

# Cinema and Classical Music: An Unexplored Symbiotic Relationship

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## Abstract

Classical Music has been popular amongst people and it has gone through several challenges. The media has been the carrier of music and entertainment to millions and billions of people across the world with India being no exception. Media, ever since its advent, has been responsible for expansion and popularity. This paper explores how the different mediums have been responsible for the popularity of classical music. Survey method is used to get answers to the research questions and the data is subjected to statistical analysis.

## INTRODUCTION

Network, information, and media technologies are rapidly changing our society, including human relationship, lifestyle, and communication. Entertainment is the area where these new technologies have a strong influence (Nakatsu 2009). People communicate with their families and friends through e-mail, mobile phones, texting, Twitter, and other means. Until the 1980s, communication media such as telephones were mainly used for business communication. Today, however, communication extends beyond business conversations and has become a form of everyday entertainment. It looks that "Global Village" proposed by Marshall McLuhan has been already realized (McLuhan and Powers 1992; McLuhan 2011).

"The origin of music is not easy to be traced. It is obvious that Nature is the fountain of all music. Warbling bird, babbling brook, the buzzing bee, the droning beetle, the whistling wind, the singing bamboo, the roaring sea are some of the organs in Nature's glorious symphony". When we hear sound sweet or harsh, pleasant or unpleasant, it at once enters our ears and produces agreeable or disagreeable impressions. The shining intellect then enlightens and animates the impressions which are at once transformed into a sensation or feeling, and the mind immediately reacts through the reflex actions and then we pay our attention to the effect of sound. Musical structures are based on composer's musical vision, and the compositions are thought of harmonic elements and rhythmic elements with the interaction of tension resolution patterns. Music

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is indeed related to core functions of the biology of the human nervous system, and therefore serves adaptive evolutionary purposes beyond that of the functional interpretation of art. Music must be viewed as a biological fact, not just as a cultural phenomenon. In both areas, the cultural and the biological, music is a powerful communicator. The thought that culture, especially art as a core part of culture, is an essential part of our life has been commonly accepted, but the relationship between entertainment, culture, art and media platforms is still neglected so far. As various aspects of entertainment, especially from technological point of view, are discussed and described in other sections of this handbook, the study primarily focuses on the contribution of media in popularizing and propagating the Indian Classical Music.

## History of Indian Music

It has been mentioned in Sangeet Ratnakar that, god himself is personified as 'NADABRAHMA'. According to the veteran scholars and stalwarts of Indian Classical Music:

### **Gitang Vadyang Tatha Nrityang Trayang Sangeetmuchyate**

In other words music is the culmination/combination of vocal music, instrumental music and dance. The Indian classical music is perhaps one of the oldest art form in the world. Its origin is said to be rooted in the 'Vedas'. It is also a major system of music that is essentially melodic: and what is of great significance and interest is that it has retained this character even in the modern times. In context of Indian classical music, it is imperative to note that the term 'classical' merely alludes to the fact that it has its roots in an ancient tradition and conforms to structural and scriptural regulation or shastra. The Indian name for this music is therefore Shaastriya Sangeet. It is also widely known as Raga Sangeet since raga forms the core of this art form. 'Classical' therefore does not refer to any classical era or period as in Western music or art traditions. Despite the common use of the word, one must bear the above clarification in mind. Roots of Indian classical musical tradition dates back to over two millennia. The tradition, nevertheless, witnessed several changes and developments through time. Although

it is acknowledged to have its origin in the Vedic tradition, what we hear today as classical music is far removed from the early Vedic chanting or recitation. The earliest forms of classical music were a conglomeration of the Vedic tradition along with various folk traditions across the country. Saama-gaana is known to be the first form of classical music. This evolved in time, into successive traditions of Jaati-gaana and Prabandha-gaana.

