

THE SWARA SAMPADA
SOURCEBOOK ON MUSIC

THE SWARA SAMPADA SOURCEBOOK ON MUSIC

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A SWARA SAMPADA PUBLICATION

FIRST EDITION

2005



THE SWARA SAMPADA SOURCEBOOK ON MUSIC
ISBN 81- 901406- 2- 0

First published: February 2005

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Price: Rs. 150/-

Publishers:

Swara Sampada

116 Runwal Height, Opp. Shopper's Stop, Mulund (W), Mumbai 400080

91(022) 30923374

<http://swarasampada.tripod.com>

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Kaizen Education Systems

91(022)2582 6644 Fax : 91(022) 2582 1680

email : kyzen@vsnl.com www.worldofkaizen.com

Also available at all leading book stalls.

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Cover Design, Layout & Printed by :

Clips and Concepts

116 Runwal Height, Opp. Shopper's Stop, Mulund (W), Mumbai 400 080

Tel. : 30923374

A life dedicated to music, and prayer...



... in fond memory of

Late Smt. Padma Sitaram

(16th August, 1930 - 25th August, 2004)

Acknowledgements

- ❖ *This book would not be possible without the willing cooperation of my co-authors Shri Raju Ganapathy, Shri Mangesh Gokarn, Shri Solomon Cheulkar and the editorial assistance of Shri Subhash Nayak and Smt. Sarala Ramachandran.*
- ❖ *Shri Ashok Sahasrabuddhe, for permitting use of his article 'Listening, Hearing and enjoying Listening'.*
- ❖ *The Office-bearers of Swara Sampada, and the members, who agreed to take part in this experiment and enjoyed all the travails it involved.*
- ❖ *To Shri Ganesh Iyer for willingly sponsoring the printing of this book, and to all advertisers who have generously donated to the cause.*
- ❖ *To Shri Shyam and Smt. Sanjivani Talawadekar and Keizen Education System for being co-publishers, and for the ISBN Number.*
- ❖ *To Sargam, the Official Bulletin of Swara Sampada, where most of the articles published here were originally printed.*
- ❖ *To Shri R.C.Singh, my father and mentor in music and life, who taught me by precept and example, what it is to be a singer and a good human being.*
- ❖ *To my most revered guruji in music, Shri Vinayak Kunte, whose immense knowledge of music was matched by his equally great generosity and willingness to part with that knowledge to his students.*
- ❖ *It is their inspiration which is at the back of whatever little I could contribute to what is happening in the movement called Swara Sampada.*
- ❖ *To all those who love music and are ready to work to bring it into their lives, and will study this book to make it happen to them.*

Ajai R. Singh

PREFACE

THE SWARA SAMPADA SOURCEBOOK ON MUSIC

The Swara Sampada Sourcebook on Music is an essential companion for all aspiring singers and connoisseurs of music. It is meant to guide and inspire potential singers, and demystify some commonly held beliefs. It takes you step by step through the process of becoming a singer and shares some secrets held closely by good singers, but seldom available to others.

In the Section *The President Speaks His Mind*, the author **Dr. Ajai Singh** leads you by the hand and gives you practical tips on becoming a singer. He discusses topics like How to select a song, the 100 times test for 100% success, How to protect your voice, How to develop stage presence, How to emote while singing, Lyrics, Diction, Classical Base, Music and Nature, etc.

In the section *The Science of an Art called Music*, co-author **Raju Ganapathy** discusses technical details of music that is essential knowledge for all aspiring singers.

In the Section *ABC of Music*, co-author **Mangesh Gokarn** shares his invaluable insights into singing, which has helped a number of his students of music succeed.

Ashok Sahasrabuddhe, voice culturist, in a guest article, discusses how to enjoy listening to music in his piece *Listening, Hearing and enjoying Listening*.

In the Final section on *Songs and Original Scale*, co-author **Solomon Cheulkar**, who has been giving orchestration for a number of years, shares his painstakingly compiled original scales of Hindi film songs with you. This is not available in any other book I know of. It will be an invaluable addition not only for new, but even established stage singers, and even orchestra players, who can refer to it during their rehearsals.

Subhash Nayak has worked tirelessly over the cover designing, lay-out and printing and editing of *The Swara Sampada Sourcebook on Music*, and **Sarala Ramachandran**, Editor of *Sargam*, the

Monthly Bulletin on Music of Swara Sampada, has done the original editing of *The President Speaks His Mind*, *The Science of an Art called Music*, and *The ABC of Music* which now appear here, albeit revised. She has also helped with the editing of the present work.

The Swara Sampada Sourcebook on Music is dedicated to the fond memory of **Late Smt. Padma Sitaram**, an accomplished Carnatic vocalist and bhajan singer, and mother of Swara Sampadite **Mr. Ganesh Iyer**.

The Swara Sampada Sourcebook on Music should prove to be a boon to all aspiring singers, music lovers, and an invaluable companion to music teachers and orchestra conductors too.

Ajai R. Singh

Editor,

The Swara Sampada Sourcebook on Music

and

Founder President, *Swara Sampada*

Contents

I. Dedication	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Preface	vii
II. WHAT IS SWARA SAMPADA ? DR. AJAI SINGH	1
III. THE PRESIDENT SPEAKS HIS MIND DR. AJAI SINGH	5-60
1. The Oath of Swara-Sampadites	7
2. Remove the Dam of Inhibition, Build the Dam of Practice	9
3. Three Steps and Three Rights for all Singers	11
4. Silence, The Heart Of Music	13
5. The 100 Times Test for 100% Success	15
6. Let The Whole World Not Know!	17
7. Sometimes, do it with Eyes closed	19
8. How to select a Song ?	21
9. Lyrics—the Soul of a Song	23
10. Who is a Guru?	25
11. If you turn your back to Music - or look Sideways	28
12. <i>Bahut Bhatke Yahan Wahan, Ab Ho Jaye Apna Ek Ghar Yahan</i>	31
13. Keep on the Highway of Positivity	33
14. Diction - the Icing on the Cake	36
15. How to Emote while Singing	39
16. Nature and Music	41
17. Develop a Classical Base	43
18. If Music Is Like Prayer	46
19. How a Singer protects his voice	48
20. Sing in your own Voice	51
21. Stage Presence	54
22. Music: A Pastime or The Rhythm of Life	57
23. Conclusions	59

IV. THE SCIENCE OF AN ART CALLED MUSIC		
	RAJU GANAPATHY	61-79
24. Introduction		63
25. Rhythm		66
26. Meter		67
27. Tempo		69
28. Pitch		71
29. Scale		72
30. Interval		74
31. Melody		75
32. Tune		76
33. Tone Colour, Dynamics and Form		78
V. THE ABC OF MUSIC		
	MANGESH GOKARN	81-86
34. The ABC Of Music		83
35. The Ten Golden Rules for a Singer		86
VI LISTENING, HEARING AND ENJOYING LISTENING		
	ASHOK SAHASRABUDDHE	87-88
36 Listening, Hearing and Enjoying Listening		87
VII SONGS AND ORIGINAL SCALE SOLOMON CHEULKAR 89-110		
37 Songs and Original Scale		91

WHAT IS SWARA SAMPADA ?

Swara Sampada is an organization of families from diverse backgrounds having one thing in common: the love of quality music and the desire to sing it. Most of them have earlier not sung on stage, or if they have, could not continue due to various obstacles. Swara Sampada provides them a platform to start their singing, or restart it, as the case maybe. It provides an atmosphere of positive vibrations amongst its members wherein the good is accented upon, while helping the individual overcome his musical faults and personality shortcomings, so that he can legitimately graduate to become a quality singer in his own right.

Swara Sampada is a unique musical experiment because it seeks to convert bathroom singers into living room singers, and living room singers into stage singers. Usually a student of music learns diligently from a *guru*, does his *riyaz*, seeks to present his talent to audiences and get their appreciation. Swara Sampada believes that while this is important, only a few very talented, or very persistent, become quality singers this way. The rest either give up, or become appreciative audiences for the few. Although this suits the talented few very well, and appears to suit the rest too, Swara Sampada believes this is at the cost of one's own musical development. Music, and singing, may not be as difficult as they are made out to be. If there is persistence, an atmosphere of sincere appreciation, and a fellowship of likeminded individuals wanting to rekindle their desire to learn music, almost everyone can sing, or at least become good appreciators of quality music.

When this experiment was launched, a number of well-intentioned doubted whether it could ever happen, for it seemed to go against most established canons of music. Two years of patient experimentation seem to prove the original premise right: that singing is possible for most, if not everyone, provided the atmosphere is right, and the musical soul is awakened.

Swara Sampada has flowered under the benign guidance of its President and other Office Bearers, who work tirelessly to see this dream become a reality. The spirit of comraderie and bonhomie



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amongst its members has to be seen to be believed. The magic of Swara Sampada lies in the feeling of musical accomplishment which a member experiences not only when he masters a song, but when his co-member does the same. For Swara sampadites are generous with their applause and reluctant with their disapprovals.

This experiment now appears to have succeeded with a performance on the big stage by Swara Sampadites on 16th February, 2005. This fiftieth performance comes into being after forty-nine medium level performances before audiences numbering 60-150. The Swara Sampada Monthly Meets are marathon learning sessions starting from 9.30 am and going on till 6.30-7 pm, and few abstain, or leave early. The President himself conducts these marathon learning sessions without leaving the stage even once, and the Group Leaders do likewise. Before coming on stage, each singer is informed atleast a month in advance the theme of the next Swara Sampada meet for which he starts preparing in right earnest. The singers meet for their rehearsals before the monthly musical meets, which are marathon 8-10 hours sessions under the direct supervision of the President assisted by the Group Leaders. Each month two Swara Sampadites are chosen as Star Singers for the next programme and they present a selection of five well rehearsed songs before the group. Swara Sampada has also conducted the Shining Stars Programmes called *Aaj Ke Sitare* for the last six months, in which earlier stars get a chance to present a medium level stage show before an audience of 140-160. These *Aaj Ke Sitare* programmes have been very much appreciated by listeners, and boosted the confidence of the singers. These singers are now ripe to present themselves on the big stage.

May we also add here a word on the themes of the Monthly Musical Meets of Swara Sampada. They are based on the compositions of one/two great music directors/lyricists/composers/singers, and all Swara Sampadites prepare songs given/sung by that master. In this manner, they have dealt with Music Directors like Naushad, Khayyam, S.D.Burman, R.D.Burman, Shanker Jaikishen, O.P.Nayyar, Kalyanji-Anandji, Laxmikant-Pyarelal; Lyricists like Majrooh Sultanpuri, Hasrat Jaipuri, Shakeel Badayuni, Sahir

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Ludhianvi; and institutions like Jagjit Singh and Chitra Singh. They have also had special programmes on Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhonsale, Kishore Kumar, and have a yearly programme on Mohd. Rafi.

Thus, besides the joy of singing, each Swara Sampadite now has a vast collection of songs he can confidently present on stage, besides of course the knowledge that goes along with this learning.

This second birthday, in February 2005, is actually the first birthday celebration of Swara Sampada. The first was not celebrated on purpose. During that time the Swara Sampadites were busy honing their talents and working hard to develop the ability to present their singing expertise, and so it wasn't time to celebrate still. Now the time has come, when, after the hard work of two solid years, and the blessings of *gurus*, Swara Sampadites can present their talent on the big stage.

They seek God's grace, and your good wishes and company, in this journey.

One last word. They could sing. So can you. Only stop being too critical of your ability, and start a group like Swara Sampada. If you need guidance, we will help you convert your dream into reality.

Dr. Ajai R.Singh
President
Swara Sampada

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THE PRESIDENT SPEAKS HIS MIND

DR. AJAI SINGH

No. Title	Page
1. The Oath of Swara-Sampadites	7
2. Remove the Dam of Inhibition, Build the Dam of Practice	9
3. Three Steps and Three Rights for all Singers	11
4. Silence, The Heart Of Music	13
5. The 100 Times Test for 100% Success	12
6. Let The Whole World Not Know!	14
7. Sometimes, do it with Eyes closed	16
8. How to select a Song ?	18
9. Lyrics—the Soul of a Song	20
10. Who is a Guru?	22
11. If you turn your back to Music - or look Sideways	25
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14. Diction - the Icing on the Cake	33
15. How to Emote while Singing	36
16. Nature and Music	38
17. Develop a Classical Base	40
18. If Music Is Like Prayer	43
19. How a Singer protects his voice	45
20. Sing in your own Voice	48
21. Stage Presence	51
22. Music: A Pastime or The Rhythm of Life	54
23. Conclusions	56

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The Oath of Swara-Sampadites

Mission Statement

***To convert bathroom-singers into drawing room singers,
and drawing room singers into stage-singers.***

- 1) We are dedicated to understanding the Science of Music and the Art of Singing.
- 2) Music is the common binding force amongst us all. It is the life-line of our fraternity. We shall think ten times before trusting a man who has no music in him.
- 3) We wish to encourage the dormant musical talents in ourselves, and in others. We want to see to it that it no longer remains dormant, that it grows and pervades our consciousness.
- 4) We shall be very keen listeners of others. Careful listening is 60% of music. The rest 40% is talent (10%), understanding (10%), and *riyaz* (20%).
- 5) We shall be appreciators of other's talent. We shall attempt to encourage the good in them always. For, in so doing , we encourage the good in ourselves.
- 6) Any criticism maybe cautiously offered, if at all, and only if we are convinced it is helpful and constructive for the musical growth of the other. It shall never be to hurt, to settle scores, or to put down the other. It shall always be in private, and with consent.
- 7) At all times, we shall uphold the dignity of a musical performance. The performer deserves our respect and total concentration, for he is trying to give his best. Talking, eating, cracking jokes etc. during a performance is to be strictly avoided. Thereby, we shall only end up depriving ourselves of becoming careful listeners, which is 60% of music, remember.
- 8) We shall learn to have faith in the vision and planning of our founders, and our leaders. We shall learn to

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harmonize with long-term goals, rather than seek short-term gains. We shall make every attempt to gel. If we feel we cannot, we shall seek clarification, guidance, even register protest, in that order. If we still find ourselves out of tune, we shall tune in, or tune off. We shall not attempt to convert the symphony itself into a noise, or stifle the rights of others to continue to enjoy the symphony.

- 9) We shall, above all, be good human beings. We shall utilize our musical quest towards that goal.

To achieve this objective, we shall see to it that all our actions are:

i. **niskama** (self-less)

ii. **nirabhimana** (not egoistic)

iii. **lokasamgrahartha** (for the benefit of getting people together)

iv. **isvararpita** (dedicated to the Almighty).

Present and future leaders will specially remember this.

- 11) We wish to make music a source of joy in our lives. All of us are co-travellers on a musical odyssey. We shall sing along with each other, enjoy each other's singing and each other's company, till the end of our lives.

