

The Significance of Melody in Music Therapy

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Abstract: *Music therapy is the use of music to address the physical, emotional, cognitive and social needs of a group or individual. It emphasises variety of activities, such as listening to melodies, playing an instrument, drumming, writing a song etcetera. The paper reveals the creative and receptive process of therapy designed along with the music perception and its effects. The benefits of music therapy are discussed along with the nada yoga and raga chikitse. The experience of melody in music therapy is elucidated in depth.*

Key-words: *Emotions, Melody, Therapy, Raga, Nada Yoga*

1. Introduction

Music therapy touches all aspects of mind, body, brain and behaviour. Music can distract the mind, it can slow the rhythms of the body, alter the mood, which in turn influences the behaviour.

Standard psychological treatments mostly consist of verbal therapies such as cognitive behaviour therapy, motivational interviewing, and relapse prevention for patients with non-organic mental disorders and low treatment motivation positive effects of an individual three-month MT (Music Therapy) program on negative symptoms; global functioning, clinical global impressions; social avoidance and vitality were reported.

In 2008, Mays, Clark, and Gordon systematically reviewed the use of MT for patients with SUD and emphasized a lack of evidence. In their review, they included

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five quantitative studies that greatly varied in terms of treatment settings, frequency, duration, persons guiding the session, and outcome variables. Furthermore, outcomes like drug consumption or long-term abstinence were not assessed in these studies. Therefore, the treatment effects of MT were primarily related to participants' attitudes and emotions. In line with that, most of the MT studies in SUD treatment met the criteria of lower levels of evidence according to evidence-based practice hierarchies, indicating that high-quality research has not been conducted.

This paper reveals the experience and significance of melody in music therapy. Every now and then, we come across people of different groups having different tastes in music who cannot be classified under a particular head. One may like classical music of Karnatak style, another may feel Hindustani style, yet another may by discarding these two systems, show desire for western and film music. These people are of our concern as they stand for entirely different tastes and represent separate clusters of listeners. Though, they differ from each other in recognizing the intricacies of each treasure of the above forms, they all concede as regards to melody with which they have the same opinion. It may be rhythmic or the elongation of a particular note (musical) which may constitute melody. Any mind having no appreciation for the melody can scarcely enjoy music at all.

Music can help people to rehabilitate who are suffering from

- emotional health issues, grief, anxiety and depression
- stroke, traumatic head injury, chronic conditions like Parkinson's or Alzheimer's disease.

Therapy will be designed based on

- Patients physical health
- Communication abilities
- Cognitive skills
- Emotional well being
- Interest

After detailed enquiry of the patient, the treatment will be initiated. It may be creative or receptive process.

Creative Process: Ask patient to create music or produce music, compose a song, engage in music or song improvisation, drumming etc.

Receptive Process: Music listening experience such as using music to facilitate individual or group relaxation. Discuss thoughts, feelings or ideas after hearing to music.

Section 2 exposes us to the emotions in music along with the mood. Need to examine the contributing factors which render melody fittest (etc.) is explicated in section 3. The merits of melody in comparison with lyrics are appraised in section 4. The perception of music along with nada yoga and raga chikithse is elucidated in section 5. followed by outcomes of music therapy in section 6.

2. Music and Emotions

Indian music has 8 basic emotions: Love-Sringara, Hasya, Karuna, Veera, Rudra, Bhayanaka, Bhibatsa and Adbhuta. The process of brain is very complex. We are born with these emotions wired into our brain. That wiring causes our body to react in certain ways and for us to have certain urges when the emotion arises. Different notes are used to evoke different emotions. All other emotions are made up by combining these basic 8 emotions. Sometimes we have secondary emotions, an emotional reaction to an emotion.

For example: Feeling shame when you get angry.

 Feeling angry when you have a shame response.

 Feeling fear when you get angry.

There are many more. These are not wired into our bodies and brains, but are learned from our families, our culture, and others. When you have a secondary emotion, the key is to figure out what the primary emotion; the feeling at the root of your reaction is, so that you can take an action that is most helpful.

The names of the standard 7 swaras are: sadja, rishaba, gandara, madyama, panchama, dhaivata, nishada. The swaras, emotions and moods are related to each other. The sound waves of music will produce signals proportional to reach brain stream.

Swaras	Emotions	Moods
Sadja	Love-Sringara	Anger
Rishaba	Hasya	Courage
Gandarva	Karuna	Compassion
Madyama	Veera	Love and Laughter
Panchama	Rudra	
Dhaivata	Bhayanaka	Fear and Disgust
Nishada	Bhibatsa	Compassion
	Adbhuta	

Table 1. *Primary and secondary emotions*

Example:

Madyama and Panchama to create love and laughter

Gandarva and Nishada for comparison

Dhaivata for fear and disgust

Sadja and Rishaba commonly used for mood of anger and courage or wonder. Knowing the relation between swaras, emotions and moods, we can move forward to understand the importance of melody in music therapy.

