

Abhyasa ganam	Lit. "learning-music" (abhyasa-ganam); a graded series of exercises and didactic compositions followed in music education; it constitutes the common ground for all Carnatic musicians and enables them to perform together with a high degree of precision.
Aesthetic delight	The Sanskrit word rasa (essence, taste, charm) denotes the enjoyment derived from any art; rasa is the result of an artist's capacity to portray and convey feelings and emotions (bhava) by various appropriate means; a discerning listener or spectator is known as a rasika.
Alapana	An exposition of the melodic characteristics of a particular raga by way of singing or playing an instrument; the notes of a raga are embellished individually and within groups of notes or phrases (sancara, prayoga); all the embellishments (gamaka) of a raga are clearly as delineated as possible; although an alapana is marked by the absence of rhythmic structure, there are accents as well as short and long notes; the tanam, on the other hand, is a variant of the alapana which is sometimes described as the "medium tempo" (madhyama kala) stage of an alapana as it contains some element of rhythm or pulse; both alapana and tanam are combined in the Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi suite.
Bani	Style, mode, family tradition; generally associated with the name of a revered musician.
Bhakti movement	Poets, composers and musicians whose lyrics and songs form the foundation of the Carnatic repertoire; a devotee is referred to as "bhakta"; Purandara Dasa, the founder-father (pitamaha) of Carnatic music, belonged to the bhakti movement; Tyagaraja drew inspiration from Purandara Dasa and later composers revered as saints; their lyrics express a state of exaltation which is caused by the realisation of beauty in all creation, the experience of divine love and limitless mercy bestowed by a supreme Creator.
Bharata Natyam	Bharata Natyam, one of the major dance styles of India, was formerly known as "Sadir"; its repertoire is based on the ragas and rhythmic principles (tala) of Carnatic music.
Bhava	The Sanskrit word for emotion, feeling or expressiveness in the arts is "bhava"; aesthetic delight (rasa) among discerning listeners (rasika) depends to a large extent on bhava experienced and conveyed by a performer.
Chamber music	Carnatic music is ideally heard in the context of chamber music where the human voice, the delicate sounds of a vina and other instruments blend naturally; traditionally, different types of ensembles presented their music for specific occasions and situations; the periya melam with loud instruments (nagasvaram and tavil), for instance, provided music for festive occasions and large gatherings in temples; today, due to amplification, any combination of music instruments is possible.
Chitra vina (gottuvadyam)	A type of South Indian lute (vina) played with a sliding "stick" after which it was named "gottuvadyam" in common parlance.
Cittasvara	A pre-arranged series of "captivating" raga patterns which can be inserted

between two parts of a song (kriti); short notes alternate with elongated ones; if improvised, a similar pattern is referred to as kalpanasvara or svara kalpana.

Composers

Many composers have contributed to the repertoire of Carnatic music. Music historians distinguish between those composers to whom both the musical structure and the lyrics can be ascribed, and those who are credited with just one of these aspects. Many songs (e.g. kriti, padam) have also been re-composed in recent decades if there was neither a living tradition (parampara) nor any written evidence of the original music.

Concert ensemble

Musicians participating in a Carnatic concert are mostly seated in a particular manner: a tambura near the principal performer (e.g. vocalist), the violinist to his or her left, and the mridangam on the opposite side; other participants, if any, are distributed in a balanced manner; if the mridangist is left-handed, the arrangement is reversed so that the audience will observe the playing of the high-pitched membrane where the more intricate finger work is performed.

Concert programme

Carnatic music performances mostly follow a well established pattern (kaccheri paddhati); the opening is mostly a varnam; this is followed by one or several small songs (kriti or kirtana) with little elaboration; one or two major songs (kriti) and/or a Raga-Tanam-Pallavi with much elaboration; and concluded with one or several "light" or "popular" types of songs, some from the dance repertoire; the conclusion is mostly a mangalam.

Dance repertoire

The classical dance known as Bharata Natyam (formerly "Sadir") is based on Carnatic music; items from the repertoire of Bharata Natyam are frequently being included in music concerts and vice versa.

Dikshitar

Muttusvami Dikshitar (1775-1835) influential and prolific composer; like Tyagaraja, he loved to experiment with motifs inspired by "exotic" music, namely the foreign band music of his times; reckoned among three greatest Carnatic composers of the 19th century, the "Trinity".