- 12) We hope and pray that as and when the end comes, it comes with a song on our lips.

As President, I take this oath in all humility. I request all of you, my co- travellers, to study each item mentioned herein very carefully and take this oath too.

It shall be a lovely journey together. I sincerely wish music become your life-long friend, to add to your moments of joy, and to subtract from your moments of sorrow.

- Dr. Ajai Singh, Sargam, Vol 1:1, April, 2003

Rule No. 1 :

*Take an oath that you will be dedicated to understanding
the Science of Music and the Art of Singing.*

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Remove the Dam of Inhibition, Build the Dam of Practice

Whenever I meet people and ask them if they can sing, most of them smile and reply, 'Yes, but only in the bathroom.' The bathroom is a place where, removing our clothes also becomes equivalent to removing our inhibitions. If the joy with which a person hums in the bathroom is anything to go by, there is more music produced in all the baths of the world than in the musical studios, and programmes, and rehearsals, and practice sessions put together. And yet all this musical talent goes down the drain, literally, like the water that pours over their bodies. Why?

The greatest inhibition that bathroom singers experience is what would others say when they hear them sing. Singing in public is like getting disrobed before people. (Therefore they disrobe in private, and can sing to their hearts content, then). If they are assured that they will not be criticized, not be ridiculed or laughed at, they are often amazed at their own voice as they sing in front of others. Since they have often sung in private, hummed to themselves, hummed along with others who have occupied the stage, music has already grown within them. But its growth is stunted, or is stifled by inhibition and the fear of reproach. Having once or twice sung before others, they find that they too have a voice that has its own tenor, its own melody.

Once this realization is achieved, it is almost like a dam of music bursting. It is like a person who is gifted with vision after a lifetime of blindness, or a person who has legs after acting as a cripple all through life. It becomes almost impossible to handle. The eagerness, the intensity, the joy of wanting to savour every aspect of music, can engulf their lives. Music has such an intoxicating influence on people.

When the dam of inhibition bursts, a second dam has to be built. This is the dam of practice, of *riyaz*, of careful listening and patient practice, of understanding and incorporating the subtle nuances of singing and rendition.

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Swara-Sampadites, your first dam, that of inhibition, has already been burst, atleast for most of you who have been in the group for an year. Now you have to build the second dam. The first one was a destructive dam, it was hurting your musical growth. The second dam of practice, of careful listening, and constant improvement, is a constructive dam. This will channelise your strongly flowing musical energies in the right direction. The direction of becoming quality listeners and quality singers.

The direction of taking a major step forward in understanding the Science of Music and the Art of Singing,

Dr. Ajai Singh, , *Sargam*, Vol 1:2, May, 2003

Rule No. 2 :

Remove your inhibition to sing which is a negative and destructive dam, and install the dam of riyaz in its place, which is a positive and constructive one.

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Three Steps and Three Rights for all Singers

In this communication I wish to share a few more thoughts with you on singing and singers. I shall put them before you in the form of points for your consideration..

1. Singing is not the sole preserve of singers (by singers I mean professional singers). It is too precious a thing to be left only to them. It is a joy for everyone to experience.
2. Removal of inhibition is the first step in becoming a good singer.
3. The second step is enjoying singing for oneself and before others.
4. The third is learning some important steps involved in singing.
5. Everyone can sing and/or enjoy singing, provided these steps are followed.
6. Other people discourage you from singing. This is because:
 - i) Either they are good singers themselves or consider themselves such, and want listeners, not singers.
 - ii) They have heard the best, their ears are trained to recognise them alone, and they judge others by those high standards. In so judging, they reject the rest. The problem in doing this is that only a few continue to sing, while the rest are deprived of its joys. Unfortunately, most of those deprived may continue to feel that it is justified that they are so deprived.
7. Your first right, therefore, is to recognize that you have a right to sing. It is also the first duty you must perform towards yourself and your own development.
8. The second right you must exercise is to enjoy your singing,
9. The last and final right is to sing well, and that is possible by learning and *riyaz*.

10. All three rights are important, mind you. If you only know of your right to sing, and you don't enjoy singing, or do not practice, it will not do. Similarly, if you sing and practice but do not enjoy the singing (for example, you are always tense while singing), that also will not do. And if you want to sing and enjoy singing, but do not practice, that will not do as well. All three rights are to be simultaneously exercised, if you want to be a good singer.
11. Swara Sampada provides you a platform and a forum to develop such skills in you because we don't want the converse of our statement to happen. We don't want stage listeners to run away to drawing rooms, and drawing room listeners to run to their bathrooms, when a Swara Sampadite performs, do we?
12. Most Swara Sampadites have experienced its fruits and felt transformed. You can experience it when you talk to them.

The proof of the pudding, as is said, is in the eating.

Dr.Ajai Singh, *Sargam*, Vol 1:3, June, 2003

Rule No. 3 :

Take three steps

- i) *remove your inhibition*
- ii) *enjoy singing*
- iii) *learn singing.*

Enjoy three rights:

- i) *you have a right to sing;*
- ii) *exercising that right is your duty;*
- iii) *you have the right to sing well.*

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Silence, The Heart Of Music

At the heart of music is silence. This may sound almost like a paradox. How can music, which involves sound, go with silence, which involves the absence of sound? Let me explain. Have you seen a spinning wheel? Or a spinning top? The outer fringes of both are spinning like mad, aren't they? You come nearer and nearer to the center. What is happening to the circles there? They are spinning with lesser and lesser speed, till you come to the center itself. And there....what is happening there? It is absolutely still. No motion at all. But it is surrounded by all the movement around it. In fact, since the center is still, and steadfast, the rest of the top/ spinning wheel is fixated, while it spins about madly.

Same is with life. Same with man. Same with music. That life, which is serene and quiescent in its core, may be surrounded by all the din and commotion of living, but it will remain unruffled and radiate joy and peace to people around. The man who is fixated to some rules and principles may be knocked around in life, but will weather every storm eventually. That music which is steadfast and serene, the product of a rippleless mind, the echo of an undisturbed soul, will spring from the depths and stir the hearts and minds of others, will make them laugh and enjoy and dance and sing, and reach bliss. It will be surrounded by everything around, and yet remain deeply still, silent in its core.

Deeply quiet. Profoundly quiet.

Like the sublime *sur*, 'sa', which is the start of all music, when prolonged and sung to perfection, the quietness and peace it gives to the singer and the audience, transforms all unease and restlessness into peace and tranquillity. Disturbances of the mind sink into oblivion. Ripples of restlessness quieten down on the psyche's surface. And in its depths. Silence touches the core of the singer and the listener.

With Best Wishes From:

Dr. Ajay Singh M.B.B.S. Cell : 92234 77028

At the heart of music, my dear Swara Sampadites, is this silence that you should try to capture. I hope and pray, you achieve it sometime in your life. Then your singing will be sublime, a prayer of gratitude and benediction to the divine. It will be *Nada Brahma*, the primordial sound, the connection between manhood and divinity

The journey of Swara Sampada is in that direction. That it may be your ultimate destination is my most sincere wish for you, and my prayer to the Lord above, on this auspicious day of Guru-Poornima.

Dr.Ajai.R.Singh, *Sargam*, Vol 1:4, July, 2003

*Note: This message was written to coincide with
Guru-Poornima in July 2003.*

Rule No. 4:

*Capture the silence which is at the heart of music,
like the sur 'sa' around which all other surs revolve.*

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The 100 Times Test for 100% Success

When people come up to sing on stage or before others, they are much concerned about two very valuable things. One is their music book and the other their spectacles. They wear the latter, dig their heads into the former and sing, blissfully unaware of a wide appreciative audience waiting to establish eye-contact with them, to enjoy with them, to smile with and clap for them. After finishing, they close their book and remove their spectacles with a great sense of relief! Thank God, it's over! That's their feeling, or something to that effect. And then the complaint is, the audience is not appreciative, today my voice is not upto its mark, there is some difficulty with the sound system, the musicians did not play the interludes well. That's why the song fell flat. Although, mind you, the voice may be good, and everything else may be in order.

What was missing? A very significant factor, that is the essence of a live performance. The rapport of souls was missing. The symphony between the heart of the singer and that of the audience was not established. Because the singer was so busy looking into the book, he/she had no time to look into the eyes of his/her audience. The heart-strings could not be tugged at. How could they? If I speak the most loving words to you and speak them before you, but looking down or the other way, you will obviously not believe they are meant for you. You'd probably believe they are for someone on the side, or down below. And you cannot be blamed for it, can you?

The singer must look up at his audience. He must smile at them. He must look into their eyes. He must watch their faces as they feel happy, or sad or excited, or pensive. But for that he has to have his eyes away from his book. He must know the lyrics of the song by heart.

How does one do so? The procedure is very simple. But the simplest of things are often difficult to do for most people. Let this paradox not be applicable to you. The procedure is what I call the 100 times test.

- 1) First of all, the lyrics of the song must be perfectly written down with you. You need to hear a song at least 5 times for

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this. Then the song by the original singer must be heard at least 10 times before you start singing it, and then you sing it for 10 times before the words become fixed in your mind.

- 2) After these 25 times, you sing it before one person, may be your spouse/friend, whatsoever, or to yourself, imaging that someone is listening.
- 3) Again listen to the original song for 5 times and sing it to yourself for another 20 times, before singing it before your family members.
- 4) Again listen to the original song for another 5 times, practice for 20 times before singing it before a small circle of 5-10 people, may be with musical accompaniment. (That's a total of 75 times.)
- 5) Listen to the song again for 5 times before practising another 20 times before you are ready to sing before a larger audience, like a Swara-Sampada group, or on stage.

A song heard at least 25 times, sung to oneself or before a small circle for 75 times, is fit to be consumed by a larger group. You don't eat raw wheat or rice. You have to cook it. Then it's fit for consumption. When you come and say, I have not prepared my song but will still try, it's like telling your guest, here is the wheat, I could not make chappatis, please excuse me and eat it. Does it make sense?

Be merciful to others. But before doing that, be merciful to yourself. Because if you follow this method, even if you are awakened in the dead of night, even if you are on your death-bed, if you have the strength and your memory is intact, you will still be able to sing, I can assure you.

This is the 100 times test which will succeed for you 100% of the times you do it. You want it to happen to you? To sing confidently before an audience? To enjoy your singing? To look into their appreciative eyes while you sing?

Then just go ahead and do it. I hope you will, my dear Swara Sampadities.

Dr. Ajai Singh, *Sargam*, Vol 1:5, August, 2003

Rule No. 5 :

Practice a song 100 times (listen to it at least 25 times, and sing it as best as you can for another 75 times) before you present it to a larger group.

Know your song by heart.

With Best Wishes From:

SAMRAJ PAPERS © 5599 0179

Let The Whole World Not Know!

All you Swara-Sampadites are sincerely devoted to music. I have no doubts on that score. You are all eager to learn and move ahead in your musical pursuits. You have developed an irresistible urge to have more and more of music in your life, and more so in your consciousness. I admire your devotion to music and dedication to furthering your interest in it.

How shall we further this interest? That is the key question. For this, I would like you to note the title of my communication this time: Let the whole world not know!

The whole world not know what, you will ask? The wrong deeds you have committed? You don't need my advice on that, you have already ensured it. Thank you very much, you will say. The wealth you have? That again you are smart enough to conceal, while revealing as much as is appropriate, for society as well as the I.T. authorities! So, you don't need my counsel on that too. Then what is this psychiatrist-president talking about? Hope he makes sense. You don't want reasons to suspect his sanity, I am sure.

Relax, my dear Swara-Sampadites. As long as there is music in me, and there is Swara-Sampada around me, I will continue to make sense ! So here goes the main point I want to make with you this time:

- i) If you don't practice for one day, *you* will know there is something wrong.
- ii) If you don't practice for two days, *your guru* will know something is wrong.
- iii) If you don't practice for three days, *the whole world* will know something is wrong!

Practice every day, 15-30 min for average singing, 30-90 min for good singing, 90-180 min. for excellent singing, spread over two sessions preferably.

With Best Wishes From:

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Please note, I am talking of music practice alone here. Kindly don't use my thoughts to suit you in other fields of your endeavour! And I know they are a plenty! I say this because my "100 times test for 100% success" communication last time has been used by my intelligent members for other such pursuits!!

So, my dear Swara-Sampadites, 'Let the whole world not know!'

Practice! Practice!! Practice!!!

Dr. Ajai Singh, *Sargam*, Vol 1:6, September, 2003

Rule No. 6 :

Practice singing every day, 15-30 min for average singing, 30-90 min for good singing, 90-180 min. for excellent singing, spread over two sessions preferably.

With Best Wishes From:

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Sometimes, do it with eyes closed

Yes, my dear Swara-Sampadites, I mean it when I say so, I am not talking here of that which comes instantly to your mind and gets, maybe, a mischievous smile on your lips! I am also not talking of following the bulls or bears in a stock-market, for if you follow them with eyes closed, you may be rammed in by the bulls, or smothered by the bears. I am also not talking of some God-men, or women, who may take you for a jolly good ride along the spiritual highway if you go with your eyes closed, and deprive you of all your belongings as they show you a mirage of spiritual bliss. I am also not talking of some health professionals, or legal experts, or financial advisors, or marketing executives, who may dispossess you of a neat financial packet if you trust them with eyes closed.

I am talking of the arts, my friends. Look at my art. You see a movie, you watch a drama, you witness a dance performance, you admire a painting or sculpture. You got to have your eyes wide open to admire all these arts. In fact, you cannot appreciate them with eyes closed, can you? We may even go to the extent of saying that you can hardly admire art if you cannot see. With, however, one exception - Music.

Music is the only art form which can be admired with eyes closed. There is no other. In fact, to be a good listener, you must consciously close your eyes to remove all other distractions if you want to concentrate on, and enjoy, good music. (And, also, to enjoy a short nap in the bargain, if you please!). Most music connoisseurs in musical concerts do this routinely (I mean the closing of eyes to concentrate on music, and not the taking of a nap). It heightens their concentration, and helps them appreciate the nuances of the performance so much better. And even the other listeners close their eyes in joy or bliss when they feel specially happy or greatly moved, during a musical performance. It happens spontaneously. It is a sign of the great joy that the listener experiences. Similarly, the singer often closes his eyes when he is contemplative, or wants to delve deep into the

With Best Wishes From:

आकलन

सही सोच का निष्पक्ष आयोजन

सम्पादक : हरजिंदर सिंह सेठी

७५/३, गुरु अर्जुन देव मार्ग, मुलुंड कालोनी, मुम्बई ८२.

intricacies of sound. And wants to establish a rapport with his own inner being.

