

Flexibility in Karnatic Music : A Comparative Analysis of Mahā Gannapatim

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Flexibility in Karnatic Music: A Comparative Analysis of *Mahā Gaṇapatim*

Yuko Matoba

Japan Women's College of Physical Education

Karnatic music is historically an oral tradition. For a South Indian musician, the performance style learned from the *guru* (teacher) is an important and proud heritage, to be preserved and nurtured. The music performed today hence shows much variety. The same song is performed differently by each musician, and even the same musician will perform the same piece differently. Musicians make variations in *gamaka* (ornaments) and add slight alterations to the tune. Sometimes the tune itself may undergo changes. Those unfamiliar with Indian music are always at a loss and confused when faced with this variety and change in Karnatic music. Amy Catlin has dealt with this issue of variability and change in South Indian classical music. She has divided variability and change into three levels: the surface, middle, and core levels (1980: 226-37). The surface level is individual style; the middle level is the *rāga* structure; and the third core level is the text of the songs, which is the stable factor. Wade also notes the flexibility in Indian music tradition (1987: 71). Variability, change and flexibility are the keywords for understanding Indian music, but it is unclear how they interact concretely within the music. I am interested in how this variability and change are taking place.

In this paper, I will first give concrete examples of variety in Indian music. A second aim is to analyze Indian music using the Indian method of notation. Indian notation is used as much as possible in this paper, with the additional occasional use of Western score. Following the Indian usage, the word “notation” will be used here in the sense of “score” in Western music. Analysis in terms of Indian notation will help us to view the music from a viewpoint closer to that of Indians themselves. It seems there are large differences between Indians and foreigners in their perceptions of music. I propose to approach Indian music from the performer's point of view, asking how musicians listen to and perceive music. I will discuss how music is treated and notated through an analysis of a *kṛti*, *Mahā Gaṇapatim*, in the *Nāṭa rāga*, *eka tāla*, by Mutthusvāmi Dīkṣitar.

Methodology

For comparison and analysis of *Mahā Gaṇapatim*, I asked Chennai-based musicians to render the song.¹⁾ The recordings are intended to cover the major types of performance common nowadays. I have selected the recordings of three vocalists and seven instrumentalists for analysis. Transcriptions of these performances were made by N. Vijayalakshmi and myself. At six of the recording sessions, handwritten notations by the performers themselves were collected (HYN, RN, KS, MN, DP, SS) to examine the relation

between performance and notation. To compare differences in performance of the same musician, three of S. Shashānk's recordings have been collected. Table 1 below shows a list of the recordings analyzed.

Table 1 List of the recordings analyzed

Performer	Abbreviation	Specialization	Recording information
1. H. Y. Nārayaṇan	HYN	vocal	unaccompanied private rendition, 2000
2. Rājālakshmi Nārayaṇan	RN	vocal	unaccompanied private rendition, 2000
3. Bombay Sisters (C. Saroja, C. Lalitha)	BS	vocal	concert at Sastry Hall, 2000
4. Kalpakam Swāmināthan	KS	<i>vīṇā</i>	unaccompanied private rendition, 2001
5. M. Nageśwara Rao, Mokkaṭṭi Śārada	NR	<i>vīṇā</i>	concert in Tokyo, 1989
6. N. Vijayalakshmi	NV	<i>vīṇā</i>	private rendition with <i>mrdangam</i> and <i>ghatam</i> , 2000
7. A. Durgā Prasād	DP	<i>goṭṭuvādyam</i>	private rendition with <i>mrdangam</i> and <i>ghatam</i> , 2000
8. A. Kanyākumari	AK	<i>violin</i>	private rendition with <i>mrdangam</i> and <i>ghatam</i> , 2000
9. S. Shashānk	SS	<i>pullāṅkuzhal</i>	1. concert, 1997 2. private performance, 1998 3. unaccompanied private rendition, 2000.
10. Mambalam M. K. S. Śiva	MKS	<i>nāgasvaram</i>	private rendition with <i>tavil</i> , 2000

***Mahā Gaṇapatim* in Nāṭa Rāga**

Composer

Muttusvāmi Dīkṣitar (1775-1835) is one of the three great composers of South India, known collectively as the trinity. The main compositions of Dīkṣitar are collected in *Saṅgīta Saṁpradāya Pradarśini* by Subbarāma Dīkṣitar,²⁾ in which 216 of his songs are presented in notation. *Mahā Gaṇapatim* is not included in this book but in *Sri Dikshita Kirtanamala*³⁾ by A. Sundaram Iyer which has notations of more than 400 compositions of Muttusvāmi Dīkṣitar. V. Rāghavan (1908-1979) has given an index to the *kṛti*-s of Muttusvāmi Dīkṣitar (1975: 73), and this list contains around 430 songs.

Muttusvāmi Dīkṣitar is said to have composed 27 songs on the Lord Gaṇeśa, of which 16 compositions including *Mahā Gaṇapatim* are grouped together as *Sodaśa* (sixteen) *Gaṇapati*. It is one of his most representative compositions, very frequently performed and well known in South India.

Text

The *sāhitya* (text) is written in Sanskrit by the composer. The *pallavi* is the first section and has two lines. The *samaṣṭi caraṇam* is the second section with four lines. The latter half of the *samaṣṭi caraṇam* is a *madhyamakāla sāhityam* (text with fast speed).

Pallavi mahāgaṇapatim manasā smarāmi
 vasiṣṭha vāmadevādi vandita
Samaṣṭi caraṇam mahādevasutam guruguhanutam
 mārakotiprakāśam śāntam
 [Madyamakāla sāhityam]
 mahākāvyanātakādipriyam
 mūṣikavāhana modakapriyam

Translation of the song:

Pallavi With my mind I meditate on Mahāgaṇapati
 One who is worshipped by Vasiṣṭha,
 Vāmadeva (the sages) and so on
Samaṣṭi caraṇam Son of Śiva, worshipped by Guruguha (Dīkṣitar's signature)
 One who has the luminance of Million Cupids
 [Madyamakāla sāhityam]
 Lover of the great poems and dramas
 Who has a mouse for a vehicle and is fond of sweets

Composition

Kṛti is a form that usually has three sections – *pallavi*, *anupallavi* and *caraṇam*. *Mahā Gaṇapatim* is a short *kṛti* that has only two sections, *pallavi* and *samaṣṭi caraṇam*.⁴⁾ The *pallavi* has two lines, of which the first line is the theme that is repeated with some *saṅgatis* (variations). In the *madyamakāla sāhityam*, the text is rendered in fast tempo. After the *madyamakāla sāhityam*, some musicians add *ciṭṭasvara*, which is a part preset with sol-fa syllables (*svaras*) composed by the composer or some other musician as ornamentation to bring out the beauty of the *rāga* of the song. Example 1 is the transcription of a rendition by Rājalakshmi Nārāyaṇan (Plate 1).



Plate 1 Rājalakshmi Nārāyaṇan

Example 1 *Mahā Gaṇapatim* (Nāṭa rāga, Eka tāla, Composer: Mutthuvāmi Dīkṣitar)

Pallavi

1. | M P , M MG PMM R , | S S S , S SR G M |
ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi
2. | P , NM P M MG PMM R , | S S S , S SR G M |
ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi
3. | GMPN SNPM MG PMM R , | S S S , S SR G M |
mahā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi
4. | PNSR , , SN PMRS R , | NS , N P , M GMR , S NSRG |
ma hā ga ṇa pa tim vasiṣ -ṭha vā ma de vā di vān dīta

| M , , P , , M MG PMM R , | , , , , , , SRGM |
ma hā ga ṇa pa tim -

| R , , , , , , , S | , , , , , , , , |
- -

Samaṣṭi Caraṇam (Anupallavi)

- 1a | M P , P , N S Ṣ | , , , , , , P SNPM |
ma hā de va su tam -
- 1b | P P , PNP Ṣ N S Ṣ | , RR S RR Ṣ N S , |
ma hā de va su tam gu ru gu ha nu tam
- 2a | SR Ḡ M R , Ṣ , SN | P , M , NPPM R S |
mā ra ko ti pra kā śam śān tam
- 1c | GMP , NP P , N S Ṣ | , RR Ṣ RR Ṣ N S , |
ma hā de va su tam gu ru gu ha nu tam
- 2b | MPNSRG MR R , Ṣ , SN | PNSN P , NPPM R S |
mā ra ko ti pra kā śam śān tam

Madyamakāla Sāhitya

- | MP , M , PMSSRGM , P M | , , , , , , P , |
mahā kā- vya nā ta kā di priyam -
- | MP , M , PMSSRGM , P M | P MP N PN SRSS NP M |
mahā kā- vya nā takā di priyam mūṣika vā- hana mo-daka priyam

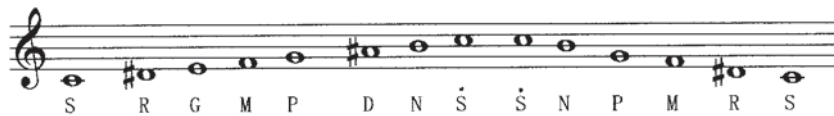
Ciṭṭasvara

- | P PM GMR S RSNS PMGM | P DN SRGM MRSR SNPM |
- | SNPM GMNP MGMR GMR S | R SS , N P MR , S NSRG |

Rāga and Tāla

This song is composed in *Nāṭa rāga* (Nattai). It has seven notes in *ārohaṇa* (ascent) and five notes in *avarōhaṇa* (descent).

