār provides an effective finale to the scene with Khoka's dead body in Roy's arms. Ray and Khan ensure that the lilting melody that starts at 00:34:51 following a brief *ālāp* flows like a calm river until 00:39:49.

Till this point Roy is seen enjoying calmly like his guests. However, after 00:39:49, the rendition seems to give glimpses of a storm through improvised *tāna* patterns embellished by full throated *gamaks* in the voice of the soiree artist. The *rasa-bhāvas* portrayed by Roy from the point he leaves the soiree till he is handed over his son Khoka's dead body are in sync with the rendition in Miyā Malhār, the *rāga* known to manifest the feeling of rain, storm and clouds. At 00:42:31, it is raining outside Roy's *havelī*. Wahid Khan's slow *ālāp* in the same *rāga* Miyā Malhār plays in the background. This *ālāp* on the *surbahār* continues the next morning, when a visibly shattered Roy is seen. This also leads to a significant point in the course of the story at 00:46:03, where Roy is dejectedly seen telling his servant that there will be no more music in his life from then onwards.

At 00:46:44, Roy starts taking slow steps towards proceeding out of the *havelī*, to meet Tufan the horse and Moti the elephant, the two favourite pet animals of his late son Khoka. At this point a slow hopeful sounding *joḍ* in Alhaiyā Bilāwal is played in the background. At 00:48:25, as a symbol of some moments of joy in Roy's shattered life, the same Tilak Kāmod *gat*, which was used earlier by Khan is played in the background.



Figure 6.17: Roy fondly looking at Moti the horse

As Roy approaches the horse Tufan and calls out to him affectionately, the Tilak Kāmod *gat* symbolises this innocent love between a man and his beloved pet. The horse was yearning for his master as explained by the caretaker at [00:48:44](#). Roy then moves further down to see Moti. He has a glimpse of the elephant from a distance at [00:49:37](#) until which point the Tilak Kāmod *gat* continues to be played. The different moods created by the same *gat* in a sprightly *rāga* is made possible by changes to not only the composition's pace, but also the cinematography. While the earlier scene used the *gat* to depict moments of joy and joy alone, this scene uses it to depict just a ray of hope.

Ananta's Joy, Hamsadhwanī and Finale (track timing - [01:04:57](#)) The next significant scene in the film before Roy's death is the final soiree of the film. However, this soiree would take place not at Roy's music room, but at the inauguration of the Jalsaghar of Roy's rival. He tries to persuade Roy to attend the soiree featuring a famous dancer by the name of Kṛṣṇa Bai to which Roy refuses. However, Roy then keeps thinking about the upcoming soiree and ponders upon whether he should attend it. The story takes a twist when he asks his servants if there was enough money left in the treasury to be able to invite Kṛṣṇa Bai himself. He finally decides to host Kṛṣṇa Bai's dance soiree himself the next day. Following Roy's announcement, his servant Ananta gets excited about the upcoming *jalsā* that were to take place after a long gap and some disastrous moments in Roy's life. This scene mainly focusses on Ananta's emotions and the music used to portray them as effectively as possible.

Ananta is overwhelmed with joy and has a sparkle in his eyes when he hears that Kṛṣṇa Bai will be performing a soiree at the Jalsaghar, which will once again resonate with music. A cheerful Ananta immediately goes to the Jalsaghar to clean it up for the upcoming soiree. Vilayat Khan plays *rāga* Hamsadhwanī to portray Ananta’s emotions of ecstasy, satisfaction and excitement. Khan’s treatment of the *rāga* to portray these emotions is noteworthy. He plays fast *tān* patterns that highlight the effulgent nature of Hamsadhwanī till 01:06:52. From the moment Ananta cheerfully glances at the other servant (01:06:12) till he lights the lamps (01:07:33), Khan has played the *rāga* with subtle changes to embellish the scenes within that duration. There is a brief *ālāp* before the fast *tāns* start to portray Ananta’s emotions while rolling the carpet (01:06:17), joyfully cleaning the mirror (01:06:19), fixing the lamp (01:06:22), Roy’s expressions while marching back and forth in his room (01:06:33), Ananta’s expressions when pouring alcohol for the guests (01:07:20) and finally the excitement on his face when lighting the lamp at (01:07:33). Through this scene, Ray has displayed emotions of an ordinary servant with great effect. In the 1950s, films mainly focussed on lead characters, especially if the subject dealt with aristocracy. But this was one of the first instances of portrayal of real life on the big screen. Ray showed how *adbhuta* and *śṛṅgāra rasas* of a servant excited selflessly for his master’s soiree, would look like in physical form. Khan chose a *rāga* and rendered it such that the servant’s excitement was brought to life.



Figure 6.18: The servant’s joy while preparing the *Jalsaghar* for the final soiree



Figure 6.19: The servant's joy

After Kṛṣṇa Bai's performance at Roy's havelī, he is shown to become increasingly disturbed and distressed as days pass, before eventually losing his life from falling off his horse, Tufan, in the final scene. The film ends with two crucial depictions. The first one is the uncontrollable sorrow of the servant; the second is a dark jalsaghar with the majestic lamp hanging as if in utter sorrow.

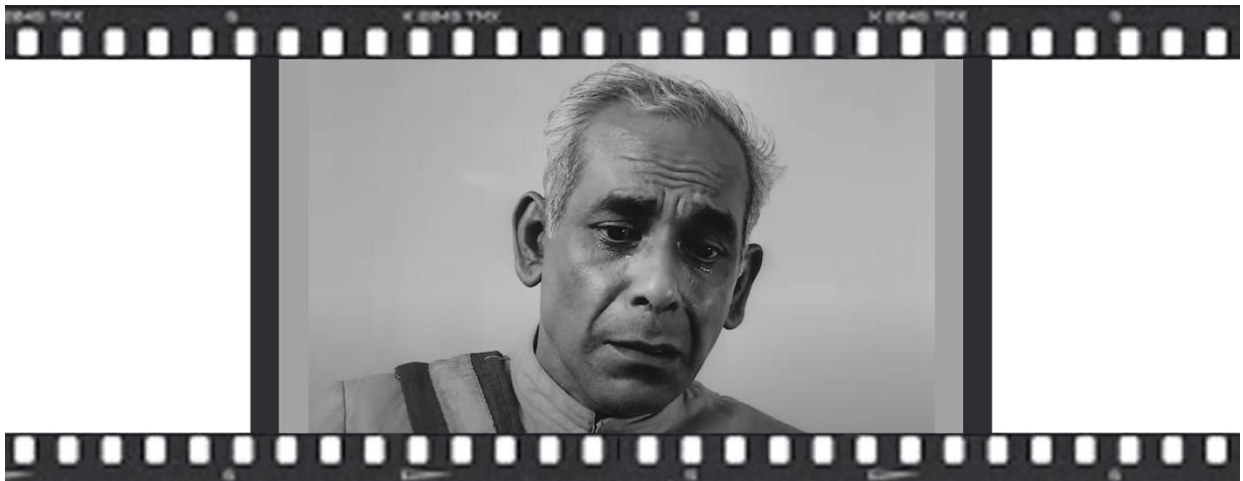


Figure 6.20: The dejected servant at Roy's death

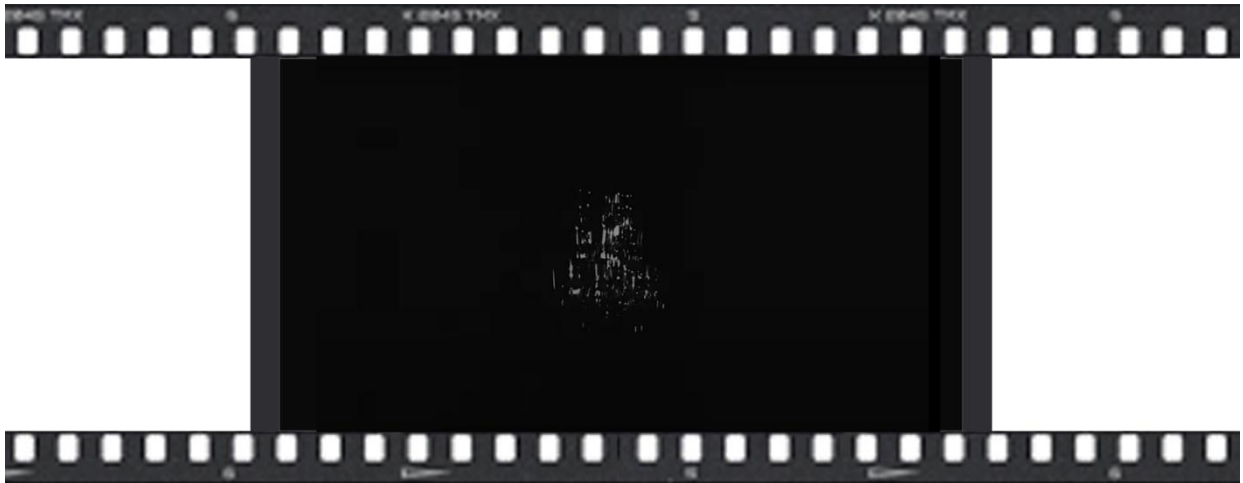


Figure 6.21: The dark room

6.5 Conclusion

The cinematic experience of *Jalsaghar* may make one wonder if there was ever any better creative interpretation of real-life situations in Indian films. *Jalsaghar* and many other Ray movies were based on fictional novels. However, his cinematic approach in terms of the methods he implemented to reach out to the audiences and to evoke particular responses in them, gave his films a documentary-touch. As has been well documented, Ray was very influenced by Italian Neo-realism. In fact, watching *Bicycle Thieves* (1948), in London, was a transformative experience for him. *Jalsaghar* is also a prime example of his Neo-realist style of film making. According to Ray, reality is not only what constitutes the tangible aspects of everyday existence, but also is composed of myths and fables. He gives an interesting example of Kṛṣṇa alive in day-to-day memory.³⁷⁶ He was of the belief that subtle and complex human relationships, which many of the best fiction films deal with, are also as much a part of reality as those other aspects generally probed by documentary makers. In *Jalsaghar*, Ray has managed to highlight even the most understated aspects of complex human behaviours and relationships.

Ray not only probes into the intricacies of human dispositions through his films but portrays them with relatable pieces of Hindustani classical music, dance and fundamental application of the *navarasas*. These observations also shed light on the clear 'Indianness' of his films. I

³⁷⁶ Ray, S. (2011) editor. *The Question of Reality. Satyajit Ray on Cinema*, by Satyajit Ray et al., Columbia University Press, pp. 35–38.

would particularly like to stress this point because Ray's cinema has been categorized as being not so popular in India as compared to the West. Although he did learn a substantial amount of his craft from Western cinema, Ray never excluded vital ingredients of Indian art, culture or aesthetics and often, employed unadulterated Indian classical music, a prime example of which would be *Jalsaghar*. His contemporaries, especially in Bollywood, who were also known for relying heavily on Indian classical music experimented with international music perhaps to a greater extent than Ray.

One of Ray's unique talents was to get the desired aesthetic contribution from masters like Vilayat Khan, Ali Akbar Khan (composer of *Devi*) Ravi Shankar (composer of *Pather Panchali*) who themselves were reported to be extremely difficult individuals to work with. Vilayat Khan demanded minimum interference from Ray and required almost complete independence in composing and directing the music. Khan sometimes did not see eye to eye with Ray and resented the fact that Ray did not allow him to score independently.³⁷⁷ However, Ray's imaginative prowess attracted Khan's attention (though only temporarily), which led to a collaboration that produced a masterpiece which may be thought of as nothing short of monumental stature. Through some outstanding compositions of Khan, combined with compelling and forceful display of *navarasas*, Ray creates an exceptional drama despite the focus on very limited subjects, mainly the protagonist and the music room. What is even more worthwhile to note is that with Khan, he was able to translate and transform complex Hindustani classical *rāgas* into pieces of melody that have been relatable to the emotional needs of audiences worldwide. In tune with this, actress Sharmila Tagore, while paying her tributes to Ray in 2015 said something very intriguing. She asserted that sixty years after he made his first film, and twenty three years after his death, his work continues to be a part of people's discourse and consciousness, seen and admired in so many countries and across various cultures which is incredible.³⁷⁸ Approving of the melodies to suit different situations in the film and appointing choicest of artists including Salamat Ali, Begum Akhtar and Roshan Kumari to precisely transform elements of his innovative perceptions to an engaging dramatic spectacle are some examples of Ray's exemplary dexterity.

³⁷⁷ As told by Vilayat Khan during a meeting with him in 2002 in Mumbai.

