

A Study of Decorative Angas found in SvatiTirunal Kritis

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Abstract

SvatiTirunal(16 April 1813 – 26 December 1846) was born in the Travancore royal family. He was the musician among the Kings and the King among the musicians. He was a prolific composer and is renowned for his outstanding literary works and musical compositions. His ambition was to assimilate the best in all traditions and reutilize the native heritage. In this paper, a humble attempt is made to give an overview of the decorative angās found in SvatiTirunal Compositions.

Keywords - SvatiTirunal, padams, kriths, tillana, varnams, javali, swarajathi, ragamālika, padmanabha, group krithis, musician, royal composer.

Introduction

SvatiTirunal has composed in diverse musical forms such as Tana Varnams, Pada Varnams, Swarajathi, Jathiswaram, Keerthanam, Padam, Tillana, Javali, Ragamalika setc, apart from North Indian musical forms such as Dhrupad, Khayal, and Tappas. Svati Tirunāl is referred to as Paryaaya Mudrakara where he used synonyms of the word Padmanabha as mudra in his compositions. The insignia found in compositions are Abjanabha, Ambujanabha, Jalajanabha, Jalaruhanabha, Kanjanabha, Kamalanabha, Nalinanabha, Pankajanabha, Saaranabha, Sarasijanabha, Saraseeruhanabha, Sarojanabha, Vanajanabha and Vaarijanabha. Svati Tirunal tops the rank of Paryaaya Mudrakara. The word Padma with its innumerable synonyms gave him the advantage.¹

Many of his compositions feature musical embellishments like Madhymakala sahitya, Solkkattu swaras, Chittaswara, etc. Some of the works, including "SankaraSrigiri in Hamsanandi" and "NrithyathiNrithyathi in Sankarabharanam," feature percussion-related syllables deftly weaved into the texture. Smarajanaka in raga Behag, used the Athitha Graha Eduppu, which means that the song begins before the first beat of the tala. In kritis like Karunakara in Begada and BhogeendraSayinam in Kuntalavarali, slow and quick tempo are dexterously weaved together.

Prosodical beauties in the compositions of SvatiTirunal

Compositions by SvatiTirunal have a stately poetic diction with a plethora of unique resonance. They are replete with embellishments, prasa, swarakshara, and alliteration. Antyaprasa may be detected in practically all of the compositions. Thus, he has bequeathed a broad and diverse legacy of endearing musical and poetic works to the music world.

Decorative Angas found in the compositions of SvatiTirunal

The minimum essential angas found in a SvatiTirunal composition are Pallavi, Anupallavi and Charanam. In addition to these essential angas, Madhyamakala Sahitya, Chittaswara, Viloma Chittaswara, Solkkattu Swara, and Swara Sahitya are occasionally used. The additional distinctive angas

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- ¹ Sambamoorthy.P, "The History of South Indian Music", Vol 5 (Madras: The Indian Music Publishing House, 1951): 145



significantly boost a kriti's appeal. His Highness used these angas with great care since he observed that some angas are vital for some musical forms, whereas it is just an additional one in some other musical form. For instance, the Chittaswara is an indispensable anga in a varnam but simply an extra anga in a kriti. Similarly, we find that swara sahitya, which is essential in a PadaVarnam is only supplementary in a kriti. Likewise, Solkkattu Swara is essential in a Tillana, but just an additional anga in a kriti.

While introducing these decorative angās, SvatiTirunal had scrutinized well in advance whether the additional anga has a valid place in the composition. He was aware that if angas are added randomly or improperly, the composition's beauty and essence will be lost. SvatiTirunal's varnams reached astounding heights when he introduced the special feature named Swaraksharams, where swaras or solfa syllables were introduced as the sahitya of the varnam.

Three Important Features in Svati Tirunal's compositions.²

Three significant aspects of creativebrilliance and beauty that are present in SvatiTirunal's works, particularly in his Chauka Pada Varnams, deserve special mention.

1. The Raga Mudra of the composition can be seen skilfully interwoven in the sahityam.
2. Dhattu Swarakshara passages occur in the swara sahitya of the Chauka varnams, enhancing the beauty of the varnam.
3. Rachana rules were completely satisfied by having a full Charanam of at least 4 padas to be followed by Mukthāyi Swara leading to the Pallavi for conclusion.