So, my dear Swara Sampadites, go ahead. Even in your Swara Sampada programmes, sometimes listen with your eyes closed. And do so even while singing. (You will, if nothing else, appear to be listening or singing with great feeling!). When you are listening to good music at home, or in a concert, do so with eyes closed. (If nothing else, you will make a great impression as a quality listener!) Listening with eyes closed is a great, soothing feeling. Please note however - Don't follow this advice while you are driving. Then you will have a great, soothing feeling as well. The hospital bills and mechanic's charges will be great, and all family members will be engaged in giving you a soothing feeling! I don't think you want either, do you?

So, then, my dear Swara Sampadites, sometimes, and *only* sometimes, please do it with eyes closed! You will, won't you?

Dr. Ajai Singh, *Sargam, Vol 1:7, October, 2003*

Rule No. 7:

Sometimes listen, and sing, with your eyes closed. Good music is appreciated better that way.

With Best Wishes From:

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How to select a song ?

The major problem with most new (and even accomplished) singers is which song/ songs to select to present in a programme. It is not different from the difficulty many people experience in selecting a dress to suit an occasion. For example, which sari to wear for a marriage, or which suit for a conference. Or, even, which dress to wear for the next Swara Sampada programme, or when you become the star-singer. While the problem is similar, the way to resolve it, unfortunately, is somewhat different. Especially if you dress casually. For if you select your song casually, you can be sure of a less than favourable impression.

What, then, are the steps in song selection? They are seven, according to me. Let us go over them, one by one:

1. First and foremost, it must be a song that instantly appeals to you when you hear it. It's like a dress you buy because you instantly like it. This is a consideration you must never, never, neglect. Your song selection reflects your personality, your inner likings, and even your Being. So, let it reflect the same in all sincerity.
2. Second, the lyrics should be such as to touch your heart. If they do not touch your heart, rest assured they won't touch your listeners'.
3. Third, you should want to hear the song again and again, to sing it again and again. Because if it is such, your listeners are also likely to want to hear it again and again, to feel the same and be touched by it.
4. Fourth, the emotions a song expresses must be comfortable for you to feel. For example, many females are uncomfortable singing a cabaret or seductive number, and many men are equally uncomfortable singing a sorrowful tune. If you are not comfortable with the feel of a song, don't sing it. First, mentally prepare yourself to accept the feeling,

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enjoy it, and then sing the song. For, a song sung without feeling is like a body without life.

5. Fifth, you must be comfortable with the diction of the song. You must be able to pronounce the syllables correctly, to understand the meaning well, and emote it while presenting your song. Of course, you must have the song by heart, and avoid the book/paper while singing.
6. Sixth, you must be comfortable with your own ability to sing the song. Don't just select a song because you like it very much (refer point 1). Judge whether you can sing it fairly well, you can present its beauty before the audience, you can be fair to the song. For example, don't sing a major *raga* based classical song unless you know something about the *raga*, have heard some masters sing it, and can understand its *aroha-avaroha*, and can sing it, at least to some extent.
7. Finally, get feed-back from those whose opinion you value, before you sing a song in a programme, and also after you have presented it. This feedback, as I said, is from those whose opinion you value, whose criticism is constructive and whose praise is genuine.

Then, go ahead and sing. And win the audience over. They are waiting to become your admirers.

Dr. Ajai Singh, *Sargam*, Vol 1:8, November, 2003

Rule No. 8 :

Select a song which instantly appeals to you, whose lyrics touch your heart, which you feel like singing again and again, whose emotion and diction you are comfortable with, and singing which is within your musical capacity.

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Lyrics—the soul of a song

We attribute certain qualities to a human being. If the body is the structure, the mind is its guiding force and the soul its essence. A song, similarly, has certain attributes and that is what I wish to share with you in this communication.

Like the human body has a structure, the song too has a structure. That is the notations, the rhythm, the *raga* on which it is based. All these are essential for a song to be manifest, just as the human body is essential for an individual to be manifest.

The music director then sets this structure to music. He uses his expertise and his imagination to make this structure vibrate with life. He designs its shape, its contours, softens its rough edges, chisels here and there till a finished product, the song, is ready. He has a talented sculptor's mind and that's what adds depth and beauty to the song. The music director's contribution to a song is like that of the mind in our body. And he uses the services of a talented singer to make this song come to life, as though.

But a song, to touch you, has to have another elusive, somewhat ethereal quality. Its words should move you, should tug at your heart strings, should stir something deep within you. It should have the ability to touch your soul. It is the lyrics, and lyrics alone, which can have that quality. The words of a song, its beauty, its composition, the poet's imagination that he pours into a song, is according to me, the soul of a song.

Unless you like, even love, the lyrics of a song, you can never love a song itself. You may like the beats, you may even admire the music, but if the words do not touch your heart, you will never be immersed in the song. And the listener will never be immersed in your song.

That's the main reason why a number of new songs fail to move you. There is hardly any lyrics worth the name in them. Those that do, will still make their mark.

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This is also the reason a number of singers fail to move you. They sing the song perfectly, in *SUR*, *taal*, *laya*, but the soul is missing. It is because they do not emote the song. And that is because either they do not understand the lyrics, or are themselves not touched by it. The poetry in the song is underdeveloped, although the music or *raga* is presented perfectly. That's incomplete music, according to me.

So, Swara Sampadites, let the words of a song move your soul. And unless they do, do not sing a song. Concentrate on what the poet tries to tell you through the song. You will pour your heart out when you sing. And your song too will achieve the melody and pathos that we associate with a Talat Mehmood, or a Jagjit Singh. They sing with their hearts because they emote the lyrics of a song.

Let your soul experience the soul of music. Let it sing and dance with joy.

Let the lyrics of a song, which is its soul, sing in rhythm with your own musical soul.

See the difference it will create in your singing. For the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

Dr. Ajai Singh, *Sargam*, Vol 1:9, December, 2003

Rule No. 9 :

*Sing only such songs whose lyrics touch your heart and move your soul.
And unless they do, do not sing a song.*

With Best Wishes From:

Jatinder Sharma

Who is a Guru?

English, for all its faults, is still a beautiful language. For, the four letters of the word GURU- G,U,R,U have given us the four essentials of this important concept.

We Indians love to exalt everything, to put it up on a pedestal, as though. And make it almost unreachable for ordinary mortals. So they worship it all right, but don't they themselves want to reach it. But the concept of a *Guru*, though exalted, is also reachable, at least for a few.

A *guru* is a teacher, but he is not only that. He is an adviser, but not only that. He is a guide, but not only that. He is a friend, but not only that. He is a repository of knowledge, but not only that. He is worthy of respect, even awe, but not only that.

What is a *guru* all about, then ?

I said the four letters of the word *Guru* are important. And let me come to them: G-U-R-U.

1. **'G'** - stands for gives. A GURU gives. He does not take. He must necessarily give and keep on giving. He has so much to give, and he does not mind giving, that he does not have the need, or the inclination, to take, though disciples may be very eager and willing to give back. And to the extent and till the time he can give alone can he occupy the position of a *guru*.
2. **'U'** - he gives you. U. His focus of attention is you, your welfare, your upliftment. It is never his benefit, his ego, his prestige, his power, his name or fame. The moment the latter become important, he loses his status. The moment the focus shifts from you to his own self, he cannot occupy that position, and must necessarily relinquish it, however great his knowledge.
3. **'R'**- stands for right. He can never, *never*, impart that which is wrong. He can never manipulate, coerce, or use his

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position to extract something out of you. He must himself know what is right, follow the right path and never, *never* show you the wrong path, for whatsoever gain of his. In a *guru's* company, you must only see that which is the right way for you, and then develop the necessary strength and ability to follow it. .

- 4 'U'- this last alphabet stands for understanding. It is not just information that a *guru* shares - that you can get from books. It is not just knowledge - that you can get from your own reflections. It is not just the power of expression, or eloquence - that you can get from attending some classes, workshops or seminars. It is *understanding* that he imparts. Understanding is the sum total of the knowledge he has gained from the masters of yore, to which he has added the experiences of his own varied and rich life. It is the wisdom of the ages distilled into a life lived in accordance with it, exemplifying it, and even at times transcending it. It is the sum total of the cosmos which you see in the pure, undefiled vision of the master. And all that you feel like doing is looking up to him, thirsting for more, and sublimating yourself as you quench your thirst for the best and the most noble in life.

The *Guru* is an exalted concept, true, but very much applicable in the world of music, my friends. You cannot reach far in the field without one. And a time must come when you yourself, by careful *sadhana* and *tapasya*, try to become one.

This is a relay-race, my friends. The baton of understanding must be passed over. But first learn to receive it, to recognize it as the true baton, and develop the ability to hold it. Then you too will be fit to pass it on to the next.

A pure, undefiled baton. Touched not only by your hand, but by your heart and soul.

And, then, somewhere down the line, you will become your own *guru*. And a *guru* to someone else too.

Then, and then alone, your musical journey, as your journey of life, will reach somewhere near fulfillment.

With Best Wishes From:

Advocate Sanjay Manek @ 9820056696

I wish you all the very best, for I am with you on this journey all through, my dear Swara-Sampadites.

A very happy and melodious New Year, friends.

Dr. Ajai Singh, *Sargam*, Vol 1:10, January, 2004

Note : This was a New Year message in Jan. 2004

Rule No.10 :

Guru stands for G-U-R-U i.e.

Gives You Right Understanding.

*Be ready to be a guru to someone else at the right time,
and learn to be your own guru too*

With Best Wishes From:

Apollo Suez Electricals Pvt. Ltd.

If you turn your back to music - or look sideways

If you have had a chance to attend a dinner-cocktail where a live musical performance is on (and I'm sure you have) you must have observed a fairly common occurrence, and even sometimes been a part of it. At least two things happen, which I have seen, and which I must share with you in this communication:

- 1) As the singer/musician is busy singing/playing, the people are busy drinking, eating and talking.
- 2) As the music rises in tempo and volume, the talking in the so-called audience rises equally, to match the singer's volume and tempo as though. (It's, really speaking, so as not to allow the conversation to be drowned in the singer's voice, or the accompanying music). So much so, that people get so preoccupied and intense in talking, they often turn their back to the performer, and, glass or plate in hand, get busy discussing some business deal to be clinched, some petty intrigue to be plotted, some delicious gossip to be shared. And, as the performer ends on stage, the volume of conversation also reduces, and a few in the audience may cry out 'Hey', and a few polite hands may clap. And again the back is turned.

And the talk... talk... talk... continues...

No doubt these good people have their reasons for doing what they do, their own commitments being elsewhere. And I guess that is good for them. So all the luck to them. But if you are one of them, my dear Swara Sampadites, then hear this one thing from me:

If you turn your back when a musical performance is on, whatever the quality or type of music that is on, you are not only turning your back to the performer, you are turning your back to Music Herself.

With Best Wishes From:

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And take this further from me: If you turn your back to music, music will turn Her back to you.

What do I mean by saying this?

At the most critical moment, when you have to perform at your best, you will forget some lines, add an unnecessary note, sing out of tune or rhythm, and feel all at sea.

Because you turned your back to music, music will unwittingly turn Her back to you.

Similarly, I have seen a number of people talking, gossiping and whispering to each other as a musical performance is on. Then you not only break the performer's concentration (That's the reason why the lights are switched off in the audience when a good performance is on). You are not only rude to him, my friends. You are being rude to your own self. For, you are depriving yourself of a great rapport you can develop with the Goddess of Music who is making Her presence felt through the voice/instrument of some performer.

And now let me tell you this other thought for this month:

If you look sideways when a musical performance is on, Music will look sideways and ignore you when you need Her blessings, when you are in the midst of an important performance.

If you are busy talking to someone on the side when a performance is on, Music will turn sideways and talk to someone else when you need Her the most, that is, during a performance.

So, my dear Swara Sampadites, I hope the message is clear. Take these two thoughts as your thumb role for this month, and for your musical upliftment. And make them your companions for a lifetime:

1) If you turn your back to music, music will turn Her back to you,

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2) If you look sideways and talk when a musical performance is on, music will look sideways and ignore you when you need Her help the most in a performance.

Now, tell me what you want. And you will get your own answer. That's provided you remember these two lovely thoughts for this month.

I'm sure you will not disappoint me, my dear friends.

Dr. Ajai R. Singh, *Sargam*, Vol 1:11, February, 2004

Rule No. 11 :

*Never turn your back to a musical performance, howsoever ordinary.
Never look sideways and talk when a performance is on.*

With Best Wishes From:

Narayan Trading Company Telefax : 55993534

***Bahut Bhatke Yahan Wahan...
Ab Ho Jaye Apna Ek Ghar Yahan***

As I got up on Holi Day to attend to the colourful get-together we had at Swara Sampadite Ganesh Iyer's place, I was struck with a thought that I want to share with you.

It's one year of Swara Sampada. A birthday celebration is due. And I know many of you are feeling the loss. But I want to celebrate Swara Sampada's birthday in Swara Sampada's own home.

We have enjoyed all the lovely programmes uptil now. At all the different venues where our needs have been quite well looked after. And I think our office bearers are doing a great job. Secretary, Swara Sampadite Dr. Milind Shejwal, Jt. Secretary, Swara Sampadite Subhash Nayak and Treasurer Swara Sampadite Ashok Doshi, along with guidance from Vice President, Swara Sampadite Dr. Vijay Thakker, have arranged for various great venues. And we have indeed enjoyed the fare every time.

But it's time to move into our own place: *Bahut bhatke yahan wahan, Ab ho jaye apna ek ghar yahan*. Swara Sampada, the baby, one year old, is asking its guardians to give her a permanent home. Maybe a modest home, maybe a big one, that doesn't matter. But her own home - where she can play at will and flourish, where she can invite her friends to play with her. As gypsies, we have moved about quite a lot. And enjoyed all the colour and fun involved in all this movement. But it's now time to settle down to a house we can call our very own.

I know there are various nitty-gritties involved in making this dream come to reality. And it's at present a dream. But nothing starts unless first a dream.

Who would have imagined that an organisation like Swara Sampada would ever be set up? And turned into a reality? My

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request to you all, my dear Swara Sampadites, now is, don't let this remain only a dream. Let's work to make this dream a reality.

And since the idea has started from me, let me follow it up by backing it with seed-money. I pledge Rs.50,000/- from my side to set the ball rolling. And I am not one to go back on my word.

Now the ball is in your court.

As I shared this thought after our Holi celebrations on the 6th of March, there was excitement in many members, cautious optimism in some. But that's how it should be. We shall of course work out the details of how to go about it. But let's first decide we want a house. Then the rest follows. Like you first decided to start singing. The rest has followed.

Nothing begins unless first a dream. Swara Sampada began that way. Nothing dies faster than a dream, unless it is shared by the rest, and followed up by concrete action. Will you, my dear Swara Sampadites, who have achieved your dream of singing, also fulfil Swara Sampada's dream of having a home?

The child looks up to the parents with hope in her eyes. Fill her eyes with joy, not with tears. I urge you strongly to work towards making our own home. And the baby will celebrate her birthday only in the new home.