³⁷⁸ Ray, S. (2017). Remembering the Godfather of Indian cinema: How Satyajit Ray Changed the Course of Filmmaking. <https://yourstory.com/2017/05/remembering-Satyajit-Ray>

Thus, the imaginative recapitulation of Tarashankar Bandyopadhyay's short story by Ray certainly gains from his application of a highly centralised and subjective control over aspects of the work. It is a film where exploration of interpersonal relations and character portrayal are closely associated with a focus on Hindustani classical music, dance, and literature. Acclaimed filmmaker Martin Scorsese once said, 'Ray's magic, the simple poetry of his images and their emotional impact will always stay with me.'³⁷⁹ But what was responsible for that 'magic' referred to by Scorsese? Cynthia Grenier is of the view that the film, from time to time, picks up a detail of almost frighteningly profound and true observation.³⁸⁰ *Jalsaghar* certainly lives up to these observations.

Roy's collapsing *haveli* creates a picture of isolation and melancholy. This is an almost immaculate analogical juxtaposition of his *antah-karan* (conscious self). It may also be argued that since *Jalsaghar* is a character-driven narrative, it would have been challenging for the director to make it consistently appealing for the layman. Having said that, the classical art forms performed by not only proficient/established but also meticulously trained artists played a significant role in meeting this challenge of Ray, coupled with his sensitivities and own expertise in filmmaking. Partha Chatterjee describes Ray's cinema to be rather alleviated and more inward looking despite its 'outer bourgeois accoutrements.'³⁸¹ Chatterjee further argues that Ray takes a clear-cut moral stand on social issues that he needs to tackle through his works and is capable of being ruthless to charlatans without losing his sense of sarcasm and subtle humour. All these elements were observed in *Jalsaghar*, a piece of work that had the Ray-stamp on it and one that was made all the more effective through its superior level of musical scores.

³⁷⁹ Satija, G. (2021, June 30). Martin Scorsese To Christopher Nolan, 11 Greatest Filmmakers Who Were Inspired By Satyajit Ray. IndiaTimes. <https://www.indiatimes.com/entertainment/hollywood/hollywood-filmmakers-inspired-by-satyajit-ray-543816.html>

³⁸⁰ Grenier, C. (1960). Review of The Music Room (Jalsaghar) by Satyajit Ray. *Film Quarterly*, 13/4, pp. 42-43.

³⁸¹ Chatterjee, P. (2012). Indian Cinema: Then and Now. *India International Centre Quarterly*, 39/2, pp. 45-53.

Chapter 7: *Devdas*

7.1 Introduction

'*Devdas*' is a novel, written by the famed Bengali writer Sarat Chandra Chatterjee published in 1917.³⁸² According to Sukumar Sen, although Sarat *bābū*³⁸³ completed it several years earlier in 1900, it was not published until 1917 owing to his hesitancy over certain unconfirmed elements.³⁸⁴ Few would have imagined that it would go on to become one of the most widely acclaimed and analysed pieces of Indian fictional literature of the twentieth century. The novel has more than twenty-five filmic adaptations in various Indian languages with three Hindi film adaptations so far by the same name, the latest one being by Sanjay Leela Bhansali in 2002.

The key ingredients of Bhansali's motion-picture adaptation of the historic novel *Devdas* are its resplendent sets, brilliant display of colours, an ethereal musical score, traditional dances, and its portrayal of characters which have a heart-wrenching effect on the viewer. I will look at various aspects of the iconic film in detail, with exploration of the influence of Indian classical music (*rāga*, *tāla* and *nṛtya*) and *rasa-bhāva* elements on its making. This is because Bhansali pays particular attention to these details in his film making. Thus, his *Devdas* offers a rich tapestry to scrutinize selected scenes, dialogues, and songs of the film. The elements of *rāga* and *tāla* will be looked at – together in some instances and separately in others. This chapter provides a perspective on the relationship between Indian classical music, dance and acting. I will examine the influence of each of the elements independently as well as together, on various aspects of the film. This influence bears adherence to the *Nāṭyaśāstra* in various ways, which will be identified, endorsed, and probed for the purpose of exposing its distinctive features. Instead of evaluating and analysing each scene of the film, I look at those aspects which highlight its musical peculiarities, and social message.

Before examining Bhansali's version of '*Devdas*,' I will give a brief introduction to the novel

³⁸² '*Devdas*' the novel, will be referred to within single quotes; *Devdas*, the character will appear non-italicised and *Devdas*, the film will be italicised throughout the chapter

³⁸³ It is an honorific term used mainly in Bengal and some other regions of Northern India

³⁸⁴ Sen, S. (1960). *History of Bengali Literature*, 3, p. 67.

itself and acquaint the reader with its previous two Hindi filmic adaptations and their peculiarities.

7.2 The plot

The novel 'Devdas' is set in a rural backdrop (a village called Taj Sonapur) in Bengal, India in the early 1900s. Devdas is a young man, born to the aristocratic Bengali Brahmin family of *zamīndār* Narayan Mukherjee. Paro (Parvati) is a young woman from a middle-class Bengali family, who lives in Devdas's neighbourhood. Paro and Devdas spend their childhood in this village as friends. A special bond of love gradually grows between them, oblivious of their respective social backgrounds, leading to a scandalous affair. Devdas is sent away for higher education to Calcutta.

However, in the first major diversion from the original plot of Saratchandra, Bhansali portrays Devdas as embarking on a journey to England for his studies. Following his return home and meeting Paro, they both realise that their relationship has transformed from innocent comradeship into something more mature and romantic. Paro's mother, Sumitra, approaches the Mukherjees for a marriage proposal between the two lovers. However, Narayan and his wife Kaushalya are portrayed as rude, contemptuous, and lordly *zamīndārs* who turn down Sumitra's offer rather arrogantly. From this point onwards, the sequence of events turn tragic for most of the characters in the story as Devdas is revealed to metamorphose into an impassioned, reckless, and tempestuous lover who embarks on a path of self-destruction after Paro is married off to an older man.

The enduring allure of the character of Devdas may seem hard to understand initially. He is represented as an indecisive and stringent tragic hero who drinks himself to death after his childhood love Paro is married off to another man. Subsequently, a courtesan called Chandramukhi falls in love with him and nurses him as he gradually deteriorates and wastes away for Paro. Devdas is presented to be too spineless and gutless to be extolled or marvelled at and yet his ill-fated saga of tragic love has such a strong hold on the Indian imagination that every generation of filmmaker has been inspired to produce its own version. The part of the plot which is difficult to fathom is that although both the women in the film are stronger than

the protagonist, they are willing to serve him and even refer to themselves as *dāsī*.³⁸⁵ In one of the scenes, Devdas hits Paro so that she acquires a mark that would reserve her as his forever. Despite this, their relationship moves the audience at every instance of the pair's interaction. Although Paro has been portrayed as mostly the one who gives in to Devdas' whims and fancies, she eventually does take stern decisions. Al-Azami et al. compare the character of Paro to that of Elizabeth from *Pride and Prejudice*.³⁸⁶ For an Indian Bengali woman from pre-independence India to be portrayed as bold and outspoken as Paro is quite unusual. She refuses the marriage proposal from Devdas after her marriage to a wealthy landlord is fixed, which is like the case of Elizabeth refusing Mr Darcy's proposal. However, the above episode was a result of Devdas' ego and his family's attitude of looking down upon Paro's low caste family compared to the aristocratic background of the Mukherjees. This shows that Sarat Chandra was influenced by English literature at least to some extent. However, while there are shades of English influences as mentioned above, one cannot ignore the similarities between the eternal mythical sagas of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa from Indian traditions in the cinematic unfolding of the Paro-Devdas love story.

7.3 Barua's adaptation

The first Hindi version of 'Devdas' was made by Prathamesh Chandra Barua in 1936 with the legendary actor-singer Kundan Lal Saigal as the protagonist. This version was a simple adaptation of the novel without any changes to the plot. Compared to modern-day Indian cinema, the glamour element is missing from the film, which was made against a conservative backdrop. However, orthodoxy, conservatism and traditionalism were normal for those times as the audience belonging to the Indian society during the 1940s related particularly to emotions and morals in films, as compared to today's demand for sexual appeal, action and often brutish entertainment. Since I am not concentrating on Barua's adaptation, I will examine only one *ṭhumrī* which evidences a significant influence of Hindustani classical music and *rasa*. This is the actor-singer Saigal's rendition of the traditional *ṭhumrī*, *Piyā bin nahī āvat cañ*, set to *rāga* Jhinjhoṭī. Both Jhinjhoṭī and Khamāj, the parent *ṭhāṭ* to which Jhinjhoṭī belongs, are steeped in the romantic sentiment.

³⁸⁵ The term used for a woman serving an Indian household

³⁸⁶ Al-Azami, Salman, and Shakur, T. (2018). Saratchandra's Devdas: A Comparison Between the Original Bengali Text and its Two Hindi Film Adaptations. *South Asian Cultural Studies*. pp. 62-71.

Video link to the song: [Piyā bin āwat nāhī, Devdas \(1936\)](#)

Saigal's rendition of this *ṭhumrī* is a fine example of *ānaṅda* (pleasure) derived from an aesthetically crafted emotion. Well known maestros argued from their own experience of personal *sādhana* (practice) that when the inner-most core of a skilled musician weeps, the resultant *pukār* (musical intonation using higher notes) is steeped in *bhāvas*. These *bhāvas* manifest corresponding *rasas* that has the potential to delight the listener with ecstasy.

In the context of this *ṭhumrī*, *śṛṅgāra* and *karuṇa* are complementary *rasas*. Saigal not only presents Jhīnjhoṭī's grammar correctly but also paints a decorous melodic picture by staying true to the *rasa*. However, Saigal as the dismal Devdas performs an exquisite amalgamation of the *śṛṅgāra* and *karuṇa* *rasas* through his treatment of the *ṭhumrī* conveying two main feelings: one, utter discomfort in the absence of Paro; the other his boundless love for her. A. Ibkar quotes Hogan (2003), 'The most common primary *rasas* in Indian cinema are the romantic and the sorrowful or pathetic'. The most elemental and essential human emotions are love and sorrow and hence the most displayed *rasas* are *śṛṅgāra rasa* and the *karuṇa rasa*, which makes Indian cinema circle around melodrama and romance.³⁸⁷

In the enacting and singing of *piyā bin nahī āvat cañ*, Saigal presents the essence of this combination of the *śṛṅgāra* and *karuṇa* *rasas* standing in for the whole emotion of the film that weaves tragedy and romance together. Most aspects of Indian cinema comprising the performance of the actors, the technique of acting, the music, background score and even the emotions experienced by the audience, are based on *rasa* and the aesthetic principles of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.

7.4 Bimal Roy's adaptation

The second Hindi film version of 'Devdas' was directed by Bimal Roy in 1955, with Dilip Kumar portraying the role of Devdas. Famous stars Vyjanthimala and Suchitra Sen portray Chandramukhi and Paro, respectively. Twenty years since 1935 when Barua's *Devdas* came

³⁸⁷ Ibkar, A. (2015). The Nāṭyashāstra and Indian Cinema: A Study of the Rasa Theory as a Cornerstone for Indian Aesthetics.

out, Indian society and the film making process had changed significantly, with developments in music, cinematography, character portrayal, acting and dialogue delivery. One change in character portrayal is the transmogrification of Chandramukhi from the 1935 attire of simple yet graceful Bengali *sārīs* to the 1955 baroque and opulently embroidered traditional long skirts known as *lehengās* topped with exquisite long scarfs called *dupaṭṭās*.

One of the most important aspects of Roy's film was Dilip Kumar's portrayal of Devdas. He was known as the tragedy-king, described as the ultimate method actor by Satyajit Ray, and is credited with bringing realism to Indian cinema. Roy's version has pathos and is a startling yet simple representation of Sarat *bābū's* novel. The textures of the film are naturalistic, while the performances are understated.

Rasābhivyakti, or the personification of *rasas*, played a vital role in all of Roy's films. Although Suchitra Sen as Paro and Vyjanthimala as Chandramukhi are eloquent and expressive, it is Dilip Kumar who anchors the film. He almost downplays the melodrama of the material. In a scene where he laments the news of Paro's marriage to another man, the *karuṇa rasa* is portrayed at its very best. A mellow background music piece on the *sāraṅgī* by Ram Narayan elevates the *karuṇa rasa* to a different level. Kumar exclaims, '*Voh śādī ke rāste par calī gayī aur māī barbādī ke rāste par*' – 'she went on the path of marriage and I on the path of destruction.'



Figure 7.1: Dilip Kumar's *mukh-mudrā* or facial expression

The *rasa-bhāva* manifesting dialogues by Rajinder Singh Bedi had a considerable impact on audiences. In the scene where Chandramukhi begs Devdas to give up his alcohol, she tells him, 'Itnī zyādā bardāšt na kar sakoge' – You will not be able to tolerate so much (alcohol). To this, Devdas replies, 'Kaun kambakht hai jo bardāšt karne ke liye pītā hai? Mai to pītā hūnn ke bas sāns le sakū aur aisī jagah se uṭkar jāne kī tākat nahī hai nā.' – 'Who drinks to tolerate? I drink so that I can breathe. I do not have the strength to move from a place like this.' The *karuṇa rasa* along with a shade of sarcasm is portrayed effectively through dialogue delivery combined with pathos filled background music.

