

Music: It's Effectiveness in South Indian Classical Dance - Bharathanatyam

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to go through the influence music has on classical dance and how they are interrelated. Classical dance or simply saying any dance requires music to create the mood, stress the beat, and initiate the motivation which triggers moving. Music has that power to take us to an elevated state and create a feel inside us. It thus plays an immense role in dance. Music when executed in various styles create various types of beats, which correspond to a specific dance style. Dance can be performed to any kind of music but it always matches with a typical category. For example, slower tunes would be utilized for dance styles such as mohiniyattom, Manipuri etc while fast, upbeat songs would be used for Bharathanatyam, kuchipudi, kathak etc. It is true that in each dance different pieces are done in different speed. So, it relates to the situation, mood, lyrics etc. Each dance follows the slow or fast music of the corresponding traditional version.

Key words: Music, Dance, Bharathanatyam, Raga, Choreography

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Introduction

Music and dance are incomplete without each other. Music initiates the mood needed for dance and is often in balance with our emotions. It is evident that it plays a vital role in the theatrics of movies, musicals, and dramas. Besides, the lyrics of a song can be represented through dance just further improvising the relationship they share. A song just read or sung can evoke so innumerable emotions through its lyrics provided it uses good language and standards. But the impact when it joins with dance can last a lifetime. Some dance performances seen will be remembered for the rest of the life and definitely the most important reason may be the music even though we notice tala intricacies, classic abhinaya etc which even depends on music for the fullness. When dramatic music is adjoined with intricate movement it enhances the aesthetic qualities and creates wonders. When the movements go in sync with the speed of the music it is indeed a visual treat.

In reality, the origins of music may be traced back to people's religious practices in the past - chanting scriptures and making musical offerings to gods are extensively documented. It was also discovered at the time that the sound produced by various areas of the human body, such as the abdomen, lungs, throat, and head, formed a self-contained system. The proportions and ratios that sound patterns displayed quickly developed into a system known as sruti. Musical scales were gradually standardised, and regulations were enacted to restrict the practice of singing and playing instruments.

This resulted in the development of melodies and a system of musical notation (raag), as well as several textual treatises on the art of dancing. A dance is the physical embodiment of music's affective content in its simplest and most obvious form and meaning. The pleasure of listening to music is different from the pleasure of watching that music acquire physical form and express its meaning in a visual experience.

Marg and desi music, the two streams did not continue to exist in isolation. The truth is that both have popular music as their font head, thus there is no difference in their ancestry. Since religious rites gradually became the exclusive domain of a few sets of people, the lyrical stream separated itself from the masses and was later dubbed classical. Unlike this, the other stream, desi, stayed in

the hands of the people and grew in popularity in a variety of forms across India. To further emphasize the distinction, we'd like to compare our music to the peaceful, soulful flow of water of a river like Ganga or Godavari.

Classical and popular forms must interact continuously in order for the former to survive and progress. The fact that ragas like Khamaj, Khambhavati, Maand, Malavi, or Sarang are classified as classical music is ample evidence to support this claim. Apart from this differentiation, which is primarily focused on content, there is another stylistic classification in Indian music.

Today, such variances have resulted in two major divisions. These are referred to as North Indian and Carnatic styles, respectively. The prevalence of local colours in both styles is the key distinguishing element. The theory is supported by an old literature produced by Matang Muni called Brihaddeshi, which contains particular reference of the regional variants classed as North and South (Carnatic). The origins of the North Indian and Carnatic genres are essentially the same. Regional or local colour is responsible for the differences that appear in these styles.

A short look at the evolution of music over a lengthy period of time reveals that regional variations begin to emerge as early as the seventh century A.D. If there had been any mainstream music at all, it was now heavily affected by these new local or regional innovations. Between the seventh and twelfth centuries A.D., Indian music came into contact with other countries' musical cultures. This was a significant period, particularly in terms of the enrichment of Indian musical culture.

One particular influence that must be mentioned, and which most likely contributed to the further development of North Indian and Carnatic as different styles, was the contact of Irani music and related treatises with Indian musical culture. In his 4th century (A.D.) treatise Sangeet Sudhakar, Naresh Haripal of Saurashtra (Gujarat) explicitly identifies these two separate schools of Indian music.