Following the Prabandha era, the music of North India, the Hindustani tradition, evolved into the Dhrupad tradition. Dhrupad is said to have evolved from one of the embedded parts of the prabandha that was popular around the 11th Century. This music maintained a strictness and

rigidity in all aspects of presentation, note application as well as rendition of the actual composition. The name Dhrupad itself is derived from 'dhruva-pada', where dhruva connotes constant, unchanged and inflexible and pada indicates a compositional bias towards the poetic aspect that strongly compliments the melodic rhythmic progression of the music. While some practitioners of this form still hold fort, dhrupad gradually receded to the periphery by the late 18th century and Hindustani classical tradition came to be identified primarily with the next successive stage in its evolution called 'Khayal'. This genre, while maintaining the purity of raga structures, reduced the extent of extreme rigidity in presentation and technique that beleaguered dhrupad and brought in a fresh approach to development and exposition of raga and composition. Hindustani classical music has parallel thriving traditions of both vocal as well as instrumental music. Indian Classical Music conveys the general impression that belongs to the whole country. Music, based on Ragas and Raginis and the ancient texts, is the Classical Music. The development of Indian Classical Music has consisted of the elaboration by performers of the traditional Ragas, which are considered fixed melodies, the traditional complex forms, within which elaboration occurs. Although some of the statements are equally applicable to "Southern Indian - Classical Music. Culturally speaking, these two systems of music are an integral part of our cultural soul that gradually evolved, into the present form in which we find



them. These are the fruits of generations of musical learning. The basic structure of the world-music is the same. The same seven notes and half notes, though there are minor differences. Vocal music is given top priority. However, dance is a separate and full-fledged art-form and is excluded from the above definition. The Western countries also exclude dance from the definition. Thus, Classical music is structurally complex; one has to listen to it, as frequently as possible, over an extended period, before one begins to understand and appreciate it. Acquiring the necessary skill to perform Classical music, takes a long time, especially if it is to be learned traditionally.

## Era of Transition

After independence, Indian music also entered into a new era. Before independence, Indian music was confined only in small princely states. However, after independence, it came under the direct influence of Government of India. The government of India made certain efforts to preserve and promote Indian Art and culture through various means. Indian government took various measures for music promotion, some of which are discussed below:-

- For promoting musicians, President Medal was started. Various other honors were started by the Indian Government like Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, Padma Vibhushan, and Bharat Ratan. These honors motivated artists and musicians to do well in the field of creative arts.
- Sangeet Natak Academies were established in the different states of the country. Sangeet Natak Academies started organizing various events related to Indian music which provided great boost among artists.
- All India Radio proved to be an excellent boost for Indian music. "All India Radio started broadcasting a programme on Indian music in 1921. In this programme, eminent artists of Hindustani as well as Carnatic classical artists gave their performances, and this tradition is going on till date, although All India Radio started working in India around 1924." However, Indian classical music got its due importance only after independence only. All India Radio promoted Indian music by broadcasting various programs

related to Indian music and by inviting many eminent artists for live recordings. It also provided new vistas of employment opportunities to the eminent artists and scholars. All India Radio had a vast reach and covered a large part of the country which resulted into a massive boost to the promotion of Indian music as by radio a large number of people started listening to Indian music.

- Doordarshan also did well in the promotion of Indian music. In India, Doordarshan was started on 15 September 1959. Through Live coverage of classical music and various other programs, Doordarshan has proved its significant role in propagating Indian Music and Culture.
- Acceptance of Indian art forms as full-fledged courses in different universities and colleges of the country by the government also resulted in creating awareness and increase in popularity.
- Organizations like Sangeet Research Academy and Spic Macay also did a great job in preserving the rich heritage of Indian music. These organizations worked well in the field of music by providing education, promotion, organizing events, seminars, workshops, and concerts to create awareness among the young generation.

## Different Mediums and their Contribution

**Print Media:** "China was the pioneer in the invention of paper and print. Paper was first made in the second century A.D. and in 868 A.D., Wang Chieh published a book printed from blocks. The oldest evidence of Chinese printing is a Buddhist scripture known as the Diamond Sutra dated 868 A.D." Print media communicates with the masses through printed publications, such as newspapers and magazines, etc. The print media is regarded as one of the basic forms of mass media which are used for communicating with a broader audience. Within print media Newspapers are the most common media, which is famous across the continents for the last few centuries. In the present time, where the education of Indian classical music is being given in schools and universities as well, increase in usefulness and necessity of textbooks can be seen. The primary source of information for researchers

who are researching various scientific and historical topics are also books. To know the origin of classical Music, the development and the laws of science, the books of that time are a great asset.