Example 2 Nāṭa rāga



Nāṭa is considered to be one of the oldest *rāgas*. *Gambhīranāṭa* (SGMPNŚ ŚNPMGS) is assumed to be an older form of the present *Nāṭa*. Tamil Hymns of Tevāram, *Todudaya Śevīyan* and *Tiruppugazh Kaitāla Niraikani* are sung in *Gambhīranāṭa*. *Mallāri*, a special composition for *nāgasvaram* (oboe), has also been played in *Gambhīranāṭa* in the temple since ancient times. *Nāṭa* nowadays is a *janya* (derived) *rāga* that is classified under the 36th *mēḷa*, *chalanāṭa*, in the 72 *mēḷa* scheme formulated by Veṅkaṭamakhin (Sambamoorthy 1964: 36). The *chalanāṭa* is called a *vivādī mēḷa* using the pitch of the next *svara*, or the pitch of R3 is same as that of G2. Similarly, the pitch of D3 is same as that of N2. *Nāṭa* is one of the *ghana rāgas*, used especially for the *tāna* style of exposition in *vīṇā*. *Nāṭa rāga* is played often at the commencement of a concert to create a bright musical atmosphere.

This composition is usually performed in *eka tāla* (4 beats), but some musicians also play in *ādi tāla* (8 beats=4+2+2).

Analysis of the Composition

Pallavi

The first line of the *pallavi* is the theme of the composition. Usually, the theme is a fairly simple melody that is often played twice and then repeated with some *saṅgatis*.

1. Theme

Considering first the theme of the composition, which is based on four words, “*mahā gaṇapatim manasā smarāmi*”, the first word “*ma-hā*” is played as { MP , } by nine musicians, while only HYN performed it as { PP , }. For the second word “*ga-ṇa-pa-tim*”, the ten musicians are divided into two groups. Group A performed it as { MGMR , }, while group B performed it as { MRSR , }. The third word “*ma-na-sā*” is basically { S N S , }, but the variations { SNPNS } and { S N SNS , } are also found (see Examples 3 and 4). Only KS used Dha like { SD N S , }. Hailing from the direct tradition of the Dīkṣitar School, KS has a particular technique of *vīṇā* playing. Ni (major 7th) is always played higher as a leading note going up to Sa an octave above. Sometimes musicians play { S N S , } as { S S S , }. Rhythmic variations (into triplets) are made here by VN { S, S S , } and BS { Ś, Ś S S , }. Performances of the fourth word “*smarāmi*” again divided into two groups: { S R , G } and { S R G M }. The last *svara* is followed by the beginning *svara* Ma (*mahā~*).

Example 3

A group

AK	M P , M G <u>PMM</u> R , S S S , <u>S,, R</u> <u>SR</u> , G
	ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi
NV	M P , M <u>MG</u> <u>PMM</u> R , <u>S,</u> ³ <u>S</u> S , S S , <u>R</u> G
	ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi
RN	M P , M <u>MG</u> <u>PMM</u> R , S S S , S <u>SR</u> G M
	ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi
SS	M P , M <u>GM</u> <u>PMM</u> R , S N <u>SNS</u> , S R G M
	ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma ṇa sā sma rā mi
MKS	M P , M G <u>PM</u> R , S S S , S <u>SR</u> G M
	ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi
DP	M P , M G <u>PMM</u> R , S N S , S <u>SR</u> G M
	ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma ṇa sā sma rā mi
HYN	P P , M <u>MGPM</u> R , S N S , <u>SNSR</u> G M
	ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi

B group

KS	M P , M R S R , <u>S.D</u> N S , <u>SN</u> S , <u>R</u> G
	ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma ṇa sā sma rā mi
BS	M P , M R S R , <u>S</u> ³ <u>S</u> S , S R , G
	ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi
NR	M P , M R S R , S N S , S <u>SR</u> G M
	ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi

2. Saṅgatis

The performance of the theme is followed by *saṅgatis* (variations). In KS's version, when the beginning note of the *saṅgati* is Ma, “*smarāmi*” is played as { S R , G }→(M). When it is Pa, “*smarāmi*” is played as { S R G M }→(P) in order to play the scale continuously.

In this composition, the first half of the line (“*mahā gaṇapatim*”) is varied. As the melody becomes more and more decorative, its range rises. The long syllable “*hā*” is particularly elaborated. The first variation touches Ni and then rises successively higher. BS sang at *brga* (double speed), touching upper Ma.

Example 4

up to N

NR | M P, N P M R S R , | S N S , S SR G M |
 ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi

RN | P , N M P M MG PMM R , | S S S , S SR G M |
 ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi

up to S

NR | P P N S N PM R S R , | S N S , S SR G M |
 ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi

SS | M P N S N PM GMPM R , | R R S N S S S R G M |
 ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi

DP | P N N S N PM MG PMM R , | S N S , S SR G M |
 ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi

BS | P N S N PMGM PMRS R , | S N P N S , R S S R G M |
 ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi

RN | GMPN S N P M MG PMM R , | S S S , S SR G M |
 ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi

up to R

NR | P N S R , , S N PMRS R , | S N S , S SR G M |
 ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi

RN | P N S R S R S N PMRS R , | S N S , S SR G M |
 ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi

up to M

BS | M P N S M M R S N PMRS R , | P S , N P , M GMR , S N S R G |
 ma hā ga ṇa pa tim va siṣ-ṭha vā ma de va di van di ta

These are the *saṅgatis* used in the variation of the latter half of the line “*manasā smarāmi*.”

The last three are the examples in which the melody rises to the upper octave.

Example 5

AK | GM P N M P M G PMM R , | S S S , S P P M R S R G |
 ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi

HYN | P N S N P , M G M R , | S N S , S N P M GM P |
 ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi

AK | GMPN S N P M MG PMM R , | R R S S N P S N P M R S R G |
 ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi

MKS | M P N S R S R , S N P M R | R R S S N P R R S N PMGM |
 ma hā gaṇapa tim ma na sā sma rā mi

Each musician may have his or her own special *saṅgatis*. Combinations of short phrases build up the variety of *saṅgatis*. The number of *saṅgatis* is different for each musician.

3. The second line of the *pallavi*

Though the first line is played with two *āvartas* (cycles), the second line, which contains the same four words as the first line, is played within a single *āvarta*. Rapidly compressed words contrast with the first line, and are repeated once or twice. There are two ways of rendering the second line. The first line has two *āvartas*, so one way is to play the full line and then go to the second line (SS VN HYN NR MKS DP).

Example 6

VN | M P³NM P M G PM R , | RR S ṢN P RRS NPMGM |
 ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi
 | PṢ, N P MGMR, S NSRG |
 vaṣiṣ-ṭha vā made vā di van dita
 | M P³NMP M G PM R , | S , , , , , , , |
 ma hā ga ṇa pa tim -

The other way is to play the half line (one *āvarta*) and then go directly to the next line (RN KS BS AK).

Example 7

RN | P N Ṣ Ṣ , , ṢN PMRS R , | N Ṣ, N P, M GMR, S NSRG |
 ma hā ga ṇa pa tim vaṣiṣ-ṭha vā ma de vā di van dita
 | M, , P, , M MG PMM R , | , , , , , , , SRGM |
 ma hā ga ṇa pa tim -
 | R , , , , , , , S | , , , , , , , , |

Usually this song is played in *Eka tāla* (4 beats). KS, however, has played it in *ādi tāla* (8 beats=4+2+2). In this case, the second line should be performed in the latter way.

