

A Voyage through the Musical Realm of Illustrious King Mysore

Shri JayachĀmarĀjendra Wodeyar

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ABSTRACT

In the 18th and 19th centuries, a galaxy of great Vaggeyakaras and Musicians were born either as contemporaries or in rapid succession to enrich classical music with their wonderful compositions. King JayachĀmarĀja Wodeyar is one among the post-trinity composers who has contributed to the lore of Carnatic music in Mysore. During his reign, Mysore was truly a musical citadel. He was initially trained in western classical music. He received the highest honours possible for a student at London's Trinity College of Music. Later, he learned the complexities of Karnataka Sangeetha from Mysore Vāsudevachar. He has composed 94 kritis in Sanskrit within a short span of 24 months (August 18, 1946 to December 28, 1947), each of which testifies to his intense devotion and profound scholarship. Another distinguishing feature of his compositions is that he composed only one kriti in one raga, resulting in 94 ragas for the 94 kritis. He is most likely the only composer who has done so. Wodeyar was an adherent of Srīvidyā (Srīvidyā Upasaka), and he used the signature 'Srīvidyā' in his compositions. In some of his compositions, he has also used his initiation name, 'Chitprabhānanda.' This article focuses on the Musical aspects of Wodeyar compositions. An attempt is made to conduct a comprehensive assessment of his compositions and to showcase their authenticity.

INTRODUCTION

The literary and artistic excellence of the Mysore dynasty, imbibed and nurtured through the ages from Wodeyar kings to the dawn of the modern era, culminated in the birth and rule of King Shri JayachĀmarĀjendra Wodeyar, an exemplary statesman, scholar, diplomat, musician, author, thinker, philanthropist, and highly skilled sportsman, whom posterity remembers as "Peoples Maharaja". Maharaja JayachĀmarĀjendra Wodeyar was born on 18-07-1919[Dhanurlagna-Uttarabhadra 2nd pada nakshathra - Mina Rashi (pisces)] to Yuvaraja Kanterava Narasimharaja



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Wodeyar and Yuvarani Kempu Cheluvajamanni. He was mentored by his uncle H H Krishnarāja Wodeyar IV. He was married to Pramodadevi and had 6 children. Wodeyars early education was in the special royal school at Chamundi Vihar Palace, Mysore. In 1938, he graduated from Maharajas College in Mysore, earning 5 awards and gold medals. Accolades came his way quite naturally as a result of his scholarship in multiple disciplines. D.Lit degrees were bestowed upon him by Anna Malai University and the University of Queensland in Australia, while D. Law degrees were bestowed upon him by Banaras Hindu University. The British government awarded him JCSI and JCB degrees. Wodeyar was also trained in various branches of administration and rigorous physical and military skills. After the death of his father's elder brother, Nalwadi Krishnarāja Wodeyar, he ascended the throne to become Maharaja of Mysore on September 18, 1940.

Jayachāmarāja Wodeyar inherited his father and uncle's passion for music, as well as his father's profound grasp of religion and spirituality. Wodeyar was naturally drawn to music after growing up in a musical environment. He was well-versed in all three musical genres (Carnatic, Hindustani and Western classical). He was under the tutelage of Vidwans Mysore Vasudevachar and Chennakeshavayya who taught him vocal music, and Vīna Venkatagiriappa from whom he learnt the vīna. When the National Center for the Performing Arts was founded in the late 1960s, he served on its Board of Advisors. He was the President of the Sangeet Natak Academy. According to Dr. S Radhakrishnan, former President of India, the Maharaja was both an Aradhaka and a Sadhaka.

MUSICAL MASTERY

Jayachāmarājendra Wodeyar rose to prominence in Carnatic music with his "Vaggeyakaratra." (Vaggeyakara is the one who comes up with both the words and the music.) He decided to become a vaggeyakara for two reasons. The first was the breadth and depth of musical experience he had gained from his gurus such as Venkatagiriappa and Vasudevachar; the influence and exposure to Hindustani music he received from his uncle, which can be seen in his compositions in ragas such as mand; and his practical and theoretical expertise in Western music. His compositions are widely sung by artists and students all over the world; surely, not many kings have such distinction. He is said to have written 94 compositions, all in Sanskrit. . He was



an ardent supporter of Goddess Chāmundeshwari(amba) as well as Srīvidyā Upasaka (practitioner).