She is a rather stubborn baby.

She will wait for her birthday celebrations. And she would want her birthday to coincide with the *griha-pravesh* ceremony.

Dr. Ajai R.Singh, *Sargam*, Vol 1:12, March, 2004.

Rule No. 12 :
Have a musical nest.

With Best Wishes From:

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Keep on the Highway of Positivity

I am fascinated with a phenomenon I witness regularly in Swara Sampada and which I want to talk about here.

Chitra and Ganesh, along with daughter Sweta, arrange for a Holi programme at their place. Sarla and A.B.Ramachandran call us all to their house- warming. Ruchi and Ram Arora have been arranging for the New Year Eve party for us for the last two years. Poornima and Ashok Doshi arrange for a lovely picnic to Mahabaleshwar where music bloomed for many. Charu and Dr. Vijay arrange for Sharad-Poornima celebrations at their place. Surekha and Subhash Nayak organise the last session on *Raga Yaman* at their residence in which our Hon.Member Mangesh Gokarna holds a full four-hour session. Our other Hon. Member Raju Ganapathy has been writing regularly for *Sargam* sharing some pearls of wisdom with us.

So many of our enthusiastic members have arranged for music practice sessions at their place, something that starts in the late-afternoon and continues well into the night. Hina and Jatin, Kokila and Dr. Milind, Rekha and Capt. Ajay, Nirmala and Pradeep, Dr. Chitra and Chandrashekhar, Poornima and Ashok, Rita and Capt. Sudhir Chaudhary, Mrs. Geetanjali and Dr. Vazandar, Charu and Dr. Vijay. So many others are eagerly awaiting their chance.

Sarala, and her team, with enthusiastic guidance from Dr. Milind, have come out with *Sargam* without a single miss, an achievement to applaud.

Hina and Jatin Shah, our new members, sponsored a full Swara Sampada programme in memory of Hina's brother who was a great music lover. Sarala and A.B. have offered to sponsor lunch for this programme, to celebrate their daughter's engagement. What wonderful gestures indeed!

Sanjeevani and Shyam Talawadekar are the first to pledge their contribution of Rs. 11,000/- towards the appeal I made in the last *Sargam* issue about having our own place. I am sure

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many more will follow when we get going with some concrete plans.

What makes Swara-Samapadites do this? To answer this, we must know what makes Swara-Sampada tick?

Let's try and answer, because we will then understand the core strength of Swara-Sampada. When Swara-Sampadites meet, the joy of coming together is palpable. It is seen in their eyes as they look at each other, in their smiles as they greet each other, in their enthusiasm as they discuss each other's song selection, and in their joy of being members of such a lovely group. For many, it is like getting back friends and friendships, which they had lost in their childhood. For many again, it's like an extended family, ever ready to respond to each other's call.

But that still doesn't answer the question: What makes Swara-Sampada tick?

One reason, of course, is that the soul of Swara Sampada is music. Music, which brings so much joy and peace to all those who practice it. And it can be a great binding force amongst people. But it can also cause quarrels, back biting, groupism, destructive criticism, all of which, touch-wood, Swara Sampada is miles away from. (And when these become the main activities of Swara Sampada, I will be the first to be miles away from it, let me assure you!)

So, that still don't answer the question: What makes Swara Sampada tick?

If the soul of Swara Sampada is music, its driving force is Positivity. To the engine of Music, we have added the petrol of Love and Encouragement, and the additives of Happiness and Appreciation, We tune up the engine with Care and Compassion and weed out the sludge of hatred, bitterness, harshness, poisonous words and thoughts. For pollution-control is equally important, as much for engines as for people, and for organisations.

With Best Wishes From:

Hotel Nisarga ☎ 2561 3132

So, keep to the highway of positivity, my friends. With the street-car called Music, you will then drive very far. And if you don't keep to the highway, it's very easy to lose your way in the lanes and by-lanes of negativity, which are in their hundreds. And, trust me, even this car called Music will stop running on the road of negativity. Don't try to find out if it will, really. Take my word for it, for I have seen it happen with so many around me.

It's music coupled with positivity that makes Swara-Sampada tick. So, now you know what you got to do to keep the organisation healthy. And continue to bring loads of happiness to you all through your life.

Dr. Ajai R. Singh, *Sargam*, Vol 2:1, April, 2004

Rule No. 13 :

Never involve yourself in negative activities.

Music combined with positivity is the winning combination in life.

With Best Wishes From:	
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Diction - the icing on the cake

Every language has its peculiar mode of expression. It is the manner in which it is traditionally spoken by the people whose mother-tongue it is. When you listen to two Maharashtrians conversing in Marathi, you find an ease, a felicity of expression. You don't necessarily find it when a Gujrati speaks in Marathi with one of the Maharashtrians mentioned above. Now, we do tolerate the mistakes of grammar and pronunciation, and ofcourse appreciate the fact that someone is making an earnest attempt to speak another's tongue. But, if the diction is not proper, the grace and rich texture which epitomises that language is lost.

Why am I writing about it here? That's because the songs we sing can have a similar problem. Songs are not just notes sung in rhythm. They are words put to notes and sung in rhythm. So, it's a three tier arrangement to say the least, and each tier is equally important in a proper musical expression for a singer. Which means, if you sing the notes properly, in *sur*, you get 33%. If you sing in rhythm, or *tal*, you get 33%. And if you pronounce properly, you get 33%, (The last 1% you never get by trying. It's by Divine grace, available only to a few, but I strongly suspect, to only those who achieve the 99%.Let's leave that for the present, because that's not the burden of what I am trying to say here.)

What does this mean, therefore? It means, even if you sing the correct notes, in proper rhythm, you are only a 66% singer, a good singer. It's only when you pronounce the words correctly that you can become a 99% singer, an excellent singer.

Now consider the following. We give so much time and effort to singing the notes correctly, We spend so much time and effort singing it in a proper rhythm. How much time and energy do we spend in pronouncing the words correctly?

We know where is the difficulty. It's because we are singing Hindi songs and Hindi being a hybrid language, has had a great

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influence as much of Sanskrit, as of Persian and Arabic, especially in its Hindustani form. And Urdu, its sister-language, in which most quality Hindi film songs of yester-years were penned, has had a great influence of Persian and Arabic.

Now, it would be expecting a little too much for every singer to learn Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic (although a quality singer should have some knowledge of these great languages), but having a working knowledge of Urdu and, most important, pronouncing the Urdu words that come in a song correctly, is absolutely necessary to present a song in its true spirit.

Let's take an example. The beautiful song :

Shame-gham ki qasam / Aaj gham-gin hain hum....

Now, if we pronounce it.

Shame-gam ki kasam /Aaj gam-gin hai hum....

The whole charm and beauty of the composition can get lost. It's as though you have removed the Minar from Charminar, or the Gumbaz from Gol-Gumbaz, or the top dome from the Taj Mahal.

Or take the other popular song :

Ye nayan da-re da-re / Ye jaam bha-re bha-re / Zaaa peene do...

Now, if we say :

Ye nayan da-re da-re / Ye jaam bha-re bha-re / Jaaa peene do...

Well, again, the top dome of the Taj Mahal is removed.

Now, that's the problem. What's the solution ?

It's not very difficult. First of all, become aware of the fact that you must pronounce correctly. The original singer whose recording you listen to has already sung it correctly. His faults of diction have been corrected for you by the singer himself, or the music director. So you have a gold-standard by which to go. If you have any doubts about your diction, just go back to the

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original and listen very carefully. And keep listening till you get it right. Now pronounce it like-wise. And repeat the correct pronunciation till it becomes a part of your consciousness. Again the 100 times test I talked of earlier will help you here too. Pronounce it a 100 times correctly, and it will work. This method of improving your diction will never fail you.

You love a cake, true. But unless you are a diabetic or a weight-watcher, you love the icing on a cake too. Diction is like the icing on the cake, or the topping on your ice-cream. The cake is ok without the icing, but it is simply superb with it.

So, as you bake the cake the next time, get the icing on it right too.

Happy baking. Er, singing, friends.

Dr. Ajai Singh, *Sargam*, Vol 2:2, May, 2004

Rule No. 14 :

Perfect your diction. Learn the nuances of the language in which you sing.

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How to Emote while Singing

For a singer, emotions are like sugar in a tea. Essential, but in the right proportion.

You can take your tea without sugar. But it will taste flat, and may no longer remain the cup that cheers. Similarly, if you sing without emotion, the song will fall flat, and may neither cheer you, nor your listeners.

You got to add sugar alright, but how much sugar to add to your tea? If you add too much, it becomes syrupy, if too little it tastes bland. It's the right proportion that makes it the cup that cheers. Similarly, if you add too much emotion to your song, it becomes mushy, too sentimental for comfort. And if too little, it hardly touches anyone's heart, like a miser's philanthropy.

So, the right proportion is important. But how do you get the right proportion? Let's come back to the cup of tea. It's the cup that cheers but does not inebriate (intoxicate). Similarly, you emote as much as to make you, and you listener, feel the emotion, without overwhelming both. The listener may enjoy, even cry, while you sing because of the emotions aroused in him/her. But the emotion should not overpower him, or drown him so that he feels choked or out of breath, for he may not want to ever experience it again, unless of course he is a masochist. The emotion for the singer should not be so overwhelming that it supersedes the other essentials of good singing like *sur*, *tala*, *laya* and diction. Like the understated elegance that defines that elusive quality called grace, emotion should be understated, delicately interwoven in the matrix of the song itself and never, never, allowed to become loud. Like loud colours in dress, they only jar the senses.

Let's take an example. The song "O... *khilona... jankar tum to mera dil tode jaate ho...*" express a lovely emotion. But the way the "O..." has been sung, makes the song too syrupy. You will hear it for a time or two, but may not like it as much later, unless of course you love a lot of sugar in your tea. I have a sneaking suspicion, this was one reason why Mahendra

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Kapoor, a good singer really, did not last long. It was probably because of the extra emotion he added to his singing.

How to emote while singing, then? It's best to know the meaning of the song first, its lyrics, because that tells you what the poetry is trying to convey. Then creatively visualise yourself in that situation, and without losing hold over the *trimurty* of *sur*, *tala* and *laya*, go ahead and present the song. If your visualisation is creative enough, and you are an emotionally adequate person from within, you will, with practice, reach that optimal blend of emotion in singing that tugs at the heart strings but does not overwhelm. It takes time and effort, but I assure you it is worth the time and effort.

Second suggestion. Listen to singers who emote well. Talat Mehmood and Jagjit Singh are the masters, and Mohammad Rafi and Mukesh are no less. If you have to really emote while singing, I have one strong suggestion to make. Listen to, and sing, Talat Mehmood and Jagjit Singh for at least six months. Listen to them very carefully, concentrate on their way of presentation and sing only them for six months at least, if possible. Then see if you emote or not. I challenge you to do this, and you will surely develop that elusive quality that makes, or breaks, a song and a singer in the long run. And this suggestion is for you, irrespective of whether you are a male or a female singer.

Great emotions don't come just like that. When was the last time you *really* laughed or cried? They require an event of that magnitude. Similarly, great emotions don't enter singing that easily. They have to be cultivated, and honed to perfection, diligently, patiently, over a period of time.

But they do come if you try hard enough. I am sure you will. And I'm equally sure you will succeed.

Dr. Ajai R. Singh, *Sargam*, Vol 2 :3, June 2004

Rule No. 15 :

Learn the meaning of a song, visualize the situation in which the song has been sung, and add just the right proportion of emotion to the song.

Listen to singers who emote well.

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Nature and Music

There is music being created around us all the time. Not only by our voices, our musical instruments, or our electronic gadgets. Have you ever cared to stop and listen to this music around you, music that is created by nature herself?

Have you heard raindrops falling on the ground? Or on a tin-roof? Pitter-patter...pitter-patter...? Or even on the top of your car while you are driving? Or your wind-shield, as you frantically start your wiper to brush them away? Have you? They all create a certain pattern of distinct musical notes. Don't miss listening to them in these rains, and spend a few minutes doing so, and you will experience what I am saying.

Have you heard the breeze passing through the trees? The peculiar swish-swoosh, as the wind forces its way through the leaves? And the leaves, aflutter, respond with happy tremulous notes to the breeze's caresses?

Have you heard the roar of the waves as they rise in the sea, and come with great intensity to break on the shore? Almost like the cascading electrifying *taans* of an accomplished singer who, having demonstrated his virtuosity, comes back contented and rests on the '*sam*'?

Have you seen the Sun's rays playing hide and seek with the clouds, or piercing through the dense foliage of a tree, and spreading patterns of art on the ground, almost like the *payal* (trinklets) of a dancer, whose musical sound mesmerises you as much as her dance?

Have you seen the full-moon waltzing through the sky, with the clouds trying to engulf her, one by one, as they pass by, enticing her by their rhythmic movements and weaving patterns, coalescing and ethereal, almost like the sublime musical presentation of a maestro?

And have you heard the birds and animals, and the lovely music they produce? One of our ancient texts identifies the

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shuddha swaras, or the pure unaltered notes of the *saptak*, with the cries of birds and animals in this manner:

'*Shadja* is the cry of the peacock, and *rishabh* of the bull; the bleating of the goat is *gandhar*, and *madhyam* is the heron's call; in spring, the cuckoo sings *pancham*; during the rains, the frog croakes *dhaivat*; *nishad* is trumpeted by the elephant.'

Did you ever care to listen to the bleating of a goat? Or the croaking of a frog, or the deep throated bellow of a bull? Well, you may say we hardly find these here in the city any longer. But did you hear the cuckoo in spring, for we do hear that bird at least in this city? Did you care to just shut your mind off everything for a moment and listen to what the cuckoo sings? For if you did, you would know that it sings to you of love, and sweetness, and longing, and seeks for the meeting of hearts, which is the essence of living.

Even the twitter of the sparrows, the cooing of pigeons, the busy chirping of assorted birds on a canopied tree early morning, if you ever had the privilege of stopping to hear them there (maybe you may stop your early morning hurried walk to listen to them the next time) - all these are creating a lovely musical symphony around you all the time.

Nature, and the cosmos around, hums a tune. It speaks to you in rhythm, and creates harmony around you. Its symphony, which envelops you if you allow for it, is a call to you to achieve a similar symphony, and harmony, in your music and your life.

Take nature, which is all around you, in your embrace. Make her a part of your consciousness, and your being.

Music, and life itself, will bloom forever.

Dr. Ajai R. Singh, *Sargam*, Vol2 : 4, July 2004

Rule No. 16:

Enjoy the music that nature plays around you.

