

The Trinity in Music

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The triangular relationship of Music, Dance and Instruments has been widely discussed and wrongly interpreted as they have equal importance. It really means that the term *Sangit* carries the totality of auditory aesthetics. Though the trio conceals music, dance and instruments music, always stands tall and dominates all other art forms. As all creatures respond emotionally to music, it has some supremacy among other art forms. (“*Nritam vadyanugatam proktam Vadyam geetanuyayi cha Atogeatam pradhanathwad...*”) which clarifies that dance to follow instrument and instrument follows music therefore music has extreme importance. This is because of the instant sweetness (“*Sangitamapisahityam Saraswatya sthanadwayam-Ekam aapata madhuram Anyam*”) of music. Instant sweetness is due to its ability to communicate without intellectual/logical provision. Intellect/logic only comes into play when literature (*‘aalochanamrutam’*) combines with the said trinity. The trinity have been well defined but there are other definitions which refer the over dominance of music over other two. Sangita Damodaram even places the music experience to the extent of root of moksha/mukti. He says that *‘Paramanadvivardhanam Abhimatabhahalam vasheekaranam Sakalajanachita haranam Vimukti beejam paramgitam,’* which means music experience is the root (*beejam*) of eternal bliss/salvation or liberation from the cycle of life and death (*vimukti*).

At this juncture dance has some limits/restrictions to stand with the threesome because of the strong presence of literature which demands intellect and logic. As we know Indian classical dance survives on its solid foundation of language. Therefore the well discussed triangular relationship of Music, Dance and Instruments to be re-examined and re-defined as dance deals with literature. So music and instruments have instant auditory sweetness but dance have limited juxtaposition in terms of appreciation due to its visual codes and language limits. But music and instruments has direct access to all creatures of the universe. In short, to appreciate Indian classical dance, understanding/knowledge of language is a desired prerequisite for a connoisseur. There is a paradox if we watchfully study both definitions “*Sangitamapi Sahityam...*” and

“*Gitam vadyam...*”. In the definition denoting trinity of music *sahitya*, the lively component of dance is not mentioned, understandingly to keep the magic figure of three.

The literature obstructs the instant sweetness of music only in terms of Dance Music. Commonly and popularly ‘*Touryatrika*’ is the term stands for the trio of Music, dance and Instruments. In the 12th century *Gitgovinda* of Jayadeva radiated *Vaishnavism* which spread throughout India, far and wide. *Gitgovind* acted as a deep undercurrent for the first National Integration during the threatening days of foreign invaders. *Gitgovind* danced and recited throughout India which acted as a stimulus for the crystallization of many classical dances in India. A new subdivision of Classical Music derived during this period and began to known as *Abhinaya Sangit*. As being the supporting Music of Classical Dance, it is bound to support the stage emotions and not proficient to claim an individual or liberal Music style.

Abhinaya sangit is a very special term for Indian classical dance theatre. This is the supporting music for *Abhinaya*. It is also known as *Bhava sangit* or *Bhavatmaksangit* as it deals with the stage emotions. Here the musician should support or share the moods/sentiments of stage or emoted actions rather than own interpretations of *Ragas*. The importance goes to *bhava* (emotics) not for musician. The instrumentalist also supposed to follow the same. The musician and instrumentalist have less importance in *Abhinaya sangit* but they are not mere background musicians. The total effect of group contribution is more relevant and it will create the magical life for Indian classical dance theatre. In the beginning, middle or at the concluding part of any dance recital, there is enough scope for the musician to dominate and interpret up to the maximum possibilities of *ragas* and prove his expertise. In some classical dance forms like Kathakali, the main singer (*Ponnani* or *Bhagavatar*) controls the whole recital and thus acted as a stage manager. In Bharatnatyam also the *Nattuvan* has similar status. In the peak of the performance all these separations will be elapsed and the dancer-musician-instrumentalist combination creates some kind of oneness or sameness. Here the auditory and visual aesthetics will lead the connoisseurs towards the eternal bliss.

Here we can recognize the importance of literature in music and dance music. Music has direct access to human minds, to an extant of all creatures in the universe. What I had attempted

to say is, when music and literature combines the level of appreciation will be lifted up to a new dimension. I am not disregarding the famous cliché, ‘music is beyond language’. But such sayings, accurately has very limited conviction. Beyond language one can enjoy music to certain extent but feel music with all oddity, proficiency in language and literature is an essential. Therefore the definition ‘*aapata madhuram*’ to be re-examined as understanding of language will make it sweeter. I am admitting the instant sweetness (*‘aapata madhuram’*) is applicable in terms of *aalap* but when music collaborate with compositions, a different level of appreciation is required. And again when music conjugates with dance, more complications are being invited. However music, dance and instruments are included in Sangit, but in a close look we can detect that dance distances itself from the trinity because of its histrionics and lingual peculiarities. Like other components of Sangit, (*gitam* and *vadyam*) dance have some divergence in terms of appreciation. The divergence became even wider when dance took local styles.

In retrospective I have to state that the mismatch of two definitions mentioned above is minimal but it is distinctive. The intention is not to separate dance from the trinity, but to invite attention to a minor paradox sensed. I would like to conclude this article with an aggregate point as follows. The conflict is just about two different types of sensory. Two of them (*Gitam and Vadyam*) are for ears and the third (*nrityam*) is for both visual and audial treat. Two different sensory of human being creates different aesthetical experiences/imageries in accordance to familiarities and self-interpretations. But in case of a general/casual appreciation of music, dance and instrument, all felt alike.