Example 8

KS | P N Ṣ N , ṢN PMRS R , Ṣ | Ṣ Ṣ, N P, MM | MR, S NSRG |
 ma hā ga ṇa pa tim va ṣiṣ-ṭha vā made vā di van dita

The second line is also played by each musician differently, as follows:

Example 9

AK	<u>P</u> <u>Ṣ</u> , <u>N</u> <u>P</u> , <u>M</u> <u>NPMMR</u> <u>S</u> <u>RG</u>
	vaṣiṣ- ṭha vā ma de vā di van di ta
DP	<u>P</u> <u>Ṣ</u> , <u>N</u> <u>P</u> , <u>M</u> <u>NPMMR</u> <u>RSRG</u>
	vaṣiṣ- ṭha vā ma de vā di van dita
BS · VN	<u>P</u> <u>Ṣ</u> , <u>N</u> <u>P</u> , <u>M</u> <u>GMR</u> , <u>S</u> <u>NSRG</u>
	vaṣiṣ- ṭha vā ma de vā di van dita
MKS	<u>P</u> <u>Ṣ</u> , <u>N</u> <u>P</u> , <u>M</u> <u>MRR</u> , <u>S</u> <u>NSRG</u>
	vaṣiṣ- ṭha vā ma de vā di van dita
SS	<u>P</u> <u>Ṣ</u> , <u>N</u> <u>P</u> , <u>P</u> <u>MPMRS</u> <u>NSRG</u>
	vaṣiṣ- ṭha vā ma de vā di van dita
HYN	<u>P</u> <u>Ṣ</u> , <u>Ṣ</u> <u>ṢNP</u> <u>M</u> , <u>MRS</u> <u>SRGM</u>
	vaṣiṣ- ṭha vā ma de vā di van dita
RN	<u>N</u> <u>Ṣ</u> , <u>N</u> <u>P</u> , <u>M</u> <u>GMR</u> , <u>S</u> <u>NSRG</u>
	vaṣiṣ- ṭha vā ma de vā di van dita
NR	<u>N</u> <u>Ṣ</u> , <u>N</u> <u>P</u> , <u>M</u> <u>MMRRS</u> <u>S</u> , <u>RG</u>
	vaṣiṣ- ṭha vā ma de vā di van dita
KS	<u>Ṣ</u> <u>Ṣ</u> , <u>N</u> <u>P</u> , <u>M</u> <u>M</u> <u>MR</u> , <u>S</u> <u>NSRG</u>
	vaṣiṣ- ṭha vā ma de vā di van dita

After the second line, the first line is repeated again in a slow tempo as the conclusion of the *pallavi* section.

Samaṣṭi caraṇam (Anupallavi)

1. First line

In the *samaṣṭi caraṇam* section, another type of *saṅgati* is seen. Many musicians add an interval after the half of the first line, and improvise another *āvarta* (cycle) adding some *svaras* from their own imagination. This is an example by BS:

Example 10

BS	M P , <u>P³NP</u> <u>Ṣ</u> <u>Ṣ</u> , <u>Ṣ</u> <u>Ṣ</u> , , , , , , <u>ṢNNPM</u>
	ma hā de - va su tam -
	<u>GM</u> P , <u>P³NP</u> <u>Ṣ</u> <u>Ṣ</u> <u>Ṣ</u> <u>Ṣ</u> , , , <u>ṢN</u> <u>P³NṢ</u> <u>P³SNPM</u>
	ma hā de - va su tam -

KS played many *saṅgatis*, as follows:

Example 11

1. | M P , P D N Ṣ Ṣ N Ṣ | , , , , | , , , , |
ma hā de va su tam
2. | M P , P D N Ṣ Ṣ N Ṣ | , , , , | , , Ṣ N N |
ma hā de va su tam
3. | M P , P D N Ṣ Ṣ N Ṣ | , , , , | Ṣ N R Ṣ Ṣ N N |
ma hā de va su tam
4. | N M P , P D N Ṣ Ṣ N Ṣ | , , , , | , S , S R G |
ma hā de va su tam
5. | M P N P P D N Ṣ Ṣ N Ṣ | , , , , | , P M R S R G |
ma hā de va su tam
6. | M P N P P D N Ṣ Ṣ N Ṣ | , , , , | Ṣ N P M R S R G |
ma hā de va su tam
7. | M P N P P D N Ṣ Ṣ N Ṣ | , , , , Ṣ R | Ṣ N P M R S R G |
ma hā de va su tam

AK played the *Nāṭa rāga* scale with variations.

Example 12

- AK a) | G M P N N P P , N Ṣ Ṣ | , , , , , , Ṣ N N P M |
ma hā de va su tam
- b) | G M P N N P P , N Ṣ Ṣ | , , , , , , Ṣ N N P M |
ma hā de va su tam
- c) | G M P N N P P , N S S | , S , R , G , M , P , D , N , Ṣ |
ma hā de va su tam
- d) | G M P N N P P , N Ṣ Ṣ | , S M R R M G G P M M P N D D Ṣ N N Ṣ |
ma hā de va su tam

KS played her *saṅgatis* in a pre-determined way while AK presented them as a kind of improvisation. After repeating half of the line, the full line is played and variations are presented.

Though the first half has many variations, the second half has fewer. Again, each musician has his or her individual phrases and develops special *saṅgatis*. Only one *saṅgati* from each musician is shown here.

Example 13

RN	P P , <u>P³NP</u> \dot{S} N \dot{S} \dot{S} , <u>$\dot{R}\dot{R}$</u> \dot{S} <u>$\dot{R}\dot{R}$</u> \dot{S} N \dot{S} ,
	ma hā de va su tam gu ru gu ha nu tam
NR	P <u>PNNP</u> \dot{S} , N \dot{S} \dot{S} , <u>$\dot{R}\dot{R}$</u> \dot{S} <u>$\dot{R}\dot{R}$</u> \dot{S} N \dot{S} ,
	ma hā de va su tam gu ru gu ha nu tam
KS	M P <u>NPPD</u> N \dot{S} <u>$\dot{S}N$</u> \dot{S} , <u>$\dot{R}\dot{R}$</u> \dot{S} <u>$\dot{R}\dot{R}$</u> \dot{S} <u>$\dot{S}N$</u> \dot{S} ,
	ma hā de va su tam gu ru gu ha nu tam
VN	<u>GMPNNP</u> <u>PD</u> N \dot{S} <u>$\dot{S}N$</u> \dot{S} , <u>$\dot{R}\dot{R}$</u> \dot{S} <u>$\dot{R}\dot{R}$</u> \dot{S} <u>$\dot{S}N$</u> \dot{S} ,
	ma hā de va su tam gu ru gu ha nu tam
BS	<u>GMPNNP</u> <u>PN</u> \dot{S} N \dot{S} \dot{S} , <u>$\dot{R}\dot{R}$</u> \dot{S} <u>$\dot{R}\dot{R}$</u> \dot{S} N \dot{S} ,
	ma hā de va su tam gu ru gu ha nu tam
VN*	<u>$\dot{S}NPM$</u> <u>$\dot{R}SGM$</u> <u>PD</u> <u>$\dot{N}\dot{S}$</u> \dot{S} , <u>$\dot{R}\dot{R}$</u> \dot{S} <u>$\dot{R}\dot{R}$</u> \dot{S} N \dot{S} ,
	ma hā de va su tam gu ru gu ha nu tam
BS	<u>$\dot{G}MPN\dot{S}\dot{R}$</u> <u>\dot{S}</u> <u>$\dot{S}NP$</u> , <u>PN</u> \dot{S} N \dot{S} \dot{S} , <u>$\dot{R}\dot{R}$</u> \dot{S} <u>$\dot{R}\dot{R}$</u> \dot{S} N \dot{S} ,
	ma hā de va su tam gu ru gu ha nu tam

HYN and MKS performed the latter half differently from others.

HYN	<u>NP</u> P , <u>PD</u> N \dot{S} N \dot{S} , <u>$\dot{S}\dot{R}\dot{R}\dot{S}$</u> <u>$\dot{S}\dot{R}\dot{R}\dot{S}$</u> N \dot{S} ,
	ma hā de va su tam gu ru gu ha nu tam
MKS	<u>$\dot{P}N\dot{S}\dot{R}\dot{S}NP$</u> P , <u>$\dot{S}N$</u> \dot{S} \dot{S} , <u>$\dot{R}\dot{S}N\dot{S}$</u> \dot{R} <u>$\dot{R}\dot{R}\dot{S}N$</u> \dot{S} ,
	ma hā de va su tam gu ru gu ha nu tam

*This line has not been played in the recording but taken from the notation given by VN.

2. The second line

As with the *pallavi*, the second line is repeated with the first line. These are the general variations of the second line. Though the differences are not large, they are not the same as one another.

Example 14

MKS	$\dot{\underline{S}}\dot{\underline{R}}$ $\dot{\underline{G}}$ $\dot{\underline{M}}$ $\dot{\underline{R}}$, $\dot{\underline{S}}$, $\dot{\underline{S}}\dot{\underline{N}}$ \underline{P} , $\underline{P},, \underline{M}$ \underline{GMPM} \underline{R} \underline{S}
	mā ra ko ti pra kā śam śān tam
RN	$\dot{\underline{S}}\dot{\underline{R}}$ $\dot{\underline{G}}$ $\dot{\underline{M}}$ $\dot{\underline{R}}$, $\dot{\underline{S}}$, $\dot{\underline{S}}\dot{\underline{N}}$ \underline{P} , \underline{M} , \underline{NPPM} \underline{R} \underline{S}
	mā ra ko ti pra kā śam śān tam
HYN	$\dot{\underline{S}}\dot{\underline{R}}$ $\dot{\underline{G}}$ $\dot{\underline{M}}$ $\dot{\underline{R}}$, $\dot{\underline{S}}$, $\dot{\underline{S}}\dot{\underline{N}}$ $\underline{PN\dot{S}N}$ $\underline{P},, \underline{M}$ \underline{MGPM} $\underline{R},, \underline{S}$
	mā ra ko ti pra kā śam śān tam
BS	$\dot{\underline{S}}\dot{\underline{R}}$ $\dot{\underline{G}}$ $\dot{\underline{M}}$ $\dot{\underline{R}}$ $\dot{\underline{S}}$ $\dot{\underline{S}}$, $\dot{\underline{S}}\dot{\underline{N}}$ $\underline{PN\dot{S}N}$ $\underline{P},, \underline{M}$ \underline{NPPM} $\underline{R},, \underline{S}$
	mā ra ko ti pra kā śam śān tam
NR · DP	$\dot{\underline{S}}\dot{\underline{R}}$ $\dot{\underline{G}}$ $\dot{\underline{M}}$ $\dot{\underline{R}}$, $\dot{\underline{S}},, \underline{N}$ \underline{P} $\underline{N\dot{S}}, \underline{N}$ \underline{P} \underline{M} \underline{MGPM} \underline{R} \underline{S}
	mā ra ko ti pra kā śam śān tam