Video link to the scene: [Dilip Kumar Most Iconic Dialogue, Devdas \(1955\)](#)

Though Dilip Kumar anchored the film, both Suchitra Sen and Vyjanthimala were no less effective in their portrayals of Paro and Chandramukhi respectively in eliciting the required *bhāvas* in the film's various scenes. Let us take an example of the scene where Paro's forehead is scarred by the smack of Devdas's fishing rod. Devdas is anguished and full of contrition by his own last love letter to Paro, following his family's unwillingness to accept her as their daughter in-law. The content of the letter suggests that there can be no further relationship between them both. However, when he arrives to console Paro, it is too late, as her wedding procession has already commenced. In a fit of rage, he wounds her forehead and expresses bitterly that whenever she sees her reflection in a mirror the scar caused by the wound will remind her of her pride. Suchitra Sen's expression of utter disbelief gradually transforms into one indicating immense satisfaction of possessing an everlasting impression of eternal love as seen in figure 7.2.



Figure 7.2: Paro’s *bhāva* of (*dhṛiti*) *santoṣ* (satisfaction)

Paro’s expression depicted here corresponds to two *sthāyī-saṁcāri bhāvas* mentioned in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, *dhṛiti* and *vṛra*, as she gives an impression of being satisfied and shy at the same time. Along with these two *sthāyī bhāvas*, Paro may also be exemplifying the *vihr̥ta bhāva* which is defined as the *bhāva* of silence owing to experiencing constraint even after *piyā-milan* (meeting with one’s lover).

7.5 *Devdas* – Sanjay Leela Bhansali

Video link of the film: [Devdas \(2002\)](#)

The third Hindi film version of ‘*Devdas*’ was directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali in 2002 with superstar Shahrukh Khan portraying the role of *Devdas*. Former Miss World title holder Aishwarya Rai and renowned actress Madhuri Dixit played the roles of Paro and Chandramukhi, respectively. Bhansali’s larger than life representation of Sarat Chandra’s imaginative characters became an overwhelming success. Bhansali went back to an older tradition of Indian film making by focussing on elaborate set designs, thoughtful colour combinations, theatrical acting, rich musical scores and by deploying esteemed dance and music maestros. Similarly to some of his predecessors from the film industry who hired renowned Hindustani classical musicians and dancers, Bhansali’s decision to collaborate with kathak maestro Birju Maharaj certainly elevated the quality of dance performances of the film.

Bhansali attempted to transform the original novel into a larger-than-life cinematic experience by implementing the following principal techniques:

- 1) Deviating from the original plot to create intrigues and artistic complexities
- 2) Setting the film in a luxurious milieu
- 3) Using Hindustani classical music for songs and background music sequences
- 4) Using traditional Kathak and folk-dance forms
- 5) Using *navarasas* in multiple dialogues, songs, and dances throughout the film
- 6) Combining melody and drama and to make it a melodramatic audio-visual experience

Bhansali's adaptation has an effective blend of *rasa*, *rāga* and *bhāva* elements. Although the *śṛṅgāra rasa* forms the basis of the melodramatic depiction, one can find traces of all the remaining *rasas* intertwined through different scenes. Like the ancient Indian poet Kālidāsa, Bhansali sees all the nine *rasas* as inherent in a human being. Throughout the film, Bhansali masterfully displays the lovers' feelings through intricate scenes with all the necessary *rasa*-portraying ingredients. Not only do the actors impeccably interpret Bhansali's imagination of *rasa-bhāva*, their expressiveness is such that it also displays a natural state of limerence, though subtly. The classical Sanskrit poet and playwright Kālidāsa (4th to 5th century CE) implemented Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* meticulously in his most famous drama *Abhigyaṅśakuntalam*. Kālidāsa drew from Bharata's exhaustive portrayal and sophisticated articulation of the *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas* and *vyabhicārī bhāvas*.³⁸⁸ Kālidāsa's works centred around the *śṛṅgāra rasa*. He has used all the complementary emotions to depict the *sthāyībhāvaḥ* of *śṛṅgāra*.

The central theme of *Devdas* is also based on the *śṛṅgāra rasa*. From the *rasa* theory of *Nāṭyaśāstra*, it is known that *śṛṅgāra* has the sub-element of *rati* or love as its *sthāyī bhāva* and has been classified into two forms, *sambhoga śṛṅgāra* (feeling of love in union) and *vipralambha śṛṅgāra* (feeling of love in separation). The latter form of *śṛṅgāra* is the dominant *rasa* in the film owing to which it falls under the genre of tragedy. The film ends with the death of the protagonist after a momentary final union, which would make the film a

³⁸⁸ 'vibhāva anubhava vyabhicārabhāvas samyogāt rasa niṣpatti' – *Nāṭyaśāstra* Chapter 10. It means that *rasa* is produced with the combination of *Vibhava*, *anubhava* and *vyabhicārabhāvas*.

vipralambha-śṛṅgāra-pradhān-nāṭya. This is a phrase coined by me which means, a drama with the dominant sentiment of love in separation.

After Devdas parts with Paro, there is an estrangement period of ten years between them which leads to the manifestation of this form of *rasa*. During this period, their acquaintanceship gradually transforms into intimacy and finally leads to a strong romantic bond. P Barua compares this situation to an instance in Kālidāsa' *Meghdūtam*.³⁸⁹ Deep understanding of human psychology, reciprocated behaviourism, and enunciating sentiments through actions were some important trademarks of Kālidāsa's writing. Bhansali's attention to detail in the emotional and physical aspects of almost every scene of *Devdas* is close to Kālidāsa's highly imaginative scene descriptions in epics like *Meghdūtam*, *Abhigyānsakuṅtalam* and *Kumārsambhavam*.

A prime example from the film is the song *Kare Kṛṣṇa rās Rādhā ke saṅg*.

Video link to the song: [Kare Kṛṣṇa rās, Devdas \(2002\)](#)

Paro's mother Sumitra, who has inherited her family tradition of theatre dancing is invited by Devdas's mother Kausalya to perform for the *godh-bharāī* (baby shower) ceremony of her daughter in-law. On this occasion, Sumitra sings a *pāraṁparik bandiś* (traditional composition) based on the popular Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa theme and dances to it while submerging herself in the *bhakti rasa*. Bhansali uses the melody of Sumitra's *bandiś* in order to portray Devdas and Paro's flirtatious emulation of the lyrics, while making a candid correlation between the mortal characters of the novel with the divine pair Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Sumitra's words '*ṭhumak ṭhumak kar nāc rahī thī merī Rādhā rānī, jāne kahān se rās racāne āyā chāīlā Giridhārī*' (Rādhā was dancing when Kṛṣṇa appeared from nowhere to play with her) compare Paro to Rādhā, and Devdas to Giridhārī (one of Kṛṣṇa's several names).³⁹⁰ Devdas transforms to Giridhārī, the highly charming and seductive form of Kṛṣṇa, while Paro, with earthen pots on her head becomes Rādhā. Bhansali, in recreating these images goes back to old Indian

³⁸⁹Barua, P. (2011). Locating The Movie 'Devdas' Within the Framework of Aristotle's Concept of 'Tragedy' and Trace the 'Rasas' and 'Bhavas', according to Bharata's Natyashastra. Research Scholar, 1, pp. 388-392.

³⁹⁰ Kṛṣṇa acquired the name *Giridhari*, after he lifted the Govardhan mountain to save his folks from a storm by providing them refuge under the mountain, as per the Mahabharat epic. *Girī* means mountain and *dharī* means lifter (basic Sanskrit vocabulary)

paintings and dance choreography. The song, music and visualisation together evoke the image of the divine lovers that is inscribed in the cultural memory of the people through countless songs that are danced to all over India.

Devdas playfully teases Paro creating *bhāvas* of *rati* (eroticism), *utsāha* (enthusiasm) and *vismaya* (astonishment). These *bhāvas* stimulate the erotic sentiments of the *śṛṅgāra rasa*. The song towards the end, moves back from Devdas and Paro to Sumitra dancing in Kausalya's hall. Sumitra is unaware that Kausalya is planning to humiliate her in front of the extended family and guests during the celebrations. Sumitra's joy turns to grief and rage when Kausalya rudely turn down the former's offer of Paro's marriage to Devdas. Bhansali thus creates a dramatic situation when many emotions come into play but all sounding a doom for the young love.

7.5.1 Examination of iconic dialogues

Before examining the songs in the film, I would like to look at some famous dialogues in terms of their *rasa-bhāva* depictions and the role of the musical (and sonic) backdrops to these dialogues. This is because I am highlighting the particular intensity in the dialogues with respect to the poetic expressions used and the *abhinaya* of the actors to manifest the *rasa-bhāva* experience. These salient passages are culturally canonical. The three dialogues collectively cover the four main characters of the film: Devdas, Paro, Chandramukhi and Chunni *bābū*. I will be considering the role of the musical (and sonic) backdrops to these dialogues.

1) Chandramukhi and Devdas (Track timing – 01:09:55)



Figure 7.3: Chandramukhi

Sometimes *rāgas* can be used to underscore an additional nuance or subtlety in a way that is not obvious in the dialogue itself. For example, in the spoken part of the dialogue there is a romantic mood. However, the background score is set to *rāgas* Mārṡā and Pūriyā which have a contrasting mood. The intensity of the dialogue and the choice of *rāgas* for embellishment of the scene are the two elements that make this episode stand out in the film.

In his early interactions with Chandramukhi, Devdas is presented as an insensitive person. Although a subtle sarcasm towards Paro is present throughout their complex relationship, Devdas' boorishness is more evident while dealing with Chandramukhi. Paro is aware of this but one day Devdas surprises her by reciting a *śāyari* (a rich tradition of Urdu poetry which has many different forms)³⁹¹ to the dancer. Chandramukhi replies with the dialogue:

**Yūn nazar kī bāt kī aur dil curā
gaye,
hum toh samjhe they but, āp toh
dhaḍkan sunā gaye.**

You stole my heart talking through
your eyes.
I thought you were a statue, but I
heard your heartbeat.

³⁹¹ [Urdu poetry - Wikipedia](#)

This provokes Devdas to recite another couplet praising her beautiful eyes which in turn makes Chandramukhi more enamoured of him. The *śṛṅgāra rasa* is the dominant element in this scene whereas the *adbhuta rasa* is portrayed by the amazement of Chandramukhi at Devdas' unusual romantic expression through poetry. In this scene, the choice of *rāga* seem uncharacteristically inappropriate to complement the *rasas* portrayed. The music is based on a combination of *saṅdhī-prakāś rāgas* such as Mārwa and Pūriyā which are best suited to depict the *raudra* and *karuṇa rasas* respectively, unlike the *rasas* portrayed here. It may be argued that lighter *rāgas* such as Deś, Tilak-Kāmod, Kāmod, Jhinjhoṭī could have been more appropriate and befitting to the scene. However, in the context of Bhansali and Darbar's intentions to enhance every scene with appropriate music, one can begin to see the reason for the employment of these two *rāgas*. In fact, the use of Mārwa and Pūriyā evoke the undercurrent of suppressed anger of Devdas, and pathos of Chandramukhi. It is this that makes a supposedly light dialogue into an iconic one.

Devdas and Paro (Track timing – 00:31:27)



Figure 7.4: Devdas expresses his emotions to Paro

When Paro complains that Devdas has not been thinking of her in his ten years away from her, Devdas responds by saying that:

**Kitnī āsanī se ginvāh diyā ki tumhe
har pal merī yād ātī thī**

How easily you calculated the times
you remembered me

lekin yeh nahī socā ki un palon mẽ
bītatā toh maī hī thā
diyā tum jalātī thī par jaltā toh maī
hī thā

But you did not realise that it was me
who lived in those moments
You burnt the lamp, but I was the
one who was burning

This is one of the many suggestive dialogues of the film which makes use of metaphors for a heightened dramatic effect. To embellish the *rasa-bhāvas* of this scene, Bhansali makes use of a soft predominantly western score as base with hints of violin, vocals and *vinā* set to rhythm by subtle drumbeats. Bhansali has engaged with a modern treatment of music that allows a contemporary audience to relate to the highly poetic and slightly hyperbolic declaration of love. The music is a perfect reflection of *abhinaya* of Devdas who mixed *hāsya* with *śṛṅgāra* to match Paro's *sthāyī bhāvas* of *śoka* and *rati*.

