

Indian classical ragas to cure diseases

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Abstract

Music is a universal language. It influences all levels of human existence. It is a medium for communication, which can be both a pleasant and healing experience. Modern science and medicine are now rediscovering the healing powers of music. And music therapy, the specialized use of music in treating persons with special needs in mental and physical health, rehabilitation and special education is gaining ground. Music therapy carries a great vintage in the ancient holistic medical science of India. The whole subject of music medical therapy is now getting attention from all across the world. In this paper we are presenting how a different raga effects the human body.

Keywords: Classical Music, Music Therapy (MT), Raga, Medicine, Human Body.

Introduction



Music therapy is a scientific method of effective cures of disease through the power of music ^[1]. It restores, maintains and improves emotional, physiological and psychological wellbeing ^[2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7]. The articulation, pitch, tone and specific arrangement of swars (notes) in a particular raga stimulates, alleviates and cures various ailments inducing electromagnetic change in the body. Music therapy has a long history dating back to ancient Orphic school in Greece. Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle, all were aware of the prophylactic and therapeutic powers of music ^[8]. Even the Old Testament mentions music therapy where King David is said to have cured an illness by playing on the harp. Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, used music to cure human diseases. In ancient Egypt music was used to lessen the pain of women during childbirth. Ibn Sina, a famous Arabic writer, has written in detail on this subject. In India legend has it that Thyagaraja, the famous musician of South India, brought a dead person back to life by singing the composition Naa Jeevan Dhara in raga Bihari. In 1729 Richard Browne, a physician wrote the famous text *Medicina Musica* which describes the use of music as medicine ^[9]. Dr. Burnell has mentioned a manuscript named *Raga Chikitsa* in the collections of the Saraswati Mahal Library in Tanjore which deals with the various ragas that can be used for curing

various ailments. "Music is a kind of inarticulate, unfathomable speech which leads us to the edge of the infinite and lets us for a moment gaze in that" observed Carlyle. Music is basically a sound or nada generating particular vibrations which moves through the medium of the ether present in the atmosphere and affects the human body ^[10]. Sarangdev mentions in his *Sangeet Ratnakar* that ahata nada or music is always produced by striking or aghata by a living being on an instrument of any kind, so music is a power or universal energy in the form of ragas.

Matanga (9-10th century AD) was the earliest writer to define raga. According to him "raga is that kind of sound composition consisting of melodic movements which has the effect of clearing the hearts of men." "There are four sources of raga: folk songs, poetry, devotional songs of mystics and compositions of classical musicians. While harmony is the characteristic of Western music, Indian music is pure melody. The general term for melody in India is raga or ragini." (Kangra Ragmala-- M.S. Randhawa). Symphonies of raga have a definite soothing effect on the mind as well as on the body ^[11]. Repeated listening to the particular raga being chosen for a particular disease produces a network of sound vibration. The muscles, nerves and the chakras of the affected part are contracted when one impulse is given and relaxed during the interval between two impulses. Thus, during contraction of the tissue, musical notes make the blood flow out of that particular area and in the interval there is relaxation and a state of reduced pressure is produced in these areas. Thus the blood from the adjacent area will flow there. This process is repeated again and again and the blood flow and energy flow in that part is enhanced. This makes quick, fast healing. Energy from URF (universal energy field) to HEF (human energy field) transmitted by the strokes of the different tones of raga affects the CNS (Central nervous system) because the roots of the auditory nerves are more widely distributed and have more connections than any other nerves in the body. Music beats have a very close relationship with heart beats ^[12]. Music having 70-75 beats per minute equivalent to the normal heart beat of 72 has a very soothing effect. Likewise rhythms which are slower than 72 beats per minute create a positive suspense on the mind and body since

