

A Concise Study of *Shringara Rasa* in *Hindustani Music*

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Abstract

The fundamental aspects of human nature are emotions and moods. Music has the ability to evoke strong emotional responses. The term 'Rasa' denotes aesthetic flavour that can be developed through various dimensions of experiences and creativities. In Hindustani Music, the application of Rasa-s is crucial for inducing an upbeat mood in the audience, arousing their aesthetic flavours. Rasa is not an abstract idea but a feeling expressed through the flow of swara-s and the swara-s employed in that Raga. Among the 'Navarasa-s' (Nine Sentiments), Shringara Rasa, which denotes Love, Joy and Beauty, is considered wide and comprehensive. It can be evoked in a Raga through the progression of its musical notes, use of embellishments, musical composition, tempo and rhythmic cycle.

A brief study, in this paper, is undertaken based on Shringara Rasa's application in Hindustani Music and some selected Raga compositions depicting various moods of love such as happiness, ornamentations, decorations, delightful atmosphere, positive colours of joy, the gorgeousness of woman, attractiveness, love-making, yearning, separation and reunion of lovers, and so forth.

Keywords: *Rasa, Shringara, Raga, Composition*

Introduction:

The term '*Rasa*' literally means extract, essence or elixir. It also means taste, relish or flavour¹. The ancient application of the word '*Rasa*' is found in *Veda-s* and *Upanishad-s*. The basic concept of *Rasa* (Sentiment) is applied in many art forms like Drama, Dance, Music, Painting, Literature etc. When the sentiments are absorbed through any art form, they create an experience and atmosphere of delight, bliss or ecstasy.

In the sixth chapter of '*Natyashastra*', *Bharata Muni* stated that no sense proceeds without *Rasa*.

न हि रसादृते कश्चिदर्थः प्रवर्तते । (नाट्यशास्त्रम् अध्यायः
६)

There is no *Rasa* without *Bhava* and no *Bhava* is devoid of *Rasa*.

¹ Sharma, Manorma. *Music Aesthetics*. New Delhi: A P H Publishing Corporation, 2007. Pg. No. 58

न भावहीनोऽस्ति रसो न भावो रसवर्जितः । (नाट्यशास्त्रम् अध्यायः ६)

The realization of *Rasa-s* (Sentiments) results from the combination of *Vibhava-s* (Determinants), *Anubhava-s* (Consequents) and *Vyabhichari* or *Sanchari Bhava-s* (Transitory Psychological States).

तत्र विभावानुभावव्यभिचारिसंयोगाद्रसनिष्पत्तिः । (नाट्यशास्त्रम् अध्यायः ६)

These Psychological States of the mind are dependent on *Sthayi Bhava-s* (Durable Psychological States).

The eight *Rasa-s* (Sentiments) recognized in Drama are: *Shringara* (Erotic), *Hasya* (Comic), *Karuna* (Pathetic), *Raudra* (Furious), *Vira* (Heroic), *Bhayanaka* (Terrible), *Bibhatsa* (Odious) and *Adbhuta* (Marvellous).

शृङ्गारहास्यकरुणा रौद्रवीरभयानकाः । बीभत्साद्भुतसंज्ञौ चेत्यष्टौ नाट्ये रसाः स्मृताः ॥ १५॥ नाट्यशास्त्रम् अध्यायः ६

Further, *Abhinavagupta* introduced a ninth *Rasa* called *Shanta*, denoting Peace or Serenity.

King *Bhoja* in his '*Shringara Prakasha*', confessed that *Shringara* is the only *Rasa* admissible. *Bharata Muni*'s classification of the '*Ashta Nayika-s*' (Eight Heroines) is depicted in the medieval period's *Ragamala* Paintings, illustrating elements associated with '*Sambhoga*' (Union) and '*Vipralambha*' (Separation) in *Shringara Rasa*.

Shringara Rasa can simply be interpreted as erotic love, romantic love, attraction, beauty and spiritual devotion. It is rightly known as the '*Rasa Raja*' (King of Sentiments) as it evokes the ultimate of all emotional aspects expressed through various art forms.

1. The *Shringara Rasa* (Erotic Sentiment):

The *Shringara Rasa* (Erotic Sentiment) proceeds from the *Sthayi Bhava* (Dominant State) of *Rati* (Love) and it has as its basis (lit. soul) a bright attire; for whatever in this world is pure, bright and beautiful is appreciated in terms of the Dominant State of love (*Shringara*)².

