

HINDUSTANI VOCAL PERFORMANCE; AN INTRODUCTION.

Notes for a lecture demonstration

by

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1. THE SCALE.

The intervals of the Hindustani scale are essentially the same as those of the western diatonic scale of just temperament.

Musical notes are designated by certain names. However, the names do not refer to notes of fixed absolute pitch. Having decided on the register and key in which the performance is to take place, the singer or instrumentalist determines the pitch which will be the fundamental pitch (or the tonic), and designates it as the first note of the octave, calling it by the label " SA ". The successive notes of the octave are then given the following names :

SA, RE, GA, MA, PA, DHA, NI, SA[^].

Here, the superscript [^] following the last note indicates the beginning of the next octave. These names are mnemonic short forms. The full names of the notes are:

SA	Shadja
RE	Rishabha
GA	Gandhara
MA	Madhyama
PA	Panchama
DHA	Dhaivata
NI	Nishada

The intervals between these notes can be regarded as the same as those of the standard C Major scale of just temperament, and we will denote these notes by

S, R, G, M, P, D, N, S[^]

In addition there are, of course, certain notes which are flat or sharp versions of some of these. They are : *komal* (flat) RE, which will be denoted by r; *komal* GA, which we denote by g; *tivra* (sharp) MA, denoted by M[#]; *komal* DHA, denoted by d, *komal* NI, denoted by n. Thus the full twelve-tone scale is labeled as :

S, r, R, g, G, M, M[#], P, d, D, n, N, S.

Today, I will use as the fundamental note the C[#] which lies one octave below middle C[#]. This will correspond to S. So the other notes will correspond as follows :

S, r, R, g, G, M, M[#], P, d, D, n, N, S[^]
 C[#], D, E^b, E, F, F[#], G, A^b, A, B^b, B, C, C[#]

Many male vocalists will use C or E^b as their fundamental. Female vocalists tend to place their fundamental somewhere in the range from F[#] to B^b in this octave.

THE INSTRUMENTS

THE *TAMBURA*.

The *tambura* (or the *tanpura*) is the instrument that provides a constant drone as the backdrop to the performance. It is a string instrument, plucked with the fingers. Usually, it has four metal strings; occasionally, one finds instruments made with five or six strings. These strings are mounted on two bridges at either end of a stem, and the stem is attached to a resonating chamber made from a gourd. The middle two strings of the *Tambura* are tuned to the pitch that is selected by the performer as the fundamental pitch (the tonic). The last string is tuned one full octave below the fundamental. The first string is usually tuned a major fourth below the tonic, i.e. to the fifth note of the octave below the tonic. Depending on the *raga* that is to be performed, this string can be tuned to a different note however. Two choices frequently encountered are: a fifth below the tonic (i. e., to the fourth note of the octave below the tonic) and a half-tone below the tonic.

Due to the resonating chamber, as well as the simultaneous plucking of the different strings, the *tambura* gives rise to overtones, or secondary harmonics, which are fairly easy to discern. For example, the plucking of the middle strings and the last string together will produce an audible overtone which is a third above the fundamental. Similarly, if the first string is tuned a fourth below the fundamental, as it often is, then the simultaneous plucking of the first and the second strings will produce an overtone that is one full tone above the fundamental. In this way, the *tambura* creates a backdrop of many tones; as it were, a canvas on which the performer tries to paint a picture of the *raga*.

THE HARMONIUM

The harmonium is a reed organ, with bellows that are operated by hand. It uses the tempered scale, so in principle it is not ideally suited for accompaniment of Indian music. Indeed it is never used as an accompanying instrument for classical music in South India. In the North, the primary accompanying instruments in old times used to be the *sarangi* and the *been*. Both these are difficult instruments to master from the point of view of intonation. With the rise of the *khayal* form, the *been* -which is primarily used in

dhrupad as a solo as well as an accompanying instrument - became a rare commodity. The *sarangi* continued to be used as an accompaniment for *khayal* performances, but over the years many vocalists preferred to be accompanied by the less treacherous harmonium. Although there have been attempts to root out the Harmonium completely from classical recitals — for example, for many years it was not allowed as an accompanying instrument for live classical music broadcasts on All India Radio — these have not succeeded, and *khayal* singers have stuck to its use now for seven or eight decades, so one must regard it as a legitimate and fully established instrument. I find it quite acceptable, and beautiful in the hands of an expert. The role of the Harmonium is to provide a backup for the main melodic line, thus endowing it with a sort of solidity and an added dimension. Since the main melodic line is being improvised on the spot, the harmonium accompanist's task is not an easy one.