2) Devdas and Chuni Bābū (Track timing – 02:46:07)



Figure 7.5: Devdas dejected and shattered

This scene comes towards the end of the film and shows a dying Devdas in a rush to reach Paro's village. This scene is unique because Bhansali has not used any music but has relied on soundscape to portray the *rasa-bhāva* of the dialogue. Devdas tells his friend Chuni *bābū*:

Apne hisse kī zīndagī toh hum jī
cuke Chuni bābū

I have lived my life Chuni bābū.

ab toh bus dhaḍkano kā lihāz karte
hāĩ

kyā kahē yeh duniyā wālon ko jo
ākhri sāns par bhī aitrāz karte hāĩ

Now I am just counting my
heartbeats.

What do I tell this world that
Won't even let me take my last
breath

Devdas is aware, and through his words, the audience too that his journey is coming to an end. Chunni bābū is unaware of the real danger Devdas is in and responds with astonishment at his ability to find humour even while in his current state of health. However, while this would suggest the *hāsya rasa*, the overarching *rasa* of the scene is *karuṇa*, within which Devdas and Chunni bābū create lighter moments through poetry before embracing each other in tears as the latter realises Devdas's miserable plight. However, Bhansali has cleverly used the soundtrack to create tension and a sense of urgency. The repetitive sounds of the running train with occasional whistling adds to the dramatic anticipation of the imminent end. It also creates a sense of anxious expectancy to see if Devdas would reach Paro in time.

7.5.2 Examination of iconic songs

Next, I analyse three songs from Devdas that in the context of Hindustani classical music and *rasa-bhāva* are extremely important for different reasons.

1) *Silsilā ye cāhat kā* (Track timing - [00:09:39](#))

Silsilā ye cāhat kā, sung by Shreya Ghoshal introduces the character of Paro. The song appears at the beginning of the film amongst family celebrations in the household of both Devdas and Paro. Devdas' mother Kausalya is informed of his imminent return from England. The Mukherjee family is joyful. They are not the only ones who desperately await Devdas' grand arrival; their next-door neighbours and family friends, the Chaterjees are equally excited. The song is sung by Paro and her friends who are teasing her about the arrival of Devdas. Bhansali creates enigma and anticipation with the music and choreography gradually revealing the identity of Paro. Paro who has lit the lamp of love with the intention to keep its flame alive forever as a symbol of her eternal love for Devdas is longing to reunite with her soulmate after several years of separation.



Figure 7.6: Paro dancing with the lamp of love

The song is composed in *rāga* Kirwānī. But it takes a twist, with a second *rāga* being introduced later. The beautiful coming together of two emotions of separation and anticipated union is captured with this introduction of the second *rāga*.

Kirwānī is a *rāga* that brings forth the multiple *bhāvas* of Paro; it gives a sombre and poignant feel, particularly suited to embellish nostalgic lyrics. Although it may have the potential to capture the *śṛṅgāra* and *bhakti rasas*, I would classify it as a *virah-rasa-pradhān rāga* (melody focusing on the emotion depicting separation) whose mood mainly reflects the *rasa* of separation. The 'd 'N S R g m P d P *pakaḍ* of Kirwānī has the capacity to transport a sensitive listener into the past. *Rāga* Kirwānī was adapted into Hindustani classical music from the Carnatic classical tradition. It is similar to the minor mode of western classical music. The *āroha* of Kirwānī is - S R g M P d N S' with only *gāndhār* and *dhaivat* as komal and rest *śuddha svaras*. The *avaroha* is S' N d P M g R S. This is one of the few *rāgas* which does not have a *vādī* or *Samvādī* note but I would consider the treatment of R, g, P and d as the crucial notes to setting its mood.

Silsilā is one of the few songs in the history of Indian film music which has employed a combination of *rāga* Kirwānī and a set of notes that do not adhere to a specific *rāga*. It has a combination of the western minor and major modes. In Hindustani terms, it starts with a sad-melancholic sounding Kirwānī and slides into a different mood which is not particularly based

on a specific *rāga*. I will explore the song verse by verse and then analyse all the important phrases of the melody.

<i>chāyī chāyī</i>	It spreads
<i>Jhokā havā kā āyegā</i>	A gust of wind will come
<i>Aur ye diyā bujh jāyegā</i>	And this lamp will be extinguished
<i>Silsilā ye cāhat kā</i>	Stories of this love
<i>Na māñe bujhne diyā</i>	I've never let it get extinguished
<i>Silsilā ye cāhat kā</i>	The stories of this love
<i>Na māñe bujhne diyā</i>	I've never let it get extinguished
<i>O piyā. ye diyā.</i>	Oh, beloved lamp
<i>Nā bujhā haī, nā bujhegā</i>	It hasn't and won't be extinguished
<i>Meri cāhat ka diyā</i>	The lamp of my love
<i>Mere piyā, ab ājā re mere piyā</i>	My beloved now come to me my love.
<i>Ho. Mere piyā</i>	Oh, my beloved
<i>Ab ājā re mere piyā</i>	Now come to me my beloved

Kirwānī's influence on the song's composition ends temporarily at this point. The next verse is set to a completely contrasting tune (00:11:25) with an eerie feel to it which matches the mood of the lyrics:

<i>Is diye sañg jal rahā merā rom rom, rūh</i>	With this lamp is burning each cell of my
<i>aur jiyā</i>	body, soul, and my heart

The next few lines are repeated to emphasize Paro's desperation to meet her beloved and set to Kirwānī as was the case in the introductory lines:

<i>Ab ājā re mere piyā</i>	Now come to me my beloved
<i>Ho. mere piyā.</i>	Oh, my beloved
<i>Ab ājā re mere piyā</i>	Now come to me my beloved

However, from 00:11:46 to 00:13:00, the focus of the melody shifts completely from Kirwānī to a combination of notes close to *rāga Miśr Pīlū*.³⁹² This variant of the Pīlū *rāga* is mainly used to sing folk and semi classical songs. In terms of western classical music, it can be said that the melody changes from the minor mode (Kirwānī) to the major (Pīlū in this case). It may be argued that the reason music director Darbar made this sudden change in the mood, is to convey hopefulness in those next lines of the song. Paro exclaims through her song that though there was a distance and separation up to that point, her beloved is arriving making her rejoice.

<i>Fāslā thā dūrī thī</i>	There was a distance
<i>Fāslā thā dūrī thī</i>	there was a separation
<i>Thā judāī kā ālam</i>	The ambience was of separation
<i>Īntezār mē nazrē thī</i>	And my eyes were waiting
<i>Aur tum wahā the</i>	And there you were
<i>Tum wahā the</i>	There you were
<i>Tum wahā the jhilmilāte, jagmagāte</i>	There you were, shining, sparkling

Pīlū is one of the few *rāgas* that fit into any mood and hence can be used to portray any of the *rasas* with equal effect. However, hopefulness and the feeling of sheer joy resulting out of it can be expressed beautifully by employing a soulful combination of *rāga Pīlū*'s notes.

The words *Silsilā ye cāhat kā na maīne bujhne diyā* are composed using the typical Kirwānī phrase S R g d P, P P P P, P – P-d S d, P d S d, P, M, g. The central idea of this melody is Paro's feeling for Devdas symbolised by the oil lamp, the flame of which is kept alive.

Kirwānī's *komal gāndhār* and then the glide from *pañcama* to the upper *Sa* while touching the *komal dhaivat* does justification to the pathos hidden within Paro's first few lines of the song (00:10:08 to 00:11:46). Then there is a tonal shift where the song begins to sound more hopeful after the initial Kirwānī treatment and due to the notes that are played by the strings in a major mode. Then only after a few seconds the tone changes once again to give an

³⁹² A *miśra rāga* refers to a particular *rāga* with shades of other *ragas* created by mixing the *svaras* of two or more *rāgas* in Hindustani classical music. There are no *miśra rāgas* in the Carnatic classical tradition.

ominous and apocalyptic feeling that comes from the wavering effect that can be heard in the tone. This seems to be produced by rapid reiteration of the *svaras* resulting in prominent overtones as well as via the key change in the musical instruments deployed in this case. Through the use of the minor mode (Kirwanī) Darbar was able to add a feeling of subtle sadness into the section, which changes the tone. Finally, there's yet another tonal shift in the track (00:14:30 till end of track) and here the tone mirrors the dance in the song as it becomes impassioned and energetic due to the fortissimo effect by use of large drums and an increased volume of the instruments.

The exploration of a *rāga* in a Hindustani classical vocal and instrumental performance usually starts with the slow meditative expedition, known as *ālāp*, where the *svaras* are sung at an irregular pace and without any rhythmic accompaniment. This feature can be seen in *Silsilā ye cāhat kā*. The vocals supported by the sitār create the *ālāp* effect as an introductory part of the song. Gradually, Darbar seems to build up the instrumental layers and enhances the overall sound effect till it suddenly plummets just before singer Shreya Ghoshal embarks upon the first verse of her solo piece. Following this, we hear a *joḍ* section, as the music develops with a simple pulse before culminating into the climax corresponding to the *jhālā* element. *Joḍ* is a slow rhythmic exploration of a melody after an initial introductory *ālāp* of *svaras* in Indian classical music, whereas the *jhālā* corresponds to a fast-paced playing towards the end of a traditional concert. These techniques are used to embellish relevant scenes.

Regarding the *tāla* aspect of this song, the Keherwā *tāla* of eight beats which is usually deployed in folk melodies is the base rhythmic structure. However, there are various forms of *ṭhekās* and *laggīs* played by expert tablā and ḍholak players in order to match the crescendos and the intensity throughout the duration of the song. Thus, the song brings alive an amalgamation of Indian classical and folk music through innovative synergies between elaborate rhythmic and melodic patterns.

2) Hameśā tum ko cāhā (Track timing 01:21:37)

Hameśā tum ko cāhā (I have always loved you) is an effective representation of the implicit *bhāvas* of agony and remorse, endured bravely by both Devdas and Paro. Paro has been

married off to an older *zamīndār* and the song appears when Devdas and the whole village are sending her off to her new abode.



Figure 7.7: Paro and Devdas being embraced by Devdas' grandmother

Though Devdas and Paro are not destined to be blessed with physical togetherness, the poetry, music and subtle *abhinaya* of the actors in this song sequence reveals sentiments which are far deeper than a mortal union of two lovers. In this process, the music elevates their feelings for each other to a sacred level.

Bearing in mind the mood of the sequence, it is surprising to note that Darbar composed the song, based essentially on a rather sprightly and cheerful *rāga* Hamsadhwanī, with shades of another *rāga* Śankarā. Hamsadhwanī is usually known for its bright, happy, and auspicious nature and does not really convey feelings of sadness. However, the song also includes a unique addition of the *tīvra madhyam svara* which is not used in either of the two *rāgas* mentioned above. As discussed earlier in this chapter, *śṛṅgāra rasa* may have elements of *karuṇa* in it. In a conversation with writer R Mehrotra, Paṇḍit Ravi Shankar suggests that *śṛṅgāra rasa* is also known as the *ādi* or the original *rasa*, since it has all the moods combined within its framework.³⁹³

The lyrics of the song start with *Hameśā tumko cāhā, aur cāhā kuch bhī nahī* (I have desired only you and nothing else), which, when read or heard on its own does not really convey any

³⁹³ Mehrotra, R. (2011). *The Spirit of the Muse: Conversations on the Journeys of Artists*. 1st ed. Haryana: Hay House India.

form of sadness or *karuṇa*. Rather it conveys romance or *śṛṅgāra* only. However, the context in which it is sung is indeed heart-breaking. Hence although Darbar starts with the notes of Hamsadhwanī, G G P (*Hameśā*) S N (*tumko*) R S (*cāhā*), he strategically composes the next line with emphasis on *tīvra madhyam*; *aur cāhā* (S N N) *kuch bhī nahī* (N D S N) *nahī* (P D) *nahī* (m P) *nahī* (G m G), *kuch bhī nahī* (P G R S S). This *tīvra madhyam*, which gives an impression of *rāga* Yaman for a momentary phase, enhances the flavour of sadness and subtle devotion depicted in the eyes of Paro and Devdas. Hence, this song has a combination of *śṛṅgāra* and *karuṇa rasas* as the primary *rasas* with shades of the *bhakti rasa*. The interplay of *rāgas* also reflect different aspects of their relationship.

Devdas and Paro, although shown as adults, seem to have an element of childishness and immaturity, which is evident in their behaviours towards each other at various intervals throughout the film. They argue, fight and often communicate with sarcastic statements. While the song is a clear reflection of the strong bond of love between them, it also portrays a culmination of togetherness and this child-like innocence through nostalgic poetry and music. Musically, while the childishness of Devdas and Paro is reflected in the sprightly Hamsadhwanī and shades of Śankarā, the *tīvra madhyam svara* highlights this other element of their sadness and devotion.

This scene is a significant one since after this, Paro and Devdas see each other only at the end when Devdas is dying.