The *Shringara Rasa* (Erotic Sentiment) has *Vibhava-s* (Determinants) - (a) *Alambana*; where young men and women are primarily responsible for the arousal of emotions, and (b) *Uddipana*; the surrounding that enhances the emotive effects such as the depiction of blossoming seasons, ornaments, love-making, application of fragrant pastes, use of colourful clothes and so forth.

Shringara Rasa alone is the sweetest and supreme of all the *Rasa-s*. According to King *Bhoja*, *Shringara* is the synonym for self-love, self-attachment and ego. *Vishvanatha* stated *Shringara*

² Ghosh, Manomohan. *The Natyashastra Ascribed to Bharata-Muni Vol. I*. Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1951. Pg. No. 108

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as the universal *Rasa* in which a large number of *Vyabhichari* or *Sanchari Bhava-s* (Transitory Psychological States), *Anubhava-s* (Consequents) and *Satvika Bhava-s* (Involuntary States) are related.

1.1. The Types of *Shringara Rasa*:

Shringara Rasa based on its sense of use in *Hindustani* Music compositions can be classified into three broad categories:

(i) <i>Sambhoga</i>:	The term literally means ‘Union’ and is also known as ‘ <i>Sanjoga Shringara</i> ’. This is the central theme of <i>Shringara</i> . It is evoked by the joy and bliss in the life of lovers or a couple, blooming seasons, flower garlands, ornamentations, decorations etc.
(ii) <i>Vipralambha</i>:	The term literally means ‘Separation’ and is also known as ‘ <i>Viyoga Shringara</i> ’. This is the reverse of <i>Sambhoga Shringara</i> . This emotion is caused by the separation of love resulting in grief, sorrow and despair in the life of lovers or a couple, indifference, jealousy, forgetfulness, craziness, doubt, feigned anger, yearning etc.
(iii) <i>Sampanna</i>:	This is defined as the re-union of lovers or a couple after a long-time separation and the expression is full of love and affection.

2. The Psychological Relations of *Shringara Rasa*:

Rasa (Sentiment) and *Bhava* (Mental State) are the two variables that operate as sequences of transformation in human psychology. According to psychological studies, the *Varna-s* (Colours) associated with the *Rasa-s* (Sentiments) mentioned in *Bharata Muni’s Natyashastra* play a significant role in human emotions.

The predominance of ‘*Shyama Varna*’ (Light-Green Colour) indicates the pleasant seasons, and the beauty of nature and also stimulates the emotion of love that leads to *Shringara Rasa*.

The sentiments of love in union restore balance and harmony in a person and exert an energizing or soothing influence³ on the mind and soul. It puts a person in a stress-relieved, relaxed or refreshed mood that helps in fostering the promotion of healthy emotions⁴. The emotion of separation in love creates sorrow, despair and grief that leads to a deep experience of mental conflicts.

Shringara is the foremost *Rasa* that strongly holds the power to heal psychological disorders.

3. The Correlatives of *Shringara Rasa*:

- According to *Bharata Muni’s Natyashastra*, the *Varna* (Colour) of *Shringara Rasa* is *Shyama* (Light-Green) and the God related to it is *Vishnu*.

³ Cheriyan, Leena B. *The Psychological and Physiological Relevance of Bharathamuni’s Theory of Rasa – A Study on the Basis of Colorgenics*. 2017. Pg. No. 43

⁴ *Ibid*

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- Nanyadeva in his *Bharatabhashyam* stated that *Shruti-Jati Deepta* (meaning Dazzling) is related to *Shringara Rasa*.
- According to Sharngadeva's *Sangita-Ratnakara*, the *Swara-s*, *Madhyama* and *Panchama* evoke the strong essence of *Shringara Rasa-s*. *Madhya-Laya* (Medium Tempo) is related to *Shringara Rasa*.
- The Musicologist, Shri G. M. Ranade stated that Imperfect Consonance (*Sa-Ga*; *Sa-Dha*) evoke *Shringara Rasa-s*.
- *Tala-s* such as 'Teentala', 'Ektala', 'Jhaptala', 'Rupak', 'Kaharva' and 'Dadra' in their medium-slow, soft and delicate tempos are suitable for evoking the aesthetic flavours of *Shringara*.

4. The Significance of *Shringara Rasa* in *Hindustani Music*:

In *Hindustani* music, *Raga* is a melody created from a selected group of musical notes with definite rules that emotionally absorbs the audience with the pure joy of sentiments. Each *Raga* evokes a particular aesthetic essence based on the musical notes used. When a *Raga* is performed with skilled precision and pure concentration, the appropriate mood of that *Raga* is deeply experienced. *Dhatu* (Musical Aspects) and *Matu* (Poetic or Lyrical Aspects) together when set to a definite *Tala* (Rhythmic Cycle of Beats) evoke the proper essence of sentiments.