THE *TABLA* AND *PAKHAWAJ*

The *tabla* is a tunable drum, one of a pair that is played together, the other drum in the pair being referred to as the *bayan*. The *bayan* is the bass drum; it is not tunable. The *tabla* is generally tuned to the fundamental note, i.e. the Tonic. Both drums have heads made of goat leather stretched over a sounding chamber which is made from wood for the *tabla*, metal for the *bayan*. The *pakhawaj* is a transverse drum, one head of which is the bass drum, not tunable, and has the same function as the *bayan*. The other side operates in a higher register, is tunable, and is tuned to the fundamental pitch. It has a noble sound.

In the case of both these drums the two separate parts can each be hit in a variety of ways, and these are identified by mnemonic syllables that roughly correspond to the sound then produced. For example, there are 2 conventional ways of hitting the *bayan* and 5 conventional ways of hitting the *tabla*, that are commonly taught to a new student embarking on the study of the *tabla*. (A student would learn more such ways as studies progress. A treatise on the *tabla* would contain many more than this number). By combining these ways of hitting the two drums, one arrives at a number of commonly used codified strikes. These strikes have names, called *bols*. *Bols* are like names of notes (solfa) for music. Similar remarks apply to the *pakhawaj*. Although the number of such strikes may appear to be small and manageable, it must be appreciated that the precise way of combining the hit on the *tabla* and the hit on the *bayan* is subject to a wide variation in force and timing, and these variations enable the percussionist to produce an astonishing variety of sounds. Indeed the different variations form the basis for distinguishing different stylistic traditions of playing the drums. By stringing together these *bols* in different ways, an enormous repertoire of patterns can be built up. This feature is one of the most intricate aspects of Hindustani music.

THE TUNING OF THE *TAMBURA*

The usual tuning of the *Tambura* is to tune the strings as follows:

P, S, S, ~S

Here, the tilde before the note refers to the octave below the fundamental. Depending on the *raga* which is to be performed, the first string may sometimes be tuned to M, or N, or (rarely) D. Because of the importance of microtones, and of intonation generally, most performers tend to be fastidious about tuning. The strings of the *tambura* as well as the head of the *tabla* are quite sensitive to temperature changes, which is one reason why the performers prefer to tune the instruments on stage. Sometimes a performer will interrupt a performance to correct the tuning of the instruments.

WHAT IS A *RAGA*?

A *raga* can be described as a melody-type, characterized by a set of rules or conventions, both as to the selection of musical materials as well as its use. These conventions are as follows:

* Each *raga* uses certain notes, which are then referred to as the allowable notes of the particular *raga*. These notes are usually selected from a “parent scale” (called a *that*.) A *raga* may use some or all the notes from this parent scale, and one says that the *raga* belongs to the particular *that* from which the allowable notes were selected. (CAUTION: These “rules” are not rigid; as with most old traditions, there are exceptions to almost any “rule”.)

* Associated with a *raga* are (i) a prescribed ascending sequence of (not necessarily *all*) allowable notes called the *aroha* (ascent) of that *raga*, and (ii) a prescribed descending sequence of (not necessarily *all*) allowable notes, called the *avaroha* (descent). Although these sequences are generally strictly ascending or descending, sometimes they incorporate sets of notes which temporarily descend in the middle of the ascent and vice versa. Compositions in the particular *raga* will try to utilise these sequences in ascending and descending parts of the composition.

* One of the allowable notes of the *raga* is designated as the sonant (the *vadi*) and another note is designated as the consonant (the *samvadi*). These two notes are usually a fifth or a fourth apart, and are used prominently in expounding the *raga*. Many phrases may end on these notes, and they will often be notes on which improvisatory phrases are centered.