the mind, body complex anticipates that the music will speed up and this restored vital energy gives a deep relaxation to the body. Rhythms which are faster than the heart rate excite and rejuvenate the body. Hindustani/classical musical considers ragas as depicting specific moods ^[13]. An appropriate mood is to be evoked in the listener's mind before initiating the musical treatment. Kafi Raga evokes a humid, cool, soothing and deep mood while Raga Pooriya Dhansari evokes sweet, deep, heavy, cloudy and stable state of mind. Raga Mishra Mand has a very pleasing, refreshing light and sweet touch while bagashwri arouses a feeling of darkness, stability, depths and calmness. Music is considered the best tranquilizer in modern days of anxiety, tension and high blood pressure. Raga Darbari is considered very effective in easing tension. It is a late night raga composed by Tansen for Akbar to relieve his tension after the hectic schedule of the daily court life. This raga belongs to Asavari that and is a complete raga containing all the seven notes. The seven notes are taken from various natural sounds of birds and animals. Raga Bhupali and Todi give tremendous relief to patients of high blood pressure. Raga Ahir-Bhairav is supposed to sustain chords which automatically brings down blood pressure. Raga Malkauns and Raga Asawari help to cure low blood pressure, for heart ailments Raga Chandrakauns is considered very helpful. Raga Tilak-Kamod, Hansdhvani, Kalvati, Durga evoke a very pleasing effect on the nerves. For patients suffering from insomnia and need a peaceful sonorous sleep, Raga Bihag and Bahar have wonderful effects. Ragas are closely related to different parts of the day, according to changes in the nature and development of a particular emotion, mood or sentiment in the human mind ^[14]. Music therapy treatment is conducted either early morning, evening or night. One should avoid long music sessions on an empty stomach ^[15]. Music sessions should be of one hour duration with two or three short sessions with breaks.

Raga and Therapy

One of the unique characteristics of Indian music is the assignment of definite times of the day and night for performing Raga melodies ^[16]. It is believed that only in this period that Raga appears to be at the height of its melodic beauty and majestic splendor. There are some Ragas which are very attractive in the early hours of the mornings, others which appeal in the evenings, yet others which spread their fragrance only near the midnight hour. This connections of time of the day or night, with the Raga or Raginis is based on a daily cycle of changes that occur in our own body and mind ^[17] which are constantly undergoing subtle changes in that different moments of the day arouse and stimulate different moods and emotions. Each Raga or Ragini is associated with a definite mood or sentiment that nature arouses in human beings. The ancient musicologists were particularly interested in the effects of musical notes, how it affected and enhanced human behavior. Music had the power to cure, to make you feel happy, sad, disgusted and so on. Extensive research was carried out to find out these effects. This formed the basis of time theory as we know it today. It is believed that the human body ^[18] is dominated by the three Doshas-Kaph, Pitta and Vata. These elements work in a cyclic order of rise and fall during the 24 hour period. Also, the reaction of these three elements differs with the seasons. Hence it is said that

performing or listening to a raga at the proper allotted time can affect the health of human beings.

Raga and Day Time

The following schedule will summarize the specific time periods. The 24 hour period is divided into 8 beats (Prahar) each three hours long, as follows:

1. 7 a.m.-10 a.m. 1st beat of the day. Daybreak, Early Morning, Morning.
2. 10 a.m. - 1 p.m., 2nd beat of the day. Late Morning, Noon, Early afternoon.
3. 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. 3rd beat of the day. Afternoon, Late Afternoon.
4. 4 p.m. - 7 p.m. 4th beat of the day. Evening Twilight, Dusk (sunset)
5. 7 p.m. - 10 a.m. first beat of the night. Evening, Late Evening.
6. 10 p.m. - 1 p.m., 2nd beat of the night. Night, Midnight.
7. 1 a.m. - 4 a.m. 3rd beat of the night. Late Night
8. 4 a.m. - 7 a.m. 4th beat of the night. Early Dawn, Dawn (before sunrise)

Similarly Everyday two cycles of change pass through our body, each bringing a Vata, Pitta, or Kapha predominance.

The approximate times of these cycles are as follows:

First cycle

- 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. - Kapha
- 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. - Pitta
- 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. – Vata

Second cycle

- 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. - Kapha
- 10 p.m. to 2 p.m. - Pitta
- 2 a.m. to 6 p.m. – Vata

Raga and Ritu (Seasons)

There are Ragas associated with the rainy season, Varsha (Raga Megha and Raga Malhar), the autumn season, Basant (Raga Basant) and the spring season (Raga Bahar). Seasonal Ragas can be sung and played any time of the day and night during the season allotted to them. The obligation of time in case of such melodies is relaxed. *Vasanta Ritu* (Spring Season). In this season, increased kapha is liquified by the heat of sun which causes diminished agni (digestive activity) causing diseases *Grishma Ritu* (Summer Season) In this season, Sunrays become powerful. Kapha decreases vata increases day by day *Sharat Ritu* (Autumn Season) Sudden exposed to sunlight after cold season aggravates pita.