The *Hindustani* Music compositions, when set to medium or medium-slow tempos together with the arrangement of musical notes and various embellishments such as the usage of *Swara Alankara-s*, *Kana Swara-s*, *Meend-s*, *Gamaka-s*, *Layakari-s* etc., elicit the appropriate relish of *Shringara-s*.

5. The Selected Compositions of *Raga-s* based on *Shringara Rasa*:

Some selected compositions of *Raga-s* evoking *Shringara Rasa-s* according to their particular time periods of presentation are as follows:

(i) *Raga Lalit* (*Marwa Thata*) - A Morning-Twilight (Dawn) Melody

Lyrics of the Composition ⁵	
<i>Sthayi</i>	<i>Antara</i>
More ghara aave moraa piyaa To kara hoon main aananda badhaayi.	Jo koyi pyaare ko le aave Taba main jaanoon laakhana paayi.

It is a Traditional Composition of *Gwalior Gharana* set to *Madhya-Vilambit Laya* (Medium-Slow Tempo) *Teentala*. In this composition, the composer is happy and excited about

⁵ Bhatkhande, V. N. *Hindustani Sangeet Paddhati – Kramik Pustak Malika Part – 4 (Hindi Edition)*. Allahabad: Sangeet Sadan Prakashan, 2019. Pg. No. 511

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the return of her beloved. She will feel herself to be lucky enough if someone brings her husband to her.

(ii) Raga Bhairav - An Early-Morning Melody

Lyrics of the Composition ⁶	
<u>Sthayi</u>	<u>Antara</u>
<i>Uthata baaja murali aaja Vrindaavana kunja me Ita-uta naratana racha laage Mayura punja me.</i>	<i>Phulana saba khilata jaata Harakhi-harakhi uthata gaata Laagata madhura suprabhaata Bhanvarana ki gunja me.</i>

It is composed by *Pandit Jnan Prakash Ghosh* and set to *Madhya-Laya* (Medium Tempo) *Ektala*. This composition portrays a delightful atmosphere of the early morning creating an intense mood of joy and rebirth.

(iii) Raga Alhaiya Bilawal - A Morning Melody

Lyrics of the Composition ⁷	
<u>Sthayi</u>	<u>Antara</u>
<i>Mana haravaa re Maikaa hari hari churiyaa deho mangaaya Ranga rangilee aura chatakilee Taapara dhana katankeli.</i>	<i>Aura gale ko haara lungi Motiyana thaala bharungi Kharaka-kharaka mori churiyaan kharake Bangari muraka gayilee.</i>

It is a Traditional Composition of *Gwalior Gharana* set to *Madhya-Laya* (Medium Tempo) *Teentala*. The focused theme of this composition is the ‘*Sanjoga Shringara*’ (Erotic Sentiment in Union) as it is related to ornamentations.

(iv) Raga Gujari Todi - A Late-Morning Melody

Lyrics of the Composition	
<u>Sthayi</u>	<u>Antara</u>
<i>Bhara daarungi ranga so Apane pritama ko aba ke phaaga me.</i>	<i>Abira gulaala aba ke malungi Bhara pichkaari ‘Sabaranga’ so.</i>

It is composed by *Ustad Bade Ghulam Khan ‘Sabarang’* and set to *Madhya-Laya* (Medium Tempo) *Ektala*. This composition portrays the strong desire of a woman to play Holi (The Festival of Colours) with her beloved (The Composer).

(v) Raga Vrindavani Sarang - An Afternoon Melody

⁶ Majumder, Diptiprakash. *Guru Jnanprakash Ghosh O Sangeet Shikkha (Bengali)*. Kolkata: Amar Bharati, 2014. Pg. No. 54

⁷ Bhatkhande, V. N. *Hindustani Sangeet Paddhati – Kramik Pustak Malika Part – 2 (Hindi Edition)*. Allahabad: Sangeet Sadan Prakashan, 2019. Pg. No. 82

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Lyrics of the Composition ⁸	
<i>Sthayi</i>	<i>Antara</i>
<i>Jaare jaare bhanvaraa piyaa paasa Ley jaao moraa itano sandesawaa Parata naahi kala bina saanvaraa.</i>	<i>Jaaye kahiyo unase bhanvaraa Kita bilama rahe baalama moraa Ita ginata taare pyaare bhanvaraa</i>

It is composed by *Pandit Jnan Prakash Ghosh* and set to *Madhya-Laya* (Medium Tempo) *Teentala*. This composition is based on *Viyoga Shringara* where a woman urges a bumblebee to convey the message to her beloved that she is unhappy without him and her time is passing counting the stars, still longing for her beloved's arrival.