* Associated to each *raga* are certain characteristic phrases using allowable notes; these phrases constitute, as it were, the hallmark or the signature of the *raga*. They are an extremely important ingredient. Indeed there are many examples where two *ragas* have

the same set of allowable notes, but are differentiated by having different characteristic phrases.

A *particular performance* of a given *raga* consists of the performer's interpretation and improvisation based upon certain compositions, but within the confines of the conventions mentioned above. The composition provides the skeletal frame for the performer to adorn with his/her imagination and musicianship. The rules of the *raga* impose a certain discipline, but the performer has great freedom within these restrictions to improvise and to stamp the performance with his/her unique approach.

PARENT SCALES, OR *THATS*

The basic parent scale is the same as the familiar western diatonic scale:

S, R, G, M, P, D, N, S.

This scale is called the *Bilawal that*. *Ragas* which use tonal material from this scale are called *ragas* of *Bilawal that*. Each *that* is named after a *raga* which occupies a distinguished place among *ragas* that belong to the *that*. Such a pre-eminent *raga* is called a *janaka raga* i.e. a *raga* that “gives birth” to other *ragas* of the same *that*. Thus, among *ragas* of the *Bilawal that* there is a *raga* called *Bilawal*. Of course there are also other *ragas* in this *that*.

By using flats and sharps, other *thats* can be constructed. Although the number of such parent scales is theoretically large, there are ten *thats* which are commonly considered today as the basis of classification of Hindustani *ragas*. They are as follows:

ASAVARI THAT

S, R, g, M, P, d, n, S[^].

BHAIRAV THAT :

S, r, G, M, P, d, N, S[^].

BHAIRAVI THAT

S, r, g, M, P, d, n, S[^].

BILAWAL THAT

S, R, G, M, P, D, N, S[^].

KAFI THAT

S, R, g, M, P, D, n, S[^].

KALYAN THAT

S, R, G, M[#], P, D, N, S[^].

KHAMAJ THAT

S, R, G, M, P, D, n, S[^].

MARWA THAT

S, r, G, M[#], P, D, N, S[^].

PURVI THAT

S, r, G, M[#], P, d, N, S[^].

TODI THAT

S, r, g, M[#], P, d, N, S[^].

This list of *thats* is due to Bhatkhande, a great musicologist who lived in the early years of this century.

EXAMPLE: RAGA BHEEMPALAS

A familiar *raga*, in which there exist a lot of compositions. The parent scale, or *that*, from which it is derived is :

S, R, g, M, P, D, n, S[^].

As we have remarked above, this *that* is called the *Kafi that*. In the case of *raga Bheempalas* all notes of the parent scale are allowable.

The *aroha* is

.n, S, g, M, P, n, S[^].

and the *avaroha* is

S[^], n, D, P, M, P, g; M, g, R, S.

Bheempalas has M as its *vadi* (sonant) and S as its *samvadi* (consonant).

Here are the characteristic phrases of *Bheempalas* :

$_n S$; g R S; S M; M g P; M g P g M; M g R S;
 $_n S$ g M P; M P g M P; D M P g;
 g M P n S[^]; R[^] n S[^] n D P; D M P g; g M P g M g R S;

EXAMPLE: RAGA DHANI

This *raga* is very close to *Bheempalas*. Both derive from the same parent scale. However, D and R are omitted from *Dhani*, while *Bheempalas* uses them in the *avaroha*, as we have seen above.

The *aroha* for *Dhani* is:

$_n, S, (M)g, M, P, (S)n, S^{\wedge}$.

The *avaroha* is:

$S^{\wedge}, n, P, M, (M)g, M; g, S$.

(Here, as well as in what follows, I will denote by parentheses a grace note, i.e. a note that is fleetingly touched upon.)

According to some practitioners, R is used fleetingly in the *avaroha* of this *raga*. *Dhani* has g as *vadi* and n as *samvadi*. The character of this *raga* is defined by the following phrases:

$_M _P _n S$ g; S g S; S g M; g M g S;
 S g M; g M P; S g M P M g; M g S;
 M P n P; P M g; g M g S;
 P n S[^]; n S[^] n P; P n S[^]; g[^] S[^] n P;
 S[^] g[^] S[^] n P; P M g; g M g S;

Although *Bheempalas* and *Dhani* are quite close tonally, the different treatment of phrasing serve to distinguish them quite well. Moreover, M is not as prominent in *Dhani* as it is in *Bheempalas* and g and n are almost always accompanied by a grace note from above. (I have not explicitly notated this in the phrases written above.)