* 'Music and Nature' (1992), *Music appreciation : A three part understanding of Hindustani Music, Music Today*, Script by Vidya Rao; Pg.56-57

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Develop a Classical Base

Even if you want to make a magnificent mansion, the first prerequisite is a strong base. That being ensured, the most opulent structure can be constructed, and becomes a source of great admiration to all. The Taj Mahal is a beautiful piece of architecture, a source of eternal joy and symbol of great romance. And everyone who has seen it is enthralled as much as awed by the magnificence of that masterpiece. But, remember, the Taj could not have been made, and would not have stood for centuries, if it did not have a strong foundation. And whenever you think of it the next time, do spare a thought for the unsung heroes who put in their sweat and blood to make the foundation what it is.

Similarly, you need a strong foundation for the Taj Mahal of music you wish to create in your singing. It may not be as magnificent as somebody else's, but it's your Taj Mahal for sure. And for that you too need a strong foundation.

This foundation is Classical Music.

If you do not create this base, then your dream of constructing a magnificent superstructure will only remain a dream. That's because it will not be able to withstand the critical scrutiny of connoisseurs. Moreover, your enthusiasm may tempt you to try difficult songs, but the necessary spadework not being done, the performance will not match up to the expectation you have, or the effort you put in. That's because the strong foundation, the classical base, has not been laid in the first place.

An *alaapi* in a classical based song, or a *taan* for the matter, is not just some *surs* thrown out of the throat at will. They are very precise, well modulated musical notes that require great practice in themselves, and are often the heart and soul of a song. And may make or mar a performance. They will be rendered perfectly only if you have undergone sincere training in classical singing from a teacher. He/She will perfect your

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surs, temper the flights of your musical desires by serious *riyaz* of *taans*, teach you how to unfold in a slow, languorous manner, an *alaapi*, and thus get to the heart and the soul of a *raga*. The deep mystical quality that sound conveys when bound in the matrix of a *raga* is learnt only at the feet of a master who himself has marinated in it with rigorous training over decades. And is the representation of centuries of tradition that is, as though, crystallized in human form in such an exemplar. (I was indeed fortunate to learn at the feet of such a Guru).

So, if you do not have a classical base, your serious singing will falter. But let me also warn you of something else. Light Music needs a classical base. True. But just because you have a classical base does not mean you will necessarily make a great singer of light music. It sounds paradoxical, but it's true. Let me explain. Just because you make a strong base, the structure constructed above it does not become a Taj Mahal. The base is a *necessary* but not *sufficient* condition for good singing in light music. A number of great classical singers have not made a mark as good singers of light music, probably because of the misplaced confidence they had that classical background is all. It isn't. And because of the ignorance of the subtleties and nuances of light music, which I have discussed at various stages in these columns.

So, beware of both traps. Don't forget to develop a classical base as soon as possible. And don't also forget that the base is only a base and you need much more to make a good singer of light music. Just because it's called light music, it's not to be taken lightly.

Classical music, of course, is an ocean and even a lifetime is not enough to even reach below the surface. But I would strongly recommend that two years for an average singer, five years for a good singer, and ten years to a life-time for an excellent singer, are a must. And *ragas* like *Yaman*, *Bihag*, *Bageshri*, *Kedar*, *Darbari*, *Sarang*, *Malkauns*, *Bhimpalas*, *Lalit* and *Bhairavi* must be learnt. These ten are the essential pillars of good quality light music. (To these you might add *Pahadi*,

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Des, Pilu, Shivranjani, Kedar and Bihag, if you please.) Out of these, atleast one full year should be spent on *Raga Yaman* and three-six months on *Raga Bhairavi*. And the rest as per your inclination of wanting to be a good or excellent singer (3-6 months for a good singer, 6-12 months for an excellent one).

So, friends, if you have set your goals high, first learn to look below your feet and make the ground on which you tread strong.

And you can't get something that is precious by paying a price that is inadequate.

Go back to the roots.

Develop a classical base.

Dr. Ajai R. Singh, *Sargam*, Vol 2 : 5, August 2004

Rule No. 17:

Develop a classical base and build your light singing on such a strong foundation. Light music is not to be taken lightly.

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If Music Is Like Prayer

I am sure you have often heard it said that you must treat music like prayer. It's a meditation, an *ibadat*. Well, if you don't agree it's like that, you may skip reading further. But if you do believe music is, or should be, like prayer, then I want to ask you a few questions:

- 1) Why do you attend to phone calls in the midst of your musical practice? Or, the cell phone for that matter? Do you do the same while you pray?
- 2) Why do you stop your practice when the door-bell rings, and keep on chatting with the visitors for hours on end, and then complain you have no time for *riyaz*? Do you do the same when you pray?
- 3) Why do you leave so many things undone, which you remember when it is time to sit for your practice, so that the practice time is spent in doing those things, and the *riyaz* again remains undone? Do you also do that to prayer?
- 4) Why do you find time to practice only while you are having breakfast, or watching T.V., or perched on the toilet-seat? Are these the only times you pray too?
- 5) Can you pray effectively when all the worries of what is happening around you are simultaneously going on in your mind? Whose phone-call has come, or not come? Why is the son/daughter chatting for so long on the phone? What is the son watching on the net? Is the wife exceeding the monthly budget every time? Is the colleague/partner in office becoming a thorn in the flesh? You temporarily blank them off when you pray, or at least should. Then why not do the same while you practice music?

Now, you might say, I have to attend to numerous things in life. Music is not the only thing to do. How can they be neglected? Well, the guests have to be taken care of, the phone calls attended, what the son/daughter does is my concern (before it

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becomes a headache), and so is the monthly budget, or the colleague's/partner's actions in office. Surely, I cannot neglect them for music?

Who is telling you to? At least not me.

What do you do when you pray? You temporarily blank them off, for the 15-30 mins that you pray, don't you? If you don't blank them off, your prayer is just a ritual, not a communion between the individual soul and the supreme soul (which it is supposed to be). All I ask is the same concentration for 15-30 mins everyday for music, if you want your musical soul to establish communion with the Goddess of Music.

All this, of course, if you agree music is like prayer. Well, if it is only one of many activities like eating, digesting, evacuating, chatting, gossiping, scheming, plotting, losing your temper- then, well, maybe you should not pray to the Goddess of Music.

Maybe the Goddess of Music should pray for your deliverance!

Dr Ajai R.Singh, *Sargam*, Vol 2 : 6, September, 2004

Rule No. 18 :

Find time for music practice.

Don't get up from, or interrupt, your riyaz, for music is like prayer.

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How a Singer protects his voice

Some time back, I had the opportunity to meet the great singer Jagjit Singhji at his residence, where we spent a good two hours discussing various issues in music. We will probably discuss that some other time. But what was very interesting for me was that while the whole conversation was on, an electronic '*tanpura*' was constantly droning in the background the *sur Kali ek* or *C#*. And, believe it or not, the maestro continued to speak also with the same as his *tonic note*. So *kali ek* was his *sur*, both in music and his speech (of course he does sing in other *tonic notes* as well). What was important was the fact that the note served as the base as much for his singing as his conversation, and somewhere deep down also for his consciousness. Moreover *kali ek* is the *sur* or *tonic note* in which most classical singing is done by males, as *Kali char* or *A^b* is the *sur* for most females. So, if the note is there in the background, the singer musician-composer can allow the notes of music to flow out of his mind and throat many many times during the day. And establish instant communion with his musical soul.

Secondly, if the note is well suited to your voice, and if you also speak with that as your base, you preserve and protect your voice from many distortions and unnecessary injury that our daily discourse may unwittingly launch you into. Good quality singers always speak in low volumes, it's their singing that speaks loudly for them. Some singers almost whisper when they speak. There are some singers who avoid any but the bare minimum of speech before a programme. That is because they want to preserve their voice for singing and *riyaz* which itself can be quite strenuous for the voice. So, even if you have to shout at the kids, or quarrel with your spouse, do so in the same *Kali ek*(males) or *Kali char*(females). It will help protect your voice. It will also help protect your relationship. Double benefit, at half the cost.



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When I brought it to his attention as to why he had the electronic *tanpura* on, the maestro smiled and nodded happily. At least someone understood what it was all about. Else there were cynics who might believe he did it just to create an impression before visitors, or sponsors (well, who knows, says the critic in you, tongue firmly in cheek ! I know, I know !).

It's a good idea for a singer to have *Kali ek* or C^\sharp (for males; or E^b if your voice is high pitched), and *Kali char* or A^b (for females ; or B^b if you sing at a higher pitch) in your house, at least in the room where you practice music, or your bedroom, or study room, and practice speaking also in that *sur*. Only see to it that if both of you are singing, let C^\sharp and A^b not become excuses for another fight!

Another precaution to protect your voice. If you have to sing high pitch songs, or where the rhythm is fast and the notes are high, and you feel there is a definite strain on your throat, please practice in a scale half to one note below the one you wish to present in a programme. For example, the song '*Tareef karun kya uski*' has the original scale F. But if you sing that song in that scale for even half an hour every day for a week before the programme, take it from me, your voice will konk off on the day of the programme. Even Rafiji would agree it would happen even to him. Practice in E or even E^b most of the days, and in F once in a day perhaps, just to get a feel of what it sounds like, and whether your voice can reach the higher notes with ease. May we also note here that it's great if you can sing in the original scale. But it's greater if you can sing in the scale that best suits your voice. For in trying to sing in the original scale, be careful that neither melody nor *sur* gets compromised. Moreover, singing in your own scale best protects your voice from damage.

Another contrivance to protect your voice is the mike. It's a good idea to sing into the mike even during your regular *riyaz*. It avoids strain on your voice, and reveals any defects that your voice may have. If it's disturbing to the others at home or the neighborhood, you may use the earphones along with the mike.

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And invite the neighbours home for tea if they start missing the sound of your regular *riyaz* which earlier disturbed them.

Some people have a rather delicate throat and easily compromised vocal cords. For them it's a good idea to avoid spicy or oily foods, as well as items consumed directly from the fridge, at least one week before a programme. It's wonderful to have your ice-cream or chilled beer after the programme rather than before it. And to have luke warm salt-water gargles before the programme. Otherwise your performance will get a luke warm response from the audience, if at all; and they will start coming after taking salt-water gargles to shout you down. And you may be forced to take salt-water gargles after the programme by the ENT specialist.

So take care, folks.

Dr. Ajai R. Singh, *Sargam*, Vol 2:7, October 2004

Rule No. 19 :

Talk in low volumes, have an electronic tanpura with C # (kali ek) for males and A^b (Kali char) for females as the tonic note in your music room or whole house; use a mike during riyaz; practice high-pitch songs half to one note lower; avoid oily, spicy foods or items from the refrigerator at least one week before a major performance.

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Sing in your own voice

The God Almighty, in His infinite wisdom, has given a peculiar quality to every human being. His voice. It's the peculiarity of a person's voice that makes you recognize it when you hear it over the phone, or the television, or in a movie, even when you don't see the person. And just as the face identifies a person, so does his voice.

Now, of course, you can improve upon, embellish, and modify your voice, as you can your face, and make both presentable. And you should. But your face remains your face, not somebody else's. And if you start trying to modify it too much, like Michael Jackson did, you may find it difficult to recognise your own self. May be the individual who stares at you out of the mirror in the morning may question who you are. Quite disconcerting, to say the least.

Well, if it's so with your face, it's as much so with your voice. We know of people who suddenly change their voice trying to ape a British or an American accent, and realise how artificial the whole thing appears. Some well-wisher points it out that, well, you can develop the whole accent and be true to it, or just stay away. Don't be a clone, and a poor copier at that. As an ad says '*Stay true. Don't blend in*'.

The same applies to a singer. When we sing Mukesh or Hemant Kumar or Kishore Kumar or Talat Mehmood or Saigal or Manna Dey, we are unconsciously tempted to ape their voice peculiarities as well. Of course the intention is not dishonest. We want to create as much of a resemblance to the original master as is possible. This makes us feel good, makes our audiences appreciate us, and everyone is quite pleased in the bargain.

But somewhere down the line, the singer must stop being pleased with himself for being able to do only this. Of course there is nothing wrong in starting this way and continuing thus for a while. But one must take the conscious decision of

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sometime or the other stepping out of this mould. Just as a butterfly cannot fly if it continues to remain a caterpillar inside a cocoon, a singer cannot make his mark if he does not come out of an earlier singer's shadow. Because it's a shelter, true, and a lovely one at that; but one you must move out of to create your own small niche in the world of music. It's like you have to move out of a rented house, however comfortable, to experience the agony and ecstasy of owning your own. (But if you prefer to remain in a rented house all through your life, well at least don't live in the mistaken notion it's your own).

All the greats have done it before you. (I mean moving into their own 'homes'.) Lataji sang a few numbers like the great Noor Jehan, Mukeshji sang like the immortal Saigal. They did it because Noor Jehan and Saigal were icons of their times and had a hold over singers even as great as these. But they quickly moved away, and moved on to develop their own distinctive style. And the rest is history.

You have to do the same sometime or the other. While you may admire the original singer and absolutely worship his rendition, you will, sooner or later, have to develop your own style of presenting his song. But before you do so, it's a very good idea to sing the song as true to the original singer's presentation as possible. Having done that, and as your confidence in your abilities grows, your voice develops its own distinctive character, and you know what that character is. Then you must sing the song in your own voice, and stop being a copy of someone, howsoever great.

A singer worth his name has to take both these steps. First, being true to a great master. Then, departing, and being true to himself.

Many of us take only the first step, and continue taking only that step all through a life-time. Nothing seriously wrong with that. It's only that you carry on walking with a stick when you know you can walk without one. It's like continuing to read your school books even when you enter college, or like continuing to drink nutritious baby foods even when you become an adult.

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Nothing wrong with it. Or *everything* wrong with it.

When will you moult? Come out of your cocoon? Sing in the voice uniquely yours, God's special gift to you? When will you actualize yourself?

As the poet has said,

Pyaar ka pehla khat likhne mein, waqt to lagta hai

Naye parindon ko udne mein, waqt to lagta hai

Ok. I know you are a *naya-parinda*. But it's still lovely to fly with your own wings.

The whole wide blue sky is ready, waiting to welcome you with open arms.

When will you flutter your eager wings? And take the first plunge?

Because that will be a plunge into the depths of your own being. And a realisation of your consciousness.

I am waiting to see how many of my dear Swara-Sampadities flutter their wings and fly. And when. Till then, good-luck.

And when you do, I will rise in my seat and applaud you.

Please give me that chance. And soon, if possible.

Dr. Ajai Singh, *Sargam*, Vol 2 : 8, November 2004

Rule No. 20:

Do not ape anyone. Let your own voice bloom in your singing.

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Stage Presence

Some people are blessed with that elusive quality called stage presence. It's that quality which makes you drop whatever you are doing and hang on to every word or gesture they make when they are around. It's that quality which makes you single them out and look at them even in a crowd. It's that quality that makes you seek them out on stage and remain rivetted even when a number of others are performing. It's the hush that falls in the audience when they speak or sing. It's the adoring looks they get from others, the spark that lights up in their eyes, and their lives, having seen or met such a person.

