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Sample



To my Guruji, Dr. K. C. Gangrade  
To Sophie, my better half  
and to all music lovers

## Preface

The present volume covers 454 compositions<sup>1</sup> on 164 *rāga* (राग)<sup>2</sup> which were collected over my student years.

It all started in India, way back in 1970, when I joined the Faculty of Performing Arts of Banaras Hindu University (then called Music College) as a bonafide sitar student. After passing Diploma (1973), B. Mus. (1976), M. Mus. (1978), M. A. in French literature (1979), I completed a Doctorate of Performance and Compositions (D. Mus.) in sitar, in may 1983.

During all these years, I had the unique privilege to learn and imbibe at the feet of Dr. K. C. Gangrade and also, for a short span of two years, during my Master's degree course (M. Mus.), from late Pandit Lal Mani Misra.

We had to acquire a fairly good knowledge of the taxonomy of *rāga* (राग) and had to learn lots of compositions from *prakashita* (प्रकाशित) « common » and *aprakāśita* (अप्रकाशित राग) « rare » *rāga*-s alike.

It is a well known fact that vocalists are much more erudite in *rāga* (राग) than instrumentalists — despite few exceptions. That is why we had to concentrate on vocal music and study compositions from vocal audio recordings as well as from the major works in *devanāgarī* (देवनागरी) by acknowledged masters such as Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande, Pandit Vinayak Rao Patwardhan, Pandit Vaze Bua, Kumar Gandharva, Pandit Shrikrishna Narayan Ratanjankar, Pandit Jaishukhlal Shah, Pandit Ramashraya Jha and others. A number of their *bandiṣa* (बन्दिशा) have thus been included in this work — whithout the lyrics or in a transcribed form for sitar.

1. While in India, we always use the term « composition » in English when speaking of *gata* (गत) and *bandiṣa* (बन्दिशा), it is actually a misnomer and should better be called « theme ». In Western musicology, a composition is a work, a musical piece (symphony, sonata etc.) which may include a number of themes.

2. See statistics, p. 371.

You will also find *gata-s* (गत) I composed, out of which 24 were submitted for the doctorate.

But the core of this *gata-s* (गत) compilation comes, on one hand, from late *Dr. Lal Mani Misra* (*gata-s* (गत) he taught us as well as others found in his two published books) and, on the other hand, from *Dr. K. C. Gangrade* (either composed by himself, or which he learnt from his late *guru-s* (गुरु), *Ustad Rustam Khan*, *Pandit Dinkar Rao Patwardhan* and *Pandit Shankar Rao Telang*). These traditional *gata-s* (गत) of the *Gwalior gharāna* (घराना) and *Amirkhani-s* are truly outstanding — the word is not too strong — and are a noteworthy heritage of *Dr. K. C. Gangrade*.

However, reader has to be warned that learning *gata-s* (गत) is not an easy affair. Indian notation system — *svoralipī* (स्वरलिपी) — has a thoroughly different function than staff notation has in the West. While the latter is extremely precise, accurate, *Hindusthānī svoralipī* (हिन्दुस्तानी स्वरलिपी) purposely gives a blurred skeletal image of the *rāga* (राग) theme, thus, *de facto*, prohibiting us to learn anew from writings. Indian music theory may be studied from the *śāstra-s* (शास्त्र), the greatest musicological works, « classics » of music literature written over the centuries. *Rāga* (राग) analysis may also be apprehended through the main XIX-XXth cent. authors but, and that's the limit, one can only read **about** *rāga* (राग) — but not **the** *rāga* (राग) itself. Therefore, in India, use of writing is limited to revise or deepen knowledge about a previously learnt *rāga* (राग) and that is done by ear.

— How to render in writing the subtle way a phrase or a note has to be taken ? all the parameters of an oscillated, *āndolita* (आन्दोलित) note ? of the many slide, *mīṇḍa* (मीण्ड) types ? ornamentations etc. ?

— Only the core of a *rāga* (राग) theme is noted down. As such, there is no life, no music in it. Pretty ugly if not properly decoded. Even for the best composition books available (the 5 000 *bandīśa* (बन्दिशा) of the VI vols. of *Krāmika Pustaka Mālikā* (क्रमिक पुस्तक मालिका) by *Viṣṇu Nārāyaṇa Bhātakhande*<sup>1</sup> (विष्णुनारायण भातखंडे), the VII vols. of *Rāga Vijñāna* (राग विज्ञान) by *Vināyaka Rāva Patwardhana*<sup>2</sup> (विनायक राव पटवर्धन)). In *gata-s* (गत), even the *bola-s* (बोल), rhythmic meters, are often similar and don't seem to offer an infinite variety. *Gata* (गत) writing is in noway a photography of the *rāga* (राग) although, in an Indian context, a good theme has to incorporate all the *rāga lakṣhaṇa* (राग लक्षण) - characteristics - in a condensed intelligible form.

1. See *Bibliography*, p. 335.

2. See *Bibliography*, p. 336.

While attempting to decode a theme skeleton, one has to recall in memory the *rāga* (राग) it belongs by internally singing its movements, known *bandīśa-s* (बन्दिशा), recalling its rules etc., getting deeper and deeper into its form and spirit, sensing it, feeling it in such a way that all its notes and movements progressively come to life in their context, making of the *rāga* (राग) a living melodic being.