EXAMPLE: RAGA PATADEEP

Patadeep uses the same notes as *Bheempalas* except that N is used instead of n.

The *aroha* is:

$_N S, g, M, P, N, S^{\wedge}$.

and the *avaroha* is:

S[^], N, D, P, M, g, R, S, \bar{N} , S, g, R, S.

Patadeep has P as *vadi* and S as *samvadi*. (However, some people hold other opinions.) The following phrases are characteristic:

\bar{N} S g R S; \bar{P} \bar{N} S g R S;
 \bar{N} S g M (g)P; M P N D P;
 P N S[^] N D P; N S[^] g[^] R[^] S[^] N D P;
 N D P g; M g R S, \bar{N} S g R S.

This illustrates the fact that classificatory rules are not hard and fast. N is used in this *raga* even though it is not included in the parent scale. Of course, the characteristic phrases of *Patadeep* are distinct from those of *Bheempalas*.

ORNAMENTATION.

Hindustani musical technique lays great stress on different ways of ornamenting musical notes in a performance. A particular note is not always sung purely at its pitch, but in conjunction with shadings of other nearby notes, which may be called grace notes. A close analysis of the way that a performer sings a note often reveals that the performer is really singing a triplet or a quadruplet of notes, centered on that note. This central note gets the lion's share of the attention, but the auxiliary notes are of great importance in creating the correct tonal effect for the *raga*. The grace notes will be chosen from the tonal material which is allowable for the particular *raga* being performed, so that a subtle fabric of those notes is being woven in the background. Another technique is that of *Meend*, a glissando, i.e. a method of making smooth gliding transitions from one note to another. During the glide, the vocalist endeavors to emphasize just those notes which are appropriate for the *raga*, even though the glide is in principle continuous from the initial to the final note.

Here is an example of the crucial role played by grace notes, intonation and phrasing.

EXAMPLE: *RAGAS MULTANI, MADHUVANTI AND TODI*.

These three *ragas* are very close together. *Multani* and *Todi* both use the scale:

S, r, g, M[#], P, d, N, S[^].

The *aroha* for *Todi* is:

S, r, g, M[#], d, N, S[^].

The *avaroha* is:

$S^{\wedge}, N, d, P, M^{\#}, g, r, S.$

It has *d* as *vadi*, and *r* as *samvadi*.

The characteristic phrases of *Todi* are:

$S r g r g; g r S;$
 $_d _N S r; r M^{\#} g;$

$g M^{\#} d; g M^{\#} d M^{\#} g;$

$M^{\#} d N S^{\wedge}; d N S^{\wedge} r^{\wedge}, g^{\wedge} r^{\wedge} S^{\wedge};$
 $N S d; M^{\#} d P;$

Multani has as *aroha*:

$_N, S, g, M^{\#}, P, N, S^{\wedge};$

and as *avaroha*:

$S^{\wedge}, N, d, P, M^{\#}, g, r, S.$

The *vadi* is *P*, and *samvadi* is *S*.

Some characteristic phrases are:

$N S N d P; M^{\#} P N N S;$
 $N S g r S; S M^{\#} g r S;$

$_N S g M^{\#} P; d M^{\#} P;$
 $M^{\#} P g M^{\#} g; M^{\#} g r S;$

$M^{\#} P N S^{\wedge}; S^{\wedge} (M^{\#})g^{\wedge} r^{\wedge} S^{\wedge};$

One of the major differences between *Todi* and *Multani* is in the treatment of the notes *r*, *g* and *M[#]*. In *Todi* the phrases

$S r g r g r S;$
 $S r g M^{\#} g r S;$

are used quite frequently. Note that *r* is used the ascent in these phrases. In contrast, the use of *r* in an ascending phrase is scrupulously avoided in *Multani*. Also, *g* is voiced with

r as a grace note in *Todi*, while in *Multani*, g would be voiced with M[#] as a grace note for it. Another difference is that P is used freely as a terminal point of ascending phrases in *Multani*, in contrast to the way in which it is used in *Todi*. Most styles will omit P in the ascent of *Todi*. (However, certain older practices allow its use, but usually not as a terminal point of phrases.)