From ancient times till today, many musicians and musicologists have written many texts from time to time, which has been considered as an important way of keeping our traditions and musical heritage alive and safe. The importance of texts in each age has been accepted not only for that age but also for the guidance of the ages to come. This is the reason why the scholars of that era have given it the name of Blind Age (Andha Yuga), in which musical texts were not available. After independence, there has been an increase in the musical repertoire in the form of compositions of many musical texts, along with the publication and translation of ancient and medieval Sanskrit texts, which is an important task. Its biggest benefit will be to those people who were not familiar with Sanskrit language. Through these translated texts, they now had the opportunity to think independently about the content of these ancient texts. Print media has contributed a lot in promotion of classical music with the publication of books on music, such as collections of traditional compositions with notations, biographies, and autobiographies of musicians, and theoretical literature, etc. The daily newspapers gave publicity with previews and reviews on classical programs, interview of artists, and criticism on the performance, etc. Moreover, magazines, journals, pamphlets and postal stamps on music have also propagated the performance and research in music

**Broadcasting Media:** The science of electronics has revolutionized present-day life. It influences one's thoughts, style of living and working, etc. Parallel to their influence on one's life, electronics, and electronic gadgets exert stunning influence and make an enormous impact on all disciplines including music. Electronic media is believed to be one of the finest platform to launch the musicians and their artistic work into the mystifying world. The music of India is an earliest modal form that is different from the western system. For thousands of years, the musical stuff traveled along a simple linear path from mentor to disciple. Cross-linkages were rare until relatively recently. The significant increase

in this horizontal flow of musical information began with the advent of the electronic media. The development of indigenous electronics industry mostly cut off from the broader world markets, has had impressive effects on musical electronics.

The history of broadcasting in the world is not very old, but only in the 20th century. The All India Radio opened new vistas in the field of audio music. In ancient times music was practiced for the self-purification, and the artists never use to perform for others. After passing through various stages, it became a source of entertainment. Microphone gives an artist, an opportunity to present his performance to a large number of people. All India Radio's role in preserving and propagating Indian classical music is laudable. It has not only presented the well-known artists but also brought the budding artists to the fore

**“The invention of the Radio Broadcasting is looked upon as the beginning of what is called the ‘Communications Revolution.’”**

**“Broadcasting shares the characteristics of creative art with other intellectual and aesthetic pursuits...”**

**“If the invention of writing brought about a minor revolution in communication, the invention of printing brought about major one.”**

Until the 19th century, the voice of one person being heard at the second place without any direct contact was only a fantasy. In the Indian scriptures, the use of the word Aakashwani was taken from the divine voice, transmitted by the god from the sky. However, today, in India the word 'Akashwani' has become synonymous with the English word 'All India Radio.' Similarly, the term 'broadcast' was also used in the twentieth century. The term 'broadcast' was used for the programs broadcasted by many transmission centers, which were heard through the radio. "Radio affects most people intimately, person to person, offering a world of unspoken communication between writer, speaker, and listener. That is the immediate aspect of radio. A private experience.



The subliminal depths of radio are charged with the resonating echoes of tribal horns and antique drums. This is inherent in the very nature of this medium, with its power to turn the psyche and society into a single echo chamber.”

Thus with the help of these mediums, classical music which until now was the heritage of the upper class, came to the reach of the general public. Broadcasting media has played a unique role in the promotion of classical music. Modern technological developments provided new techniques which helped to popularize classical music all over the world. The process of production, propagation, and preservation of this enchanted art form became straightforward. The new generation devices are quite simple to handle. The Audio Visual systems made music sweeter to our senses and accessible to anyone anywhere in this world. The development of Classical Music is not achieved on its merit alone, but with the help of many other supplementary factors too.