Dosha	Accumulation	Vitiation	Diminution
Kapha	Shishir	Vasant	Grishma
Pitta	Grishma	Varsha	Sharad
Vata	Varsha	Sharad	Hemant

Raga and Ritu (Seasons) Association

Raga	Ritu
Bhairav	Shishir
Hindol	Vasant
Deepak	Grishma
Megh	Varsha
Malkans	Sharad
Shree	Hemant

Various Ragas and there Performance Timings

Raaga	Thaat	Performance Time
Piloo	Kafi	Any Time
Kafi	Kafi	Any Time
Mand	Bilawal	Any Time
Dhani	Kafi	Any Time
Bhairavi	Bhairavi	Any Time
Gaud Malhar	Kafi	Monsoon
Miyan Malhar	Kafi	Monsoon
Deshkar	Bilawal	Morning
Gunkri	Bhairav	Morning
Ahir Bhairav	Bhairav	Morning
Asavari		Morning
Bhankar	Bhairav	Morning
Bairagi Bhairav	Bhairav	Morning
Basant Mukhari		Morning
Basant	Poorvi	Morning
Bhoopali Todi	Bhairavi	Morning
Bhatiyar	Bhairav	Morning
Bilawal	Bilawal	Morning
Bilaskhani Todi	Bhairavi	Morning
Bhairav	Bhairav	Morning
Desi	Asavari	Morning
Sohni	Marwa	Morning
Gurjari Todi	Todi	Morning
Nat Bhairav	Bhairav	Morning
Kalingada	Bhairav	Morning
Lalit	Poorvi	Morning
Jogiya	Bhairav	Morning
Jaunpuri	Asavari	Morning
Hindol	Kalyan	Morning
Todi	Todi	Morning
Vibhas	Bhairav	Morning
Vrindavani Sarang	Kafi	Afternoon
Shuddh Sarang	Kalyan	Afternoon
Poorvi	Poorvi	Afternoon
Patdeep		Afternoon
Madhyamad Sarang	Kafi	Afternoon
Madhuvanti	Todi	Afternoon
Bhimpalasi	Kafi	Afternoon
Gaud Saarang	Kalyan	Afternoon
Multani	Todi	Afternoon
Bhoopali	Kalyan	Evening
Kamod	Kalyan	Evening
Desh	Khamaj	Evening
Yaman Kalyan	Kalyan	Evening
Hansdhwani	Bilawal	Evening
Khamaj	Khamaj	Evening
Sham Kalyan	Kalyan	Evening
Yaman	Kalyan	Evening
Tilang	Khamaj	Evening
Shuddh Kalyan	Kalyan	Evening
Shankara	Bilawal	Evening
Maru Bihag	Kalyan	Evening
Puriya Dhanashri	Poorvi	Evening
Puriya	Marwa	Evening
Pahadi	Bilawal	Evening
Jana Sammohini		Evening
Marwa	Marwa	Evening
Shree	Poorvi	Evening
Bahar	Kafi	Night
Tilak Kamod	Khamaj	Night
Bageshri	Kafi	Night
Charukeshi		Night

Malhar	Kafi	Night
Raageshri	Khamaj	Night
Nand	Kalyan	Night
Malkauns Pancham	Bhairavi	Night
Malkauns	Bhairavi	Night
Bhinna Shadja	Khamaj	Night
Shivranjani	Kafi	Night
Malgunji	Kafi	Night
Jhinjhoti	Khamaj	Night
Kirwani		Night
Chandani Kedar	Kalyan	Night
Chandrakauns		Night
Kedar	Kalyan	Night
Chhayanat	Kalyan	Night
Darbari	Asavari	Night
Kalavati	Khamaj	Night
Adana	Asavari	Night
Durga	Bilawal	Night
Jaijaiwanti	Khamaj	Night
Gorakh Kalyan	Khamaj	Night
Hamir	Kalyan	Night
Bihag	Kalyan	Night