We now discuss *Madhuvanti*. *Madhuvanti* uses the same scale as *Multani*, except that R and D are used instead of r and d. Thus the differences between them depend critically on intonation and phrasing.

Madhuvanti uses as *aroha*:

˘N, S, g, M[#], P, N, S^ˆ.

and as *avaroha*

S^ˆ, N, D, P, M[#], g, R, S.

The *vadi* is P and the *samvadi* is S. Notice the close similarity with *Multani*. In this *raga*, the note P will be ornamented with D (compare this with *Multani* where d would be used), and S is ornamented with R rather than r, as it would be in *Multani*. Many phrases are similar to those of *Multani*, and differ only in the intonation of R and D. Here are some phrases of *Madhuvanti*:

˘N S ˘N (D) ˘P; ˘P ˘N S; g R S;

˘N S g M[#] P; M[#] g R S;

g M[#] P N S^ˆ; g^ˆ R^ˆ S^ˆ;
N S^ˆ N D P; M[#] P (M[#])g;
M[#] g R S;

This example is about as subtle as one can get. In most cases the distinctions are easier.

ALAP

Alap literally means narration, address, conversation, speech, or communication. In a musical performance, it refers to the leisurely opening section of the performance, during which the artist tries to expound the *raga*, delineating his/her conception of the structure and nuances of the *raga*. This section does not have any rhythmic structure and is not accompanied by the drums. It stresses the subtleties of the tonal structure of the *raga*, and seeks to lay the foundation on which the later parts of the performance will rest. *Alap* can be long or short, depending on the tradition which forms the training of the vocalist, and the mood of the performer. In certain styles, and especially in the singing of

Dhrupad, an ancient style, *alap* is often referred to as “*nom-tom alap*”, because the singer often uses alliterative sounds like *ri, na, na, nom, tom, tanom, deem* etc. while singing it. The slow non-rhythmic *alap* is usually succeeded by a section in which the vocalist, still unaccompanied by the drums, sings with a consistent internal rhythm. This section is referred to as *jor*. Many regard the vocal *jor* as an extension of the *alap* section, and hence as a part of it. (In instrumental performance, there also exists such a section following the *Alap*, also called “*jor*” or “*jod*”. Instrumentalists also follow the *jor* by a rapid, unaccompanied but rhythmic, section called the “*Jhala*”).

LAYA & TALA

The speed or tempo at which the performance proceeds is called *Laya*. Usually, three tempos are used: *vilambita* or *vilambit* (slow), *madhya* (medium), and *druta* or *drut* (fast). Classical literature also refers to two more: *Ativilambita* (very slow), and *Anudruta* (rapid). But these last two are not singled out in practice; thus the *druta* tempo is allowed to become rapid without explicit mention.

Tala is the rhythmic cycle which is followed by the beats of the drum, and which also underlies the composition that is being sung or played. A particular *tala* can be executed at different tempos. The *tala* consists of a certain number of beats, called *matras*. The *matras* are also grouped together in divisions of different length. Here are some examples:

TEENTAL: Sixteen *matras* (beats); divided as follows: 4-4-4-4

EKTAL: Twelve *matras*; divided as follows: 4-4-2-2.

JHAPTAL: Ten *matras*; divided as follows: 2-3-2-3.

ROOPAK: Seven *matras*; divided as follows: 3-2-2.

CHAUTAL: Twelve *matras*; divided as follows: 4-4-2-2.

There is an enormous variety of *talas*; there are *talas* with 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16 beats in common use, sometimes more than one having the same number of beats, and there are others, not in common use, with unusual and even fanciful features. These can be heard in solo drum recitals on occasion. A classical treatise on music, the “*Sangita Ratnakara*”, lists 121 *talas*. Modern treatises list about 80, of which about 15-18 are in common use.

COORDINATION BETWEEN THE PERFORMERS.