Education

The basic training undergone by all Carnatic musicians is the common denominator that enables them to perform together even without rehearsing an entire concert jointly; the syllabus of exercises and small compositions, referred to as "Abhyasa ganam", helps a musician to internalize all the basic aesthetic principles and technical features of Carnatic music: raga, tala, and bhava from which even complex "compositions" and "improvisations" evolve and result in seemingly infinite varieties of musical expression.

Eduppu

The starting point (Tamil: eduppu, Sanskrit: graha) for the melody or theme of a song which is maintained throughout a concert item. There are several other types of eduppu or graha: on the first beat (sama eduppu); after the first beat: a "quarter" (kalidam), "half" (arayidam), "three quarters" (mukkalidam) and six quarters or "one and a half" (onrarai). Less common is the eduppu before the first beat of the tala cycle.

Festivals

Carnatic music is being practiced in the private sphere as well as in public.

	Major festivals, such as in Chennai, Tiruvayyaru, Trivandrum and Cleveland (USA) attract a large public every year.
Flute	References in treatises, literature and depictions in temple sculptures prove that the side-blown flute has been one of the most popular instruments of India from ancient times. In devotional poetry and songs, the flute (Sanskrit: venu, murali) is associated with Krishna (hence "Venugopala", "Muralidhara") when dancing with the Gopis. In Carnatic music, the bamboo flute (Tamil: pullankuzhal) was absorbed from the traditional dance ensemble (cinna melam) in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and has remained a popular concert instrument ever since.
Freedom struggle	Many poets, musicians and composers made major contributions to creating a sense of national identity and unity through their art; their involvement accompanied several decades of political struggle for independence from colonial rule until it was achieved in 1947; the memory of their contribution is kept alive by way of performing the songs of patriotic composers, especially those of Subramanya Bharati, even today.
Gamaka	Embellishments of individual notes and phrases in a raga exposition or composition; there are many types of gamaka in Carnatic music. Cf. entries "Rakti raga" and "Ghana raga".
Ghana raga	A raga lending itself to a faster tempo rather than being endowed with heavy ornamentation (gamaka); there are five primary ghana ragas, often heard together in the following sequence (as ragamalika): Nata, Gaula, Arabhi, Varali, Sri ("ghana raga pancaka"). Cf. entry "Rakti raga".
Hindustani sangit	The classical music of northern India; its southern counterpart is referred to as Karnataka Sangita or Carnatic music.
Imagination	According to scholar K. M. Sen, "a great part of Hindu religious practice consists of an appeal to the imagination"; and "even God is described as a kavi, i.e. a seer, a term that later came to mean a poet".
Intercultural aspects of Indian music	Many Indian musicians are fond of incorporating instruments, melodies and rhythms found in other cultures, be it temporarily for the sake of experimentation (e.g. fusion, jugalbandi) or permanently (e.g. the violin and mandolin); some ragas and tunes found in the songs by Tyagaraja and Dikshitar are the outcome of an exploration of intercultural dimensions inherent in their own music tradition.
Jana ranjaka	Literally "enjoyable by all" (instantly); refers to a popular type of raga not requiring any musical knowledge to appreciate.
Janaka raga	A "parental" raga with reference to many "derived" ragas (janya raga); today synonymous with a scale type (melakarta raga).
Janya raga	A "derived" raga with reference to a "parental" (janaka) raga or scale type (melakarta raga).
Jugalbandi	(1) A joint performance by (Hindustani) musicians with different specializations (i.e. not normally performing together); (2) a joint performance between North and South Indian musicians.
Kala	Measure of time; in Carnatic music, used as an indication of relative speed

or tempo in the sense of "1st, 2nd or 3rd speed"; cauka kala/vilambita kala = slow; madhyama kala = medium; druta kala/duritam = fast.

Musicians refer to the slow tempo also as "irandu kalai" whereby each gesture (kriya) is doubled or repeated.

Kalapramanam
Kalpana svara

A tempo (kala) which is correct or standardized (pramanam).

Literally an "imaginative arrangement of notes" (kalpana svara/svara kalpana); no lyrics are included here as the improvised melody is sung on svara syllables (sargam); but each series of kalpana svara is concluded by the theme from which it started (i.e. pallavi, anupallavi or caranam); in this sense it is different from the niraval type of improvisation where the distribution of the lyrics is taken up and the words are being pronounced or emulated.