3. Melody in Music

Melody, harmony, rhythm and lyrics are the four dimensions of music. Among the four dimensions of music, the experience of melody in music therapy is elucidated to examine the contributing factors which render melody fittest etc.

There are basically swaras or notes which give rise to ragas. Swaras are formulated on the basis of the natural sounds. For ex: Sa-(a note) is derived from the sacred 'oom' and so on. If the notes ranging from 'Sa' are properly represented in a designed order, the raga takes birth.

There are only 12 musical notes derived from the rudimentary seven notes (Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Nee). The 12 musical notes are; Sa (Constant) Re, Re2, Ga, Ga2, Ma, Ma2, Paa(constant), Dha, Dha2, Nee, Nee2. There are further notes also like Re3, Ga3, Dha3, Nee3. These can be stated like this: Re3= Ga, Dha3= Nee and so on. The numbers indicate the exact sound the note should produce i.e., Re, as in 'Todi' of Karnataka, Áhir Bhairavi' of Hindustani system and Dha3 as in 'Natai' of Karnataka., 'Miya ki Mallahas' of Hindustani. Number one indicates that the swara is 'Komal' (The stress on the sound is too little); Number two states that the swara

is 'Shudda' or just in between 1 and 3 (the stress on the swara here is medium), Number three denotes the swara as 'teevra'.

Based upon this broader classification, there are many ragas formulated. Each raga is a melody in itself and is usually christened on the basis of melody it produces. A raga is combination or arrangement of swaras in ascending and descending order having equal number of swaras or unequal numbers of swaras. Primarily, all swaras are related and connected to 'Saa' which is very important and without which there is no melody or raga. That is why, when a raga is elaborated, if the note 'saa' is reached, anyone having a musical knowledge feels a sort of stillness. Other than this note which is common to all melodies, there will be other two notes which are called the life notes (Jeevaswaras) to that particular raaga. This means if these two notes are played in different tones (sthayees) they synchronise with each other.

As these swaras are very important in rendition of a raga, they are repeatedly used and the expected melody is extracted. There are three 'Sthayees' namely, a base or bottom are, a middle or intermediary are and a top one. Depending upon the development of the vocal cords, this can be adjusted. This is the factor which determines the Shruthi (i.e., the shruthi synchronises all the three Sthayees). As it will be constantly flowing it suits to any sthayee 1. Mandara 2. Madhyama or the 3. Taraka in which the singer is singing or the instrument is being played.

To make it melodious the shruthi must be perfect (which may also be called octave). It may be C1, C2, C3, C5, C1/2 likewise in relation to the harmonic reeds which we used to detect the pitch or the octave. Usually the women's voice will be of a higher pitch and men's voice will be of a lower pitch.

Any melody for that reason needs a way of proper representation in which the listener feels that the best of the raga is extracted which further means that the denotations of the raga are sung in their respective appropriate places and Sthayees. Each raga produces a sort of passion (Rasa) and feeling to the heart (Bhava). These are designed and designated for the ragas after carefully studying then and relating the resultants of the ragas to the nature and mind. Even scientifically this is corroborated. There will be an instinct inside. The brain which gets crossed when one listens to music. The ragas should confine to the fundamental need of them 'Raga and Bhava', if not their rendition is futile and wasteful. To analyse and conclude that the melody with the conception that already exists in one's mind, it is necessary that one should have a basic knowledge

of feeling for music. A musician can have a better enjoyment of music and he can be a good critic about it, than the ordinary listener does.

If the raga, bhavas and rasas are not perfectly rendered, there is no meaning in having that there is melody. To exponent these, a deeper touch to the individual notes should be given thus making the whole raga elaborate and exhaustive. The jeeva swaras should be lengthened that the whole swaras should flow to the ears. The typical notes are only supportive and have got little scope in any musical systems. First, the praise of Almighty was recited in various ragas which combined some typical hymns or poetic lyric. This was extended to every field of poetics as a result of which, poems of different nature are presented with the aim of different ragas and thus the true meaning of the lyric was tried to be reflected in the form of music.

If the singer sings or an instrumentalist plays with these above points in mind, the music should be divine. Of course, stress is also laid equally upon voice and instrument culture which is also prime requisite to render music pleasingly.

4. Lyrics versus Raga/Melody

Coming to the point that karnatak music cares much for lyrics, hindustani discards it and western does not at all considers it, have been the major factors for some in deciding the pleasantness or otherwise of the musical system.

I hold firmly that lyrics are secondary. One having no knowledge of music enjoys only lyrics for whom, if the lyric were read like prose the gravity of pleasure would have been the same. So lyric does not claim a very important place in music but in one of the contributories.