Last but not least, one advice. Whenever you want to learn a *gata* (गत) on a *rāga* (राग) you don't know, don't rush on it but do listen to different interpretations by acknowledged great vocalists<sup>1</sup>, take notes on what you hear and read about it from main Hindi authors<sup>2</sup>. Cross-check your sources, find what is consensual about its characteristics, movements and then only, learn the *gata* (गत). If the theme is instrumental (i.e. with a consequent metric element), then always start by learning the *bola* (बोल) by heart, counting the *tāla* (ताल) on your fingers (cf. p.48), before grafting melody on it. That will keep you from going astray. Sing the *gata* (गत) and do make it sing on your instrument ! Repeat it thousands of times, over and over again, revise its *sthāi* (स्थाई) and *antarā* (अन्तरा), recall it in memory until it becomes part of you.

I hope this compilation will benefit sincere students of *Hindustānī rāga sangīta* (हिन्दुस्तानी राग संगीत) and that given themes are representative of the greatness of *rāga* (राग).

*Patrick Moutal*

Paris, February 13, 2012



1. Please, forget YouTube as it is too difficult to sort out the good from the bad. That could completely misguide you. Do listen to LPs, CDs from the acknowledged Masters, go to <http://moutal.eu> where you will find a huge collection of vocal gems (754 audio mp3 and video mp4 archives, on feb. 11, 2012) and browse <http://www.musicindiaonline.co/#/genre/8-Classical/>.

2. See *Bibliography*, p. 335.

**Sur Malhar (सूरमल्हार) Sūra Malhāra****Druta sthā, tīnatāla, LMM**

Feb. 1977

X	2	0	3
स्थाई			
सा - - नी	नी ध म -	- धध पप नीनी	ध धप -प प
दा - - दा	-र दा दा -	- दिर दिर दिर	दा रुदा -र दा
			- पप
			- दिर
म प - मम	रे म - रेरे	सा रे - सासा	नी सा - सासा
दा रा - दिर	दा रा - दिर	दा रा - दिर	दा रा - दिर
			मम रेम रे सानी सा
			दिर दिर दा दिर दा

**Vilambita gata, tīnatāla, LMM**

Feb. 1977

X	2	0	3
			स्थाई रेम रे सासा नी सासा
			दिर दा दिर दा दिर
सा सा सा नीनी	ध मनी ध प	रेम सारे नीसा	
दा दा रा दिर	दा दिर दा रा	दा- दा- रा-	
		अन्तरा	पप म पप नी नी
			दिर दा दिर दा रा
सा सा सा सासा	नी सासा रे सा	रै रै रैसा	
दा दा रा दिर	दा दिर दा रा	दा दा रा	
			नीसा रै नीनी ध म
			दिर दा दिर दा रा
प नीध प मरे	म रेसा रे नीनी	सा सा सा	
दा दिर दा दिर	दा दिर दा दिर	दा दा रा	

## T

**Tablā** (तबला) : The most popular and complete percussion instrument of *hindusthānī* (हिन्दुस्थानी) music.

**Tāla** (ताल) : Rhythmic cycle. It is composed of a certain number of *mātrā-s* (मात्रा) (beats) grouped in several *vibhāga-s* (विभाग) (divisions) indicating : i) the *sama* (सम) (first beat, in notation : « + » or « x »), ii) the *tālī-s* (ताली) (lit. « clapping of hands », in notation : « 2 », « 3 » etc.) and iii) the *khālī-s* (खाली) - empty beat(s) - in notation : « 0 ». Each *tāla* (ताल) uses a peculiar *thekā* (ठेका) - mnemonics representing the basic structure - and can be performed in different *laya-s* (लय).

**Tālī** (ताली) : First beat of each *vibhāga* (विभाग) (division) other than the *sama* (सम) (first beat) or the *khālī* (खाली) (empty beat). Lit. « clapping of hands ». Like for *sama* (सम), *tālī-s* (ताली) are indicated by hand clapping. In notation, they are indicated by numbers : thus, in *tīnatāla* (तीनताल) (×4<sup>2</sup>4<sup>0</sup>4<sup>3</sup>4), *tālī-s* (ताली) are « 2 » and « 3 ».

**Tāna** (तान) : Virtuoso passage. Can be *ārohī* (आरोही), *avarohī* (अवरोही), *ārohī-avarohī* (आरोही-अवरोही), *gamaka* (गमक), *sapāṭa* (सपाट), *vakra* (वक्र), *alankāra* (अलंकार), with *bola-s*, *mūṇḍa-s* (मूंड), *ghasīta* (घसीट) etc.

**Tappā** (टप्पा) : Vocal genre of semi-classical music which would have been created in Penjab by « *Shore Mihan* » *Gulab Nabi*. These love-songs require a very great virtuosity : the *vakra tāna-s* (वक्र तान) in extremely fast « zigzags » - are so unique that they immediately identify the genre.

**Tāra** (तार) : i) String, ii) higher. Ex. *tāra saptaka* (सप्तक) / *sthāna* (तार स्थान) = higher octave / register etc.

**Tarānā** (तराना) : Vocal composition sung in a fast tempo and using rhythmic syllables (onomatopoeias)

**Thekā** (ठेका) : i) Mnemonics representing the structure of a *tāla* (ताल). ii) the playing of a basic *calana* (चलन) of a *tāla* (ताल) without variations<sup>1</sup>.

**Thumarī** (ठुमरी) : Semi-classical vocal music genre. *Thumarī-s* (ठुमरी) are only sung in a few *rāga-s* (राग) like *bhairavī* (भैरवी), *khamājā* (खमाज), *jhinjhoī* (झिंझोटी), *tilaka kāmōḍa* (तिलक कामोद), *deśa* (देश), *pilū*, *kāfī* (काफी), *jogiyā* (जोगिया) etc. whose peculiarity and greatness reside in the fact that they may be interpreted in all different genres. Although labelled as « light music », *thumarī-s* (ठुमरी) are in no way an « easy music » and require from the vocalist a good dose of lyricism and virtuosity.

1. See *tāla* (ताल) p. 41.

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