Kalpita sangita

The category referring to any composed concert item; there are many types musical forms belonging to kalpita sangita; the kriti (a tripartite song) is regarded as its most important representative in the Carnatic repertoire; it also provides extensive scope for creative expositions (manodharma sangita) with regards to specific aspects of its melodic and rhythmic structure.

Karuna

(1) In drama and poetry, the expression of pathetic sentiment; (2) in many devotional lyrics of Carnatic music, mostly inspired by the Bhakti movement, the word karuna denotes a plea to God to be "compassionate" and "patient" in view of man's shortcomings.

Korvai

(1) Any rhythmic pattern strung together in an aesthetic manner; (2) conclusion of an improvisation whereby the melody is also arranged in rhythmic patterns; (3) an elaborate combination of dance movements.

Kriti, kirtana

Both words are often used as synonyms to describe the main form of composition in Carnatic music; a kriti consists most often of three parts or themes (pallavi, anupallavi, caranam); Muttusvami Dikshitar preferred a different form (samasti caranam). The word kirtanam is mainly used to designate a devotional song in which the message of the lyrics (sahityam) is more important than musical intricacies; this enables laypersons to sing along in a congregational singing session (bhajana). A kriti, on the other hand, has fewer words in order to facilitate artful elaboration.

Kriya

The reckoning of a tala cycle by way of certain gestures and finger movements.

Madhyama kala

Literally medium tempo with reference to the "slow" tempo (cauka kala or vilambita kala) or "fast" tempo (druta kala or durita kala); the relative speed of musical flow or density of events in madhyama kala is usually half and double compared to fast and slow respectively; the tanam, an extension of a raga alapana, is sometimes also referred to as madhyama kala.

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Mangalam	The words "mangalam" denotes an auspicious song at the end of a Carnatic concert, often in a shortened version; sometimes the mangalam is followed by a brief exposition of raga Madhyamavati which is associated with a serene state of mind.
Manodharma sangita	Improvisation, the spontaneous aspect which constitutes an important realm of Carnatic music; it is complementary to composed forms of music (kalpita sangita). Raga alapana, tanam, niraval, and tani (taniyavartanam) are the main manifestations or "forms" of manodharma sangita
Melakarta raga (scale types)	The Carnatic system of 72 scale types (melakarta ragas) can accommodate almost any, but not every, conceivable raga; it is based on 12 semitone steps that are combined and re-combined in six groups (cakra) of six scale types (mela) each; as there are two variants for each scale, this arrangement results in 72 different melakarta ragas.
Memory, mnemonic system	The most important mnemonic system in Carnatic music is known as "katapayadi samhkhya"; it is based on the alpha-numerical arrangement of the Sanskrit alphabet and has traditionally been applied to any field of knowledge. All scale types (melakarta ragas) are arranged in accordance with the katapayadi samhkhya (Mecha-Kalyani = #65); several exceptions to its underlying rules were necessary in order to arrive at pleasant sounding names for all melakarta ragas.
Mridangam	A double-faced drum; the main percussion instrument for Carnatic music and classical dance (Bharata Natyam).
Nada	Sound; a term generally used with regard to the metaphysical aspect or spiritual dimension of sound and music; Tyagaraja refers to nada in several of his song lyrics.
Nagasvaram	Double reed instrument which belongs to the temple music ensemble (periya melam); now also played in concerts.
Navarasa	The nine principal sentiments (rasa) underlying Indian poetry, dance, drama, and music; Tyagaraja composed songs (kriti) wherein these sentiments are expressed and sometimes even named in the lyrics; a good example is the kriti "Svararagasudharasayuta" (raga Sankarabharanam).
Naya, nayam	Literally "soft, subtle, new"; a quality of singing associated with some types of raga (e. g. rakti raga)
Niraval	Melodic variation based on a line from a composition (kriti or pallavi); the words are pronounced by the vocalist, or emulated by way of phrasing if played by an instrumentalist; the rhythmic and syllabic structure of the chosen passage is maintained at first and gradually subjected to subtle changes over several tala cycles; a branch of improvised music (manodharma sangita).
Notation	A solfa-notation system with a few symbols added to the seven letters s r g m p d n s is being used most commonly in Carnatic music; detailed musical notation is of rather recent origin although syllabic notation for melody