3) ***Kāhe cheḍ cheḍ mohe*** (Track timing - 01:10:30)

Kāhe cheḍ cheḍ mohe sung by Kavitha Krishnamurthy is perhaps one of the most complex songs of the film in terms of the *rāga*, *rasa*, *nṛtya* and *abhinaya*. This song is filled with the *śṛṅgāra rasa*, highlighting the playfulness of Kṛṣṇa towards Rādhā. Madhuri Dixit who plays Chandramukhi is a trained kathak dancer and therefore is able to perform to Maharaj's choreography. Bhansali along with Birju Maharaj and the music director Ismail Darbar ensure that the dance scores are of high calibre. Maharaj is considered one of the most accomplished Kathak exponents and composers, owing to his renowned lineage, mastery over an extensive repertoire of compositions, and naturally gifted *abhinaya*. Birju Maharaj gave a contemporary

flavour to traditional kathak compositions by creatively innovating without compromising on the traditional core of the art form.



Figure 7.8: Chandramukhi's playful taunt

As discussed earlier, Bhansali collaborated with Kathak exponent Birju Maharaj to choreograph the dance sequences in the film. The lyrics of the composition *Kāhe cheḍ cheḍ mohe* are by Bindadin Maharaj,³⁹⁴ an ancestor of Birju Maharaj and one of the maestros of Lucknow *gharānā* of kathak during the 18th century.

<i>mālatī guṇdhāy keś pyāre ghuṅghurwāle</i>	Curly hair alluring decked with flowers
<i>mukh dāminī sī damakat, cāl matwārī</i>	Face like lightening, gait captivating
<i>dhāy Śyām rok laī aucakh mukh cūm laī</i>	Śyām stops her and kisses her face
<i>sar se morī cunarī gayī sarak sarak</i>	The scarf from my face slips steadily

³⁹⁴As is the case with a majority of Hindustani *khayāl* and semi-classical compositions, the theme of the song revolves around Lord Kṛṣṇa and his eternal lover Radha. Arshiya Sethi refers to an interesting historical fact that informs about the origins of the Radha-Kṛṣṇa theme of compositions in the Lucknow Kathak *gharānā* that is its speciality. Maharaj Thakur prasad (one of the sons of Prakash-founder of Lucknow Gharana), who taught Nawab Wajid Ali Shah of Lucknow, referred to his own dancing style as *naṭawarī nṛtya* as it was always based on the Radha-Kṛṣṇa theme. Thakur's brother Durga Prasad's two sons, Kalka Prasad and Bindadin Maharaj were also employed by the Nawab. The brief reign of Wajid Ali Shah from 1847-1856, is believed to be the golden age of Lucknow's cultural life. The nawab himself was a great poet, composer and connoisseur of music and dance. His very first drama that he wrote in Urdu and which he directed himself was called '*Radha Kānhāī*'. As the '*Īśṭh Dev*' or chief deity of the family of Thakur Prasad and Durga Prasad ji, was Kṛṣṇa, the Nawab's interest in the theme of Radha and Kṛṣṇa, the *rāsālilā*, the *Rahas*, and other aspects of the Radha Kṛṣṇa love story gelled well together. The *nawāb* was taught by Durga Prasad but was also influenced by the *rasadhārī* performers and the *rāsālilās* of Vrindavan and Mathura. He himself choreographed a dance, *Rahas*, that he danced himself with the ladies of his court. Because of this obsession on the part of the patron, with Radha and Kṛṣṇa, the abhinaya sequences of the Lucknow *gharānā* are mostly devoted to Kṛṣṇa. Bindadin Maharaj, followed by successive maestros of the Lucknow Kathak tradition thus far have kept the influence of the Radha-Kṛṣṇa theme alive through their compositions.

<i>kāhe cheḍ cheḍ mohe garwā lagāye</i>	Why do you tease me and embrace?
<i>Nañd ko lāl aiso ḍhīṭa barbas morī lāj līnhī</i>	Naughty son of Nand stole my modesty
<i>Biñdā Śyām mānat nāhī</i>	Kṛṣṇa does not pay heed to my request
<i>kāse kahūn māñ apne jiyā kī</i>	How do I pour out my heart?
<i>sunat nāhī māñ</i>	He doesn't listen, oh Mother
<i>kāhe cheḍ cheḍ mohe</i>	Why are you (Kṛṣṇa) teasing me?
<i>dadhī kī bharī maṭakī lai jāt rahī ḍagar bīc</i>	I was taking the butter-filled earthen pot through the middle of the path
<i>āhaṭ sun jiyarā gayo dharak dharak dharak</i>	My heart pounded at the sound of his (stealthy) approach
<i>kar pakarat cūrīyā sab karakī karakī karakī</i>	As (he) clenched my wrists, all the bangles broke

In this case however, not only the choreography, but even the tune of the traditional *bandīś* was created by Maharaj though his name did not appear in the music credits.

I was fortunate to have a personal conversation with Maharaj after one of his live concerts in Mumbai in the summer of 2003. He explained that he chose the *rāga* Paraj because the sequence was set in the backdrop of the spring season. In India this is widely considered as the season of hope, renewal, and a much-anticipated rebirth which ushers in new happiness in people's lives. The renewed flora, bright sunny days, and an overall upswing mood in nature throughout the country reflects the mood of *rāgas* Paraj and Basant Bahār. Maharaj felt that the *rāga* would do full justice to the song. An exceptional attribute of Indian classical music is that though some *rāgas* contain the same *svaras*, they are articulated differently. In this process, a unique dynamism is created for each of those *rāgas*. Paraj and Basant are classic examples of such a phenomenon. While Basant's beauty is enhanced by smooth, elongated *mīṇḍs*, Paraj is of a rather restless nature and focuses on tonal priorities and centre-points different from Basant.

This song is very important as it introduces the character of Chandramukhi to both Devdas and the audience. The playfulness of *rāga* Paraj matches with the scintillating performance of Madhuri Dixit and is an effective contrast to the sullen and uninterested Devdas who has been

dragged by his friend Chunni *bābū* to this dance gathering. This is the only song in the film, where intricate rhythmic patterns derived from traditional *tablā* compositions of Lucknow are employed. *Bols* including *tere keṭe, tak kḍān, dhā ti dhā* and longer phrases including subtle off-beat variations within the musical intervals have been used to enhance the overall effectiveness of the dance sequence. The *tablā bols* are also used to show *śṛṅgāra rasa* filled playful interactions between Chandramukhi and Devdas. In this way, this song is treasure trove of melodic and rhythmic expressions that perfectly complement Chandramukhi's masterly kathak.

At the end of the performance, Devdas is overwhelmed by all the music and dance and the attention given to him by Paro. Hence the sequence also introduces future dynamics of the story in which the relationship between Devdas and Chandramukhi is affected by the introduction of the villainous son-in-law of the elderly *zamīndār* Paro has been married off to. This leads into the next song *Ḍolā re*.

4) *Ḍolā re* (Track timing 02:20:40)

Bhansali digresses from the original plot of the novel to allow for the meeting of Paro and Chandramukhi in order to generate an epic *jugalbandī* (a traditional duet performed between two classical instrumentalists, vocalists, or dancers). A duet sung by Kavitha Krishnamurthy and Shreya Ghoshal, it is focussed on Chandramukhi and Paro with a host of other dancers. The coming together of the actresses Madhuri and Aishwarya in this lively dance number is almost a magnetic pull of the Indian audience to the cinemas.

According to choreographer Saroj Khan,³⁹⁵ *Ḍolā re*, was her toughest assignment out of the 2000 songs that she has choreographed to date.³⁹⁶ She designed it out of a combination of various classical dance forms basing it on a dance style known as *Naṭawarī* with shades of

³⁹⁵ *Ḍolā re* was choreographed by one of the most respected dancers and choreographers of the Indian film industry, Saroj Khan. Khan as compared to Maharaj, the other choreographer of the film, is not trained in any of the Indian classical dance forms. However, in 2002, during a brief meeting with me at Director Subhash Ghai's film school, 'Whistling Woods' in Mumbai, she mentioned working for and learning dance/choreography from B Sohanlal. He was trained in traditional Kathak of the Jaipur *gharānā* and proved to be a major influence on Khan's choreography style which is evident in her work, particularly in songs like *Ḍolā re*.

³⁹⁶ This information was received from Saroj Khan during my meeting with her in 2012 in Mumbai.

kathak as well as bharatnāṭyam.³⁹⁷ She composed complex pieces of *ṭoḍās*³⁹⁸ for each of the two dancers.

This song is not merely a visual treat that was used to publicise and market the film in its pre-release days. It is also a crucial element in the narrative development. The intricate dance movements, body language and relationships between the performers, the *rasa* and *bhāvas* provoked, and its musical elements highlight the dramatic significance of this sequence in the film. The dance is planned strategically between two important events in the story. In the scene preceding it, a visibly distressed Devdas, under the influence of alcohol, is seen pouring his heart out to his old family servant. Almost in tears, the agonised protagonist laments the failed relationships with literally everybody in his life including his own parents, relatives, and the woman he loves. Following this, Devdas imitates the act of a traditional ritual performed for the dead (*śrādh*). Then Devdas pleads with a Paṇḍit to conduct his own death ritual. The Paṇḍit is understandably astonished and turns away. With ominous music in the background, Devdas is then shown steadily dousing his head in the Ganges, as if giving a harbinger of his inevitable dissolution. Bhansali makes effective use of Vedic chants coupled with the beats of the pakhāvaj drum throughout the scene, culminating in an increased tempo towards the end when he is completely submerged in the water. The entire scene presents a combination of the *karuṇa*, *bhayānak* and *adbhuta rasas*. While the servant's *bhāvas* are full of *bhayānak rasa* at the sad plight of his beloved Devdas who he raised since he was a child, the manifestation of *karuṇa rasa* through various gestures of Devdas is heart wrenching. In direct contrast, the *Ḍolā re* sequence follows this poignant scene.

Paro has persuaded the courtesan Chandramukhi to grace her home with her presence for the Durga *pūjā*. She has also introduced Chandramukhi to her in laws without revealing her occupation, as this would lead to a disgraceful situation for a respected landlord's social status. The family welcomes Chandramukhi and as part of the celebrations the two women begin the dance *Ḍolā re*.

³⁹⁷ *Naṭawarī* dance is associated with Kathak and literally means dance of Kṛṣṇa

³⁹⁸ A composition using dance syllables that usually begins on the first beat of the rhythmic cycle (sum) and after one or more cycles eventually ends on sum. At intervening phases, various *ṭoḍās* like *ṭoḍās of ādī-laya* (a complex mathematical rhythmic pattern), powerful and mellowed *ṭoḍās*, etc. are interjected into the composition, which the dancer usually recites while performing.



Figure 7.9: Paro's mudrās

The fusion of classical and semi-classical dance forms to suit film sequences is not novel. There are several notable instances from the history of Indian cinema where a variety of elements from Indian classical and folk-dance traditions such as kathak, Bharatnatyam, folk etc. have been used to enhance a film's dance sequence. Dancer Uday Shankar used this concept for his themed ballets in the 1930s and 40s, which he also used for the film *Kalpna* in 1948. The duo of Hiralal and Sohanlal combined moves from Kathak, Bharatnatyam and even Manipuri traditions to choreograph for *Guide* (1965) in which actress Waheeda Rehman performed each of the dance pieces.

The most notable aspect of *Dolā re* is that Paro and Chandramukhi come from completely different backgrounds and have contrasting social identities. Paro, from an aristocratic landlord's family dancing in a duet with Chandramukhi, a courtesan is not a normal event. Chandramukhi is assumed to have all the skills of a traditional high-calibre courtesan well versed in the art of dance, music and poetry and hence it is no surprise that she executes the complex moves with great skill. But Paro matches up to her in every move, to the amazement of the audience.

Their duet in identical costumes and perfect synchronisation gave a message of social equality, challenging the prevailing customs in the then Bengali society of India. Madhuri Dixit in her portrayal of Chandramukhi carries forward a recognised tradition of actresses playing

courtesans since the early days of Bollywood. Madhubala (*Mughal-e-Azam*,1960), Meena Kumari (*Pakeezah*,1971), Suchitra Sen (*Mamta*,1968) and Rekha (*Umrao Jan*,1980) are amongst some of the most memorable actresses who played courtesans. Courtesans in those times were well trained in classical dance forms, music and even *śer-o-śāyarī* (a form of Urdu poetry) by recognised ustāds from a young age. The character of a courtesan not only has historical significance in India but has been treated as larger than life by Indian filmmakers. *Ḍolā re* captures both of their emotions and the depth of their love for Devdas.