More elaborate tunes appear in the repetitions of the second line, as follows:

KS	$\dot{\underline{S}}\dot{\underline{R}}\dot{\underline{G}}\dot{\underline{M}}$, $\dot{\underline{P}}\dot{\underline{M}}$ $\dot{\underline{R}}$, $\dot{\underline{R}}\dot{\underline{S}},,$, $\dot{\underline{S}}\dot{\underline{N}}$ $\underline{PN\dot{S}N}$ \underline{P} \underline{M} \underline{NPPM} \underline{R} \underline{S}
	mā ra ko ti pra kā śam śān tam
VN	$\underline{N\dot{S}R\dot{G}}$ $\underline{M\dot{P}M}$ $\dot{\underline{R}}$, $\dot{\underline{R}}\dot{\underline{S}},,$, $\dot{\underline{S}}\dot{\underline{N}}$ $\underline{PN\dot{S}N}$ $\underline{P},, \underline{M}$ \underline{MGPM} \underline{R} \underline{S}
	mā ra ko ti pra kā śam śān tam
RN	$\underline{M\dot{P}N\dot{S}R\dot{G}}$ $\underline{M\dot{R}}$ $\dot{\underline{R}}$, $\dot{\underline{S}}$, $\dot{\underline{S}}\dot{\underline{N}}$ $\underline{PN\dot{S}N}$ \underline{P} , \underline{NPPM} \underline{R} \underline{S}
	mā ra ko ti pra kā śam śān tam

SS and AK played other variations in which the end of the first line goes up to R, connecting to the beginning *svara* (G) of the second line.

Example 15

SS 1a.	\underline{M} \underline{PNNP} $\underline{P\dot{N}P}$, \underline{N} $\dot{\underline{S}}$ $\dot{\underline{S}}$, $\underline{R\dot{R}}$ $\underline{S\dot{N}}$ $\underline{R\dot{R}}$ $\underline{S\dot{N}}$ $\dot{\underline{S}}$ $\dot{\underline{R}}$,
	ma hā de va su tam gu ru gu ha nu tam
2a.	$\dot{\underline{G}},, \underline{M}$ $\underline{P\dot{M}M}$ $\dot{\underline{R}}$, $\dot{\underline{S}}\dot{\underline{N}}$, \underline{P} $\dot{\underline{S}}\dot{\underline{N}}$ \underline{P} $\underline{P\dot{M}M}$, \underline{MGPM} \underline{R} ,
	mā ra ko ti pra kā śam śān tam
1b.	$\underline{GMP\dot{S}}$ $\underline{S\dot{N}}$ \underline{P} , $\underline{N\dot{P}}$ $\underline{S\dot{N}}$ $\underline{S\dot{S}N\dot{S}}$, $\underline{R\dot{R}}$ $\underline{S\dot{N}}$ $\underline{R\dot{R}}$ $\underline{S\dot{N}}$ $\dot{\underline{S}}$ $\dot{\underline{R}}$,
	ma hā de va su tam gu ru gu ha nu tam
2b.	$\dot{\underline{G}},, \underline{M}$ $\underline{P\dot{M}M}$ $\dot{\underline{R}}$, $\dot{\underline{S}}\dot{\underline{N}}$, \underline{P} $\dot{\underline{S}}\dot{\underline{N}}$ \underline{P} $\underline{P\dot{M}M}$, $\underline{M\dot{N}P}$ $\underline{M\dot{P}M}$ \underline{R} ,
	mā ra ko ti pra kā śam śān tam

AK played the end of the first line with N in advance two times { SN , } and then played the end of the next line with R { SR , }, making a good contrast.

Example 16

AK | $\dot{S} \dot{N} \dot{P} \dot{M}$ $\dot{R} \dot{S} \dot{G} \dot{M}$ $\dot{P} \dot{N} \dot{P} \dot{N}$ $\dot{S} \dot{S} \dot{N}$ $\dot{P} \dot{N} \dot{P}$ | \dot{S} $\dot{R} \dot{R}$ \dot{S} $\dot{R} \dot{R}$ \dot{S} \dot{N} $\dot{S} \dot{N}$, |
 ma hā de va su tam gu ru gu ha nu tam
 | $\dot{N} \dot{N} \dot{P} \dot{M}$ $\dot{R} \dot{S} \dot{G} \dot{M}$ $\dot{P} \dot{N} \dot{P} \dot{N}$ $\dot{R} \dot{S} \dot{R}$ $\dot{P} \dot{N} \dot{P}$ | \dot{S} $\dot{R} \dot{R}$ \dot{S} $\dot{R} \dot{R}$ $\dot{S} \dot{S}$ \dot{R} $\dot{S} \dot{R}$, |
 ma hā de va su tam gu ru gu ha nu tam
 | \dot{G} , \dot{M} \dot{R} , \dot{S} , $\dot{S} \dot{N}$ | \dot{P} , \dot{M} , $\dot{N} \dot{P} \dot{P} \dot{M}$ $\dot{M} \dot{R} \dot{R} \dot{S}$ |
 mā ra ko ti pra kā śam śān tam

3. Madyamakāla Sāhitya

After the second line, the *madyamakāla sāhitya* is performed. Just like the first line of the *samaṣṭi caraṇam*, the first half is repeated with improvised tunes.

Example 17

VN | $\dot{S} \dot{P}$, \dot{M} , \dot{P} $\dot{M} \dot{R} \dot{S} \dot{G}$, \dot{M} , \dot{P} \dot{M} | , , , , , $\dot{P} \dot{M} \dot{R} \dot{S} \dot{N}$ |
 mahā kā vya nā ta kā di pri yam
 AK | $\dot{S} \dot{P}$, \dot{M} , \dot{P} $\dot{M} \dot{R} \dot{S} \dot{R}$, \dot{G} , \dot{M} \dot{P} | , \dot{R} , \dot{G} , \dot{M} \dot{P} , \dot{R} , \dot{G} , \dot{M} \dot{P} |
 mahā kā vya nā ta kā di pri yam
 AK | $\dot{S} \dot{P}$, \dot{M} , \dot{P} $\dot{M} \dot{R} \dot{S} \dot{R}$, \dot{G} , \dot{M} \dot{P} | $\dot{N} \dot{N} \dot{P} \dot{M}$ $\dot{N} \dot{N} \dot{P} \dot{M}$ $\dot{N} \dot{N} \dot{P} \dot{M}$ $\dot{R} \dot{S} \dot{R} \dot{G}$ |
 mahā kā vya nā ta kā di pri yam
 BS | $\dot{M} \dot{P}$, \dot{M} , \dot{P} $\dot{M} \dot{R} \dot{S} \dot{M}$ $\dot{G} \dot{M}$, \dot{P} \dot{M} | \dot{P} , , , , , $\dot{M} \dot{R} \dot{S} \dot{R} \dot{G}$ |
 mahā kā vya nā ta kā di pri yam
 BS | $\dot{M} \dot{P}$, \dot{M} , \dot{P} $\dot{M} \dot{R} \dot{S} \dot{M}$ $\dot{G} \dot{M}$, \dot{P} \dot{M} | \dot{P} , , , $\dot{S} \dot{N} \dot{P} \dot{M} \dot{G} \dot{M} \dot{R} \dot{S} \dot{R} \dot{G}$ |
 mahā kā vya nā takā di pri yam

There are eight words within two *avartas*. The meter of the syllables is the same for all the musicians, but the *svaras* are different. The word “*priyam*” which is used two times here ends both times mostly on Ma, but the last four are examples that end with a different *svara*.