	(sargam) and rhythm (jati) are found already in ancient inscriptions; special symbols and graphic notations have been introduced in recent years (e.g. at the Brhaddhvani Centre, Chennai).
Philosophy of art music	Carnatic music derives its strength from a combination of aesthetic delight (rasa), based on differentiation of melody and rhythm, and the experience of spiritual fulfilment (bhakti); the effort underlying this transcendental approach to music (nada) is referred to as nadopasana (music as meditation or prayer"); Tyagaraja composed many songs (kriti) that contain references to these philosophical concepts.
Pramana	Literally, "right proportion, precision, conformity to the idea model." (Refer: René Daumal). In Carnatic music, the term Pramana is used in combination with Kala (tempo); Kala pramana denotes "correct" or "appropriate" tempo and also the virtue of maintaining a chosen tempo throughout a concert item (i.e. the absence of undesirable tempo fluctuations); many beginners' exercises aim at acquiring the ability of maintaining a steady tempo in Carnatic music.
Raga	From the root "ranj", literally "to colour, be attached to"; a combination of notes (svara) found to be appealing and emotionally satisfying; a raga provides scope for melodic variety in the context of compositions or improvisations; there are specific features (laksana) for each raga; this includes certain permissible combinations of notes, their relative pitch (svarasthana, sruti), embellishments (gamaka), and characteristic phrases (prayoga) that bring out the beauty of each raga.
Raga	A combination of notes that is appealing and provides scope for variety in the context of compositions and improvisations alike; there are specific features (laksana) for each raga such as the permissible combinations of notes, their relative pitch (svarasthana), embellishments, and characteristic phrases which bring out the beauty of each raga.
Raga laksana	A set of specific and recognizable features that have been defined for a given raga; a prominent part of "grammar" in Carnatic music.
Ragamalika	Literally, a "garland of ragas"; often heard in the form of the five ghana ragas("ghana raga pancaka"); either by way of improvisation (raga alapana, tanam, or niraval) or as part of a composition.
Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi ("RTP")	A musical form or suite of concert items which incorporates the improvised development of a particular raga by way of (1) alapana, (2) tanam and (3) a formal exposition of a short theme (pallavi); a typical Carnatic composition like the kriti comprises three themes (pallavi, anupallavi and caranam) whereas a single theme is taken up in the "RTP" suite during a concert.
Rakti raga	Literally "pleasingness, loveliness, charm"; a particularly pleasing type of raga which plays a prominent role in a concert.; a category of Carnatic ragas with special appeal, and scope for elaboration (manodharma sangita); such ragas can be rendered in a slow tempo and with rich ornamentation (gamaka); Anandabhairavi, Bhairavi, Bilahari, Kambhoji, Purvikalyani, Sahana, Saveri, and Yadukulakambhoji are prominent examples. Cf. entry "Ghana raga".