1. Varnams with Raga Names

Raga names are woven into the Sahityam of significant number of varnams. The word "**Khamaj**" can be seen in the Anubandha of the Khamas Varna. The phrases "**Nilambariyaharshanityakarana**" in the Sarasasamasundara Anubandha, "**Purnachandrikanibhanga**" in the Palayamam Deva Anubandha, and "**SaverihaTanuja**" in the Pallavi of Adi Tala Varnam are a few illustrations. This naturally helps to dispel questions about the raga of the songs, originally composed by Swāthi Tirunal.

2. Suddha Swaraksharas

Here the sahitya syllables are exactly like solfa letters. Most of the Pada Varnas has this striking and impressive feature. The Pallavi of the Todi Pada Varnam begins with beautiful swarakshara phrase as follows.

D , ; ; N , , S , , N N R S ,
daa ni saa

The Mukthayi Swara of this Pada Varnam also begins with the swarakshara phrase as

D , , M D , ,
dha . . ma .dha...

3. Chittaswaras

We get instances of Chittaswara passages in Saarasalochana in Raga Kalyani and SaamodamKalayami in Raga Todi.

4. Ragamalika Chittaswarams

- ²Dr. Ramakrishna T.S, "Maharaja SvatiTirunal and his Chowka Varna Compositions". Madras Music Academy Journal, XLVI, (1975):61-67.



The krithi SaanandamKamalaamanoharina composed in four ragas has ragamalika Chittaswaram. Another instance of Ragamalika with Chittaswara, Makuta Swara and Viloma Chittaswara can be seen in the magnum opus kriti Pannagendra Sayana in eight ragas. The swara section in this Ragamalika have a certain common structure. The first avartha of the Chittaswaram is in Vilamba kala and second avartha in the Madhyamakala followed by Makuta Swara which is also in Madhyamakala. The Viloma Chittaswara figuring in the end is also set to Madhyamakala.

5. Madhyamakala Sahityam

Madhyamakala Sahityam with Solkkattu swaras can be seen in GopalakaPahimam in Raga Bhoopalam set to Misrachappu Tala.

An Analysis of the Varnams of the great Composer

1. Chalamela - Sankarabharanam - Khanda Ata Tala

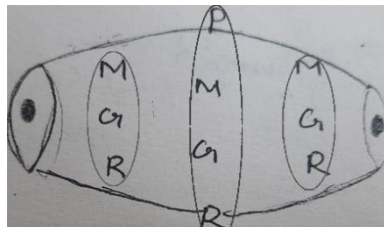
The very start S N P is startlingly peculiar and arresting and soon at the closing of the avartha we get the full arōhanam S R G M P D N S. The Varnam Chalamela is a beautiful depiction of Sankarabharanam in all its dazzling colors and unusual swara phrase combinations. The second avartha of the Pallavi starts with the striking dhattu prayogam RNSDNPDMPGMRGS, is followed by janta prayoga S S R R G G M M P P D N in the corresponding area of the second laghu, and concludes once more with Arohana Gamaka

Beginning with the unique prayoga S D P, the Anupallavi then illustrates the cascade of PDND-MPDP-GMPM. In the Mukthayi Swara route, we find a graceful descend to Mantra Sthayi Panchamam as SRGR GR, S - NRSNDNP, -DNSRN, the lower end of the range, and an ascend from there that is strikingly symmetrical with the descent and extends to Tara Sthayi Gandharam. At its conclusion, the Makuta appears as

DN
PDN
MPDN
GMPDN
RGMPDN
SRGMPDN

where we get a series of phrases, showing a systematic widening known as Srothovaha Yathi, appropriately ending in Arohana Gamaka.

The Mantrasthayi sanchara descends to Panchamam and traverse upwards to Madhyasthayi Madhyamam, in the first ettugada swara. The second swara highlights the Madhyasthayi's journey from Dhaivatham to Shadjam by using a series of phrases ending in GR, namely MGR-PMGR-MGR-SGR, with the first three symbolizing the Mridanga Yathi. Mridanga Yati is a combination of Srothovaha Yati and Gopuccha Yati. The phrases are framed in such a sway that the center portion is broad and narrows outward toward the two ends.