(vi) Raga Madhuwanti - A Late-Afternoon Melody

Lyrics of the Composition	
<i>Sthayi</i>	<i>Antara</i>
<i>Kaahe maana karo sakhi aba Bahuta dinana te piyaa ghara aaye Vaako manaao rijhaao dhira dharo.</i>	<i>Gandha maala so anga sajaao Vividha dhanga so gaao bajaao Pritama ki aba preeta haro.</i>

It is composed by *Pandit Jasraj* and set to *Madhya-Laya* (Medium Tempo) *Teentala*. This composition is based on *Sampanna Shringara* where a friend tells her companion to enjoy the moment and fascinate her beloved as he has arrived after a long time of separation. This reunion of lovers is full of romantic love.

(vii) Raga Deepak (Purvi Thata) - An Evening-Twilight (Dusk) Melody

Lyrics of the Composition ⁹	
<i>Sthayi</i>	<i>Antara</i>
<i>Dekha kaisi sajee ranga rangilee jyota Dipana ki atahee naina sukhadaayi.</i>	<i>Laala haarita pita nila aruna barana Bhaanta-bhaanta sohaata 'Sujana' mana bhaayi.</i>

It is composed by *Acharya S. N. Ratanjankar* 'Sujaan' and set to *Madhya-Laya* (Medium Tempo) *Jhaptala*. In this composition, the heart and soul of the composer are attracted by the various colour shades of flame in a lighted lamp.

(viii) Raga Bhupali - An Evening Melody

⁸ Majumder, Diptiprakash. *Guru Jnanprakash Ghosh O Sangeet Shikkha (Bengali)*. Kolkata: Amar Bharati, 2014. Pg. No. 115

⁹ Ratanjankar, S. N. *Abhinav Geetmanjari Vol. 2 (Hindi)*. Bombay: Acharya S N Ratanjankar Foundation, 1992. Pg. No. 19

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Lyrics of the Composition ¹⁰	
<i>Sthayi</i>	<i>Antara</i>
<i>Bega milaao piyarawaa sanga Ghanaa ranga pee bichhure bahuta dina.</i>	<i>Beete barakhaa beeti bahaara Beeta chale ghadi pala chhina ginata dina.</i>

It is composed by *Pandit Jnan Prakash Ghosh* and set to *Madhya-Laya* (Medium Tempo) *Teentala*. This composition depicts a strong desire of a woman to meet her husband after a long time of separation. The monsoon and spring seasons are over, time is passing counting days; still yearns to meet her beloved.

(ix) Raga Shyam Kalyan - An Evening Melody that uses both *Shuddha* and *Tivra Madhyama-s*; emphasizing *Tivra Madhyama*.

Lyrics of the Composition	
<i>Sthayi</i>	<i>Antara</i>
<i>Shyaama chhabi mana mohe liyo Pyare neha se bhara diyo.</i>	<i>Raadhaa sanga jugala murata Jiyaa me harakha purata Sohata sohani surata Ata mangala birachiyo.</i>

It is composed by *Pandit Jnan Prakash Ghosh* and set to *Madhya-Laya* (Medium Tempo) *Jhaptala*. In this composition, the composer is extremely mesmerized and his heart is delighted by seeing the idol of *Radha* and *Krishna*.

(x) Raga Chhaya Nat - An Evening Melody that uses both *Shuddha* and *Tivra Madhyama-s*; emphasizing *Shuddha Madhyama*.

Lyrics of the Composition	
<i>Sthayi</i>	<i>Antara</i>
<i>Jhanana jhanana jhana nananana nananana Baaje bichhuvaa baaje Piyaa se milana ko chali jaata Apane mandira so aaja naara.</i>	<i>Puja karana ko nikasee ghara so alabeli naara Chamake jiyaa 'Inaayata' baara baara.</i>

It is composed by *Ustad Inayat Hussain Khan 'Inayat Piya'* and set to *Madhya-Laya* (Medium Tempo) *Teentala*. This composition depicts that the anklet bells are ringing when the beautiful woman is going to meet her beloved. She has come out of her house, to worship in the temple, and reminds of her beloved (The Composer).