Ranj, ranjaka	Ranj refers to the perception of colour and forms the root of the term "raga"; ranjaka literally means "pleasing"; as in the case of the so-called "jana ranjaka ragas" that are instantly enjoyable "by all".
Rasa	Sanskrit: "essence," "taste", or "flavour", literally, "sap" or "juice"; in the context of music, poetry and other allied arts, it is used in the sense of "aesthetic delight"; a rasika is capable of perceiving and appreciating rasa; nine types of rasa (navarasa) are referred to in treatises on the arts.
Rasika	Sanskrit for "connoisseur" or "aesthete"; a sensitive and discerning listener or viewer who perceives the aesthetic essence (rasa) of a piece of art or poetry.
Rituals	Carnatic music is often heard during domestic and temple rituals (puja), religious festivals and other auspicious occasions such as marriages. Tyagaraja even describes his daily worship of Rama in "Cetulara srngaramu"; he makes many other references to his religious beliefs and daily worship in his lyrics.
Sahitya Sama Veda	The lyrics of a Carnatic composition. Sanskrit for "wisdom of melody and chant"; also "knowledge"; hymns from the Rgveda, arranged for singing.
Sampradaya	Sanskrit for "tradition, custom, usage"; denotes an adherence to "classical" aesthetics, norms, rules and stylistic conventions such as the correct placement of gamaka in a Carnatic raga.
Sangita sastra	Defined by Ashok D. Ranade as the "scientific and systematic study of music" (sangita = music; sastra = religious or sacred treatise).
Saptasvara ("7 notes")	Literally the "seven notes" from which the scale types and ragas of Indian music are formed; each note has (1) an abbreviated name which is sung: sa, ri, ga, ma pa, dha, ni; (2) a written form: s, r, g, m, p, d, n (written in any alphabet); and (3) a full name: sa = sadjam, ri = risabha, ga = gandhara, ma = madhyama, pa = pancama, dha = dhaivata, ni = nisada. A similar system is employed for the solmisation for rhythmic patterns (jati syllables or konnakkol); "Sobhillusaptasvara", a song (kriti) by Tyagaraja mentions the seven. A set of notes is also referred to as "sargam".
Sarasvati	The goddess of learning and the arts; usually shown as holding a vina; Sarasvati Puja, the festival in her honour which is held in October, provides a welcome occasion for musical gatherings; it is also the day chosen by many students for starting dance and music lessons on an auspicious note.
Sargam	Solfa syllables used for practicing, writing and performing Carnatic music; they correspond to the basic seven notes (saptasvara).
Sarvalaghu	A type of improvisation; traditionally a prominent feature in concerts; characterized by a free flow of musical notes purely for the sake of enjoyment; consists of the singing or playing series of notes (kalpana svara) and embedded in a composition (kriti); pre-arranged patterns are avoided.
Social change	Important developments in Carnatic music have always been associated with movements advocating social change; this includes the Bhakti movement from the Middle Ages to the modern era; it denounced caste

divisions and sectarian strife; and also the Freedom struggle wherein many women participated actively and which resulted in India's independence from colonial rule in 1947; its leaders and poets sought to establish equal rights for women.

Solmisation

Singing a melodic passage to the seven names of musical notes (saptasvara or sargam); pronouncing rhythmic patterns (jati syllables or konnakkol); a useful method for practicing improvised types of Carnatic music (kalpana svaras, taniyavartanam), and for composing or memorizing preset svara-passages (cittasvara).

Srngara, srngara

The erotic sentiment underlying a piece of art; many lyrics in Carnatic music and South Indian dance (Bharata Natyam) are defined in terms of srngara; in devotional literature and music, the profound love or attraction associated with erotic feelings is equated with God's love for the human soul; the Divine is always referred to as the (male) "lover", and any human being as the (female) "beloved"; this convention applies irrespective of a poet's or performer's actual gender.

Sruti

Refers (1) to the concept of microtonal division of the octave in (mostly) 22 intervals or microtones; (2) in common parlance, to the basic note chosen by the principal artist of a concert or dance ensemble; the pitch corresponding to Western C is referred to as "1 sruti", D flat as "1 1/2 sruti", D natural as "2 sruti", and E natural as "3 sruti" etc. in the latter sense.

The Naradiya Shiksha (c. 500 AD) cautions "As foot-marks of fish and birds do not remain in water and sky, similarly the Sruti-s are known by their timbre (dhvanivisheshha) and not by their size." - Source: Ashok Ranade (2001:37)

Svara

A musical note; all ragas and melodies are formed from a combination of specific svaras and their variants; the basic seven notes (saptasvara) can be combined in many different ways; except for the 1st note (Sa) and the 5th note (Pa), a svara can denote different chromatic steps or intervals depending on the raga in which it occurs; some ragas have less, others more than seven notes.

Svati Tirunal

Major composer and scholar of Carnatic music (1813-1846); heir to the royal throne of Travancore (Kerala); a patron of the arts whose family continues to be involved in Carnatic music even today.

Syama Sastri

Scholarly composer (1762/3-1827) referred to as one of the three composers of the 19th century or "Trinity".

Tala

Division of time in Indian music; there are different cyclic arrangements all of which are referred to as tala (e.g. Adi tala, Misra capu tala); and each tala has its characteristic set of finger and hand movements to reckon musical time (i.e. the audible clap of the palm and the inaudible finger count or turn of one hand).

Tambura

Long-necked lute which serves to provide the basic note heard continually during an Indian concert (drone).