That's presence.

Dilip Kumar has it. So does Amitabh Bacchan, Govinda and to an extent Shahrukh Khan and Rekha. Sanjay Dutt and Nana Patekar have it too. Shammi Kapoor had lots of it, as did Devanand, and also Madhubala and of course, Meena Kumari.

What makes some people have stage presence?

It's rather difficult to analyse and pinpoint. But let's try.

All these have one special quality. They are all originals. But that's not all. They are very very graceful in whatever they do. That too is not all. They are fully immersed in whatever they do, not at all stage conscious. That also is not all. They are highly talented. Even that is not all. They never sell themselves short. That also is important, but not all. They never indulge in petty activities or play bit roles. Well, that too is not all. They have a great sense of their own importance, but have learnt to be down to earth and underplay it so they never become, or appear, conceited. Even that is not all. They know their strengths and shortcomings and play the game on their strengths and improve upon their shortcoming, but never, never play their game on it. Even that is important, but not all. They have great control over their body movements, and facial expression, and the way they walk, talk, smile and sing. They make you want to worship them for their

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qualities. They play larger than life roles, not only on stage but also in their personal lives. They do extraordinary acts, do not crumble under pressure like ordinary mortals. They survive and grow strong through personal tragedies. Even if they succumb they leave a twinge of compassion, they wring your heart inside out. Like Lady Diana did, or Meena Kumari, or even Madhubala, Marilyn Monroe and Guru Dutt did, as they left us in their hey days. But even that is not all.

So what's it then?

Well, let's try and define it, although we may fall short of capturing its essence and leave much more to the imagination.

It's all these qualities we mentioned earlier put together in the crucible of time and stirred by the handle of destiny.

That statement leaves you feeling stunned. Well, it stunned me when it came to my mind.

But let's come to more practical consideration.

Can you have stage presence?

Yes, you can .

Can you cultivate it?

Yes, indeed.

How?

Now that's a million dollar question, but let me try and answer. Firstly you have to be yourself. Secondly you have to be good at it. Thirdly you have to be way above others in it. Fourthly, you have to give up your complexes, your diffidence, your self-doubts. Fifthly, you have to cultivate and nurture a positive self image in your mind before you can present it to others. Sixthly you must rise above petty bickerings and small talk, stop bitching and poisonous gossiping. Finally you have to project and maintain a positive self image in a group which loves your image. Then you start developing a *presence*. When you come in front of such a group on stage, you

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start developing that elusive quality called *stage presence*.

It's not easy if you analyse it. But if you go ahead and strive for excellence in whatever you do, it comes. That's it then. In three short words:

Strive for excellence.

The presence, stage presence included, follows.

And if you desire a stage presence on the stage of life, well then the *mantra* is in the form of three short three letter sentences.

- 1) Strive for excellence.
- 2) Be a fighter.
- 3) Be an original.

Take up as much as you can digest out of these.

But being a Swara Sampadite wanting to make his/her mark on stage, start with the first atleast.

Somewhere down the line, the strength and motivation to do the other two will follow :

All the very best.

Dr. Ajai R. Singh, *Sargam*, Vol 2 : 9, December 2004

Rule No. 21:

Strive for excellence and be an original. This ensures stage presence.

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Music :

A Pastime or The Rhythm of Life

I know most of you are proud to say music is your favourite hobby. And I also know for some of you it has become the *only* hobby. I know it has added so much meaning to life, and to the joy of living itself. It has helped forge so many family friendships, become your favourite topic of conversation, made you aware what you missed out in life uptil now but won't any longer. And a host of other such lovely realizations.

While all these are very important in themselves, I want to start with the very first, in which we found you proudly proclaim music as your favourite hobby, or pastime. Which is no doubt a great thing to happen. And let's thank God it has. But, now ask yourself this question too: is it only a pastime, just a way to *pass the time*, to keep an idle mind occupied, to while away time? Or is it your means to find meaning and purpose to your very existence?

This is a crucial question to ask, and I am sure some day or the other you will, if you have not done so already. Music is not just fun. That it is, but much more. It is not just a means of relaxation for today's stressed individuals. That too it is, but much more. It is not just a lovely means of self-expression, to make the whole wide world aware of your talent and nod in approval, if not sing and dance to it. That too it surely is, but much more. Let me say what it is in essence. It is the very foundation of good living, the very basis of a life led well. Let me explain.

What is a good life? It's a life lived in harmony with others, in rhythm with your inner being, in tune with society, in tempo or *laya* with your goals. Harmony, rhythm, tune, *laya* are integral to good music. If, therefore, you understand and capture the essence of good music, you will some day also capture the essence of a good life, and hopefully, the very purpose of existence, at least in some measure, if not fully.

Such is my fervent wish and earnest desire for you. That when you sing, let your mind establish communion with your soul. That

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your voice, your *sur*, become the very expression of your inner being. That you some day transcend your technical concerns with *sur, tala, laya*, composition, metre, and get yourself tuned with the divinity waiting patiently within you to *log in* to you.

How long further will you make it wait?

How long will it take for the realization that music is not just to remain a pastime, but a means to establish such a rhythm in life as makes your mind and body, your whole outer being, establish communion with your inner being, your very soul.

Let the New Year bring in this realization for you, friends.

Happy 2005.

Dr. Ajai R. Singh, *Sargam*, Vol 2 : 10, January 2005

Note: This is the New Year Message for 2005 and the last article in the series *The President Speaks His Mind* published in *Sargam*, till date

Rule No. 22:

Music is not just a pastime. It can be a rhythm of good living. It can help you tune in to the Divinity waiting patiently within you.

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Conclusions

Rule No. 1 :

Take an oath that you will be dedicated to understanding the Science of Music and the Art of Singing.

Rule No. 2 :

Remove your inhibition to sing which is a negative and destructive dam, but install the dam of riyaz in its place, which is a positive and constructive one.

Rule No. 3 :

Take three steps i) remove your inhibition ii) enjoy singing iii) learn singing.

Enjoy three rights: i) you have a right to sing; ii) exercising that right is your duty; iii) you have the right to sing well.

Rule No. 4:

Capture the silence which is at the heart of music, like the sur 'sa' around which all other surs revolve.

Rule No. 5 :

Practice a song 100 times (listen to it at least 25 times, and sing it as best as you can for another 75 times) before you present it to a larger group.

Rule No. 6 :

Practice singing every day, 15-30 min for average singing, 30-90 min for good singing, 90-180 min. for excellent singing, spread over two sessions preferably.

Rule No. 7:

Sometimes listen, and sing, with your eyes closed. Good music is appreciated better that way.

Rule No. 8 :

Select a song which instantly appeals to you, whose lyrics touch your heart, which you feel like singing again and again, whose emotion and diction you are comfortable with, and singing which is within your musical capacity.

Rule No. 9 :

Sing only such songs whose lyrics touch your heart and move your soul. And unless they do, do not sing a song.

Rule No.10 :

Guru stands for G-U-R-U i.e. Gives You Right Understanding. Be ready to be a guru to someone else at the right time, and learn to be your own guru too

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Rule No. 11 :

Never turn your back to a musical performance, howsoever ordinary. Never look sideways and talk when a performance is on.

Rule No. 12 :

Have a musical nest.

Rule No. 13 :

Never involve yourself in negative activities. Music combined with positivity is the winning combination in life.

Rule No. 14 :

Perfect your diction. Learn the nuances of the language in which you sing.

Rule No. 15 :

Learn the meaning of a song, visualize the situation in which the song has been sung, and add just the right proportion of emotion to the song. Listen to singers who emote well.

Rule No. 16:

Enjoy the music that nature plays around you.

Rule No. 17:

Develop a classical base and build your light singing on such a strong foundation. Light music is not to be taken lightly.

Rule No. 18 :

Find time for music practice. Don't get up from, or interrupt, your riyaz, for music is like prayer.

Rule No. 19 :

Talk in low volumes, have an electronic tanpura with C # (kali ek) for males and A^b (Kali char) for females as the tonic note in your music room or whole house; use a mike during riyaz; practice high-pitch songs half to one note lower; avoid oily, spicy foods or items from the refrigerator at least one week before a major performance.

Rule No. 20:

Do not ape anyone. Let your own voice bloom in your singing.

Rule No. 21:

Strive for excellence and be an original. This ensures stage presence

Rule No. 22:

Music is not just a pastime. It can be a rhythm of good living. It can help you tune in to the Divinity waiting patiently within you.

Dr. Ajai R. Singh

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THE SCIENCE OF AN ART CALLED MUSIC
RAJU GANAPATHY

No. Title	Page
24. Introduction	58
25. Rhythm	61
26. Meter	62
27. Tempo	64
28. Pitch	66
29. Scale	67
30. Interval	69
31. Melody	70
32. Tune	71
33. Tone Colour, Dynamics and Form	73

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The Science of an Art called Music - I

Introduction

It has been my constant endeavor to analyse whatever I have learnt musically or for that matter, even am learning today, in a mathematical way and reason out things. With this in my mind I would like to share with you, all that I have learnt till date, since I strongly believe that knowledge grows by sharing. In the articles to follow, I would like to explain the actual *grammar of music*. This definitely cannot be studied in a few issues and will need years of practice and study. It is more like a journey, a never-ending journey, that music lovers like you would love to be a part of. The deeper one gets into music, be it instrumental or vocal, or even listening for that matter, the more one cherishes being with it. Music is Sublime and appeals to the ear and the mind, to the senses and the intelligence, to emotion and intellect. Everybody likes and reacts to music differently. A person who does not like music however does not feel elated even if he listens to the best of compositions. My explanations, in the columns that follow, would also appeal to such a person who is averse to music, and help him understand and appreciate what he listens, in due course of time.

To start with, as a curtain raiser in this issue, let me introduce you to the very basic essentials of music. The various factors of music are: 1. Rhythm 2. Meter 3. Tempo 4. Pitch 5. Scale 6. Melody 7, Tone Color 8. Dynamics 9. Tonal texture 10. Form

1. Rhythm - Music exists in time, just as a painting exists on a flat surface and sculpture exists in 3 dimensions. Rhythm can be defined as the aspect of music having to do with the duration of the notes in time.

2. Meter - Meter is defined as a background of stressed and unstressed beats in simple, regular, repeating pattern. While a rhythm is heard, we tend to organize it into simple units which make up the meter. One basic repeating pattern is what is called a Measure or a Bar of Music.

3. Tempo - It is the speed of music, the rate of turnover of the numerical accented and unaccented beats. It takes account of the

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absolute duration of the notes. We know that, $\text{Speed} = \text{Distance} / \text{Time}$. Hence, $\text{Tempo} = (\text{Meter} \times \text{Measure}) / \text{Time}$

4. Pitch - The quality of “highness” or ‘lowness*’ of sound. It is actually the frequency measured in cycles per second or Hz.

5. Scale - It is the total pitch material that is considered to be available to make music with. A collection of ordered pitches which provides the pitch material for music.

6. Melody - A coherent succession of pitches is called a melody. Successive pitches can be plotted on the pitch-time graph as a line. Just as a line in a drawing can possess artistic character and strike us as bold, graceful or delicate, so too can a melody gain character from the progression of pitches in time. A melody is a line in time, with the direction and shape of the line given by the pattern of pitches. For example: If one note follows another, each higher than the previous one. it gives you the feeling of an ascent or a *climb*. A pair of low notes acts as a *setback*. A long note held on the .same pitch gives you the feel of an *hold*. A series of repeated notes on the same pitch would give you an impression of *waiting*.

7. Tone Color or Timbre - Sounds of the same pitch and in the same octave differ in sonic quality depending on the instruments that play them. For example: the sound of a flute is different from that of a trombone or trumpet. Timbre is actually the amount of simultaneous secondary vibrations or overtones that we call in music. When a person has a good voice, we say that he or she has a very good timbre. In the case of singers, timbre is a characteristic of the vocal chord.

8. Dynamics - The loudness or softness of sound. Sound is measured in decibels which can be called the amplitude or volume, but Dynamics deals with the way some notes are accentuated to pronounce them.

9. Tonal Texture - It is the term used for the blend of the various sounds and melodic lines. Comes from the textile industry term of texture. You could call it the weave of the music.

10. Form - It refers to the shape, arrangement, relationship, and organization of the various elements in the musical composition.

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The organization is carried out by repetition of themes, repetition of rhythms, tone colors, textures etc. In short all that we have learnt now forms the form of music.

The above has been a brief description, perhaps quite dry for some, with the definitions for the various factors of music. It is difficult to explain everything in one or two issues- In the subsequent issues, I shall take each one in particular with some more examples for you to understand the concepts better. The examples would ensure that you will be quite comfortable and not scared of the above jargons. I thank Swara Sampada for giving me this opportunity to reach out to so many music lovers like you.

- Raju Ganapathy, *Sargam*, Vol 1 : 7, October 2003

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The Science of an Art called Music - Part II

RHYTHM

Rhythm is defined as that aspect of music having to do with the duration of the notes in time. Music exists in time, just as a painting exists on a flat surface and architecture exists in the three dimensional world. Similar to the lines and brushstrokes that mark off areas on a canvas, we can say that sounds mark off spans of time. The sound of each musical instrument has an individual characteristic, which marks off a particular span in time. The time taken for a particular musical note to sustain and die off, is different for different musical instruments e.g. the strike of a musical note on the piano, or the pluck of the same note on the guitar, or the blow of the same note on a flute, will all be different in time span. In actual terms, it is the Resonance of the sound here that is different. The time taken for the sound to die off is actually what we call the *Decay*. Setting up proper time relationships among all the various points in a musical composition, is what gives the desired colour to that composition. This is where, the skills of a Music Arranger are put to test. In the olden times (especially in the Hindi film music scenario), we used to have a Music Director whose main job would be to compose the melody line of the song.

Once the tune is set, the Music Arranger is the person to write and conduct the whole orchestration for that song. Today we have many Music Directors who are Arrangers themselves and they do the composing as well as the scoring. On the other hand, in this world of specialisation, we also have arrangers who are just Rhythm Arrangers.

Accent : To refine the time relationships among the various points in a musical composition, the composer normally stresses certain sounds. This is what is called providing them with an Accent. There are many ways of accenting a note. The simplest is to have it played somewhat louder than the others surrounding it. We can compare this to the shading used in painting. In music, successive notes follow one another sometimes directly and sometimes with short spaces of silence between them. But in any case the time interval between notes is generally prescribed with care, and so is the relative weight of the notes (weight here means the accent). No single feature of music, not even melody, determines the effect of the music more crucially than timing and accent. The word rhythm in its most general sense refers to this whole time aspect of music.