Since the vocalist is improvising to a great extent during a performance, it is essential to have some conventions so that the vocalist's performance can be coordinated with the percussion accompaniment. The first beat of the *tala* provides them with a

convenient point of reference. This beat is called the *sam* (pronounced sum). *Sam* literally means: together, equal, even.

How is this point of reference utilized in the performance?

* The percussionist often emphasizes the first beat by striking it in a slightly different, distinctive way.

* The singer or instrumentalist performs a composition that normally has a part that is repeated as a refrain - called a *dhruvapada*, or *mukhda*; this refrain will have a point of emphasis, and the performer contrives to arrive at this point at the same time as the percussionist arrives at the *sam*.

* In between, and sometimes for several repetitions of the *tala* cycle, the vocalist may improvise in various degrees, coming to the *sam* periodically by singing the refrain. In most vocal performances, the *tabla* accompanist is not accorded much scope for improvisation, but in instrumental concerts it is more usual to allow the percussionist some scope to display skill. So that both artists will improvise, arriving at the *sam* together periodically. In instrumental performances where a master percussionist is at the drums, the drums will be accorded an almost equal role.

KHAYAL OR KHYAL

Khayal literally means thought, idea, or concept. As the name suggests, this musical form stresses the performer's conception of the structure of the *raga*, and her/his ideas which often arise on the spur of the moment.

After the *alap*, the singer will present the *khayal* proper, first at the *vilambita* (slow) tempo, and later at a *druta*, (i.e. fast) tempo. The *tabla* will now join in, maintaining the *tala* that is appropriate for the composition that has been chosen. Usually different compositions will be chosen for the *vilambita* and the *druta* presentations. In contrast to western practice where the performance consists of rendering the set composition, the *Khayal* singer uses the composition as a foundation for improvisation, so that the *raga* can be adorned and embellished with the singer's imagination and ideas.

Usually, the composition has two parts : The *sthayi*, or *asthayi* and the *antara*. The *sthayi* usually uses the tonal material from the first half of the octave which starts at the fundamental, while the *antara* will emphasize the second half. The *sthayi* contains a phrase - the *mukhda* - which will be used repeatedly as a refrain. The singer will always start by stating the *sthayi*, and sometimes may choose also to state the *antara* immediately thereafter. In the statement a certain amount of melodic precision is supposed to be maintained, so that the composition will be rendered more or less as it was taught to the singer by his/her teacher. However, once the composition has been stated, the real business of the performance begins. This is the presentation of the vocalist's own ideas about the *raga*. The conventions and rules described above impose a certain discipline,

but since they are not too specific and rigid, they also allow the performer a lot of freedom within these limits. Also, the fact that the composition is only a skeleton allows the vocalist a great deal of scope for invention.

Here are some of the common features of the presentation of this part of the performance :

* The performer will gradually proceed from the lower tetrachord where the *sthayi* usually resides, to the upper one. Starting from a group of notes at the lower end the performer might explore a set of musical ideas, and will slowly introduce the successive allowable notes of the *raga*, and also smoothly transform the musical ideas to accommodate the newly introduced notes. This process is referred to as the *badhat*, meaning growth or expansion. The manner in which this is done is a criterion by which a singer is judged.

* The singer will seek to coordinate the arrival to the first beat, the *sam*, in a smooth and unforced manner, but nevertheless will not allow the listener to overlook the fact that the magic of that special moment has been achieved. The singer may also sometimes draw attention to some other beat of the rhythmic cycle e.g. by ending a phrase on that beat etc.

* Certain parts of the composition may be dwelt upon more than others due to the singer's desire to underline their emotive content.

* After reaching the upper part of the octave and elaborating the *antara*, the vocalist will often render the entire composition at a somewhat faster tempo, interspersing it with fairly fast runs called *tans*. Sometimes such runs may also occur earlier in the performance.

* Many singers will also sing some solfage, i.e. the names of the notes will be sung in tune. This is called singing *sargam*. There is no particular rule about when or whether a singer might do this. When this is done, it is supposed to be done sparingly, so that technique does not dominate the performance to the detriment of musicality.

