

Classical Music of India:

Proposal for a Lecture, Demonstration, and Concert

Raj Rangayyan: *Bansuri* bamboo flute

The Classical Music of India has its roots in ancient chants, religious hymns, devotional music, and folk melodies. The fundamental nature of the Hindustani traditional form of music is melodic, with tonal graces and rhythmic patterns that embellish the presentation. Improvisation and spontaneous elaboration are important and essential aspects that enrich the music as well as facilitate the development of originality and exploration of musical notions.

The lecture-demonstration presents a structured introduction to the Classical Music of India. Starting with an introduction to the historical and cultural aspects of the music of India, the theoretical basics of Hindustani classical music are described in detail. The presentation is augmented by demonstrations on the bansuri. Notes and articles will be provided.

The general outline of the *three-hour* lecture-demonstration is as follows:

- Introduction to the historical and cultural aspects of the Classical Music of India.
- Celestial connections, myths, legends, and reality.
- Traditional practices and contemporary concepts.
- The art, artists, and society.
- Mystical, emotional, sentimental, philosophical, and physiological aspects of music.
- Evolution of methods of teaching, learning, and presentation.
- The trinity of *svara*, *raga*, and *laya*.
- The concept of the *raga*.
- The characteristics of a *raga*: *aroh*, *avaroh*, *vadi*, *samvadi*, *pakad*, and *alap*.
- Association of *ragas* with mood, sentiment, time of day, and seasons.
- Introduction to the rhythmic patterns in the system of *tala*.
- Development of a composition: *vistar*, *jod*, *tans*, and other musically textured phrases.
- Elaboration, embellishment, improvisation, and creativity with *ragas*.
- Classical music of India as a path for meditation, self improvement, emotional balance, and relaxation.

As a follow-up to the lecture-demonstration, a concert could be presented with two parts of about one hour each. The concert will include a *tabla* accompanist and feature a selection of *ragas* designed to suit the time, occasion, and preferences related to the event. In the case of a concert arranged in the morning period, the audience will have a special opportunity to immerse themselves in sublime morning *ragas* that are never presented in the typical evening concerts. A concert in the afternoon period would give an opportunity to experience serene *ragas* that are exclusively performed between noon and sunset. The traditional evening concert format would be suitable for the presentation of a selection of popular and melodious *ragas* as well as a few delightful compositions to enthrall the audience. A series of three concerts spanning the morning, afternoon, and evening periods would lead the audience through an enchanting and mystical musical experience spanning the elaborate artistic, emotional, and sentimental gamut of the Classical Music of India.



Photo courtesy of Sarb Akal Music Society of Calgary and Arshad Photography

Raj Rangayyan learnt the Hindustani style of the Classical Music of India on the bamboo flute *bansuri* from Guruji Sri K. Pundalika Shenoy and on the sitar from Guruji Sri N. R. Rama Rao in Bengaluru, India. He has given many performances in India, Canada, and Brazil. In Calgary, he has performed for the Raga Mala Music Society, the Glenbow Museum, Arts Commons, and several other organizations. He wishes to present and promote the Classical Music of India in its pure, serene, soothing, and natural acoustic character to facilitate yoga, meditation, mindfulness, and contemplation.

Raj has provided several lecture-demonstrations on Hindustani classical music in courses on Asian Studies, World Music, and Ethnomusicology at the University of Calgary. He has rendered many performances for the College of the Rockies, Cranbrook, and other organizations in British Columbia, and taught music for over ten years at the School of Indian Languages and Performing Arts, Calgary. He has provided many interviews and live performances on CBC radio, CJSW radio, RED FM radio, and Global TV. He has been performing and teaching music on the bansuri and sitar in Canada for over 40 years.

With Utpal Mazumdar on the tabla and pakhawaj, Raj has produced seven CDs on various themes with exquisite selections of ragas; the 50 compositions from his CDs are available through iTunes, Google, Spotify, Amazon, and many other digital music distributors. His music has been licensed to prestigious museums as well as yoga and meditation schools. He has collaborated with several musicians of different genres; his arrangements have included innovative combinations of many varieties of instruments and genres of music.

Relax with ragas – mystical musical structures – that resonate with your environment and state of being. Experience how classical music can help you be mindful and improve your emotional balance.

Let Raj's music on the bansuri bamboo flute carry you away into a soothing space that facilitates introspection, contemplation, relaxation, and meditation.

Visit <https://rangayyan.ca/> <https://slowmusic.ca/>

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBC99e_LbTqGq007UdoxL1w

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PS: Raj is a Professor Emeritus of Electrical and Computer Engineering at the University of Calgary; see <https://rangayyan.ca>