Raju Ganapathy, *Sargam*, Vol 1 : 8, November 2003

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The Science of an Art called Music-Part III

METER

Meter is defined as a background of stressed and unstressed beats in a simple, regular, repeating pattern. While a rhythm is heard, we tend to organize it into simple units which make up the meter. One basic repeating pattern, is what is called a Measure or a Bar of Music,

Amongst the various types of Meters present, the 2 basic ones can be called the Double and Triple meter. The Double meter follows a pattern of ONE two ONE two ONE two.... (Note that the stress is on ONE). The Triple meter follows a pattern ONE two three, ONE two three ONE two three..... The background meter serves as a kind of graduated time grid against which the much more complicated course of the rhythm itself is measured or heard. Dances and Marches are some examples of music that do emphasize the meter. In order to stimulate body movement most popular music features a relatively heavy beat. Some examples are Bhangda, Garba, Pop, Disco, etc. In softer musical compositions, the meter is not brought out too strongly. It doesn't need to be, for the listener almost always feels it under the surface. The psychological reason for this probably lies in the fact that simple repetitive patterns of stress/unstress underlie so many of our basic life functions: the heartbeat, walking, dancing or marching. [Example: The song **Jeena Yahan, Marna yahan** from Mera Naam Joker does not show a very strong meter (triple meter), as compared to say **Chal Chaiyan, Chaiyan, Chaiyan, Chaiyan**.

A good interaction of rhythm and meter supplies much of the real vitality to music. As the rhythm momentarily coincides with the meter, then goes its own way, and then perhaps even contradicts or obscures the meter, all kinds of variety and tension and excitement can result. A good tabla player or a mridangam player could be a good example of this. Measure by measure the player whirls around the main framework of the meter portraying very complex rhythm structures. Note that the meter would be either a 2/4 (pronounced as Two four - a two beat duple or double meter), or a 3/4 (pronounced as Three four - a triple meter), or a 6/8 (pronounced as Six eight -

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which is a six beat pattern called *Dadra*), or a 4/4 (Four four - known as *keherwa* in Hindustani music), or a 7/8 (*Rupak*) or 10/8 (*Jhap taal*) or any other meter for that matter, yet the rhythm player works a complex rhythmic structure around it.

Left to itself, I would say, Meter makes only for monotony. Thank God and thank the drummer, for how much more imaginative and lively he is than the drummer in a marching band, whose destiny is to beat out nothing but the ONE two, ONE two, ONE two and ONE two alone!!

- Mr. Raju Ganapathy, *Sargam*, Vol 1 : 9, December, 2004

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The Science of an Art called Music-Part IV

TEMPO

Tempo is the speed of music i.e. the rate of turnover of the metrical accented and unaccented beats. Tempo takes account of the absolute duration of the notes, while the rhythmic notation takes account of their relative duration. $\text{Tempo} = \text{Distance} / \text{Time}$

Hence in a manner we can say that $\text{Tempo} = (\text{Meter} \times \text{Measure}) / \text{Time}$.

Tempo is measured in bpm (beats per minute). In Hindustani music, Tempo is called Laya. You must have heard terminologies like *Vilambit laya*, *Madhya laya*, *drut laya* etc being commonly used by singers and musicians in Hindustani Classical Music. These are qualitative terminologies.

Tempo can be measured quantitatively and is also written quantitatively in Western Classical music. They are indicated by the symbol δ . When we say $\delta = 120$, it means that there are 120 quarter notes per minute or in other words 120 quarter beats per minute.

Metronome is a device that ticks out beats at all practicable tempos and the indications of tempo are also called as Metronome marks.

It should be noted that composers normally prefer to use the qualitative language for describing Tempo. In the period when these terms began to be used regularly in western classical music, Italy dominated the musical scene in Europe. Hence most of the Italian terms have become conventional. Some of the terms are:

<i>adagio</i>	slow
<i>andante</i>	slow, but not too slow
<i>moderato</i>	moderate tempo
<i>allegro</i>	fast
<i>allegretto</i>	fast, but not too fast
<i>presto</i>	Very fast
<i>accelerando (accel.)</i>	getting faster

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<i>ritardando(rit.)</i>	getting slower
<i>piu allegro</i>	Slower,faster
<i>fermata</i>	a hold of indefinite length on a note
<i>rubat</i>	a short temporary change in tempo.

Rubato means “robbed” time. This is a style of playing where the meter is stretched slightly and then compressed, or when the meter is constant then the melody stretches so as to be slightly out of phase with it. An artistic *rubato* can be sensuous and teasing, but excessive *rubato* can be vulgar or spineless or both.

- Raju Ganapathy, *Sargam*, Vol 1 : 10, January, 2004

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The Science of an Art called Music-Part V

PITCH

In this part we shall see what Pitch is? Pitch deals with the quality of “highness” or “lowness” of sound. If sound lacked this quality or if the human ear failed to respond to it, music would be truly one-dimensional. Time may be regarded as one of the main co-ordinates of music, the other main co-ordinate is pitch. It is actually the frequency measured in cycles per second or Hertz.

A Brief History

Musical pitch was one of the first natural phenomena to be investigated scientifically in the western world. Only astronomy goes as far back as that. But astronomy does not permit direct experimentation, as the study of pitch does. Only later were light, mechanics, chemistry and even medicine studied in a scientific way.

Before 500 B.C., Pythagoras, who is famous for his theorem on right angles, was the first person who codified numerical facts about the sounds produced by the plucking of strings. The pluck gives out a particular pitch, the pinch of the string yet another. String lengths in the ratio 2:1 produce notes at the octave (saptak in Hindustani). Strings in other simple numerical ratios-2:3,3:4,4:5,8:9 produce all other notes of the diatonic scale.

(The set of white notes on the Piano constitute the diatonic scale).

To the Greeks, this seemed fascinating and extremely significant, Pythagoras was the first one who showed that physical phenomena which can be detected by the senses relate directly to mathematical abstractions which can be understood by the reason. One should remember that at that time people were not aware that falling bodies, light waves, electrons orbiting the nucleus of the atom, all obey mathematical laws. Today, thanks to these great scientists, we can say that natural phenomena can be described in terms of mathematics. It is in this sense that I have named the series of my articles as “The Science of an art called Music”.

In the next issue we shall learn a little more about Pitch, along with an experiment.

- Raju Ganapathy, *Sargam*, Vol 1 : 12, March, 2004

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The Science of an Art called Music-Part VI

SCALE

Have you ever thought what Sound really is? Sound results from small but rapid vibrations that are set up in certain objects or bodies. The human ear can detect a considerable range of these vibrations from around 16 cycles per second up to around 20,000 cycles per second (i.e. 16 Hz to 20 KHz). However, animals can detect sounds beyond the human listening range. The A note which is used to tune instruments at the beginning of a concert, has a frequency of 440 cycles per second.

The smaller the vibrating body, the faster the vibrations and the higher the sound. For example, a flute encloses a smaller tube of vibrating air than does a trombone. If you blow across the top of a beer bottle while filling it up with water, the sound becomes higher in pitch as the vibrating column of air above the water becomes shorter.

Besides this quality of 'highness' (or lowness), there is another important aspect of pitch that every one recognizes instinctively. If someone plays a series of higher and higher pitches - say an upward run on the keyboard - there comes a point at which the pitch seems to duplicate an earlier pitch. The new pitch does not sound identical with the old one, but somehow the two sounds are very similar. They blend extremely well and seem to fuse into each other. This is known as the phenomenon of 'Octaves' . The name 'Octave' means eight-span and comes because western music originally employed only seven different pitches A B C D E F G (eight inclusive). The set of these seven pitches forms the diatonic scale. At a later point in history, 5 further pitch subdivisions were settled on and the notes C[#] E^b F[#] A^b and B^b came into being. The total now stood at 12, which constitutes the chromatic scale. Features of many instruments are designed to produce these particular pitches exactly. Frets on the guitar, carefully measured out holes in flutes, are some examples. Other instruments such as the violin and the slide trombone,

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have a more continuous range of pitches available to them, as does a police siren or the human voice. One of the first tasks in mastering these instruments is learning to pick out exactly the right pitches. This is what is called playing in tune. Likewise, singing in tune is and should be a matter of constant concern for all vocalists.

- Raju Ganapathy, *Sargam*, Vol 1 : 13, April, 2004

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The SCIENCE of an art called MUSIC Part VII

INTERVAL

The space or distance between any two pitches is called an Interval. The intervals take their name from the number of scale notes (not chromatic notes mind you) between two pitches, counting from the first pitch to the second inclusive. For example, an Octave is the interval between 8 inclusive scale notes. The chart below shows the major scale on C.

Sa	Re	Ga	Ma	Pa	Dha	Ni	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C

As Swara Sampadites you all know how hard it is to sing the Choir part in tune for the Invocation Song *Prabhuji*. That is what is called as “harmonising”. Singing on an octave higher or lower seems to be much easier as compared to singing on the 3rd or 5th interval. As you can see from the above chart, the 3rd interval is the *Gandhar* while the 5th interval is the *Pancham*. “Singing in thirds” is the term used for the practice of singing along with somebody else at the interval of a third scale note higher or lower. This is also what is called as “Close Harmony”, a term suggesting the comfortable sound this creates. As an exercise, try singing with somebody else or tell a few people to try singing in the sevenths interval (Sa-Dha) and you will know why “Close Harmony” is more appealing. Different sets of chords (an assembly of two or more notes) can be used in the harmonization of any melody and the overall effect of music depends to a great extent on the nature of these chords, or the harmony in general. We shall learn about “Consonant & Dissonant harmony”* when we come to ‘Tonal Texture’ later on. We shall also learn about another property of the Pitch system, which is ‘Tonality’, later on. Amongst the various factors of music that I had mentioned in my first article, ‘Tone Colour or Timbre’ and Tonal texture are two factors that actually come under ‘Pitch’, but I have treated them separately to give a wider perspective. We shall discuss them in the subsequent articles.

- Raju Ganapathy, *Sargam*, Vol 1 : 14, May, 2004

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The SCIENCE of an art called MUSIC- Part VIII

MELODY:

The pitches that make up music occur simultaneously or successively in time – usually both. Successive pitches can be plotted on the pitch time graph as a line.

Melody can be called as a coherent succession of pitches.

The importance of melody in the musical experience hardly needs to be stressed. Just as a line in a drawing can possess artistic character and strike us as bold, graceful or delicate, so too can a melody gain character from the progression of pitches in time.

A melody is a line in time, with the direction and shape of the line given by the pattern of pitches. For example, If one note follows another, each higher than the previous one, it gives you the feeling of an ascent or a CLIMB. A pair of low notes acts as a SETBACK. A long note held on the same pitch gives you the feel of an HOLD. A series of repeated notes on the same pitch would give you an impression of WAITING.

Some tunes or melodies linger in your memory, while some don't and yet some may be according to you bad or ugly. Though we may not find the melody easy to sing or remember, or even to follow, a succession of pitches is certainly there. As long as the music involves a succession of pitches and the mind can detect some kind of rationale in them, it has melody. In the Vedic chants or the age old Gregorian chants for example, the number of notes used in chanting is quite limited. Yet it is very appealing and has a strong melodic content. Normally when people call music "unmelodious" they probably mean that it does not strike them as having a *tune* – a simple, easy singable catchy melody such as a folk song or a dance. In our next article we shall go ahead and see how a tune is quite different from a melody and see some categories of melody that do not happen to be tunes.

- Raju Ganapathy, *Sargam*, Vol 2 : 3, June, 2004

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The Science of an art called Music - Part IX

TUNE

Normally when people call music “unmelodious” they probably mean that it does not strike them as having a Tune – a simple, easy singable catchy melody - such as a folk song or a dance. A tune is quite different from a melody. It is in fact a special kind of melody. Melody is a term that includes tunes and also much else. Tunes play an important role in our musical life.

Most melodies fall naturally into smaller sections, called phrases. In tunes, the division into *phrases* is clear and sharp. In tunes with words, i.e. songs, the musical phrases tend to coincide with the poetic lines. Most lines in a song lyric end with a punctuation mark and a rhyme word, and these features also serve to emphasize the musical phrase divisions. (In Hindi songs, you can compare this to the *mukhda*, *antra*, *coda*, etc)

In a large proportion of tunes, all the phrases are 2,4 or 8 measures long, although other phrase lengths can certainly occur and generally make for a very welcome contrast. In any case, there will be a sense of balance between the phrases of a good tune, both in terms of time and in terms of pitch. Taken together, the phrases of a tune add up to a well-proportioned whole.

A tune generally has a clear sense of beginning, a feeling of action in the middle, and a firm sense of winding down and concluding at the end. There will probably be a single climax in the *antra*, usually a high note or a high passage, which the earlier part of the tune seems to be heading toward. Usually the end of the tune relaxes from this climax. There will certainly be a very solid stopping place at the end of the tune, as well as subsidiary stops in the middle, and at times at the end of interior phrases. The term for these stopping places is *cadences*. *Cadences* can be composed with all possible shades of finality about them. Indeed the art of making cadences is the most basic in musical composition.

Take any tune you know and sing it through, you will find all the above mentioned features in it. The mark of a good tune is a vital,



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intriguing set of melodic parallels, contrasts and balances. Why do we like to sing one particular tune rather than another? Because of the words, perhaps. But also because there is a pleasure in going through again and again a good, shapely melodic pattern – a pleasure involving an appreciation of its comfortably balanced phrases, an anticipation of working up to its climax, and a feeling of accomplishment at rounding it all off with a decisive final cadence.

But remember there are other forms of music too – music that does not consist of tunes, music which people probably do not sing, but which they seem to enjoy anyhow. I shall try to throw light on this in my next article. *Sangeet ek mahasagar hai* and I hope you are enjoying your journey through it.

Happy reading, happy listening and good singing to all Swara Sampadites!

- Raju Ganapathy, *Sargam*, Vol 2 : 4, July, 2004



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The Science of an art called Music - Part X

TONE COLOUR, DYNAMICS, FORM

Tone Colour: Sounds of the same pitch differ in tonal quality depending on the instruments that play them. Tone colour and timbre are terms for this quality. For example, a flute sounds different from the violin even if the same note is played from both of them. The characteristic of one individual's voice is different from the other, and this is the reason why we say one has a richer voice as compared to the other, though they may both be singing perfectly. From the scientific point of view, *tone colour* is related to the simultaneous secondary vibrations or overtones produced by the sound emitting body.

Dynamics: The general name for the volume of sound, the loudness or softness of a musical passage, is what is *Dynamics*.

Form: The form of a particular type of music refers to its shape, arrangement, relationship, or organization of the various elements that we have already studied: rhythm, melody, tone colour and texture. In a musical piece the organization is carried out by repetition of themes, repetition of rhythms, tone colours, and textures and by long drawn out contrasts, balances, climaxes, and the like.