Example 18

RN	<u>MP, M, P MSSRGM, P M</u> P <u>MP N</u> <u>PN</u> <u>ŚRŚŚ NP</u> M mahā kā vya nā ta kā di pri yam mū-ṣika vā hana mo-daka pri yam
BS	<u>MP, M, P MRSMGM, P M</u> P <u>MP N</u> <u>PN</u> <u>ŚRŚŚ NP</u> M mahā kā vyanā ta kā di pri yam mū-ṣika vā hana mo-daka pri yam
MKS	<u>MP, GMP SNSRGM, P M</u> P <u>MP N</u> <u>PN</u> <u>ŚRŚŚ NNPM</u> mahā kā- vya nā ta kā di pri yam mū-ṣika vā hana mo-daka priyam
KS	<u>MP, GMP S, RG, M, P M</u> P <u>MP N</u> <u>PN</u> <u>Ṛ ŚŚ NP</u> M mahā kā- vya nā takā di pri yam mū-ṣika vā hana mo-daka pri yam
VN	<u>SP, M, P MRSG, M, P M</u> P <u>MP N</u> <u>PN</u> <u>ṚRŚ ŚNP</u> M mahā kā- vya nā ta kā di pri yam mū-ṣika vā hana mo-da ka pri yam
HYN	<u>SP, M, P MRSRGM, P M</u> P <u>MP N</u> <u>PN</u> <u>ŚNPM, P M</u> mahā kā- vya nā takā di pri yam mū-ṣika vā hana mo-daka pri yam
*	
DP	<u>MP, M, P N, SR, G, M P</u> P <u>MP N</u> <u>PN</u> <u>ŚRŚN, P M</u> mahā kā- vya nā ta kā di pri yam mū-ṣika vā hana mo-daka pri yam
SS	<u>MP, M, P MRSR, G, M P</u> <u>PNMP</u> <u>NNPN</u> <u>ŚNPM</u> <u>GM R</u> mahā kā- vya na takā di pri yam mū-ṣika vā-hana mo-daka priyam
AK	<u>MP, M, P GMPŚ, NPN</u> <u>Ś</u> <u>Ś NŚ</u> <u>ṚRŚN</u> <u>ŚNPM</u> <u>GM R</u> mahā kā -vya na ta kā di pri yam mū-ṣika vā -hana mo-daka priyam
NR	<u>SP, MMP MMR S, G, M P</u> P <u>PP</u> <u>NNPM</u> <u>PDNŚ, N</u> <u>Ś</u> mahā kā-vya na ta kā di pri yam mū-ṣi ka vā -hana mo- da ka pri yam

4. *Ciṭṭasvara*

A *ciṭṭasvara* is not always performed. It is not certain that this part was composed by Muttusvāmi Dīkṣitar, as it is possible that it was added later by another composer. Six of the ten musicians played the *ciṭṭasvara* in almost the same way.

Example 19

KS	BS	VN
P <u>PM</u> <u>GMR S</u> <u>RSN</u> <u>SPMGM</u>	P <u>DNŚ</u> <u>ṚGM</u> <u>MRŚ</u> <u>RSNPM</u>	
*(NSR)	(R) **	
<u>ŚNPM</u> <u>GM</u> <u>NPM</u> <u>RGM</u> <u>RR S</u>	<u>Ṛ</u> , <u>Ś</u> <u>Ś NP</u> , <u>MR</u> , <u>SN SRG</u>	
*** (GMR GMR S) (Ś, N P MG,) **		

*A. Kanyākumari ** A. Durgā Prasād *** Rājālakshmi Nārayaṇan

A Comparison of Three Recordings by the Same Musician

I shall now examine three recordings of the same piece by the same musician in order to look at flexibility within the performance of a single musician. S. Shashānk played *Mahā Gaṇapatim* three times as follows.

- I concert in 1997
- II private rendition in 1998
- III private rendition in 2000

Pallavi

The part “*ṇa pa*” is different each time, and in the second line, the part “*vāma de*” is changed.

Example 20

Pallavi (first line)

I		M	<u>PNSN</u>	<u>PM</u>	<u>GPMM</u>	R	,		<u>SRSN</u>	S	,	S	R	G	M		
		ma	hā	ga	ṇa	pa	tim		ma	na	sā	sma	rā		mi		
II		M	<u>PNSN</u>	<u>PM</u>	<u>MG</u>	<u>PMM</u>	<u>SR</u>	,		<u>RRSN</u>	S	,	S	R	G	M	
		ma	hā	ga	ṇa	pa	tim		ma	na	sā	sma	rā		mi		
III		M	<u>PNSN</u>	<u>PM</u>	<u>GPMP</u>	R	,		<u>RRSN</u>	<u>S₁N</u>	S		S	R	G	M	
		ma	hā	ga	ṇa	pa	tim		ma	na	sā		sma	rā		mi	

Pallavi (second line)

I		<u>P</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>PM</u>	<u>PMRS</u>	<u>NSRG</u>			
		Vaṣiṣ-ṭha	vā	ma	de	vā	dī	van	dī	ta	
II		<u>P</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>MP</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>PMRS</u>	<u>NSRG</u>	
		Vaṣiṣ-ṭha	vā	ma	de	vā	dī	van	dī	ta	
III		<u>P</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>PNP</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>MRRS</u>	<u>NSRG</u>			
		Vaṣiṣ-	ṭha	vā	ma	de	vā	dī	van	dī	ta

Samaṣṭi Carāṇam

These are the first *saṅgatis* of the first line. Shashānk started the first line in a low octave in the recording I.

Example 21

The first line of samastī caranām

- I 1a. | P SN P P , N S S | , RR S RR SN S R , |
 mā hā de va su tam gu ru gu ha nu tam
- II 1a. | M PNNP P , N S S | , RR S RR SN S R , |
 mā hā de va su tam gu ru gu ha nu tam
- III 1a. | M PNNP PNP , N S S | , RR SN RR SN S R , |
 mā hā de va su tam gu ru gu ha nu tam

The second line of samastī caranām

- I | G , PMM R , S | SN P PMM , MGP PM R , |
 mā ra ko ti pra kā śam śān tam
- II | SRGM PMM , R S , P | SN P PMM , MGP PM R , |
 mā ra ko ti pra kā śam śān tam
- III | G , M PMM R , SN , P | SN P PMM , MNP MPM R , |
 mā ra ko ti pra kā śam śān tam

The second line has two *saṅgatis*. In concert I, Shashānk played only one *saṅgati*. Performances II and III are examples of the *saṅgati* being played last.

Ciṭṭasvara

There were fewer differences here. The performer put an additional *svara* within a syllable in performance III.

Example 22

- I, II | MP , M , P MRSR , G , M P | P MP N PN SNPM GM R |
 mahā kā- vya nā- takā- di pri yam mūṣika vā-hana mo-daka priyam
- III | MP , M , P MRSR , G , M P | PNMP NNPN SNPM GM R |
 mahā kā- vya nā- takā- di pri yam mūṣika vā- hana mo-daka priyam

Through the composition, there are many differences in the three recordings. Shashānk changed *svaras* or put additional *svaras* within the confines of *Nāṭa rāga* at each performance.

Performance and Notation

The notations of a large repertoire of the *kṛtis* are published in print. They are written in Tamil, Telugu, English and other languages. Notations of the trinity are available in many versions. I have collected six published notations of *Mahā Gaṇapatim*.⁵⁾ Appendixes 1 and 2 show two of these. As with performances, there are many differences between them. In

teaching, musicians therefore use mainly their own handwritten notation. For this research, the musicians were asked to write their notations of *Mahā Gaṇapatim*. Notations were collected from six performers (RN NR HYN SS DP VN KS). See Appendixes 3-5.

Differences remain between the performance and the notation written by the performer. The notation by Shashank and the transcription from his performance are as follows (*pallavi*, 3rd *saṅgati*). The notation shows “*smarāmi*” as { $\dot{S}NPMRSGM$ }, but he performed it as { $SRGM$ }. A fourth *saṅgati* in the notation was never played in three renditions.

Example 23

The notation by SS

| M $\dot{P}N\dot{S}N$ $\dot{P}M$ $\dot{G}M\dot{P}M$ R , | $\dot{R}R\dot{S}N$ S , $\dot{S}NPM$ $\dot{R}SGM$ |
ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi

The transcription from the performance by SS

③ | M $\dot{P}N\dot{S}N$ $\dot{P}M$ $\dot{G}M\dot{P}M$ R , | $\dot{R}R\dot{S}N$ \dot{S}, \dot{N} S S R G M |
ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi

The fourth sangati in SS's notation

| $\dot{G}M\dot{P}N$ $\dot{S}NPM$ $\dot{G}M\dot{P}M$ R , | $\dot{R}R$ S $\dot{S}N$ P $\dot{S}NPM$ $\dot{R}SGM$ |
ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi

Example 24 is HYN's notation and performance (*pallavi* part). There are major differences between them. He did not play as he wrote, and he did not play the third line.