A work becomes or qualifies to be classified as a musical composition when it rests on the following three cornerstones: a) Swara or sound, b) Taal or Laya or beattune, c) Raag or melody. These are the three elements that make up music: Swara is a sound that has a specific identity and carries some meaning. Only when a sound has a distinct connotation among other sounds, as well

as rhythm, does it become music. Swaras are the foundation of Indian and Western music. It is made up of many Swara configurations.

Shadaj is the basic Swara in Indian music. The basic swara is another name for it. Because the term shadaj literally means "six," it's easy to see how this fundamental swara is always linked to six other swaras. In Indian music, the swara spectrum is made up of seven bands, also known as saptak. Unlike Western music, the swaras in Indian music are not tied to a specific pitch. The musician determines the pitch of shadaj, and the other six swaras are placed on the musical spectrum correspondingly.

However, in Western music, there is a concept known as "absolute pitch." This means that each swara has its own pitch. Similarly, musical instruments are made to a set of fixed pitches. The Arts and Aesthetics of Dance and Music The beat, or taal, is the second most significant element in Indian music. Traditionally, taal has been regarded as an essential component of Indian music. It is the method by which rhythm is represented in musical works. The taal is also quantified in terms of the pulse's numerical content in each composition. The composition is called vilambit when the pulse is sluggish. Madhyam is defined by a medium pulse count; drut pulse is defined by quicker counts.

In Indian music, there are many combinations of these pulse counts that give such a wide range of sounds. The taals are usually performed with percussion instruments such as the jhanjh, manjira (metal), mridang, pakhavaj, tabla (drums), and so on. During the performances, musicians that play taal instruments also practice their own terminology. Theka, bol, gat, tutra, tihal, palta, and other terms are among them. The words for the two principal percussion instruments used in North Indian and South Indian music systems, tabla and mridang, are the same. The melody (raag), which is also a distinguishing trait of Indian music, is the third major component of music.

Indian music is noted for its melody, whereas Western music is known for its harmony. A raag's core manifestation is its joy. It is still feasible to create a musical composition that does not pleasure - but we will not name it raag. There are eight other characteristics that define a raag, in addition to its delectability. The many permutations and combinations of these characteristics give rise to

the entire raag music repertory. Another important feature of a raag is that it should be infused with emotions. In Indian music, it is considered that if the melody is devoid of sensuality, it becomes mechanical.

Raagini is a subdivision of raag created by this aspect of sensuality. It is appropriate to mention that the famous Raagmala series of Indian paintings is based on this element, since they reflect the many moods of raag and raagini in their artistic representation. The musical triad of song, instrument, and dance includes dancing. The three can't be separated, but they preserve their own identities in many respects.

Music and Natyasastra.

Music adds sparkle to the precious classical dance forms like Bharathanatyam which originates from Natya Shastra. South Indian classical forms like bharathanatyam, kuchipudi, mohiniyattom etc are danced to the Carnatic music. The mathematical accuracy of Bharatanatyam matches that of Carnatic Music in each measure. It is noteworthy that both Bharatanatyam and music forms its base from Natya Shastra. After the Samaveda this is the only text that talks about music in detail. Bharata Muni talks about music elaborately in chapters 28 to 34 in the Natyasastra.

The Natyasastra evidently articulates rasabhavaprakriya, a standard or measure used for all dance and musical dhruvas and abhinaya. Dhruva Ghana are mainly the songs used to enhance the entire dance drama. The term Raga was first described in the Natya Shastra along with signifying the usage of scales in intervals of 2, 3 or 4 srutis. In this book, musical instruments are put into four categories, which include Tata (lutes), Sushira (flute), Ghana (cymbals), Avanaadha (drums). The chapters also speak about the codes of usage of all categories of instruments, talas and even the Gandharva music.

Music and Bharathanatyam

The theory of Indian dance is broad in its presentation, and it cannot be grasped without considering the dance's technique. The art of dance must be understood on a technical level as an

intriguing combination of the arts of sculpting, painting, music, and even literature. The technique of one or all of the foregoing is not addressed in the dance manuals. Dance is considered one of numerous communication tools in all of the treatises. The Natyashastra definitely declares about dance: 'This art will be strengthened by the teachings of every scripture (shastra) and will provide a review of all arts and crafts.'

Carnatic music sung for a dance recital differs from a pure music kutchery. A carnatic kutchery begins with a Varnam whereas in a dance recital Varnam comes much longer after Pushpanjali, shabdham and Alarippu. Talam plays a vital part in the dance concert. The singer has to match tala with the mrudangam and the dancer's beats. Adhi talam is the most commonly used tala of the songs sung in a dance concert. It is an 8 beat talam. Some of the songs are more difficult ones sung to Ata talams and Jhumpa talams in various jathis.