Tanam	A pulsating extension of the alapana wherein a subtle rhythmic layer emerges in a free-flowing manner; sometimes also referred to as the "medium tempo" (madhyama kala) stage of an alapana as it contains some element of rhythm or pulse; both alapana and tanam are combined in the Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi suite.
Tani, taniyavartanam	Rhythmic elaboration in the form of a percussion solo performed by one or several musicians; played on the mridangam (double-faced main drum); sometimes with kanjira (tambourine), ghatam (clay-pot), morsing (jew's harp), and by way of rhythmic solmisation or "jati" syllables (konnakkol); brings out the rhythmic aspect of Carnatic music as an extension of a major composition (kriti) or the Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi suite; there is usually one major "tani" in a performance; and in a longer concert, there may be second, mostly shorter, solo in another tala.
Tavil Temple music	Double-faced drum; belongs to the periya melam (temple music) ensemble. Two types of music ensembles are traditionally associated with South Indian temples: (1) the dance ensemble ("cinna melam") which has been modified in the 20th century to suit the new presentation of dance on stage rather than in temples (where it is no longer performed); and (2) the nagasvaram and tavil ensemble (periya melam) for festive processions and other public occasions. In addition, temple singers (oduvar) were, and sometimes still are, attached to the temples to sing the Tevaram hymns.
Tillana	Type of composition found both in the concert and dance repertoire; a playful exploration of rhythm in all its variations and precision; performed towards the end of a programme; Lalgudi Jayaram is the most renowned modern composer of tillanas.
Tisra nadai	Subdivision of each beat within a tala cycle into three units instead of the usual four units; Tisra Adi tala is used by Syama Sastri for his kriti Sankari Samkuru.
Tradition	Adherence to norms and stylistic principles regarded as sanctioned by a series of masters of the past (sampradaya); traditional aspects of Carnatic music are variously associated with a personalized style (bani) or belonging to a chain of authoritative masters and their pupils (parampara); equally prevalent is urge to follow a "grand road", namely being drawing inspiration from religious ideals (marga) which is articulated in the lyrics of Tyagaraja.
Tukkada	Literally "inferior, ordinary"; an enjoyable small type of composition heard at the end of a concert; also referred to as "musical titbit" providing some relief after a rather weighty main concert item; mostly set to a "lighter" or popular raga (desya raga).
Tyagaraja	Tyagaraja (1767-1847) is the most revered poet-composer and innovator of Carnatic music; like his contemporary, Muttusvami Dikshitar, he also experimented with motifs inspired by "exotic" music; reckoned among three greatest Carnatic composers of the 19th century, the "Trinity".
Vaggeyakara	A major composer in Carnatic music; credited with writing the music as well as the lyrics of a song (e.g. kriti).

Vedic recitation of notes	Rgveda is recited by the Archika who uses 1 note Yajurveda is recited by the Gathika who uses 2 notes Samaveda is recited by the Samik who uses 3 notes Source: Ashok Ranade (2001:35)
Vina	The Sanskrit word "vina" denotes (1) in ancient texts: any type of stringed instrument; and (2) the modern type of a lute; known as Sarasvati or Tanjore vina; for many centuries, the principal melody instrument of Carnatic music; many important composers and theoreticians were also vina players (vainika); the process of perfecting the fretted vina since the 16th/17th century is linked to the evolution of the Carnatic system of 72 scale types (melakarta raga).
Violin	The violin has played a major role in Carnatic music for two centuries; its playing technique and posture has been adjusted to suit the requirements of South Indian music, especially the use of embellishments (gamaka).
Visesa sancara	An occasional deviation from the "regular" scale pattern of a raga; a phrase (sancara, prayoga) that adds to a particular raga's beauty if applied sparingly and in accordance with accepted performance conventions (raga lakshana).
Voice	The voice is the chief vehicle of Carnatic music which instrumental musicians seek to emulate in order to heighten the aesthetic and emotional quality of their music. With the introduction of amplification, voice culture has suffered considerably in recent decades.
Wonder (adbhuta rasa)	Wonder or astonishment (adbhuta rasa) is one among the nine principal sentiments (nava rasa); in Carnatic music, Tyagaraja's kriti "Paramatmudu" expresses a profound sense of wonder in an effective manner by way of an appropriate choice of an uncommon raga (Vagadhisvari).