Example 24

a. A Copy of the Handwritten Notation by H. Y. Nārayaṇan

Pallavi

1. | M P , M $\dot{G}M$ R , | S \dot{N} S , $\dot{S}N\dot{S}R$ G M |
ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi
 2. | M P , M $\dot{M}G\dot{P}M$ R , | $\dot{R}R$ S S , $\dot{S}N\dot{S}R$ G M |
ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi
 3. | $\dot{P}N\dot{S}N$ $\dot{P}M\dot{G}M$ $\dot{P}M\dot{R}S$ R , | S \dot{N} S , $\dot{S}N\dot{S}R$ G M |
ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi
- | $\dot{P}\dot{S}, \dot{N}$ P, $\dot{M}G$ $\dot{M}R,$ S $\dot{N}SRG$ |
Vasiṣ-ṭha vā made vā di van dita (ma hā~)

b. Transcription of the H. Y. Nārayaṇan's Performance

Pallavi

1. | P P , M $\dot{G}M$ R , | S \dot{N} S , S $\dot{S}R$ G M |
ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi
 2. | $\dot{P}N\dot{S}N$ P , M $\dot{G}M$ R , | S \dot{N} S , $\dot{S}NPM$ $\dot{G}M$ P |
ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi
- | $\dot{P}\dot{S}, \dot{S}$ $\dot{S}NPM$, $\dot{M}RS$ $\dot{S}RGM$ |
vasiṣ-ṭha vā made va di van dita (ma hā~)

Such differences between notation and performance appear for most of the musicians. The background to this variety between renditions among musicians and notations is discussed in the following section.

The Musician's Viewpoint

Throughout all the sections (*pallavi*, *samaṣṭi caraṇam*, *ciṭṭasvara*), the composition *Mahā Gaṇapatim* played by ten musicians exhibited great variety. Indian classical music is handed down from *guru* to *śiṣya* in the oral tradition. There are many schools and many versions. Even the numbers of *saṅgatis* differ among musicians. Musicians listen to each other to learn many different *saṅgatis*. Each musician is proud to observe the style of their *guru*, but a performer has also freedom to add or modify the *saṅgatis* according to his or her musical knowledge. There is also a recent tendency for students to learn from different teachers. For example, VN learned the *kṛti* from KS, but there is a great difference between VN and KS. VN made many changes because she also learned *vīṇā* from her mother RN. Her parents are both musicians (HYN and RN) who learned from different schools, and VN grew up hearing the different types of singing and playing from childhood.

In a concert, musicians play together with members who learned different *saṅgatis* from their respective *gurus*. How do they adjust to these differences? VN states: “In ensemble, it is necessary to decide on the main and sub among the musicians. Then the soloist (main musician) plays and the other musicians follow as subordinate players. Without this sort of agreement we cannot play together.” The sub players listen to what the soloist plays on the stage and immediately follow him or her then and there.

However, even though the sub players follow the main player closely, there are still differences between each player. How is this received by the musicians and the listeners? Musicians do not seem to mind slight differences of melody as long as they are within the scheme of the *Nāṭa rāga*. Rather, they want to put their own stamp on the rendering of the composition. The audience too appreciates differences in the rendering as expressing the individuality of the performers.

In teaching, handwritten notation is generally used in India. The teacher writes in the student's notebook, or the student copies from the teacher's handwritten notebook. Sometimes printed notation is used, but often many parts are changed to suit the teacher's own experience and preferences. In some cases, students copy only the text and do not use the notation, memorizing the music by heart. In Indian music, the notation presents one possibility for rendition, and is used solely for memorizing and reference.

The one aspect of the music that is common to all is the text. The text verses are treated with great veneration by the musicians. The composer's original text analyzed in this article has no variation: no one touches or changes it. Basically, the position of each syllable of the text is fixed. Rājālakshmi Nārāyaṇan said, “When a player makes variations, he must be careful that the words should come to the same position.” They can sometimes be changed slightly because of rhythmic variation. For example, “*manasā*” in the *pallavi* theme may commence after the beginning of the *āvarta*, and not on the beat. See Example 3 (BS).

Musicians are allowed to perform slight differences, as long as they are still within the structure of *Nāṭa rāga*. As the position of the syllables of the text is almost identical for all the musicians, they can play together.

Example 25

tāla	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
mātrā- s								
sāhitya	ma	hā —	ga ṇa	pa tim —	ma	na sā —	sma rā —	mi

tune A	M	P	,	M	R	S	R	,	S	Ṇ	S	,	S	R	,	G
sāhitya	ma	hā —	ga ṇa	pa tim —	ma	na sā —	sma rā —	mi								

tune B	M	<u>P</u>	<u>Ṇ</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>Ṇ</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>R</u>	,	<u>R</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>Ṇ</u>	S	,	<u>S</u>	<u>Ṇ</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>R</u>	,	G	
sāhitya	ma	hā —	ga ṇa	pa tim —	ma	na sā —	sma rā —	mi																

The Structure of *Nāṭa Rāga*

It is assumed here that this variety in performance and notation is caused not only by its oral tradition and individuality but by flexibility in musical theory. Indian music has certain strict rules, but its rules themselves contain some possibilities of rendition, or flexibility. Musicians can change a melody or rhythm slightly within the rules of the *rāga* and *tāla* scheme. To explore such flexibility in the rules of music commonly followed by Indian musicians, the structure of the *Nāṭa rāga* is examined below.

The *Svaras* in *Nāṭa Rāga*

Rāga is more than a scale. Each *svara* in each *rāga* has its special role that distinguishes the *rāga* from others. The *svaras* are played with or without *gamaka*. In all *rāgas*, Sa is the base of the *rāga* and is always a stable note. Pa, the fifth, is also stable, and no shaking type of *gamaka* is applied in principle. These two basic *svaras* are plain notes that can be arbitrarily extended when played.

The interval of Sa and Ri is an augmented second, a fairly wide step. When a tune moves from Sa to Ri, usually Ri starts from the pitch of Sa and then reaches Ri, and vice versa, but this is not obligatory. Ri is a *jīva svara* (the soul of a *rāga*) and has a special status. Ri can also be made a long note with *gamaka* in the *avarōhaṇa*. In this case, the amplitude of the *gamaka* is very small, like a vibrato. This vibrato is played only downward from the pitch of Ri. Extending Ri with the vibrato accentuates the *svara*, and gives a strong aural impression. Ma is a stable note. The three notes {RGM} are close to each

other, and Ga, being between the two strong notes, Ri and Ma, is played short and serves as a passing note.

In *Nāṭa rāga*, Ri is the most characteristic note and emphasized *svara*. In *ārohaṇa*, {SRGM} and {PDNS} have symmetrical intervals, but compared with the importance of Ri, Dha appears with low frequency, and there are even some descriptions that entirely omit Dha in *Nāṭa rāga* (Panchapakesa 1989: 1). In fact, SS's notation does not include Dha, and it does not appear at all in his three performances discussed here. KS, who is an expert in compositions of Muttusvāmi Dīkṣitar and NV, who learned *Mahā Gaṇapatim* from KS, performed using Dha more often than the other musicians did, as described above. KS said that Dha (aug. 6th) is more often used in their school tradition. Tyāgarāja's *Pancharatna Kīrtana* in *Nāṭa rāga* does not have Dha in the composition. Some different views about the treatment of Dha date back to the composer's days. As a result, differences in the usage of Dha in the same composition have appeared among the musicians.

Dha is used mostly as a passing note with rare frequency, only in *ārohaṇa*. The phrases { PNP } and { PNS } are commonly used. The interval between Pa and Nī is not close as that between Sa and Ri above, and Nī can start from Pa and vice versa. In the case of { PNP }, Nī is reached from Pa and is touched only at the last moment. { PNP } is performed as { P PN P } or { P P₂ N P }. However, Indians recognize the metric value of the *svara* Nī to be the same as Pa.

Example 26



Nī, the major seventh, is always played higher – at almost the same pitch as Sa. In { SNS }, Nī is sometimes played at the same pitch as Sa and also written as { S S S } in notation.

Example 27

HYN		S	N	S	,	<u>S</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>R</u>	G	M	
		ma	nā	sā		sma	rā				mi	
AK		S	S	S	,	S	R	,	G			
		ma	na	sā		sma	rā				mi	

The Combination of *Svaras*

The melody is created by combining *svaras*. Some possible combinations in *Nāṭa rāga* are as follows:

· Conjunctive motion with 2 <i>svaras</i>	GM	PM	SN etc.
with 3 <i>svaras</i>	PN	SNP	PNP GMR etc.
· Disjunctive motion with 3 <i>svaras</i>	NRS	NMP	PSN etc.
· Motion with 4 <i>svaras</i>	PMGM	GMRS	PMNP etc.
with 5 <i>svaras</i>	GMPDN	NRSNP	MGMPN etc.
with long <i>svara</i>	S, N	R S,	M P, etc.
with double <i>svaras</i>	RRS	NNP	MMR PPMM etc.

Various combinations of *svaras* are indicated in *varṇam*, the equivalent of an *étude* in Western music. Musicians remember these combinations, which are basically made with two or three *svaras* as typical simple patterns. Patterns of four *svaras* are regarded as conjunctions of 2+2. Similarly, patterns of five *svaras* are thought of as 2+3 or 3+2. Again, how each pattern is connected with the other is shown below.

Example 28

Nāṭa Varnam “sarasijanābha” pallavi, firstline (see Appendix 6)



Svara and Gamaka

These patterns are played with *gamaka*. A melody can be created based on the *svaras*, but the music fully emerges only when the *svaras* are combined with one another and ornamented with *gamaka*. Through playing a *varṇam*, students learn both how individual patterns are played and also how the patterns are connected with each other.