Musical form is very much its own thing, as is equally true of form in any of the other arts. The special factor with music is the crucial importance of memory and also of anticipation, which according to me is the reverse of memory. The main talent involved in an "ear for music", in fact, is memory. In grasping musical form, we are continuously putting together in our minds what we hear at the present moment, what we have heard earlier in the piece, and what we feel we have been led to expect to hear later. This is not as formidable as it may sound and many of you go through this whilst you sing or listen to a song.

Dear Swara Sampadites, this is the last article that I am presenting in the series of the 10 articles that you read. I hope these have helped you in getting an insight into this musical world. What I have presented is just the tip of the ice berg. Music is a subject that is so vast, that we always say *ek zindagi bhi iske liye kum hai*. My idea of penning down these articles, was for you to be aware of what you are actually doing in your Monthly Meets at Swara Sampada. Music is something that is



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more than just singing or listening to. A sound knowledge of the subject always helps the artist in performing to the best of his ability. One thing that I would like to mention is that any form of art comes basically by copying in the initial stages. A child at an early age does nothing else but copy. He starts speaking the language even before he knows the alphabets. How does he do that? Just by listening and repeating. Once he goes to school he learns the alphabets, then the construction of sentences, and then the grammar. When he goes college, he learns Shakespeare and is even taught to enact those plays. All this is much the copying stage. It is only after he has successfully gone through all that, does he start creating on his own. Hence imitation is a stage which comes before creation. All of you are presently in that stage, which is a very long stage. Once you have mastered this stage, the rest will be a piece of cake for you. Keep listening to the songs that you have to perform and keep repeating them before going to the microphone. Proper grasping, recapitulating and proper reproducing are all important.

My effort was to make you aware of the basic grammar involved in the field of music. Once again as I say, this was just the tip of the ice berg, and there are innumerable other aspects left to be studied. But for the moment I shall stop here. In case you have any questions or doubts, please feel free to contact me. It was a pleasure coming across to all of you. Thank you.

- Raju Ganapathy, *Sargam*, Vol 2 : 5, Aug, 2004

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THE ABC OF MUSIC
MANGESH GOKARN

No.	Title	Page
34.	The ABC Of Music	75
35.	The Ten Golden Rules for a Singer	78

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The ABC Of Music

In nature, we experience two types of sounds:

- i) Sound, or a group of sounds which is unstable and has irregular vibrations, is called noise and is not useful in creation of music.
- ii) Sound, which is stable, and has regular vibrations, is useful in creation of music. The term for vibrations per second is named as "frequency".

"In Hindustani Classical Music, 22 such sounds, each having a stable and a distinct and a regular frequency, have been identified. These 22 sounds are known as *shrutis*. Out of these 22 *shrutis* seven distinct frequencies have been chosen as the principal frequencies and are termed as *swaras* (notes.) They are named as one *Shadja*, *Rishabh*, *Gandhar*, *Madhyam*, *Pancham*, *Dhaivat* and *Nishaad*, in the increasing order of frequencies. Or symbolically speaking &, *Re*, *Ga*, *Ma*, *Pa*, *Dha* and *Ni*.

The meaning of *Shadja* is a note which gives birth to six more notes Thus, *shadja* is the tonic note and with the following six notes namely, *Rishabh*, *Gandhar*, *Madhyam*, *Pancham*, *Dhaivat* and *Nishaad*, form a *heptave*, "a *saptak*". By adding the tonic note from the next register, the *heptave* becomes an octave, as *Sa*, *Re*, *Ga*, *Ma*, *Pa*, *Dha*, *Ni* and *Sa*.

As told before, seven out of 22 *shrutis* have been chosen as the principal frequencies, 5 more notes are added to the principal seven to make the total number of notes to 12. These additional five notes are known as *Komal Rishabh*, *Komal Gandhar*, *Teevra Madhyam*, *Komal Dhaivat* and *Komal Nishaad*. The meaning of *Komal swar* is a flat note and *Teevra swar* is a sharp note. Thus, the entire spectrum of an octave shall be, *Sa*, *Komal Re*, *Shudh Re*, *Komal Ga*, *Shudh Ga*, *Shudh Ma*, *Teevra ma*, *Pa*, *Komal Dha*, *Shudh Dha*, *Komal Ni*, *Shudh Ni* and *Sa* (from next higher register).

This can be verified on a keyboard instrument, by choosing any key as *shadja* - *Sa*. If you go on counting serially, the



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thirteenth note will be the same as the first note - 'Sa'. As told before, an octave can be formed by choosing 8 *swaras* in the ascending order, which is called *Aroha*, the rule in the formation of an octave allows only one type from the pairs '*Komal -Shudh*' or '*Komal-Teevra*, 32 different octaves or permutations are possible. These 32 octaves (different from each other) are called -*Thaat*, meaning, parent scales.

However, in the present form of Hindustani Classical Music only 10 *Thaat* (Parent Scales) are accepted and the rest 22 are ignored. These 10 *Thaats* (Parent Scales.) in practice are:

- 1) *Bilawal* (all *shudh*).
- 2) *Kalyan* (*Teevra madhyam*).
- 3) *Khamaj* (*Komal Nishaad*).
- 4) *Bhairav* (*Komai Rishabh & Komal Dhaivat*).
- 5) *Asavari* (*Komal Gandhar, Komal Dhaivat. and Komal Nishaad*),
- 6) *Todi* (*Komal Rishabh, Komal Gandhar, Teevra Madhyam , Komal Dhaivat*)
- 7) *Kafi* (*Komal Gandhar, Komal Nishaad*).
- 8) *Marva* (*Komal Ri shabh, Teevra Madhyam*).
- 9) *Poorvi* (*Komal Rishabh, Teevra Madhyam, Komal Dhaivat*) and
- 10) *Bhairavi* (*Komal Rishabh, Komal Gandhar, Komal Dhaivat and Komal Nishaad*).

Each *Thaat* gives rise to a number of *Raagas*. About 1400 *Raagas* are defined and about 200 of them are in practice.

Now, you may ask what is a *Raag*. A. *Raag* can be defined as a concept which establishes certain rules and characteristics about the application of notes in melody creation, using the *Raag*. These rules and characteristics are

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called '*Lakshana*' of the *Raag*. Here are some examples of '*Lakshana*' or the Rules and the characteristics of a *Raag* :

- 1 A *Raag* should have the minimum of five *swaras* and the maximum seven *swaras* in its ascending order (*Aaroha*) and the descending order, (*Avaroha*)
- 2 The *Raag* must be derived from one of the parent scales.
- 3 The *shadja*, or *sa*, the tonic note cannot be rejected.
- 4 The *raag* should consist of *Madhyam* or *Pancham*, or both. These two together cannot be rejected in the formation of *Aroha* or *Avaroha*.
- 5 A *raag* must be performed during the time specified by the tradition. Any particular *raag* may be said to be a morning melody, midnight melody, evening melody, etc. These are some of the rules (*Lakshanas*)

These *Lakshanas* are described in several ways. A theory book on music, generally describe the *Lakshana* in the form of prose or in the form of poetry, generally written in Sanskrit or in the some what ancient Hindi language. *Lakshana geet* means poetry describing the rules of a *raag* and can be sung. The first form is a *Doha*, a couplet written in ancient Hindi and is sung in the traditional way, the *dohas*(couplets) are sung.

The other form of the poetry of *Lakshana geet* is very popular and is widely in practice. A *Lakshan geet* of a *raag*, is a set of instructions composed in the same *raag*, the script the *Lakshan geet*, briefs the rules i.e. characteristics of the *raag*. It is composed for singing in a moderate tempo- means *Madhya laya*, and is sung in *chhota khayal*, a type of singing in a short duration of time. The *lakshan geet* consists of two parts :

The first, *Sthayee* means the two beginning lines or is called (a sign line). The second part is called '*Antara*' (a stanza.). There are a number of *Lakshan geets* composed for and in various *ragas* in existence. This kind of songs for remembering the *Lakshan* of a *raag* is much popular as it is easier for a student to remember a song form than a prose form.

- Mangesh Gokarn, *SARGAM*, Vol1 : 3 & 4, June & July, 2003

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The Ten Golden Rules for a Singer

- 1 Do listen to the songs of your choice, carefully and regularly. (This enables you to sing a song properly when you sing it independently)
- 2 Do sing at least 10-15 minutes a day. (This enables you to sing without a blemish during performance.)
- 3 Do pay attention to practise lower notes and higher notes of a song. (This enables you to increase the range of your singing.)
- 4 Do understand the meaning of a song i.e. its lyrics, words of lyrics and the direct and abstract meaning of song) (This enables you to express the feelings of a song. It also enables you to remember the lyrics.
- 5 Do study the accents on words of a lyric. (This enables you to convey the meaning of a song to the listener correctly. An example can be given here. A line of a song from film 'Kanhaiya' *Mujhe tumse Kuchh bhi na chahiye* (Mukesh)
The accent on word '*Mujhe*' indicates that, I don't want anything from you, but someone else wants. The accent on word. '*Tumse*' indicates that, I don't want anything from you, but I want it from others.
The accent on word '*Kuchhbhi*' indicates that, I don't want anything from you leave me alone.
The accent of *Kuchhbhi* is correct and if conveys the correct feeling of the singer.
- 6 Do not whistle or play instruments that are blown by mouth (Flute, Clarinet etc.)
- 7 Do not sing along a song when it is being played (on radio or on a music system)
- 8 Do not sing a song without understanding the meaning of it.
- 9 Do not sing a song in an original scale, if its scale does not suit you.
- 10 Do not pay attention to the things around you while performing but concentrate on your singing.

- Mangesh Gokarn

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Guest Article**Listening, Hearing and
Enjoying Listening****Ashok Sahasrabuddhe**

Whether indoor or outdoor, one listens to various sounds, some bearable and some unbearable. Unbearable sound is noise. Though all sounds enter human ears, most of them are ignored- forgotten and very few are attentively listened and registered in the brain. The Process of listening carefully and attentively is hearing. For example, in the Court of law, court hearing consist of listening to the culprits and witnesses, etc., attentively.

In case of musical notes: vocal or instrumental, third dimension viz 'enjoying listening' comes into existence. It is obvious that due to absence of words in instrumental music, vocal music is superior to instrumental. Old Ustads therefore used to say '*Gaaya to Badshah hain!*' We will therefore study in this article only vocal music and what/ how to enjoy listening to the same.

Human voice is the backbone of vocal music. Grand human voice is optimum blending of the following qualities in right proportion:

- 1) Power (*Josh*)-forcefulness, strength.
- 2) Sweetness (*Mithas*)-pleasing, soothing.
- 3) Flexibility (*Loch*)-free rapid movement.
- 4) Crystal clarity (*Nikhar*)-clear pronunciation.
- 5) Tenderness (*Nazakat*)-grace.
- 6) Emotion(*Navarasa-pradhan*)-effective demonstration of feeling (*Ras*) in the song.

Mohamad Rafi and Asha Bhosale are the best examples of grand male and female singing voice. Both are unique and it is a great fortune for Hindi film song lovers that during the period 1955-1970 when Hindi Film music was at its best, both these singers were young and in full form. Also they had the opportunity to sing under the music direction of Shankar-Jaikishan, O.P. Nayyar, S.D.Burman, C. Ramchandra, Roshan, Hemant Kumar, Ravi, Madan Mohan, Kalyanji-Anandji, Laxmikant Pyarelal and others who were also at the peak of their careers. Out of these O. P. Nayyar made the best utilisation of talented voices of Mohamad Rafi and Asha Bhosale. In one letter

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written to O.P.Nayyar, Mohamad Rafi writes '*Yun To Humne Lakh Sangeetkar Dekhe, Tumasa Nahin Dekha*'.

Following are the specialities of Hindustani Vocal music which are to be enjoyed during listening:

- 1) *Meend* - sliding down from higher note to lower note without interruption (break) and without going out of Tune (*Besura*).
- 2) *Ghasseet* - climbing up from lower note to upper note without interruption (break) and without going out of Tune (*Besura*).
- 3) *Gamak* - to sing same note once again. For example: *Sa-Sa, Re-Re* etc, without going out of Tune (*Besura*).
- 4) *Acharak* - to sing same note 3 or more times. For example *Sa-Sa-Sa, Re-Re-Re-Re* without going out of Tune (*Besura*).
- 5) *Harkat (Muraki)* - to sing more and more notes between two beats without going out of Tune (*Besura*)
- 6) *Phirki Taan* - to sing same Harkat one after other two or more times.

Both Mohamad Rafi and Asha Bhosale, especially Asha Bhosale were masters of all these specialities. Mohamad Rafi used to praise Asha Bhosale for those Harkats which he was unable to sing. He once asked Asha '*Kya Harkate Leti Ho! Main Nahin Le Sakta!*' Asha replied '*Galese Nikalti hai, Isliye Leti Hun!*'. This fact is clear in many duet songs of Mohamad Rafi and Asha Bhosale. All these specialities are best heard and enjoyed from original sound tracks of the film in the theatres or from quality recorded Records or CD's from original sound tracks.

O.P.Nayyar was master user of all these specialities of Hindustani Vocal music. Swara Sampada members are requested to hear the following O.P.Nayyar compositions from original sound track, note and enjoy all the above specialities:

Asha Bhosale - Solo (Top 10) Film		Asha-Rafi Duets (TOP 10) Film	
Jaiye Aap Kaha	Mere Sanam	Tum Roothake Mat Jaana	Phagun
Aao Huzur Tumko	Kismat	Main Soya Akhiya Miche	Phagun
Aaiye Meherban	Howrah Bridge	Bahut Shukriya Badi	Ek Musafir Ek
Zara Holle Holle Chalho	Savan Ki Ghata		Hasina
Ratonko Chori Chori	Mohabbat Jindagi Hai	Mangke Saath Tumara	Naya Daur
Dekho Bijuri Dole	Phir Vahi Dil Laya Hai	Deewana Hua Badal	Kashmir Ki Kali
Jadugar Savariya	Dhake ki Malmal	Aye Hai Doorse	Tumsa Nahin
Chainse Humko Kabhi	Pran Jaye Par		Dekha
	Vachan Na Jaye	Main Pyar Ka Rahi Hun	Ek Musafir Ek
Main Shayad Tumhare Liye	Ye Raat Phir Na Ayegi		Hasina
Piya, Piya, Na Lage Mora	Phagun	Roka Kai Bar Meine	Mere Sanam
		Ankhon Hi Ankhon Mein	C.I.D
		Isharo Isharo	Kashmir Ki Kali

- SARGAM, Vol2: 6, September, 2004

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SONGS AND ORIGINAL SCALE
SOLOMAN CHEULKAR

Following is a list of 445 popular songs with their Music Director, Film Name, Original Scale and the Raga on which it is based. It will prove invaluable to all aspiring as well as accomplished singers, orchestra arrangers and music enthusiasts.

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