Musicians depend on technology to reach a wider audience. The microphone is a significant one. Microphone together with amplifier and speakers increase the volume of an artist's voice to desirable levels to reach those assembled in a big hall or open space so that it can be heard. Radio signals carry voice across the continents. Music can be preserved by recording it. Television brings music to homes. It helps music lovers to see the concert as well as hear the music. It also helps to learn forms of various rare Ragas and Ragnis. In a way, the media, whether it is Newspapers, Radio, Television, Cinema or any other medium, helps people to hear, read and enjoy and understand the world of music.

**Digital Media:** “Digital is a form of encoding in which the waveform of a signal is represented as a series of digits, which are then encoded as a sequence of binary “0s” and “1s,” or as “ONs” and “OFFs.” Since digits rather than an analog of the waveform are encoded, the digital representation allows near perfect storage and transmission. However, these advantages are got at the expense of bandwidth, and digital needs significantly more bandwidth than analog. The solution is to compress the digital signal”. The digital media is a recent and technically fast and more precise medium for promotion of music. After the digitalization of media, every part of media

has become digitalized. Although Newspaper to Books, Radio to Television or Cinema and Computer to Mobile Phone there is nothing that escaped from the reach of digitalization. Computers put the marvelous impact on the production and protection of classical music. Especially after 2000, the pop up of thousands of websites, blogs on music made it worldwide famous and accessible. There is a massive amount of information on the internet about music. There are blogs by musicians and connoisseurs discussing music. On the e-groups, people discuss their opinions on music. Many recording companies sell their products of CDs, DVDs online. Now, there are many eGurukuls, e-books, digital libraries or web portals are available for learning classical music. Today the most popular Social Media websites and applications like YouTube, Daily Motion, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and many other classical websites are contributing immensely in propagating the sole purpose of Indian classical music. Some of the important and very common digital platforms and sources used in art creation and promotion are as follows:-

**Music Production Software:** Ableton Live, Ardour, Audiotool, FL Studio, Digital Performer, Fairlight, GarageBand, Cubase, Logic Pro, Nuendo, Mixcraft, Mixbus

**A sound card:** A device which can be slotted into a computer to allow the use of audio components for multimedia applications. A sound card (also referred to as an audio card) is a peripheral device that attaches to the ISA or PCI slot on a motherboard to enable the computer to input, process, and deliver sound.

**Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI):** Thus, the help of an external music card was taken for high quality sounds/tones from various microcomputers. These cards were quite favorite till the seventies, but later on, Micro Computer manufacturers experienced that they were directly producing high-quality sound creating chips which is surely more advantageous. As a result, the need for purchasing additional cards is over, after listening to music. In fact, the powerful synthesizers produced by the instrument makers in these machines have sound production capacity. Nowadays, most computer users are only engaged in powerful music chip



machines. "Any tune can be played with the help of a computer synthesizer, with the utmost accuracy. By changing the recurrence of this sound as desired, the sound of any instrument can produce. In America's "Bell Telephone Laboratory," the music of the entire orchestra has been generated from the computer." In the early eighties, the makers of Electronic K-Board wanted to standardize the process of transmitting information to music and thus 'Musical Instruments Digital Interface' (MIDI) was born. MIDI is the language in which information can be shared from one microcomputer to another micro computer with the help of MIDI-equipped electronic instruments. MIDI is standard for both hardware and software; it adopted in 1982. MIDI got the initial promotion, the synthesizer of various manufacturers interconnected. Today, MIDI-equipped equipment are included not only synthesizers but also drum machines, samples, computer, tape and storage devices. It has made an unprecedented contribution in the field of microcomputer and music.