The combinations of distant *svara* like { MNP } are played as { M MN P }. Similarly { P Ṡ, N } is played like { PP ṠN }. Sa starts from Pa and slides to the pitch of Sa.

To play a *svara* starting from the pitch of the previous note is called *anusvara*. *Anusvara* is also explained as “additional notes played around a note of a melody for decorative effect” (Sambamoorthy 1952: 23). Sambamoorthy also describes traditional *gamakas* (1959: 170-3), but in practice there is almost no explanation of *gamaka* while learning. The *gamaka* attached to each *svara* in a *rāga* changes according to the distance and direction (ascending or descending) of the next *svara*. In addition, *gamaka* changes with tempo. Generally, a slow tempo *svaras* are decorated more because there is enough time to do so. Long *svaras* can also include much *gamaka*. At a faster tempo, however, there is less time for making *gamaka*, so *svaras* are rendered simply. These differences in making *gamaka* are also learned in *varṇam* with different *kālas* (speeds).

A detailed study of *gamaka* is not feasible in this brief paper, but to its extent is suggested by Sambamoorthy: “There are many subtle *gamakas* peculiar to vocal music and instrumental music (*vīṇā*, violin, *pullāṅkuzhal*, *nāgasvaram*)” (1959: 173). The implementation of *gamaka* also seems to be related to the different techniques of

instrumental and vocal music. BS sang at double speed (rapid passage), which seems more suitable for voice than for instruments. Musicians also try to make their own phrases with special *gamaka*.

Basically, the position of each syllable is regarded as fixed. Within a syllable, musicians make their own arrangements by adding another *svara*. In the *pallavi* theme of *Mahā Gaṇapatim*, for example, {MP, MGMR, } is the skeleton used by group A. To this line, different musicians put *svara* in different ways (see Example 3). At the position of the syllable “na,” VN put Ma before Ga and SS put Ma after Ga. At the position of the syllable “sma,” KK put Ri and HYN put Ni. Around the skeleton of a theme, musicians put another *svara*, which is always the next *svaras* to make the line continuative.

Sometimes even the *svaras* that comprise the skeleton of a melody line may change. This is allowed as long as the *svara* is within the framework of *Nāṭa rāga*. Each musician puts *svaras* differently, and when *svaras* are notated in detail a variety of transcriptions results.

There appears to be a large gap between Indians and foreigners in terms of the understanding of change. Indian musicians do not think that they have changed the melody, but that they have simply explored variations in it.

Furthermore, *gamaka*, an essential factor in Karnatic music, also should be considered. Although translated as “ornament” or “grace,” *gamaka* is an integral part of *svara*, and inseparable from it. *Gamaka* is rarely written in the notation, and it would actually be rather difficult to notate. Indian music uses many kinds of *gamaka*, such as *kāṃpita* (shake), *jāru* (glide), and *sphurita* (appoggiatura), to make a melody graceful. Sambamoorthy explains that “*gamaka* is a comprehensive term meaning and including not only the shakes but also the manipulation of a note in any manner resulting in a musical effect. In other words when the plain character of a note is altered so as to result in a musical effect it becomes a *gamaka*” (1959: 171).

Svara is combined with *gamaka*, and there is no single way of adding *gamaka*. There are several possibilities for adding *gamaka* to a single phrase. For example, NR played {R S R, } as (i) at 1a and as (ii) at 1c; (iii) would also be possible.

Example 29

NR 1a. | M P , M R S R , | S Ṇ S , S SR G M |
 ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi

1c. | P P̣ Ṇ Ṣ Ṇ P̣ Ṃ R S R , | S Ṇ S , S SR G M |
 ma hā ga ṇa pa tim ma na sā sma rā mi

(i) (ii) (iii)

R S R , R S R , R S R ,

RN showed that the phrase { M P , } in *varṇam* can be played in these three ways: (a) simply, without *gamaka*; (b) long Pa touches Ma briefly and returns; and (c) Ma touches Ni before going to Pa and Pa again touches Ma.

Example 30



From the same notation, many different ways of putting *gamaka* become possible according to the interpretation of *svara* and the musician's individual preference. As *gamaka* is rarely written in the notation, such actual melody lines are learned only in practice.

When a tune is notated more precisely, it may happen that the notation is different but the music is performed in the same way. As Ri usually starts from Sa in *ārohaṇa*, for example, (i) is performed in the same way as (ii).

Example 31

- | | | | | |
|------|-----|------------|---|----|
| (i) | S | R | G | M |
| (ii) | S | <u>S R</u> | G | M |
| | sma | rā | | mi |

Then to what degree of detail should music be notated? Rājālakshmi said "If melody is notated more precisely, flexibility decreases. So, notation should be simple so as to preserve the possibilities."

There is thus a great distance between music and notation. The gap between them seems to be made up by the knowledge of *rāga* or musical theory. Indian musicians sometimes ask questions such as, "Do you know *Nāṭa rāga*?" This question is about whether one knows the way of adding *gamaka* in *Nāṭa rāga*. Conversely, with such knowledge of *Nāṭa rāga*, one can interpret from the *svaras* presented in the notation and render the music. A notation shows only the outline of the music or one of the possible renditions, and is important for musicians for reference or teaching. Although what musicians have learned from their *guru* carries a good deal of weight, they also have room to choose other possibilities or to create a new arrangement according to their knowledge of *rāga*, taste, or mood at the moment. For a musician, music is not necessarily performed exactly as the notation indicates.

This is assumed to be related to the tradition of *manodharma saṅgīta* (improvisation) that is another major area of Indian music. As musicians have been trained in improvisation for many years, they have no resistance to changing the melody. Replacing the pattern of

svaras in *Nāṭa rāga* and building up one's own phrases is the backbone of improvisation. The skill of improvisation with *sāhitya* is refined by means of training in *niraval*. Every musician tries to bestow some individuality even to the composition, and the notation they write is just one of the possibilities for rendition. They can always be creative while staying within the *rāga* and *tāla* scheme. The spirit of improvisation also exists in *kalpita saṅgīta* (composed music).

Conclusion

Through a composition of Muttusvāmi Dīkṣitar, *Mahā Gaṇapatim*, we have seen the full variety of Karnatic music performance. There are many performance styles and versions. Although each is passed on from teacher to student, individual musicians still have great freedom within their inherited styles. Within a *rāga* scheme, musicians can choose from among many phrases or create new melody lines. Because of the emphasis on improvisation in Indian music, musicians are always trained to be creative. Even in a composed piece, the performer is still left with great freedom for creating music within the scheme.

Karnatic music is rendered by the *rāga* tradition, which has strict rules about the treatment of *svara* and *gamaka*. At the same time, this tradition offers room for a musician to choose and replace a phrase from among several different possibilities for rendition at each performance. The use of *gamaka* itself is not fixed but flexible. By the performer's various interpretations of *svaras*, many ways of adding *gamaka* become possible. This means that Karnatic musical performance is always fluid and changing in detail.

Though the variety of performance in Karnatic music may be regarded as stemming from its oral tradition and musicians' individuality, the flexibility in music also brings out a good deal of variety.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

- 1) Chennai is the capital of Tamil Nadu state.
- 2) This is accepted in India as the most authentic study of Muttusvāmi Dīkṣitar.
- 3) Notations in fifteen volumes, published from 1941 to 1979.
- 4) *Samaṣṭi* means "condensed" or "shortened." Subbarāma Dīkṣitar, in his book S.S.P., uses the term *anupallavi*, but the second section is referred to as *samaṣṭi caraṇam* in the later period (Ramanathan 1998).

- 5) Published notations of *Mahā Gaṇapatim* are included in Bhagyalekshmi (1997a: 13; 1997b: 59), Govinda Rao (1997), Panchapakesa Iyer (1989), Rangaramanuja Ayyangar (1983: 249), and Sundaram Iyer (1988: 12).