In a performance the laya of the music has to counterpart the bhavas of the dancer. In a pure music recital, the singer manages the Layams and conveys it in the best way he chooses to. In a music concert, a composition can be sung in different talas and speeds, but in a dance concert this is decided by the choreography. Even the repetitions are fixed and decided. In sangita ratnakara it is said as, "Geetham Vadhyam Thatha Nrityam Thrayam Sangeetha Mucchyathe"

Sangeetham constitutes of Geetham (songs), Vadhyam (instruments) and Natyam (Dance). So, it specifies that each form cannot exist without the other. Dancing is a combination of various steps and movements set to music. Even though the quality of a performance bases on the dancer's level of skill, the impact of choreography and music on it is indeed immense. True, these three types of art are intertwined, but they have all grown and developed in their own unique ways. It's an interesting fact that Indian music has developed in two parallel streams from its inception. Music was employed extensively in religious ceremonies in one stream, while music was also used extensively during popular festivals and other occasions for public pleasure in the other.

The Carnatic music specialized for Bharathanatyam music in a few ways. In a music concert, the musician's talent is exposed whereas in a dance performance, the musicians have to maintain his focus on accompaniment to support the dancer. Unnecessary improvisation in the music distracts

the audience from the dance. Improvisation is left to the dancer, in certain segments of items. The musicians must be able to take cues from the dancer to make unplanned adjustments or spontaneous ideas.

In the music, the range of tempo is restricted to what a dancer can physically handle. Beats according to the dance or that are important to help the dancer should be played by the percussionists. They should not involve in expert demonstrations or avoid exposing personal skill that don't support the dancer. The musical group includes nattuvangam which includes the recitation of rhythmic syllables matching the dance movements, and striking cymbals in rhythm as cues to the dancer. This is played by dancers and or teachers, and not the concert musicians. Bharatanatyam goes hand in hand with Carnatic music. The padam, varnam, kirtanam, and tillana, in dance and music concerts have the same structure. As both art forms are South Indian in origin it is natural that the theme is also the same.

Music composed for dance items makes use of rhythmic patterns (talas) and melodies (ragas) that balances or beautifies the theme of the dance. The combined effect of the music and dance is important in communicating an experience or feel of the theme to the audience. The expressive power of Carnatic music is such that often the music alone can move the audience. This either frees the dancer or helps a less skillful artist of the responsibility to deliver a strong performance, or it challenges a skilled or more expert dancer to do justice to the music.

Aruna Sairam a music exponent opinion that, "A singer seems stationary during a performance, but every nerve, muscle and cell in her body dances to her own singing". In February 2017, eminent dancer Malavika Sarukkai and Aruna Sairam did 'Sammohanam', a theme based on the concept — the dancer sings with the body and the musician dances with melody. From her experiences she puts forward yet another explanation to the music-dance relationship — "the way in which the singer and dancer instinctively adapt to each other; different points when one takes the lead and the other mellows, the dynamic tension which ensues; this is itself a dance. It reveals an important tenet — the rapport between musician and dancer plays a significant role in the quality of the performance." It is said that dance has the power to reveal everything mysterious that is hidden in

music. It has the added merit of being human and physical existing. Dance can be further beautifully said as a poetry with arms and legs.”

Carnatic Music an Indian classical music originated in the Southern India. We notice that the lyrics in Carnatic music are highly devotional. Almost all of the songs address the Hindu deities. Along with these songs which emphasizes love or other social issues are there. Many songs are themed on the thought of rerouting of human emotions for union with the divine. Hence for an example, a young woman in a modern classical composition will be depicted yearning for one of the deities, such as Krishna, as her lover. Unlike in the normal motion pictures, such musical pieces provide an outlet for human emotions and to address God rather than another human being. Obviously Carnatic music as a classical form is continually essential to aid a culturally elevating medium. Foundations of Carnatic music can be traced back to Vedic times. It can assume that it began as a spiritual ritual of early Hinduism. Having originated from sama veda tradition, Hindustani music and Carnatic music were one and the same. But the scenario changed after the Islamic invasions of North India in the late 12th and early 13th century. 13th century onwards, there was a separation in the Indian music forms. The Northern style got influenced by Persian or Arabic music. The two main components of Carnatic music like any other Indian music are raga, the melody pattern, and tala, the rhythm pattern. Apparently, there can be music without dancing, but no dance can be done without musical accompaniment. Undoubtedly music is an integral part of dancing. Other musical instruments commonly employed in Bharatnatyam include cymbals, violin, veena, flute, tanpura, and mridangam, in addition to vocal assistance.