On August 17, 1945, he began writing songs under the pen name/ankitha 'Srīvidyā'. Among the compositions, there were 11 Ganapati kriti, 15 Shiva kritis, 4 Vishnu kritis and the other kritis which dealt with various Devi manifestations. (Chāmundeshwari, Lekshmi, Sarawati, Durga, etc.) Sri Mahāganapatim Bhajeham was the first composition in raga Atāna, Adi tala.

On December 19, 1947, the composer completed his last composition- Sri Ranganatha Pahimam Kripanidhi in the raga Kalyana Vasantha. *(These details are provided by Sri. S Krishnamoorthy, grandson of Mysore Vasudevacharya and Wodeyar's classmate, in an article titled "Raja Rachana Charutha Jayachāmrājendra Wodeyar," which was published in "Kannada Prabha" on September 28, 1997.)

Salient features of his compositions

- All of Wodeyars compositions were composed over a period of 28 months. Structure of his compositions normally follow Pallavi, Anupallavi and charana pattern. Some of his compositions do have two stanzas, some 4 or some up to 8. Normally after Anupallavi or Charana, is followed by a brief Madhyama kala sahyam. It can be observed that notations similar to the notes were used in western classical music, with odd laya patterns unlike traditional compositions of our classical music. We could very well attribute to his process of composing music through piano.
- His kritis are written in the appropriate metres (Chandas) to ease singing and ensure the fusion of lyrics and music. Lyrical content is filled with devotion and prayer, so Kavyalankaras are rarely used. Long Samasams, which are typical of the Sanskrit language, are quite often used in his compositions like Madhya, Adi, and Antya prasas.
- His compositions were greatly influenced from Muthuswāmy Dikshitar, who was also a Srividya Upasaka. It should be brought to the notice that no other musical forms were formulated by the king except kritis.
- Wodeyar incorporated several dogmas from Srīvidyā, Srīchakra, and Mantra Sastra into the majority of his kritis.



- The sahyas are dense and require a lot of breath power, making the kritis challenging to vocalise.
- Yantra, Mantra and Tantra propel the theme of Jayachāmarāja Wodeyar Compositions.
Eg : In the kriti Chintayāmi jagadambam , hindolam , in the last charana a portion of gayathri matra is incorporated - ‘mathimna prajotham lalitham’
- In his compositions, the Maharaja used a total of 32 mela ragams. A remarkable highlight of the compositions was that no ragas were repeated.
- In addition to the well-known melams such as Todi, Kalyāni, Shankarābharanam, Latangi, Shanmukhapriya, Chakravākam, Chārukeshi, Shubhapantuvarali, Simhendra madhyamam, Hemavati, Dharmavati, he has hired some unusual ragas such as Dhenuka, Kokilapriya, Vakulābharanam, Hātakambari, Suryakantam, Vagadishvari, Kāmavardhani, Ramapriya, Gamanashrama, Bhavapriya, Rāgavardhani, Vishvambhari, Shadvidhamargini, Suvarnangi, Nāmanarayani, and Rishabhapriya.
- Melam 22, **KharaHarapriya**, is notable for its absence.
- The Janya ragams used, include some well-known, some uncommon, and one invented by Maharaja himself, as illustrated by the following list:
- Jayasamvardhini , Hamsanatini , Nilaveni ,Amritavarshini, Balachandrika, Bhairavam, Bhogavasantam, Devagandhari, Durvānki, Gamakakriya, Gundakriya, Hamsavinodini, Hindoladarbar, Hindoladesika, Hindolavasantam, Jaganmohini, , Janaranjani, , Kokilabhashini, Kokilapanchamam, Lalita, Mānd, Nadabrahmam, Nagadhvani, Nārayanagaula, Nilaveni, Pratapavarali, Simhavāhini, Simhendramadhyamam, Shivakāmbodhi, Shuddha lalita, Shuddha todi, Shuddha salavi, Supradipam, Suranandini, Udayaravicandrika, Vasanta, Viravasantam, Vijayavasantam.
- The ragam Jayasamvardhani , a janyam of Suryakantam was invented by the Maharaja.
- Chittaswara passages were incorporated in his krithis.