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Appendixes

1. Printed Notation by A. Sundaram Iyer

1. “மஹாகணபதிம்”	
36. நாடகம் — ஏக தாளம் { ஆ : ஸாரிகமபாதலிஸா அவ : ஸ்விபமரீஸா	
4	4
பல்லவி	
மா பா ; மா ரீ ஸா ஸ ரீ , ம ஹா . க்ஷ . ண . ப . தி . ம் . ப நி ம ப நி ப ப ம ம ரி ரி ஸ ரீ ; ம . ஹா . . . க்ஷ . ண . ப . தி . ம் . ப நி ஸ் நி ப ம க ம ப ம ரி ஸ ஸ ரீ , ம . ஹா . . . க்ஷ . ண . ப . தி . ம் . ஸ் ரி ஸ் நி நி ப ப ம ம ரி ரி ஸ ஸ ரீ , ம . ஹா . . . க்ஷ . ண . ப . தி . ம் . ப ஸா நி பா ம ரி க ம ரி ஸ நி ஸ ரி க வ்ஸிஷ்ட, வா மதே, வா திவந் தி, த ஸா ரீ ஸா ; ப ம க ம ரீ ஸா ம ன ஸா . ஸ்ம . ரா . மி	ஸா ரீ ஸா ; ஸா ஸ ரி கா மா ம ன ஸா . ஸ்ம ரா . மி ஸா ஸ நி ஸா ; ஸா ஸ ரி கா மா ம ன . ஸா . ஸ்ம ரா . மி ம க ப ம ரீ ஸா ஸா ஸ ரி கா மா ம . ன . ஸா ஸ்ம ரா . மி ம ப ப ம ம ரி ரி ஸ ஸா ஸ ரி கா மா ம . ன . ஸா . . ஸ்ம ரா . மி ப நி ம பா , ப ம ம ரி ரி ஸ ஸ ரீ , ம . ஹா க்ஷ . ண . ப . தி . ம் . ரி ஸ ஸ ரி க ம ரி க ம ரீ , ரி ஸா ,
ஸமஷ்டி சரணம்	
ப ம பா ; ஸா ; ஸா ஸ் நி ஸா ம . ஹா . தே . வ்ஸ . தம் ஸ் ரி கா மா ம் ரீ , ஸா ; ஸ் நி மா . ரகோ . டி . ப்ர . மத்யம காலம் ம பா க ம ப ஸ் நி ஸ ரி க மா ப மா ம ஹா கா வ் ய நா ட கா திப் ரி யம் சிட்டா ஸ்வரம் பா ப ம - க ம ரி ஸ - ரி ஸ நி ஸ - ப ம க ம ஸ் நி ப ம க ம - நி ப ம - ரி க - ம - ரி - ரி ஸா பா ம ப ரீ ப நி ஸ் ரி ஸ் நி ப ப ம மூ ஷிக வாஹனமோ . த்ஷ க ப் ரி யம் பா த நி ஸ் - ரி க்ம் - ம் ரி ஸ் - ரி ஸ் நி ப ம ரீ ஸ் ஸா நி - பா ம - கா ம - நி ஸ ரி க (மஹா)	; ரீ ஸா ரீ ஸா ரீ ஸா ; . கு. ரு கு ஹ னு தம் . ஸ் நி பா பா மா பா மா ரீ ஸா கா . ஸ்ம் . ஸா ந் தம் . பா ம ப ரீ ப நி ஸ் ரி ஸ் நி ப ப ம மூ ஷிக வாஹனமோ . த்ஷ க ப் ரி யம் பா த நி ஸ் - ரி க்ம் - ம் ரி ஸ் - ரி ஸ் நி ப ம ரீ ஸ் ஸா நி - பா ம - கா ம - நி ஸ ரி க (மஹா)

2. Printed Notation by A.S. Panchapakesa Iyer

Sri Ramajayam		- 2 -	
GĀNĀRUTHA KEERTHANA MĀLIKĀ			
Part I			
1. MAHĀ GANAPATHIM			
Rāgam : Nāttai	- 36th Mēla jānyam		
Thālam: Ādi	- Sri Muthuswāmy deekshithar		
Āro. S R ₃ , G ₂ M ₁ P N ₂ S	Ava. S N ₂ P M ₁ G ₂ M ₁ R ₂ , S		
Pallavi: Mahā Ganapathim manasā smarāmi			
Mahā Ganapathim Vaṣishta Vāma			
Dēvāḍi vaṇḍitha			
Charanam: Maha dēva sutham Guruguha nutham			
Māra kōti prakāṣam ṣhāntham			
Mahā kavya natakāḍi priyam			
Mushika vāhana mōḍaka priyam			
Pallavi:			
1. M, P, , M, M G P M R, , ,	na - pa - thim - - -		
Ma - hā - - - Ga -	R S R G, M, ,		
S, N, , , ,	sā - - - - - mi -		
ma - na - - - - -	P, M, M G P M Do		
Ma - - hā - - - Ga -	na - pa - Do		
P N S N P M - G M P M R S Do	na - pa - Do		
Ma - hā - - - Ga -	na - pa - Do		
P N S N R, - S N P M R S R, , ,	na - pa - thim - - -		
Ma - hā - - - Ga -	na - pa - S R G M		
N S, N P, M - G M R, S	vaṣi - shta vā - ma dē - vā - ḍi		

3. Handwritten Notation by Rājālakshmi Nārayaṇan

No. _____
Date 27. 8. 2000

Rāga NĀTA Tala - CHATURSA EKAM

Composar - Sri Muttuswami Dikshitar.
Arohana - $\text{S}^3 \text{g}^3 \text{p}^3 \text{d}^3 \text{n}^3$ Avarohana - $\text{d}^3 \text{p}^3 \text{m}^3 \text{R}^3$

Pallavi

1) MP ; M RSR ; || SNS ; n n sr GM ||
Maha . Ga . na . pathim Manasa . sma . nā . mi

2) P, n n PM RSR ; || do 1
Ma . ha . Ga . na . pathim do

3) g m p n n p m m g p m R ; || do 4
Ma . ha . Ga . na . pathim || do

4) p n s R ; s n p n s R ; 1) n s n . p m g m R s n s n g ||
Ma . ha . Ga . na . pathim Vashistakama . De . vadi . vandita

5) do || n n s n p p . n n s n p n g m ||
do Ma . na . bā . sma . ra . mi
do do
do Vashistakama . De . vadi . vandita

MP ; M RSR ; || ; ; ; ; ; ; s n g m ||
Maha . Ga . na . pathim
R ; S ; ; ; ; ;
.

Samasthi Charanam

1) n p ; ; n p ; ; N S S || ; n n s n n s N S ; ||
Maha . De Vabudam Guru . Guha . natham

2) g m p n p p n S S ; || do
Maha De . va . indam do

1) s n GM R ; s ; s n : || P ; M ; m g p m . R ; s ||
Ma . na . koti . pra . ka . ham . sha . m . tham

2) do || p n p n n p m n p p m . R ; s ||
do Ka ham . sha . m . tham

Madhyam Kala Sahityam

1) n p g m p S n GM p m || g m p n m p ; ; s ||
Maha . kavya . Nata . Kadi . priyam ||

2) do do || p m p n p n s n s n p m ||
— — Moostika . Vāhana . Moda . kapi . priyam

Chitta bhava

P p m g m n s s s n s p m g m || P d n s n g m n n s n s n p m ||
s n p m g m n p m g m s g m n s || R s s n p m R s n s n g ||

— x — Rājālakshmi Nārayaṇan

5. Notation by S. Shashānk

NOTATION FOR MAHA GANAPATHIM - NATA

SCALE : S R3 G3 M1 P N3 S

PALLAVI :

FIRST LINE

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|------|------|-------|------|--|------|------|-------|------|
| 1. | M.P. | ..M. | G.M. | R... | | S.N. | S... | S.R. | G.M. |
| | MAHA | GA | NAPA | THIM | | MANA | SA | SMARA | MI |
| 2. | M.P. | SNPM | G.M. | R... | | S.N. | S... | S.R. | G.M. |
| | MAHA | GA | NA PA | THIM | | MANA | SA | SMARA | MI |
| 3. | M.PN | SNPM | GMPM | R... | | RRSN | S... | SNPM | RS6M |
| | MAHA | GA | NAPA | THIM | | MANA | SA | SMARA | MI |
| 4. | GMPN | SNPM | GMPM | R... | | RRS. | SNP. | SNPM | RS6M |
| | MAHA | GA | NAPA | THIM | | MANA | SA | SMARA | MI |

SECOND LINE

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----------|--------|------|---------|--|--|--|--|--|
| 1. | P.S.N | P.MG | MRRS | NSR6 | | | | | |
| | VASISHTA | VAMADE | VADI | VANDITA | | | | | |
| | CHARANAM | | | | | | | | |

FIRST LINE

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|------|------|------|--------|--|------|-------|-------|------|
| 1. | P.SN | P.P. | S.SN | S.S. | | ..RR | S.RR | SN.S. | R... |
| | MAHA | DE | VA | SU TAM | | GU | RU GU | HA NU | TAM |
| 2. | P.SN | PMPN | S.SN | S.S. | | ..RR | S.RR | SN.S. | R... |
| | MAHA | DE | VA | SU TAM | | GU | RU GU | HA NU | TAM |

SECOND LINE

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|------|-------|------|------|--|------|------|------|------|
| 1. | G... | M.R. | ..SA | ..P. | | SNP. | PMM. | MGPM | R... |
| | MA | RA KO | TI | PRA | | KA | SHAM | SHAN | TAM |
| 2. | SR6. | M.R. | ..SA | ..P. | | SNP. | PMM. | MGPM | R... |
| | MA | RA KO | TI | PRA | | KA | SHAM | SHAN | TAM |

CHITTAI SWARAM :

- | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--|---------|--------|--------|-------|
| SP.M | MPMR | SR.G | ..M.P. | | P.MP | N.PN | SNPM | GMR. |
| MAHAKA | VYA NA | TAKADI | PRIAM | | MUSHIKA | VAHANA | MODAKA | PRIAM |