The many apanyasas in Sankarabharanam's Panchamam make up the third ettugada swara. P, - DPMP, - MGMP, - GRSNDP, - DNSRSP, - MPDP, -NDNP, - S NDP, -NDMP, -DNSP, -RGMP, and is developed with high scholarly imagination.

The last ettugada swara is noteworthy for several features. It stresses on Tarasthayi going up to Madhyama twice, both in phrases of symmetrically placed swara as RGMGR and SRGMGRS. In this ettugada swara a rare phrase DMR can be seen. A beautiful expression of a Panchama varja phrase NRGMDNGR can be spotted here which resembles the Western major diatonic scale. The Dhaivatham employed here is a little lower in frequency (Triśruthi Dhaivatham), as pointed out by eminent musicologists. The ettugada swara ends with regular arohana gamaka.

It may be noted that the Shadja-Panchama balance is well maintained in the first notes of different angas. The Pallavi takes off in Tara Sthayi Shadja, the Anupallavi in Madhyasthayi Shadja, The Mukthayi again in Tara Sthayi Shadja and Charanam in Madhyasthayi Panchamam. The Chalamela Varnam is the crystallized essence of Raga Sankarabharanam.

2. Sarasijanabha - Rāga Kamboji - Khanda AtaTala

The visesha prayoga MGS, opens the varnam Sarasijanabha in Kamboji. It then swings into the prayoga SNPDS with anya swara Kakali Nishadam. Beautiful janta prayoga, such as DD SS RR GG MM GG RR, can be found in the anupallavi. Different apanyasas in Shadjam, such as SRGS, RGMP, RGMPDS, -NDM, GS, and -PDS, are portrayed in the second ettugada swara. The apanyasas in Madhyamam, such as PDM, -PDNDM, -PSNDM, and -DM, are illustrated in the third ettugada swara. Additionally, it showed how Shadja and Panchama suddenly dropped an octave without creating the feel of disharmony, in the section MPDS - GPDS-SRGMP-PDSRGM, -. There are many raga ranjaka prayogas in the varnam, including MGS, MGPDS, SRGS, RGMP, etc.

3. Danisamajendra - Todi - Adi

The varnam begins with the visesha prayoga D ,; N, S,, with the swarakshara synchronism, a feature which occurs at the commencement of almost all the avartha throughout the Varna. The starting notes in the different sections show the graha in all the swaras except Rishabham, which is conformity with the tradition. The entire spectrum, from Tara Madhyamam to the Mantra Panchamam, is effectively displayed. The second avartha of the third ettugada swara is almost entirely composed of the phrase MGRS. The initial swara increments establish an appealing progression as MGRS-PMGRS-DMGRS-NDMGRS-SNDMGRS, with The swara phrases DMGRS, NDMGRS, and SNDMGRS also come together to create a beautiful Srothovaha Yati.

The introduction of Tisra Gathi in this Varna is a unique aspect that stands out. The final portion of the fifth ettugada swara, illustrates it. Perhaps it is an experiment in combining different gatis and laya in the same avartha.

Conclusion

From the above examination of a few of the Varnas, it can be seen that each one of them has distinct significance of its own and alludes testimony to the musical genius of Maharaja SvatiTirunal as expressed in this challenging art form. The sahitya in the various Varnas show the expressions like Patuthama, chanaetc and metaphors of the Lord as fire engulfing the forests of sin, cloud dousing the blaze of crimes with rains, wind blowing off the demon clouds, thunderbolts stomping the mountains of wickedness, etc. The Sringara Pada Varnas portray a variety of emotions that both excites and irritates the love-struck lady. The author's deep knowledge of Natya Sastra is discernible in them.

Maharaja SvatiTirunal lived barely 34 years. In the short period of adult creative life, he was prolific and distinguished in his literary and musical compositions, which have carved out a special niche among the foremost composers of South. He left behind a galaxy of compositions which are both a precious and prestigious heritage in the world of Carnatic Music. The subject is a vast one and what has



been attempted so far is like cabinet samples of ore from the riches of the mine. All credit to the galaxy of evergreen compositions that serves as a great treasure for passionate learners and rasikas of this art form. Blessed are the souls who listen, learn and appreciate these gems!!!

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