(xi) Raga Kaushikdhvani (*Bilawal Thata*) - A Night Melody

Lyrics of the Composition	
<i>Sthayi</i>	<i>Antara</i>
<i>Aayo ri basanta, navala ranga laayo Kusuma kaliyoon se saba bana sajaayo.</i>	<i>Pavana madhu-manda sugandha bahaayo Harakhi nara-naara kalola machaayo.</i>

¹⁰ Majumder, Diptiprakash. *Guru Jnanprakash Ghosh O Sangeet Shikkha* (Bengali). Kolkata: Amar Bharati, 2014. Pg. No. 90

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It is composed by *Pandit Jnan Prakash Ghosh* and set to *Madhya-Laya* (Medium Tempo) *Teentala*. This composition portrays the beauty of gardens filled with scented flowers and the joyfulness of men and women during the spring season.

(xii) Raga Rageshri (Khamaj Thata) - A Night Melody

Lyrics of the Composition ¹¹	
<i>Sthayi</i>	<i>Antara</i>
<i>Phala phula sohe birachhana para Chandaa sohe amala gagana para.</i>	<i>Bansi sohe kanha adhara para Banitaa ata sohe jo pee ghara.</i>

It is composed by *Pandit Jnan Prakash Ghosh* and set to *Madhya-Laya* (Medium Tempo) *Teentala*. In this composition, the composer states that fruits and flowers look beautiful on trees, the moon looks attractive in the clear sky, the flute looks beautiful on the lips of Lord *Krishna*, and a woman looks extremely pretty in her husband's home.

(xiii) Raga Jog (Kafi Thata) - A Night Melody

Lyrics of the Composition ¹²	
<i>Sthayi</i>	<i>Antara</i>
<i>Saajana more ghara aaye Ata mana sukha paaye.</i>	<i>Mangala gaao, chauka purao 'Prema Piya' hama paaye.</i>

It is composed by *Ustad Faiyaz Khan 'Prem Piya'* and set to *Madhya-Laya* (Medium Tempo) *Teentala*. This composition is composed depicting a woman looking forward to her husband's arrival. Her heart is filled with cheerfulness, and she urges her friends to join her in singing auspicious songs and decorating the house for his arrival.

(xiv) Raga Chandrakauns - A Mid-Night Melody

Lyrics of the Composition ¹³	
<i>Sthayi</i>	<i>Antara</i>
<i>Saguna saroopa nandalaala Kaana kundala tilaka bhaala Manda madhura musakaana.</i>	<i>Thumaka-thumaka chalata chaala Gale sohata pushpa maala Bansi adhara harata chaina Manda madhura musakaana.</i>

It is composed by *Dr Prabha Atre* and set to *Madhya-Laya* (Medium Tempo) *Ektala*. In this composition, the composer crisply describes the delightful appearance of Lord *Krishna*.

(xv) Raga Basant - A Late-Night Melody

¹¹ Majumder, Diptiprakash. *Guru Jnanprakash Ghosh O Sangeet Shikkha (Bengali)*. Kolkata: Amar Bharati, 2014. Pg. No. 186

¹² <https://raag-hindustani.com/Jog.html>

¹³ Atre, Prabha. *Swaranjanee (Hindi Edition)*. Delhi: B R Rhythms, 2016. Pg. No. 207

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Lyrics of the Composition	
<i><u>Sthayi</u></i>	<i><u>Antara</u></i>
<i>Lachaka chalata mana moha liyaa moraa Piyaa ki chhaba dekha bhayi baavari mai to.</i>	<i>Banathana nikasee ghara so 'Sabaranga' ke darasana ko aayi ree mai to.</i>

It is composed by *Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan* 'Sabarang' and set to *Madhya-Laya* (Medium Tempo) *Teentala*. In this composition, the composer's mind is influenced by the picture of a woman in his dream coming to meet him (The Composer) with her gorgeous appearance.

Conclusion:

One of the unique characteristics of *Hindustani* Music is the assignment of definite hours of day and night for performing *Raga-s*. Each *Raga* and *Ragini* has an association with a definite human mood and/or change in nature.

Raga plays a vital role in imparting a positive impact on the mind of listeners, which absorbs the psychological effect of *Raga-s* through the sentiments evoked by the musical notes of that *Raga*. The melodic framework along with the musical composition woven in a rhythmic cycle form a united expression of emotions.

The evolution of sentiments is determined by the experience and mastery of a performer in the application of suitable musical note patterns while developing a *Raga*, aesthetic creativity, understanding the mood of compositions, dexterity, intricate pattern of *Sargam-s* and *Tana-s* and the overall experience.

Last, but not least, the aesthetic evolution of emotions is incomplete without the active involvement of listeners in the whole process. The artistic performance can only be successful if it is carried out with the utmost skill, devotion and concentration, such that the audience is completely enthralled by the *Rasa* experience and becomes emotionally absorbed into the performance.

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