**Internet for Indian Classical Music:** The generator of the network system, the Internet was started in the year 1969 as a research project of the U.S. Defence Ministry, but the Internet term came into practice only in the mid-1994. Today only twenty years have passed since the entry of the Internet in India. In the interval of these few years, the development of the Internet has become the world's giant domain. First of all in India, the internet was provided for some time by 'Education and Research Network,' but since August 1995, this facility has been made available by the Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL) for commercial use. As a result, only 32,000 people from the capital, Delhi and the surrounding areas start taking advantage of this facility. Bangalore, Pune, Kanpur, Lucknow, Chandigarh, Jaipur, Hyderabad, Patna, and Goa were also added to the Internet facility started from August 1995 for New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai metropolitan cities. Today the situation is that due to the growing internet network, the number of Internet subscribers in India is increasing rapidly and the internet is being used in the villages also. The Internet has the option for smallest to more significant requirements. Whether in the remote country to get any information from an artist, even if

they have to invite to any program, in every situation the Internet is becoming the most obedient. There are discussing some Internet-related features.

**Digital Library:** A digital library is an online collection of digital contents that can include text, still images, audio, video, or other digital media database. Objects can consist of digitized content like print or photos, as well as born digital objects like word processor files or social media posts. In addition to storing content, digital libraries provide means for organizing, searching, and retrieving the material contained in the compilation. "Digital libraries can vary vastly in size and scope and can be maintained by individuals or organizations." "The digital material may be stored locally, or accessed remotely via computer networks. These information retrieval systems can exchange information with each other through interoperability and sustainability." The concept of digital libraries has also been introduced in the Indian society. Digital Library of India was formally started by the then president of India Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam in 8th September 2003 to preserve knowledge and cultural heritage of India. Ministry of Communications and Information supports the project Technology, Government of India and coordinated by Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. It digitizes and preserves all significant library, artistic and scientific works in its three regional mega scanning center and 21 scanning centers and makes it freely available to the world for education and research. At present, Digital Library of India hosts 4,80,335 books comprising about 168 million pages. The books came from about 48 diverse languages in various subjects. Participating Institutions are Indian Institute of Information Technology Hyderabad; ERNET (Education and Research Network) India; Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC). Some of the other important digital libraries of India are as follows:-

- Vigyan Prasar Digital Library
- NCERT Online Text Books
- National Mission for Manuscripts
- Muktabodha: Digital Library and Archiving Project
- Shodh Ganga: Indian ETD Repository
- Vidyanidhi Digital Library
- Digital Library of Institutional Repositories
- E-Gyankosh



## Objectives

- To study how media has facilitated Hindustani classical music
- To study the perception about the current media trends with respect to promotion of India Classical Music

## Methodology

It is a survey based study conducted on population comprising of people trained and some not trained in music. The sample size (N) is 246 and the sampling technique used is non-probability (purposive sampling). The data was collected using close and open ended questionnaire and the analysis done on SPSS 24. The statistical tests used include ANOVA and T-Test along with the basic univariate frequency tables.

## Data Tabulation and Analysis

- Cinema has embraced Hindustani Classical Music
- While Bollywood has kept Hindustani Classical alive and the other language cinema have given boost to the local folk art musical forms
- The musical and non-musical background people have similar opinion regarding how cinema has contributed in the preservation of music
- People with Musical and non-musical background have similar opinion regarding the type of classical music that has got the boost
- Both believe that soft or semi-classical has got more backing from cinema than the pure classical forms
- The people with musical background feel that cinema could have given more to classical music but the ones with no music background feel otherwise
- The future of classical music is seen to be bright with respect to its involvement and indulgence in cinema by the non-musical background people while the ones with the musical background see otherwise. They believe the fast moving world and altered individualistic preferences to be an obstacle.

## CONCLUSION

The study helped in expanding discernments that directly contradict popular ideas. While the popular

sentiments claim that the classical music is not so popular and has been on a decline for long. Some also believe that preserving this art form would be difficult because of different taste for music amongst the youth. The results of the study claim otherwise. Majority believe that not only has the Hindustani classical music come a long way, it will continue to grow and become more popular. The perception is similar amongst all kind of respondents including the ones who have been trained in music and the ones who have never been trained in any form of music. While the study focusses heavily on the people's perception, the role of media can be very aptly established through the results. It offers great insights into how media can be used more effectively for popularizing this art form and how it can be further used for other art forms too.

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