Figure 7.10: Paro and Chadramukhi's *jugalbandī* dance

The sequence also displays their ability to sway through intricate rhythmic patterns to the beat of the *tablā* with graceful expressions bathed in *śrngāra* throughout the sequence. The song starts with the humming of the words *Ḍolā re Ḍolā re*. From the storyline, it is evident that both the dancers are overwhelmed owing to their immense love for Devdas, which they express in the words *man Ḍolā, tan Ḍolā* (the mind swung, the body swung). From figure 7.10, it can be seen how each of the two main dancers position their right arms to the back of their heads and look diagonally upwards with blissful smiles on their faces while swaying gracefully to the eight-beat *Keherwā tāla*.

The song ends on a highly exciting note with the scene choreographed in different circular movements. *Jamāī bābū* circles the dancers and the camera circles him. This creates ominous tension and suspense; we know that something terrible is going to happen. *Jamāī bābū*, whose advances had been thwarted by both Chandramukhi and Paro declares publicly that it

is great to see an aristocrat and a courtesan dance together. This leads to a scandal, and Paro is confined to the walls of the *haveli* for befriending a courtesan and for her relentless affection for Devdas.

With this, the film moves on to tragic plane from which there is no retreat. It culminates with the death of Devdas.

7.6 Conclusion

Manish Mathur suggests that melodrama is often seen as an inferior genre in films because most modern directors do not know how to manage it competently.³⁹⁹ However, Bhansali is one of those rare breeds of filmmakers whose individual style and exemplary control over all elements of production give a film its personal stamp. In my analyses, I have argued that *Devdas* is an outcome of Bhansali's in-depth understanding of classical music and dance, a talent for composing music himself and a natural flair for creating a fusion of cinematic, narrative, lyrical, musical, visual, and cultural elements. Without breaking the flow of the story-telling process, Bhansali masterfully deals with facilitating the music, which is a rich mix of melody, emotions, exclusive rhythmic arrangements and *rasa-bhāva-abhivyakti*. Thoughtfully composed music and the choicest of *rāgas* used to create ethereal melodies to suit various sequences of the film, show that even today, the influence of centuries old Indian classical music has a strong hold on Indian cinema. Adherence of almost every important scene, plot and sub-plot to the principles of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* not only conveys the influence of ancient Indian literature but also stresses the relevance of ancient Indian thinking to the expressions of the modern Indian society. In interweaving the tragic and romantic, 'Devdas' the novel creates the magic that in its reworkings again and again raises its own status to a cult classic.

³⁹⁹ Mathur, M. (2011). Every Play Has Two Acts: Devdas on its 15th Anniversary. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://talkfilmsociety.com/articles/every-play-has-two-acts-devdas-on-its-15th-anniversary>.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 The approach summarised

Indian civilisation has assimilated influences brought about by foreign invasions as well as exposure to foreign cultures over several centuries. While examples from the past include culinary styles to architecture to fashion, more recently it has been filmmaking techniques which originated in the West. The highly developed ancient practices combining dance, drama and music that continued to thrive were used with modern cinematic techniques to produce films starting from the 1930s, a phenomenon which is now renowned globally as Bollywood. The cinematic medium got re-envisaged to make it Indian. The classical theory of drama associated methodologies and themes from the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Vedic hymns from the *Sāma* Veda and Indian classical music theories and practices from several ancient and medieval texts together contributed to this process.

I have developed a theoretical framework primarily based on the following elements:

- *Rasa* theory
- *Rāga* and *tāla* theory from Hindustani classical music
- Two principal genres of Hindustani classical music: *khayāl* and *ṭhumrī*
- Selected film directors and music composers from Indian cinema

The above-mentioned elements are collectively an invaluable model for understanding the formal and conventional propensities including the melodramatic, evident not only in Hindi, but also the regional cinema of the country. The methodology has involved an analysis of film scenarios, film songs and performances using the collective *rasa-rāga-tāla* archetype. The following (figure 8.1) is a snapshot of all the case studies I have undertaken. This provides an immediate understanding of the range of analyses involved in this research.

Section	Title of song	Film title and year	Music director	Rāgas and Tālas	Rasas
1.5	<i>Navarasa Rama</i>	<i>Sampūrṇa Rāmāyaṇa</i> (1961)	N/A	N/A	All the <i>navarasas</i>
1.6	<i>Viśvamiṭra Menakā Nṛṭya</i>	<i>Jhanak Jhanak Payal Baje</i> (1955)	Vasant Desai	Paṭadīp, Pahādī, Jhīnjhoṭī, Bhīmpalāsī	<i>śānta, śṛṅgāra</i>
2.5	<i>Jab dīp jale ānā</i>	<i>Chitchor</i> (1976)	Ravindra Jain	Yaman	<i>śṛṅgāra, śānta</i>
2.5	<i>Nigāhē milāne ko jī cāhatā haī</i>	<i>Dil Hi To Hai</i> (1963)	Roshan	Yaman	<i>śṛṅgāra</i>
2.5	<i>Zarā sī āhaṭ hotī haī</i>	<i>Haqeeqat</i> (1964)	Madan Mohan	Yaman	<i>karuṇa, śṛṅgāra</i>
2.5	<i>Nām gum jāyegā</i>	<i>Kinara</i> (1977)	R D Burman	Yaman	<i>karuṇa, śānta</i>
2.5	<i>Abhi na jāo choḍkar</i>	<i>Hum Dono</i> (1961)	Jaidev	Yaman	<i>śṛṅgāra</i>
3.6	<i>Gaṇeś paran</i>	NA	NA, Kishan Maharaj	<i>Tāla-tīntāla</i>	<i>śṛṅgāra, adbhuta</i>
3.7	<i>Madhuban mē Rādhikā</i>	<i>Kohinoor</i> (1960)	Naushad	<i>Tāla-tīntāla</i>	<i>śṛṅgāra, adbhuta</i>
3.8	<i>A relā</i>	<i>Sholay</i> (1975)	Rahul Dev Burman	<i>Tāla-Keherwā</i>	<i>adbhuta, bhayānaka</i>
3.9	<i>Tablā in a TV commercial</i>	NA	Unknown	Random beats	<i>hāsya, adbhuta</i>
4.6	<i>Kā karū sajanī</i>	<i>Swami</i> (1977)	Rajesh Roshan	Sīndhu Bhairavī, Kirwānī	<i>śṛṅgāra, karuṇa</i>
4.7	<i>āyo kahān se Ghanaśyām</i>	<i>Buddha Mil Gaya</i> (1971)	R D Burman	Khamāj	<i>śṛṅgāra</i>
4.8	<i>haṭo kāhe ko jhūṭhī banāo batiyā</i>	<i>Manzil</i> (1960)	S D Burman	Bhairavī	<i>śṛṅgāra</i>
4.9	<i>āoge jab tum</i>	<i>Jab We Met</i> (2007)	Sandesh Shandilya	Mānjh Khamāj	<i>śṛṅgāra</i>
4.10	<i>ān milo sajnā</i>	<i>Gadar</i> (2000)	Uttam Singh	Khamāj	<i>śṛṅgāra, karuṇa</i>
5.2.1	<i>Hum haī matā-e-kūcā-o-bāzār kī tarah</i>	(<i>Dastak</i> , 1970)	Madan Mohan	Bhairavī	<i>śṛṅgāra, karuṇa</i>
5.2.2	<i>Merī āwaz suno</i>	<i>Naunihal</i> (1967)	Madan Mohan	Jansammohinī	<i>Karuṇa</i>
5.3.1	<i>Madhuban Mē Rādhikā</i>	<i>Kohinoor</i> (1960)	Naushad	Hamīr	<i>śṛṅgāra</i>
5.4.1	<i>Garajat barasat sāwan āyo re</i>	(from two films, <i>Malhar</i> and <i>Barsat ki raat</i>)	Roshan	Gauḍ Malhār	<i>śṛṅgāra</i>
5.4.2	<i>Man re, tu kāhe na dhīr dhare</i>	<i>Chitralkha</i> (1964)	Roshan	Yaman	<i>karuṇa</i>
5.5.1	<i>Rainā Bītī Jāye</i>	<i>Amar Prem</i> (1972)	R D Burman	Toḍī and Khamāj	<i>śṛṅgāra, karuṇa</i>
6	<i>Jalsaghar</i>	<i>Jalsaghar</i> (1958)	Vilayat Khan and others (Bismillah Khan, Begum)	Toḍī, Bhairavī, Tilak Kāmod, Pīlū, Miyā Malhār	<i>śṛṅgāra, karuṇa, adbhuta, bhayānaka</i>

			Akhtar, Wahid Khan, Roshan Kumari, Salamat Ali Khan)		
7.5.2	<i>Silsilā ye cāhat kā</i>	<i>Devdas</i> (2002)	Ismail Darbar	Kirwanī, Pīlū	<i>śṛṅgāra, karuṇa, adbhuta bhayānaka</i>
7.5.2	<i>Hameśā tum ko cāhā</i>	<i>Devdas</i> (2002)	Ismail Darbar	Śankarā, Hamsadhwanī	<i>śṛṅgāra, karuṇa</i>
7.5.2	<i>Kāhe cheḍ cheḍ mohe</i>	<i>Devdas</i> (2002)	Birju Maharaj	Paraj	<i>śṛṅgāra</i>
7.5.2	<i>Ḍolā re</i>	<i>Devdas</i> (2002)	Ismail Darbar	Caṅdrakauns	<i>śṛṅgāra</i>

Figure 8.1: List of Case Studies

This table shows the following key points. The most indispensable human emotions are love and sorrow. Thus, the most displayed *rasas* are *śṛṅgāra* and *karuṇa*, which in turn makes the cinema revolve around melodrama and romance. This also shows that Indian audiences connect with these *rasas* with considerable passion. As explained before, Indian film music relies heavily on the tradition of *khayāl* and *ṭhumrī*. Even if *ṭhumrī* may be composed with more than one *rāga*, a *khayāl* is sung in a single *rāga*. However, as the table shows, many film songs and sequences are composed to multiple *rāgas*. Music directors have taken a creative liberty to compose songs that have the ability to attract masses to classical music. Another interesting factor is the evidence of rare and highly specialised musical forms like the *caturāṅga* amongst popular Hindi film music. Thus, music directors have not only borrowed from the vast resources offered by Hindustani *sāstrīya saṅgīta* but also given back to the tradition by creating songs that have increased its popularity and given it the deserved respect and recognition. It also underscores the point that occasionally in film music, there are some unexpected and obscure *rasas* like *hāsyā*, *adbhuta* and *bhayānaka*, which the *khayāl* singers do not usually explore through their *bandīś* renditions. Sourcing from all of the above, Indian cinema has acquired a rich heritage and leaves behind a lasting legacy for future filmmakers to develop their art further.

This study of film songs, background scores, and various genres of Hindustani classical music used in film music places the film narrative and its thematic development within the context of Indian aesthetics. My research also offers a counter critique to the critics of Indian cinema.

8.2 Beyond realism and towards aesthetic emotion

In her book, *Feeling and Form*, Susanne Langer remarks: ‘Some of the Hindu critics ... understood much better than their Western colleagues the various aspects of emotion in theatre, which our writers so freely and banefully confuse: the feelings experienced by the actor, those experienced by the spectators, those presented as under- gone by characters in the play and finally the feeling that shines through the play itself-the vital feeling of the piece.’⁴⁰⁰ Langer’s comments are particularly true with respect to emotion in Indian cinema, since there are varied expressions of emotions in India depending upon social, cultural, religious, and political influences spanning several regions across the vast hinterland of the country. All these expressions knowingly or unknowingly have crept into the film-making process through music, dance, poetry, and drama.

One may ask how important the element of emotion is, with respect to the study of Hindi film, its music, and acting methods. This approach is justified by the need to see film song from an aesthetic lens which is not of realism. While western models of film criticism have been in favour of realism, this is not relevant here because the generic codes and conventions of Bollywood are non-realist. Much western film content is not melodramatic in the sense of melody plus drama, and also in the everyday sense (e.g. intensified emotions). Satyajit Ray is known to have been influenced by Italian neorealism as well as French poetic realism, particularly through the works of Italian filmmaker Vittorio De Sica and French filmmaker Jean Renoir. However, from my thesis, it is evident that even his successful attempt at parallel cinema which owed to foreign influences, may not have had the same aesthetic fullness and effect without the basis of classical Indian theatre and Hindustani music. Even diegetic music, which realism would accept, serves a bigger purpose in Indian cinema as is evident from my analysis of the music of *Jalsaghar*. There is an aesthetic and emotional need, which is catered to by sensitive film makers like Satyajit Ray and decorated with appropriate music by music composers and musicians like Vilayat Khan, Naushad etc.