As we all know, any dance performance's nritta is tied to a specific talam, beat, or time cycle. The nattuvanaar uses the cymbal to establish this. When adavus, jatis, or intricate teermanams are performed, the cymbal provides support and auditory effect to both the dancer and the audience, emphasizing the beauty of the choreography. The cymbal is utilized by the nattuvanaar, but it also helps the entire orchestra keep a consistent rhythm in the talam. The mridangam also acts as a cymbal for the dancer's motions, particularly the feet in a nritta sequence, principally to establish the performance of the jatis with clarity. In an abhinaya sequence, it also puts a lot of stress on various moods. For instance, swift and loud drumming to indicate fury, subtle drumming to indicate pounding on the door, and so on.

Interpolations of jatis, korvais, and theermanams are always included in musical pieces for dance. However, simply playing the mridangam or striking the talam in time with the footwork isn't the only skill. The mridangist and nattuvan usually add and give flourishes and decorations. It's also crucial that they don't dominate the recital's overall impression. It must match the song's speed, atmosphere, and passion, as well as the Sollukattu (jati syllables recited). Ragas that appeal to the emotions rather than the intellect are recommended for dance. To express sadness, for example, the composer will use ragas like Mukhari, Ghanta, and Nandanammakriya. His choice will be determined by the level of melancholy shown in the abhinaya. In keeping with his goals, the composer emphasizes the state of feeling in the musical composition by judiciously emphasizing specific phrases. Nattai, Hamsadhvani, and other ragas are commonly used in invocational songs. Yaman Kalyani, Kadana Kudugallam, and other ragas show delight.

Choreography and Music

Choreography is the method or way of designing the steps, movements or abhinaya to correspond with specific styles of dances. It aids to create continuity throughout a performance as it well planned. Without the choreographic method, dancing can be disordered, confused and lack flexibility. It is ensured that the series of dance steps designed is in rhythm to the music at all points of choreography. This helps in preventing the dance from being out of sync. Normally, there are different stages in choreographic process.

Choreographers draw attention to different aspects of a musical work on the nature of experience they get from the music. So according to the tastes of different artists a multiple or various package of possibilities regarding how the music can be exploited or framed is brought out. The choreographer or dancers explore the different accents that the work can speak. Those who learn music lovers may be only limitedly interested in learning all the aspects a piece can say that too in all the ways. Meanwhile choreographers are performative interpreters of the significant characteristics of the music on an equivalence with conductors and musicians. Hearing tones or music artists automatically move with them. There occurs a balance between the motion of both.

Dance either performatively interprets music by calling attention to aspects of its qualities and structures or expands upon it, by either strengthening or completing structural or qualitative tendencies in the music. Many times, it creates an altogether new accent by means of comparison and contrast. Music inspires feelings of movement in audiences. Similarly, dance does often by activating certain mirror reflexes in viewers, to say, certain muscular, motor impulses that correlate to the movements witnessed in the relevant dance. Through this path, the movement in the dance explains, enlarges, or expands the feelings of movement already available in the related music. Thus, the dance empowers the viewer to sharpen, deepen, or otherwise develop the indication of movement she feels from the accompanying music. This is indispensable to the aesthetic experience of this sort of choreography.

Dance is well understood as the clarification of the feelings of movement inspired by the music. Dance helps to deepen such feelings. This deepening is secured, partially by the activation of the motor reflexes in the body of the spectator. The body of the spectator, in a way, is the medium through which the related feelings of movement is accomplished or completed. The resultant interdependence of dance and music may result in the dance making the music more legible, the music making the dance more legible, or both. It also may result in evolving a new feeling not available independently either in music or in dance but one that occurs as their combined product.

Furthermore, the same thing happens with posture as it does with facial expressions and behaviours. When an interlocutor bends forward to confide in us, we instinctively lean inward as well. When we watch a football player stretch forward to catch a pass that is just barely beyond his reach, we feel our muscles tugging in the same direction, slightly but insistently. Scan the audience during a boxing match or a television broadcast of one. Observe how many of them are making gestures that suggest they are blocking or about to unleash a punch. Of course, they aren't exactly copying the fighters' movements.

