



## **SUNADA**

Music, Therapy and More...

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From the Editor's Desk.....

February somehow, always feels short and sweet, despite the fact that it is smaller only two days than the normal months. However, it is very power packed and here are some articles to prove it. It is short and strong and yet meaningful. "A thing of beauty is a joy forever" said John Keats. A thing is considered as *beautiful* only when a *harmonious* combination is present in its entirety. It goes without saying that music is definitely a product of notes arranged in harmony. It is a distinct probability that the Greek Gurus gained their knowledge of the philosophic and therapeutic aspects of music from the Egyptians". Research about the origin of Music as Therapy shows that the ancient Greek Philosopher and Mathematician Pythagoras indeed the first one to use Music for Therapeutic purposes.

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Ancient Greek Instrument Lyre

## GENRES OF MUSIC – THE GHAZAL EFFECT

By

K.S. Vasantha Lakshmi

### The Ghazal effect

A lot of people say very often that they relax while hearing some old ghazals either by Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, Ghulam Ali, Begum Akhtar, Suresh Wadkar, Hariharan and last but not the least, Jagjit Singh and many more. One often wonders what it is that draws people to these slow numbers. The major attraction is the lyric. There is a saying “People listen to music when they are happy and listen to lyrics when they are sad”. A majority of ghazals are somewhat melancholic in nature. A lot of them are about the hard hearted lover who jilts the partner. Keats rightly pointed out that “some of the sweetest songs are the saddest” and it’s an apt description of a ghazal. It has also to do a little with the influence on the lyrics in Ghazals. There is a similar school of writing songs in Carnatic Sangeet called “Madhura Bhakti”, which has taken off from the original movement by Chaitanya Maha Prabhu. What is being emphasized here is the capacity of the brain to understand a particular emotion expressed and make it its own, go through the same and emerge purged. That is the wonderful Cathartic effect of Ghazal, which I have christened as the “Ghazal Effect”. Some of the great ghazal writers include, Ghalib, Momin,

Bahadur Shah Zafar, Daag, Iqbal, Gulzar and some other lesser known but good writers like Jahan Qadar Chughtayi, Sayeed Bhopali, Jameel Gulshanabadi, Manmohan Kumar 'Tamanna', Masood Bhopali, to name a few.

The best feature of a ghazal is that the tempo or time is rather slow, the music is usually sweet, the lyrics smoothly flowing making the experience of listening to a ghazal a rather emotional journey rather than a frenzy or intellectual. The fact that the listener experiences the emotion of the ghazal makes it a more therapeutic one rather than an exercise of expertise, although this is not to say that the singer himself/herself need not be a trained singer. It requires a special kind of talent to sing a ghazal without losing the nuances of the music as well as the lyric and then only it achieves its purpose of enchanting the listener. Mostly all ghazal concerts are in the nature of chamber music.

It works very well for people who are highly stressed out, hypertensive and highly strung. Its cathartic effect is doubtless. But it can also have the side effect of making a sad and depressed person sink further into the abyss of depression. But on the whole its purgative qualities outweigh the other side effects like melancholy.

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# Pythagoras – The Father of Music Therapy

Dr. KVN Rao & KS Vasantha Lakshmi

Pythagoras (580 B.C) was one of the greatest mathematicians and philosophers of all time. But little do many people know that he was an accomplished musician - highly unusual amongst the great prophets of philosophy . He played the kithara, an ancient form of the guitar, and often sang as he played.

Recognizing the profound effect of music upon the senses and emotions, Pythagoras did not hesitate to influence the mind and body with what he termed “musical medicine.” He is reputed to have been able to soothe both animals and people.

The ancient instrument lyre, like the Veena in the Indian tradition, was regarded as the secret symbol of the human constitution, the body of the instrument representing the physical form, the strings the nerves, and the musician the spirit. Playing upon the nerves, the spirit thus created the harmonies of normal functioning, which, however, became discords if the nature of man were defiled.”

Pythagoras professed that the soul could be purified from its irrational influences by solemn songs sung to the accompaniment of the lyre. In his investigation of the therapeutic value of harmonics, Pythagoras discovered that the seven modes-or keys-of the Greek system of music had the power to incite or allay the various emotions.

Having first learned the divine theory of music from the priests of the various mysteries, Pythagoras thought over for several years upon the laws governing consonance and dissonance.

While meditating upon the problem of harmony, “Pythagoras chanced to pass a blacksmith's shop where workmen were pounding out a piece of metal upon an anvil. By noting the variances in pitch between the sounds made by large hammers and those made by smaller implements, and carefully estimating the harmonies and discords resulting from combinations of these sounds, he gained his first clue to the musical intervals of the diatonic scale. He entered the shop, and after carefully examining the tools and making mental note of their weights, returned to his own house and constructed an arm of wood so that it extended out from the wall of his room. At regular intervals along this arm he attached four strings( or chords), all of like composition, size, and weight. To the first of these he attached a twelve-pound

weight, to the second a nine-pound weight, to the third an eight-pound weight, and to the fourth a six-pound weight. These different weights corresponded to the sizes of the blacksmith's hammers."

Pythagoras then discovered "that the first and fourth strings when sounded together produced the harmonic interval of the octave, for doubling the weight had the same effect as halving the string. The tension of the first string being twice that of the fourth string, their ratio was 2:1 and produced music interval known as 'diapente' By similar experimentation he ascertained that the first and third string had tension ratio of 3:2 and produced the music interval of what is known today as the 'Perfect fifth' or 'sesquialter'.

He raised the art of music to its true dignity by explaining its mathematical foundation and is generally credited with the discovery of the diatonic scale.

Pythagoras cured many ailments of the spirit, soul, and body by having certain specially prepared musical compositions played in the presence of the sufferer or by personally reciting short selections from such early poets as Hesiod and Homer.

In his university at Crotona it was customary for the Pythagoreans to open and to close each day with songs--those in the morning calculated to clear the mind from sleep and inspire it to the activities of the coming day; those in the evening of a mode soothing, relaxing, and conducive to rest. At the vernal equinox, Pythagoras gathered his disciples in a circle around one of their number who led them in song and played their accompaniment upon a lyre.

It is said that while observing the stars one night he encountered a young man befuddled with strong drink and mad with jealousy was piling faggots about his mistress' door with the intention of burning the house. The frenzy of the youth was accentuated by a flautist a short distance away who was playing a tune in the stirring Phrygian (the mode represented by the natural diatonic scale E-E, containing a minor 2nd, 3rd, 6th, and 7th) mode. "Pythagoras induced the musician to change his air to the slow and rhythmic Spondaic mode, whereupon the intoxicated youth immediately became composed and, gathering up his bundles of wood, returned quietly to his own home."

"The therapeutic music of Pythagoras is described by Iamblichus thus: "And there are certain melodies devised as remedies against the passions of the soul, and also against despondency and lamentation, which Pythagoras invented as things that afford the greatest assistance in these maladies. And again, he employed other

melodies against rage and anger, and against every aberration of the soul. There is also another kind of modulation invented as a remedy against desires."

Rightly, Pythagoras is regarded as the father of music therapy

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*Picture of Ancient Indian Instrument Veena*



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# WHAT YOU THINK



Your article on GENRES OF MUSIC – THE BHAJAN EFFECT is very informative and thought provoking.

Thanks for sharing

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