Instead of a bias towards a predominantly rational and realism-oriented medium of film criticism, a *rasa-rāga-tāla*-based analysis thus draws the focus of critical attention back to

⁴⁰⁰ Langer, S K. (1953). *Feeling and Form* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, p. 323.

emotion-infused music and its various possible methods of expressive enunciation. Simultaneously, *rasa* theory's capacity for understanding the art of *abhinaya* in conjunction with Hindustani classical music proves to be an invaluable asset for analysing what may seem to be the stereotypical-stylised performances of Hindi cinema.

The following *śloka* that nearly every student of performance learns, is crucial for the understanding of emotion in Indian art.^{401 402}

यतो हस्त स्ततो दृष्टि |

यतो दृष्टि स्ततो मनः ||

यतो मनः स्ततो भावो |

यतो भावो स्ततो रसः ||

Yato hasta stato dr̥ṣṭi

Yato dr̥ṣṭi stato manaḥ

Yato manaḥ stato bhāvo

Yato bhāvo stato rasaḥ

Where your hands go, your eyes go

Where your eyes go, your mind goes

Where your mind goes,

there will be expression of inner feeling.

Where there is expression shown,

there will be sentiment evoked

Abhinaya Darpaṇa sūtra (CE 35-36, in
Nandikeshvara 1957, 46)

Like many Indian treatises on the human body, here too it starts with the physical – from the hands and the eyes to the minds, of the performer and the viewer. This is applied consciously or sub-consciously in Indian cinema too. The films that I have examined shows this and other traits of the very core of an Indian mindset through music and acting.

⁴⁰¹ Nandikesvara. [5th century – 4th century BC.] (1957). *Abhinayadarpanam*. A manual of Gesture and Posture used in Hindu Dance and Drama. Authorship ascribed to Nandikesvara. English translation by Manmohan Ghosh. Calcutta: Asiatic Society. 2nd Edn, p. 46.

⁴⁰² Zarrilli, P.B. (1987). 'Where the Hand [Is]...' *Asian Theatre Journal*. Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 205-214.

The *Nāṭyaśāstra* advocates four types of *abhinayas* (techniques of representation) which are the *āṅgika* (physical gestures), *vācikā* (verbal), *āhārya* (ornamental) and *sāttvika* (emotional). I have attempted to discuss and analyse all four of these in a combination with Hindustani classical music theory. For example, in *Devdas*, several instances of the *āṅgika* by Paro, Chandramukhi and Devdas have been analysed through dance and song sequences. Selected dialogues and their importance with respect to *rasa-bhāva*, particularly in *Devdas* provide evidence of the *vācikā* element. Paro and Chandramukhi's rich costumes points towards the *āhārya* aspect of *abhinaya*, whereas songs and background scores that have been analysed throughout the thesis provide evidence of the emotional aspect. Thus, the overall skeletal structure of *abhinaya* that provides aesthetic emotion in Indian cinema is directly or indirectly based on the formulations of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. It is thus quintessentially Indian in nature.

8.3 The Indian-ness of Hindi films

Javed Akhtar, the Indian screen writer and lyricist, claims that 'the difference between Hindi and Western films is like that between an epic and a short story.' Philip Lutgendorf suggests that Indian films have a unique feel to them especially with respect to their look and sound.⁴⁰³ The characteristics mentioned by Lutgendorf would not feel the same without Hindustani music and *rasa-bhāva* filled representations. Lutgendorf further points out that proclamations of the characteristic 'Indian-ness' of Hindi cinema, or the lack of it, are an outcome of a variety of scholarly approaches including cultural-historical, technological, psychic-mythical, and political-economic ones. However, generally, there is no mention of a musicological approach to assert 'Indian-ness.' I have used a combination of the above while focussing on the musical and *rasa*-based approach. This has been long overlooked even by scholars of Hindi films, Indian theory of aesthetics and Hindustani music. Alain Daniélou argues that Indian thought is predominantly cosmological and that it is in a constant search for principles of a general nature that can be applied to the different categories of being.⁴⁰⁴ He further argues that each *rāga* is based on a building block of meticulously detailed relationships, a harmony which necessarily corresponds to a divine human being. This being, he suggests, manifests itself in the five *īndriyas* (senses), the *navarasas* and the operations of

⁴⁰³ Lutgendorf, P. (2006). Is There an Indian Way of Filmmaking? *International Journal of Hindu Studies*, 10/3, pp. 227–256.

⁴⁰⁴ Daniélou, A. (1976). Aesthetics and Indian Music. *The World of Music*, 18/2, p. 17–22.

the human psyche which combine symbols, words and melody in an attempt to personify ideas appropriately.

To illustrate this point, films like *Jalsaghar* and *Devdas* show music in various environments and situations. They show it in mehfil, in romantic settings, in dance sequences and in other background scenes as and when deemed necessary. They bring the essence of *khayāl* and *thumrī* to life through acting. All these genres and sequences mean something to the lay filmgoers in India even though their knowledge of Hindustani classical music may be negligible as compared to their exposure to folk and other regional forms of music.⁴⁰⁵

But these regional forms known as folk music have a connection to classical music. Canonical *śāstras* talk about *desī* and *mārgī* music. It is commonly accepted that *desī* music is music for ‘entertainment’ while *mārgī* music is music for a ‘higher ideal.’ Some classical musicians and musicologists are of the view that classical music is *mārgī* (with a flavour of elitism and superiority), while folk music and other music is *desī* (with a flavour of condescension). Despite this classification, both classical and folk music have a relationship with each other, and the latter has been used separately as well as in an interwoven form in Indian film music.

However, it is through the emotional depth of *rāgas* and the impact of *tālas* via expert musicians and composers that the Indian public connects with the nuances of Hindustani classical music. In modern times, the situation has changed drastically as more people have started learning Hindustani classical music, as compared to the pre-independence period in India, during which time this music was limited to the royal courts and patrons.

Lewis Rowell observes that for approximately 2000 years, music’s perceived capability to stimulate and alter the emotions of its audiences has been vital to the classical aesthetics theory of India’s *rāga*-based traditions.⁴⁰⁶ However, understanding the emotional expressions of people across cultures requires a grasp of cultural situations that inspire those expressions. In Indian culture, the major goal of the arts (including music, dance, drama, and poetry) is to

⁴⁰⁵ If one were to set out on a journey from the city of Ahmedabad in Gujarat towards the state of Rajasthan in the North, the dialect, food, mannerisms, fashion etc. have subtle and sometimes remarkable modifications after every few miles. This variety has been a part of Bollywood films since its inception.

⁴⁰⁶ Rowell, L. (1992). *Music and Musical Thought in Early India*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

empower the audience to nurture an aesthetic sensitivity to surpass the concerns of mundane life and to taste the *rasa* of different emotions.⁴⁰⁷ India is known to be associated with a deep understanding of emotions where tasting the flavour of emotions is thought of as an opportunity to capture the spirit of ultimate reality that is intrinsic in every living being.⁴⁰⁸ The popular Hindi film songs of yesteryears sparked this spirit and fascinated all who heard it. This is because of the unprecedented juxtaposition of the *pāraṁparik* (traditional) *rāga-tāla* concepts and the *ādhunik* (modern) techniques. These classics consequently pioneered a unique modern musical trend and structure, deeply rooted in traditional values that has since conquered the very core of Indian musical thought and articulation. This resulted in a majority of Indians preferring to listen to film songs and other musical genres. It is clear that film music persists to have a strong grip on its audience. Such a hold on a population as large as India's would not be possible without something genuinely connected to the very fabric of Indian culture/roots and those roots are firmly established in the *rasa-rāga-tāla* framework as has been demonstrated throughout this thesis.

Of course, whether the experiential, physiological and facial mechanisms are universal or whether they diverge significantly across cultures⁴⁰⁹ is an ongoing question. In respect of India, which is a vastly diverse society, contextual variations are likely to influence the expression and regulation of emotions in different communities. But there is a common cultural link between the communities and to a certain extent this unifies the expression of emotions.

8.4 The role of artists

We may ask, how does a music director go about composing and sometimes even arranging music? How are the various tunes made? Do composers never run out of imagining new songs film after film, year after year? Why are some Bollywood film songs seemingly more melodious and soothing than some others? Why do memories of some film sequences stay intact in audiences' minds even years after watching a film? Also, what does an Indian film

⁴⁰⁷ Kathuria, T., et al. (2023). Emotion Socialization in the Indian Cultural Context.

⁴⁰⁸ Menon, U. (2000). Analysing emotions as culturally constructed scripts. *Culture and Psychology*, 6/1, pp. 40-50.

⁴⁰⁹ Hejmadi, A., Davidson, R. J., and Rozin, P. (2000). Exploring Hindu Indian Emotion Expressions: Evidence for Accurate Recognition by Americans and Indians. *Psychological Science*, 11/3, pp. 183–187.

actor actually do? Is acting just a natural talent or based on theoretical frameworks that have existed since centuries?

In my personal experience of *rāga* or *tāla* improvisation through phrases or set compositions during *riyāz*, there is a ubiquitous tension between the material that is being worked upon and that pressing *bhāva* of creation, which happens in the spur of the moment. The vast repertoire of *bols* and *bandīśes*, coupled with subtle techniques mastered through *riyāz*, are either deliberately or subconsciously re-structured during improvisations. However, the material should be learnt in the first place, and exposure to *gharānedār tālīm* from experienced *gurus* is a must if one is to do any meaningful and effective improvisation. *Riyāz* is the most important element once there is a *guru* and material to learn from. This is so because, while at times, the music may seem to come from within, it is only through extensive mental and physical practice that a musician may reach such an advanced level. These principles not only apply to Hindustani classical musicians, but also to Hindi film music composers, who often started off as serious *sādhakas* (practitioners) of this art form before venturing into the film industry.

In Hindi films, the musical venture is highly collaborative, such that successful songs are those where the music director sources from classical music. I have looked at the works of Naushad, Madan Mohan, Roshan and R D Burman, all of whom have heavily leaned on Hindustani classical music to compose film music tunes. Naushad and Roshan bring with them formal *tālīm* alongside their own creative abilities. Madan Mohan brings with him an appreciation of *rāga* music and associated sub-genres while not having had any formal *tālīm*. R D Burman, along with his formal learnings, brings with him a fresh approach of improvisations based on classical music.

All these music composers thus bring with them *tālīm*, *gharānā* knowledge, in some cases associations with contemporary established classical musicians, and an ability to create film songs from *khayāl* and *ṭhumrī* genres. Indian film music composers and to an extent film makers and playback singers have engaged extensively with both these genres. Composers like Naushad, Roshan, Madan Mohan, R D Burman amongst others and playback singers like Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosale, Mohammad Rafi, and Manna Dey have brought traditional

Hindustani classical compositions to the forefront of film music and made them popular amongst the general public.

Thus, it has been shown that qualities including high levels of musicality, nearly flawless playback singing, superior levels of composing and hugely appealing filmmaking of high calibre have been achieved through a set of some crucial attributes. While credit for natural talent cannot be taken away from any of the principal characters of the Indian film industry, it may be safely argued that without the knowledge and practice of these ancient theories of aesthetics and classical music, the cinematic outcomes that we experience today may not have been manifested.

8.5 Relevance and future work

This thesis comes out of my own experience of being a practicing Hindustani classical musician schooled in theoretical training as well. This experience underpins the research implicitly. My research has also got explicit examples of analysis of practice. I have included case studies involving practitioners like Ustād Zakir Hussain that have demonstrated the application of Hindustani classical music and the manifestation of corresponding *rasas*. This could form a basis for further research in which the immediacy of practical demonstrations is maximised.

From my own perspective, I envisage two possible practice-led ways forward. One is exploring rare *rāgas* to suit diegetic and non-diegetic music in modern Indian films. Hindustani classical music also has the potential to embellish background scenes (romantic, action, emotional, nostalgic, fantasy, comic) of Western films, for, if used in a creative manner, the appeal of *rāga* and music can be universal and be implemented extensively beyond the boundaries of Indian cinema. A second way forward would be to focus on *tablā* and its creative application to International Cinema. While there has been some use of this instrument in background scores of selected Hollywood films, there is considerable scope for further rhythmic experimentation in modern World Cinema.

Documentary film could be an ideal medium for this kind of development. The documentary form would lend itself to an exploration of the sonic and visual as well as document the

heritage of Indian classical music and its rich contribution to cinema. Thus, we see the fecundity of this vast subject. Practice-led research both in terms of musical practice and documentary practice can enrich the methodology used to examine Indian cinema from a combined musical and emotional perspective.

Any student or practitioner of Indian music or Indian film may find this thesis relevant in composing for a film, and to an extent even making films. Scholars working in this area may also find my *rasa-rāga-tāla* approach to studying Indian film music crucial to developing a holistic Indian film criticism framework. This work may also prove to be a reference for those amateur *rasikas* and connoisseurs who despite being interested in the subject seek a better understanding of it in theory and practice. It leads towards a new research sphere, in which explorations may be made across the length and breadth of Hindustani classical music to develop novel methods of composing for films. This would be in stark contrast to the common approach of relying on Artificial Intelligence and electronic music taken by several film music directors and upcoming musicians these days. But most importantly, a *rasa-rāga-tāla* based study draws attention to the ancient roots of Indian arts and takes us to the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, where it all began.