Their movements are clearly condensed copies of what they're viewing. Nonetheless, it's evident that they're gaining some knowledge of what they're viewing by partially reflecting it in their own bodies. Needless to say, they are not acting in a thoughtful or deliberate manner. It's a reflex, just like our prior, mundane examples, all of which were designed to prove the common observation

that we humans have an instinctual inclination to copy our conspecifics' behaviour. This is known as the "mirror reflex."

In the relevant cases, the music evokes a sense of movement in the listener, who also sees the dancer moving to or with the music, allowing the responsive listener to refine or expand on that experience with the addition of physical input acquired from her mirror reflexes. Music-cum-dance, on the other hand, offers the audience with an image of appropriate movement that, by activating our mirror reflexes, heightens or expands our apprehension of the evolving experience of movement.

The feeling of movement begun in the music can be perceived ever more precisely and richly thanks to the addition of a kinesthetic dimension to the aural one, which is aided by our mirror responses to the image of movement created by the dancers' bodies. In answer to the music's demand, the dancer can soar and sink, expand and contract, circle and disperse. The dancer may turn abruptly, push, pull, sweep ahead, freeze, swell, oscillate, subside, flutter, swing, , confront, fight, prolong or hasten the moment, change, or stop moving completely. Furthermore, the choreography can introduce these gestures in front of the music, in conjunction with the music, as a retrospective reflection on the music, or even as a counterpoint to the music.

The dancing movement can be heavy or light, ponderous or light, staccato, syncopated, conflicted, tense, or equilibrated, in rhythm with musical movement impulses or in opposition to the orchestra's feelings of motion.

In any case, the dance activity may serve as a stimulus for a series of mirror responses, which can help us refine or enhance our understanding of the changing feeling of movement as it forms in tandem with the musical score's motion ideas.

Dance movement, in its most basic form, is a translation from one medium to another - from musical movement impulse to flesh and blood movement. The accompanying dance motifs fluidly interlace as the intuited melodic lines of movement merge into each other cyclically, capturing the

continual impression of movement in the music in evenly flowing motions whose energy resonates quietly and steadily and softly inside the receptive viewer.

In effect, dance is a performative interpretation of the movement impulses represented by music. A performance of choreography can function as a further articulation and amplification of certain qualities that are inherent in or supervene upon the music, just as a dramatic performance of a play is an interpretation of the text – one that draws out and makes evident some of its various qualities.

The relationship between dance and music is a massive subject. Both artistic genres are chronologically structured. In fact, it is because of this proximity that dancing can be seen as an explanation for music, and vice versa. They also share a lot of features, such as tempo, rhythm, metre, meaning, and emotion. As a result, we could conclude that in both arts, tempo and time are crucial. However, the relationship between music and movement can be discovered by looking at the expressions used in music education. Music and dance have long been linked in many ceremonies and social dancing around the world. This phenomenon varies from tribe to tribe, and its progression varies from country to country. It's nothing new; the two arts have long been linked, from pre-modern dances to modern waltzes.

Conclusion

Dance and music are performing arts that are an important part of Indian culture. Dance and music have long been a part of Indian culture as ancient performing arts. Dance was regarded as a significant activity in the human search for God in our religious texts. The value of dancing may be seen in India's earliest civilization artefacts. Dance remained at the forefront of the performing arts in the later period as well. We learn about it from sculptures and paintings. Music, too, has a long and illustrious history. It has also received widespread support from the general public.

As said earlier, music plays a major role in dancing. It decides whether the movements are to be dramatic, playful or smooth and graceful. In a performance or in a particular piece, dance explains a story through its series of movements, music and costumes. The music used should be apt for the theme or the story. For a serious situation, Dark, serious musical tones or notations will be

suitable. For a love story or happy tale, light, fanciful or impulsive music would be nice. Music when skillfully blend with suitable dance movements can make elevate the spirits, create a feeling of mystery in the air or drive the audience to tears. Music stirs emotions throughout life.

Dance may be traced back to the dawn of Indian civilization in the form of an art form. Centuries of refinement and the introduction of new elements have resulted in dance being one of the most complex arts in Dance and Music. It is also supported by a large theoretical vocabulary and vivid technical details. Dance has a vital role in the rich tapestry of Indian culture since it is fundamentally a visual art.

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