We shall take the typical examples of two listeners who represent the Karnatic and Hindustani styles. The recital is raga 'Naati' 'Kruti 'Jagadaananda karaka' of Thygaraja in Áditala'. The listener knows nothing as regards raga 'Naati' it's notations in the ascending and descending order, it's parent raga 'Chalamaata', he does not know the kriti which is mixed in Sanskrit and Telugu, the tal (aditala) of 8 beats is entirely unknown to him in depth (as to the scale and anga particulars it has got) though, he can show how that tala is represented by the hand or the leg and fingers.

The second listener is hearing rag 'Megh' Vilambit, Druth and composition set to Éktal' of 7 beats. Here he knows nothing of the rasas and bhava of Megh, the

procedure of gharana in which the singer is presenting the raga. His knowledge of tala is nothing.

Despite all the above unknowns, listeners feel that their system is better and easily understandable. What they understood is very little other than the melody in both the systems, they would have known nothing more. One cannot be theoretically a critic having no knowledge, or music personally.

Therefore, just because one cannot follow the music, there is no room for one to assess and assert that the system itself is not pleasing. The whole world of music stands upon melody. If this is achieved by it, the purpose is finished. It is not lyric which gives recognition to music. Actually, pure music is free from bondages like tala etc. Even the so-called music lovers can praise the melody only and not the clandestine, a subtle theoretical portion of the same. Whatever may be the system, everything centres round the instinct in the human brain which can cherish and find contentment in it. As far as possible, most of the factors representing melody are covered successfully in Hindustani music. Due to this reason, it has won name and fame both in India and abroad when compared to the karnatic style.

5. The Music Perception

The additional areas in music perception can help to define the pitch, quality, rhythms, roughness and loudness of the music.

Effects of Music:

Music relaxes – muscles, reduces systolic blood pressure, heart rate and even brings down oxygen saturation when it is low. However, faster the music, it causes a raise in these parameters and breathing rate.

Pleasant music will help to relax the mind and reduces BP. Classical music produces growth hormones.

5.1. NADA YOGA & RAGA Chikitse

5.1.1. Nada Yoga:

It is an origin from a sound projection. Here 'Na' refers to 'Prana' and 'da' refers to 'fire' as per Sarangadeva.

'Nada' is "flow of consciousness". There are four levels of consciousness:

- a. Transcendental
- b. Deep sleep
- c. Dream
- d. Wakeful i.e., Para, Pashyanthi. Madhyama, & Viakhavi.

Nada Yogic exercises address the chakras – Energy centre of human body by natural sound, vibrations in the breath and also certain frequencies produced by musical instruments. The practice intends to synchronize ‘chakraasthanas’ (location of chakras) with “Swarasthanas” (location of musical notes). ‘Yoga’ encompasses various forms of practices ranging chanting in praise of Divine like Vishnu Sahasranama/Lalitha Sahasranama.

Nada Sankeerthan to purification of energy channels (Nadi Shuddhi). These diverse practices provide us with multiple options to formulate a suitable treatment plan to cater the needs of the patient at every stage.

5.1.2. Raga Chikitsa

Raga is a set of selected notes. It creates immense creative potential for improvisation. Each Raga has various effects. Specific Raga has specific Rasa, this impresses the listeners. The emotional effect of raga is determined by the frequency of notes on its “Jeevaswara”. “Bhava” is emotional essence of music which gives color to the Raga. All the Indian ragas are suitable for emotional healing for anxiety and stress.

For joyful lyrics ‘Panthuvarali’ or ‘Arili’ is set and for pathetic lyrics – Bilahari Raga is set.

6. Outcome of Music Therapy

Music in therapy is a systematic form of intervention to promote health. Listening to music, playing instruments, singing, composing every aspect of music supports the health system.

A qualified and knowledgeable therapist can handle the patients on a structured basis in regular sessions. Indian music therapy is highly subjective to meet individual needs. It also focuses on spiritual aspects as the goal. The achieved goal is the ultimate reality.

The approach to therapy is raga based and it produces the change in body. In turn, it relaxes the anxiety and induces sleep. It purely depends on the listeners' choice about swaras, alaps, and rhythm, all about his /her listening habit.

Many therapists have tried to experiment an alternative therapy in music, which refers to give positive results in cases of:

- Schizophrenia
- Dementia
- Autism
- Insomnia
- Disorders of speech and coordination
- Relief of terminal pain of cancer

Indian Music therapy finds benefits such as:

- Changes into positive mind
- Better concentration and attention
- Assists with coping and attention
- Helps to understand a person's inner self, image and personality
- Gives a better awareness of self and environment, positive impact on social interactions

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