The *Nāṭyaśāstra* points to the ultimate aim of *Nāṭya-Veda* which is to attain pleasure or bliss through classical performing art. The ancient seers from the Indian subcontinent propounded that the cognitive ability to create something meaningful improves exponentially as one gets closer to the realisation of this deeper essence within music, which resonates with *rasas*. This, in turn has a considerable impact on memory and inventiveness.⁴¹⁰ It also evokes strong visual imagery.⁴¹¹ It is a phenomenon often experienced by Indian classical music maestros and composers while performing. The centuries of refinement and development of this art form through various channels including scientific analyses, *guru-śiṣya paramparā*, *riyāz* and in recent times, Hindi film music compositions have made it a repository of creative possibilities. While it has boundaries in the form of grammar, *gharānās* etc., this music also offers

⁴¹⁰ Day, R. A., Thompson, W. F., & Boag, S. (2020). Characterizing experiences of music-evoked visual imagery in high prevalence contexts. *Psychomusicology: Music, Mind, and Brain*, 30/2. p. 72.

⁴¹¹ Deil, J., Markert, N., Normand, P., Kammen, P., Küssner, M. B., & Taruffi, L. (2022). Mind-wandering during contemporary live music: An exploratory study. *Musicae Scientiae*, 27/3, pp. 616–636.

considerable freedom to its practitioners. With deeper exposure to its intricacies and maturity, an artist learns to compose within boundaries and create meaningful pieces of art. Each of the songs, sequences and films I have analysed in this thesis demonstrates the instrumentality of *rasa-rāga-tāla* virtuosity in a mass-mediated context.⁴¹² In addition to nearly diaphanous proficiency, there are two standard empirical measures that are employed in musical scenes. The first is music's profound effect on the physical world and the second is its effect on the spiritual realm. This music has the ability to inspire and motivate practitioners to physically engage in rigorous *sādhanā* and achieve high levels of musicality as well as *tañyārī*. More importantly, this music can uplift the moods of millions of listeners and help them sail through the often tricky journey of life. This it is able to do owing to the healing effects of *rāga-tāla saṅgīta*. It is up to the future generations to make optimum use of all that Hindustani classical music has to offer and carry forward a timeless legacy.

⁴¹² Booth, G.D. (2005). Pandits in the Movies: Contesting the Identity of Hindustani Classical Music and Musicians in the Hindi Popular Cinema. *Asian Music*, 36(1), pp. 60–86.

Selected Glossary

<i>Abhinaya</i>	Acting
<i>Abhivyakti</i>	Expression
<i>Adhyātma</i>	Spirituality
<i>Ādi</i>	Original, first
<i>Āhārya</i>	Ornamental
<i>Ākār</i>	A type of <i>tāna</i> or <i>ālāp</i> sung with the mouth wide open having the phonetic sound 'ā'
<i>Ākramak</i>	Attacking
<i>Alaṅkāra</i>	Organized group of <i>svaras</i> connected together
<i>Ālāp</i>	The opening section of a typical North Indian classical performance which is a form of melodic improvisation that introduces and develops a <i>rāga</i>
<i>Ānaṅda</i>	Happiness
<i>Ānaṅd-Dāyak</i>	Giver of happiness
<i>Āṅg</i>	Limb
<i>Āṅgika</i>	Physical gesture
<i>Aṅkuśa</i>	A sharpened goad used to control an elephant
<i>Anuśāsan</i>	Discipline
<i>Antarā</i>	Subsequent section of a composition following the <i>sthāyī</i> that introduces new melodic material and provides contrast to the <i>sthāyī</i>
<i>Anubhāva</i>	The consequents or verbal, physical and involuntary emotional reflexes, or reactions to an action trigger
<i>Āvartan</i>	A cycle in <i>tablā's tāla</i>
<i>Bābū</i>	Mister
<i>Bahuraṅgī</i>	Multi-coloured
<i>Bāī</i>	Lady or mistress
<i>Bāj</i>	Performance style of a particular <i>gharānā</i>
<i>Baṅdhī</i>	Built/bound

<i>Baṅdīś</i>	A composition in Hindustani classical music which literally means that which is built
<i>Behlāvās</i>	Medium tempo rendition of the notes which follows the pattern of the <i>āroha</i> (ascent) and the <i>avaroha</i> (descent) of the <i>rāga</i>
<i>Besurā</i>	Out of tune
<i>Betālā</i>	Out of rhythm
<i>Bhajan</i>	A devotional vocal genre
<i>Bhāṣa</i>	Language
<i>Bhava</i>	Concrete sentient birth in one of the three realms of existence posited by ancient Indian philosophy
<i>Bhāva</i>	Emotion or mood
<i>Bhāvanā</i>	Sentiment
<i>Bol</i>	Word
<i>Bol banāv</i>	Expressing the mood of the composition by means of particular intonation of the words of the composition in appropriate musical phrases
<i>Bol bāñṭ</i>	Dividing the bols according to rhythmic patterns
<i>Braj</i>	A geographical region associated with Kṛṣṇa in the Northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh
<i>Calan</i>	The pattern of movement of notes within a <i>rāga</i>
<i>Cīz</i>	Thing
<i>Daitya</i>	A clan in ancient India
<i>Dāsī</i>	Female servant
<i>Deva</i>	Deity (in Indian mythology)
<i>Dhrupad</i>	A North Indian classical vocal genre pre-dating the <i>khayāl</i>
<i>Dhwanī</i>	Sound
<i>Dhyānast</i>	In a meditative state
<i>Dohā</i>	A form of self-contained rhyming couplet in poetry composed in <i>Mātrika</i> metre.
<i>Drut</i>	Speedy
<i>Gāyakī</i>	Style of singing

<i>Gharānā</i>	School of vocal or instrumental Hindustani classical music, the name/origin of which depends on the founder musician from a geographical location starting a distinct novel style
<i>Gharānedār</i>	Having influence of one or more <i>gharānās</i>
<i>Ghazal</i>	A lyric poem with a fixed number of verses and a repeated rhyme, typically on the theme of love, and normally set to music often written in the Urdu language
<i>Guru</i>	A teacher/mentor. The syllable <i>gu</i> means darkness, the syllable <i>ru</i> - one who dispels it. Because of the power to dispel darkness, the guru is thus named.
<i>Hukkā</i>	A traditional smoking device
<i>Jamāi bābū</i>	Son-In-Law
<i>Jam̄jamā</i>	Musical embellishments which consist of forceful and speedy engagement of multiple svaras
<i>Joḍ</i>	The portion following an ālāp section of a classical music recital which is rhythmic in nature but not accompanied by any percussion
<i>Jhālā</i>	The often-speedy climax section of a classical music recital after the <i>joḍ</i> and before the <i>gat</i> is played.
<i>Jugalbandī</i>	A musical performance that features a duet of two solo musicians
<i>khānāqāh</i>	A building or lodge designed for <i>sūfī</i> gatherings
<i>Kathak</i>	A North Indian classical dance form
<i>Khaṭkā</i>	An embellishing technique in Hindustani classical music that involves performing a single note as a cluster of notes. It may also be defined as a rapid, often abrupt, ornamentation that typically includes a series of quick notes or a slide, adding a playful and lively character to the melodic phrase
<i>Khayāl</i>	A North Indian classical vocal genre
<i>Kinār</i>	The outermost part of the tablā drum's surface which produces the <i>tā</i> or <i>nā</i> sounds with the strike of a finger
<i>Krīyā</i>	Action/deed
<i>Laggī</i>	An intricate pattern of tablā <i>bol</i> s

<i>Laya</i>	The distance between two rhythmic beats, Tempo
<i>Loka</i>	Worlds according to ancient Indian spiritual traditions
<i>Madhya</i>	Middle
<i>Mahāvat</i>	An elephant rider
<i>Maṅtra</i>	A word, phrase or sound repeated to aid concentration in meditation
<i>Masālā</i>	Spice
<i>Mehfil</i>	Musical Soiree
<i>Mīṇḍ</i>	A glide from one <i>svara</i> to another
<i>Miśra</i>	Mixed (denotes a <i>rāga</i> with elements of another <i>rāga</i> (s) within its melodic structure)
<i>Muni</i>	Sage
<i>Murkī</i>	A short <i>tāna</i> or an inverted mordent in Hindustani classical music
<i>Nād</i>	Sound
<i>Nāṭya</i>	Dance
<i>Nawāb</i>	King
<i>Nāyikā</i>	Lead female protagonist
<i>Nirukti</i>	A ‘notional’ etymology that indicates an understanding of essential meaning but rarely stands up to historical philological analysis
<i>Niṣpatti</i>	Production
<i>Paṇḍit</i>	Priest or a learned person
<i>Nṛtya</i>	Dance
<i>Paḍhānt</i>	Recitation
<i>Paraṃparā</i>	Tradition
<i>Pāraṃparik</i>	Traditional
<i>Paran</i>	A type of traditional <i>tablā</i> composition
<i>Pakaḍ</i>	The characteristic phrase or group of <i>svaras</i> that define a particular <i>rāga</i>
<i>Pāṭhya</i>	Readable
<i>Paurāṇic</i>	Belonging to or from the time of ancient Indian literature known as <i>Purāṇas</i>
<i>Pradhān</i>	Main/Dominant

<i>Pukār</i>	Musical intonation using higher notes
<i>Pūrab</i>	East
<i>Rasika</i>	Connoisseur
<i>Racanā</i>	Composition/creation
<i>Rāga</i>	'A non-constructible set, in music,' just like non-constructible set, in language for human communication
<i>Ranj</i>	To colour
<i>Rasa</i>	The essence or an essential mental state
<i>Rijhānā</i>	To gratify/entertain
<i>Riyāsat</i>	Princely state
<i>Sādhaka</i>	A seeker-practitioner
<i>samavādi</i>	The <i>svara</i> which is the second most frequently used in the melodic expansion of a <i>rāga</i>
<i>Sāma Veda</i>	One of the four Vedic scriptures from ancient India
<i>Sampradāya</i>	An organised community
<i>Sāndhī</i>	Joining
<i>Saptak</i>	One of the three musical registers in Hindustani classical music
<i>Sargam</i>	Musical notes
<i>Śās</i>	To teach
<i>Śāstra</i>	Canonical literature from India
<i>Śāstrokta</i>	That which is in adherence to particular <i>Śāstra(s)</i>
<i>Sāttvika</i>	Emotional
<i>Sautan</i>	A keep or co-wife/partner
<i>Sawāl-jawāb</i>	Question - Answer
<i>Śer-o-śāyarī</i>	Urdu poetry often written/recited in the form of couplets
<i>Seṭh</i>	Rich man
<i>Śiṣya</i>	Disciple
<i>Śloka</i>	A verse, hymn, couplet, or poem in Sanskrit
<i>Śruti</i>	Micro intervals in Indian classical musical notes
<i>Sthāyī</i>	Initial section of a composition where the main melodic theme is introduced and repeated

<i>Sūfi</i>	A spiritual mystic
<i>Svara</i>	Musical note
<i>Taiyyār</i>	Well-practiced, seasoned
<i>Tāla</i>	A rhythmic framework
<i>Tālabadhh</i>	Set to a <i>tāla</i> or rhythmic framework
<i>Tālīm</i>	Training
<i>Tāntric</i>	A practitioner of the ancient esoteric tradition of <i>tantra</i>
<i>Tār saptak</i>	High Octave
<i>Tarānā</i>	A type of Hindustani composition using semantic words; sometimes Persian couplets are woven into them.
<i>Tawāif</i>	Courtesan
<i>Ṭhāṭ</i>	Classification structure of <i>rāgas</i>
<i>Ṭhekā</i>	Skeletal structure of a <i>tāla</i>
<i>Ṭhumak</i>	A rhythmic jerk of the hip and waist
<i>Upaniṣad</i>	A set of philosophical literature of ancient Indian origin
<i>Ustād</i>	Expert, Teacher, Mentor
<i>Utsāh-Vardhak</i>	Raiser of enthusiasm
<i>Vācikā</i>	Verbal
<i>Vādi</i>	The primary <i>svara</i> of a <i>rāga</i>
	Social order
<i>Vāgyekār</i>	One who composes both the text and the music of a song
<i>Vaishnava</i>	Follower of Lord Viṣṇu
<i>Varṇa</i>	Colour or caste
<i>Vazan</i>	Weight
<i>Veda</i>	A collection of authorised scriptures consisting of Sanskrit hymns from ancient India
<i>Vilāmbit</i>	Slow
<i>Vināśinī</i>	Destroyer
<i>Zamīndār</i>	Landlord

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