Eg: Sri Jalandharam (Gambhiranatta) , Saraswathim Bhagavathim (Hamsavinodinim)

Lyrical Beauty

Most of his songs constitute alliteration (prasam), such as Adyakshara prasam (first syllable rhyme), Dvitiyaksara prasam (second syllable rhyme), or Anytaksara prasam (end syllable rhyme), or a combination of these.



The Adyakshara prasam can be outlined in the following kritis: "Pari pahimam sada (Sudha dhanyasi), Swaminatha palayamam (Charukeshi).

Examples of Dvitiyaksara prasam can be found in ,durga devi (dharmavati), and "nagalingamaheshvaram (shankarabharanam).

Anyakshara Prasam examples- "Chintayami Jagadambam , "Sri mahaganapathim , "Amba shri rajarajeshvari", "Bale brhatspatimūle", "Mahisasuramardani", "Suvarnangi rajamatangi".

Mudra

As a devotee of Goddess and a worshipper of Srīvidyā, the Maharaja naturally chose the phrase " Srīvidyā," as his vaggeyakara mudra in the majority of his compositions.

For 86 songs, genuine raga mudra is incorporated. Ragams Hanumatodi, Atāna, Amritavhini, Hindoadarbar, Chārukshi, Vasantabhairavi, and Malavi doesn't have raga mudra . One can see the usage of indirect raga mudra in few rare cases, with some clever word construction without interfering the meaning of the sahitya . As an example,

Mand (in brahmĀNDa valayE mAyE),

Shankarabharanam (nagarajadi bhakthashankarabharanayutam)

Kamavardhini (Kameshvarimkamavardhinim)

Hamsavinodini (paramahamsavinOdinIm)

- Long winding phrases can be found in several compositions, including Kshīrasāgara shayana-Māyamalavagoula, Kāmeshwarīm Kāmvardhinim-Kāmavardhini.
- Each of his compositions captures the depth and soulfulness of the melody while exemplifying the essence of Raga bhava.
- In the case of Laya aspect, Wodeyar also composed in various new talams like Chaturasra Matya, Misra Jhampa, Khanda Jhampa, Chathurasra Dhruva , Khanda Triputa etc. There were 38 Adi tala compositions.
- No Chappu tala kritis were found.
- His *kritis* are musically complex, which requires mastery of voice modulation and voice culture. They are the result of the mind of a pianist at work. While both Hindustani and



Carnatic classical music are linear in nature — one *swara* following the other — the genius of Jaya Chāmarāja Wodeyar is that he used Western harmonic vocabulary (chords) and translated them into Carnatic compositions.

- Then they are all in Sanskrit, which demands not just knowledge of this language but as Dr. Satyavathi points out, also mastery over pronunciation and articulation; and since the *sahitya* (lyrics) is dense, close-knit, with little room for breath, it demands excellent breath control.
- The kritis run in Atita and Anāgatha grahas and they are to be handled carefully with a proper sense of Laya.

Conclusion

Jayachāmarājendra Wodeyar was a remarkable synthesis of a versatile composer, a Sanskrit scholar who adorned his music with grace, dignity, and tranquillity, and a Sadhaka who stepped in devotion and good tradition. The lyrics of JCW's compositions are filled with devotion. They express the feelings and experiences associated with devotion. Glory, divinity, and benevolence are all qualities that the vocabulary represents in an imagistic way based on the context. They were chosen to enhance the musical qualities of the lyrics by contributing to their melody, intensity, and so on. The kritis clearly possess all of the qualities required for presentation on a concert platform, with ample scope for improvisation. They are masterworks that should be rendered by tala njana musicians. Manodharma –neraval and swara kalpanaswara improvisations are also possible. His contribution to the advancement of Indian classical music deserves to be memorialised in gold lettering. We owe a debt of gratitude to this eminent musical scholar for enriching our musical heritage by introducing a number of beautiful compositions in various ragas with intellectually appealing lyrics to our repertoire. His songs evoke a meditative devotion to the sublime nature that goes beyond words to feelings.

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