* As the tempo of the performance gets faster, those aspects of the performer's skill which are more suited to the faster tempo will be brought into play. The weaving of clever metrical patterns and playing with the rhythm are some of the devices that are used by the singer. This is referred to as *layakari*. Certain styles of singing are famous for their cultivation of this aspect. (Note: In the weaving of these metrical patterns, it is the rhythm or *tala* that is being played with and not the tempo or the *laya* of the performance. Thus, strictly speaking, calling this device *layakari* is a bit of a misnomer, which is firmly established, however).

OTHER MUSICAL FORMS.

A performer usually present several pieces during a concert. To maintain variety and interest, he/she often chooses several *ragas* and *talas* during the recital. Moreover, additional variety will be provided by presenting different forms. Some of these forms are : *Thumri*, *Dadra*, *Tarana*, *Bhajan*, and *Tappa*. In the short time available we cannot deal with these forms at all. But here are short sketches that will serve to inform you as to what these terms mean.

* *Thumri* is a lighter form than *khayal*. It attained currency during Mogul times, and was cultivated in the context of the pleasure-seeking pastimes of wealthy courtiers. Its themes are amorous; many are coquettish, some sad and full of longing - for love, naturally. Both the music as well as performance practice abet the emotive intent of the form. *Thumris* are often used in the accompaniment of *Kathak*, a leading dance form. In this context its themes are usually about the God Krishna.

* *Dadra* is also a light form, to which most of the remarks made above about the *thumri* apply. The form derives its name from the fact that it is always sung in one particular *tala* called *dadra*, a cycle of six beats divided into two equal divisions : 3-3.

* *Tarana* is syllabic composition, sung to fast tempo, usually following a *vilambita khayal*. The syllables do not have a meaning, but are chosen for alliterative effect.

* *Bhajan* refers to devotional compositions. This form is at once a folk form, being an integral part of the Indian cultural experience at all levels of society, and a light classical form. There is a vast source of *bhajans* in the compositions of the saint-poets of India, from all parts of the country.

* *Tappa* derives from the style of singing certain folk songs, which was cultivated by the camel drivers of Punjab, Sind and Rajasthan. It is characterized by fast runs which incorporate a peculiar use of glottal stops to achieve their effect.

IMPROVISATION.

Although the performer takes a composition as a point of departure, the mainstay of a performance is the improvisation which is taking place extempore. The ability to infuse the performance with a certain spontaneous energy via imaginative but structured improvisations is the hallmark of a great performer.

During a performance, improvisation takes place in many ways:

* Tonal - the performer improvises and " plays " with different patterns of notes allowable in the *raga*.

* Temporal - the performer may present a phrase with essentially the same rhythmic structure but at a different tempo, e.g. at twice the speed or at half the speed.

* Metrical - the performer may execute a phrase with the same tonal structure, but with different time values to the various notes that make up the phrase.

* The above variations may be performed either with vowel sounds, i.e. without syllables of words in the composition, or with the help of syllables, or *bols*. There are technical names for these devices. For example, when tonal variations are performed with syllables as a skeleton, one speaks of *bol-alap*, and of *bol-tan*. Similarly, when metrical variations are performed with syllables as a basis, one speaks of *bol-bant* ; literally: the apportioning of syllables. The relative emphasis placed on these techniques varies substantially between different traditional lineages of singers (*gharanas*), and also from one performer to another.

A musician's reputation depends on the degree to which he/she is able to combine all these ingredients in a vital and entertaining way.

RAPPORT WITH THE AUDIENCE.

In a Hindustani concert, it is not impolite for people in the audience to communicate their appreciation to the performer during the flow of the performance. There are of course certain obvious rules dictated by good manners: one should not interject too loudly or too often, or at a moment when doing so may impede the flow of the performer's thought, e.g. in the middle of an obviously intricate phrase. But subject to these simple rules, appreciative interjections are in fact welcomed by a performer. Absence of well conceived and well timed expressions of appreciation is considered as the sign of a "wooden" audience. A performer who receives a word of encouragement from someone in the audience just when he/she has executed a novel maneuver knows immediately that a careful and discriminating listener is at hand. A subtle dialogue often ensues, in which the performer and listener reinforce each other, elevating the level of the total experience. Many recitals are memorable precisely because such interaction can shape the performance as it progresses and endow it with a charged atmosphere as people become aware that what they are witnessing is the creative process in its elemental form.