More on Raga -Time Association

Time	Raga	Benefit
4am - 7am	Raga Bhairavi	emotional strength, Devotion and Peace
	Raga Bhairava	Peace Integration, Compassion
	Ragas Ramakali & Jogiya	Peace & Serenity
7am - 10am	Raga Komala Rishabha Asawari	serenity
	Raga Deshkara	Increased Energy
	Raga Jaita	Dynamism
	Raga Gurjari Todi	Compassion ,Patience
	Raga Todi	Joy
10am - 1pm	Raga Alahiya Bilavala	Peace and Happiness
	Ragas Gauda & Vrindavani Saranga	wisdom
	Raga Shuddha Saranga	Success, Knowledge
	Raga Ahir Lalita	Joyfulness
	Raga Vrindavani Saranga	Greater Energy
1pm - 4pm	Raga Multani	Achievement, Affluence
	Raga Madhuvanti	Happiness
	Raga Samanta Saranga	Creativity
	Raga Bhimapalasi	Life
4pm - 7pm	Ragas Kafi & Madhuvanti	Creativity and Happiness
	Raga Mishra Pilu	Celebration & Joyfulness
	Raga Puriya Dhanashri	Relaxation
	Raga Marwa	Coherence ,Happiness
	Raga Puriya Kalyana	Harmony
7pm - 10pm	Ragas Puriya & Rageshri	Harmony and Rejuvenation
	Raga Hansadhwani	Celebration & Happiness
	Raga Maru Bihaga	Compassion
	Raga Desh	Joy
	Raga Durga	Integration
	Raga Maru Bihaga	Compassion

10pm - 1am	Raga Darbari-Kanhra	Restful Quality of Sleep
	Raga Bageshvari	Relaxation & Rest
	Raga Gunji Kanada	Better Sleep
	Raga Abhogi	Peaceful Slumber
	Raga Malkaunsa	Restful Sleep ,Tranquility
1am - 4am	Raga Sohini & Bhatiyara	Healthy Mind and Body
	Raga Basanta	Love & Happiness
	Raga Sindhu Bhairavi	Gentleness
	Raga Lalita	Peace & Tranquillity
	Raga Nata Bhairava	Serenity

Music can play an effective role in helping us lead better, fruitful lives. Listening to specific kinds of music at specific times of the day has been shown to be helpful in maintaining good health. Indian music, with its many Ragas, is known to be particularly therapeutic value. The curative power of music emanates from the resonance of certain ragas on hormonal and glandular functions which produce secretions that keep the body balanced and infection free.

Ahir Bhairav	Indigestion Rheumatic Arthritis Hypertension ^[19]
Asavari	to build confidence - Low BP
Bageshri	insomnia
Basant Bahar	Gall Stones (Cholecystitis)
Bhairavi	Rheumatic Arthritis Sinusitis encourages detachment
Bhim palas	Anxiety, Hypertension
Chandrakauns	Anorexia - Heart Ailments
Darbari	Sedative - Easing Tension
Darbari Kanada	Headache Asthma
Deepak	Indigestion, Anorexia Hyperacidity, Gall Stones (Cholecystitis)
Gujari Todi	Cough
Gunakali	Rheumatic Arthritis, Constipation Headache, Piles or Hemorrhoids ^[19]
Hindol	Rheumatic Arthritis Backache Hypertension
Jaunpuri	Intestinal Gas Diarrhoea Constipation
Jaijawanti	Rheumatic Arthritis Diarrhoea Headache
Kafi	Sleep disorders
Kausi Kanada	Hypertension Common Cold
Kedar	Headache, Common Cold Cough, Asthma
Khamaj	Sleep disorders
Madhuvanti	Piles or Hemorrhoids
Malkauns	Intestinal Gas - Low BP
Marwa	Indigestion Hyperacidity
Nat Bhairav	Indigestion, Rheumatic Arthritis, Colitis
Puriya	Colitis, Anaemia Hypertension
Puriya Dhanashri	Anaemia
Ramkali	Colitis Piles or Hemore... OEeu
Shree	Anorexia, Common Cold Cough, Asthma
Shudh Sarang	Anorexia Gall Stones (Cholecystitis)
Shyam Kalyan	Cough, Asthma
Sohani	Headache
Yaman	Rheumatic Arthritis
Tilak Kamod, Hansadhwani, Kalavati, Durga	Relaxation & Easing Tension, Pleasing effect on Nerves.
Bihag	Sonorous sleep
Bhupal Todi	High Blood Pressure ^[19]

Conclusion

The importance of music therapy on the human body is numerous. Music therapy uses for communication, language, and intellectual development. Music therapy as support, for people who are grieving, going through a crisis time or who are in pain. Music therapy used to lower stress and tension and also gives motivation for rehabilitation. In this paper, we presented, how Indian classical Music affects the human body. Each raga has its own nature of human treatment. Each Raga is associated with a definite mood or sentiment that nature arouses in human beings.

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