

CLASSICAL MUSIC IN THE MAHABHARATA

Dr Leela Omcherry

Maharshi Vyāsa's diamond-hard brilliance flood-lights the various facets of the life and culture of ancient India through the great epic *Mahābhārata*¹. Music being a powerful branch of this ancient culture, it has also been dealt with in all its deserving significance. Vyasa's sensitive observations and references stand out, not only as sound proof of the author's interest and mastery over the subject, but also as valuable sources for understanding the art technically and aesthetically. The present article is an attempt to study classical music on the basis of these references that are scattered over the body of the *mahākāvya*. *Harivamsa*², though it belongs to a later date and to a different author according to some views, has been widely accepted as a supplement to *Mahābhārata*. So it has also been referred to.

Origin of Gandharva

The terms *gāndharva* and *sangita* are very old and denote the triad forms of art, dance, vocal music and instrumental music. Vyāsa too accepts them in the same connotation (*M*—9-37-11; 3-158-60; *Hari* 3-60-37) and analyses the prevailing systems of music accordingly. Three styles of singing have been described by him in the epic and they are the music of the gods and the celestials, the music of kings, state musicians and orthodox people, and the music of the masses a simple style developed by those non-Aryan sects who were not keen followers of caste and professional restrictions (*M*—8-44-92). Since Vyāsa was of the opinion that the traditional arts must be imparted only to *āstikas* (*M*—13-17-17) and that too

1 "Mahabharata", Gita Press, Gorakhpur.

2 Harivamsa ; Lakshmi Venkatesvara Press, Kalyan, Bombay.

only by traditional masters in strict accordance with the accepted rules and principles, (M 3-91-14) the first two styles alone could have belonged to classical music.

Vyāsa refers to classical music as *gāndharva veda* (M—3-91-15) and considers Vishnu as the creator of this art (M—12-210-8). This art was once lost in the deluge along with the rest of the culture (M—12-210-19). The credit of recovering it and developing it into a crystallised branch of study goes to Nārada (M—12-210-21), the celestial musician, through whom the art might have spread to the mortal and immortal worlds (M—2-5-8, 9). To suit the needs and ideals of both heaven and earth, the art naturally had to branch out into two styles of singing.

Deva Gandharva and Desa Gita

Vyāsa calls these two styles *deva gāndharva* (M—13-19-47) or celestial music, suggestive of *mārga sangit*, which is described as “*dēva vihitam nṛlōkē ennavidyatē*” (M—3-44-6, 7, i.e. which is current among the celestials and which does not exist in the world of mortals) and *dēśa gita* suggestive of *dēśi sangit* which was “*nānā dēśa samuddhānām gītānām yō abhavam*” (M—7-85-20 i.e. the swell of songs belonging to different regions).

It is worthwhile to point out here that the *Sangita Ratnakara* also supports this contention by referring to worldly music or regional music as *gāna* and the *mārga* type of music as *gāndharvam*.

The *dēva gāndharvam* was performed primarily for pleasing the gods (M—8-34-92) and the heavenly abodes. *Kailasa* (M—13-140-8, 9, 10), *Indra'loka* (M—3-168-10) etc. resounded with it. It was sung by gods like Sankara (M—13-14-89), Brahma (M—6-65-69) and Indra (M—9-46-59); sages like Nārada (M—13-83-9), Tumburu (M—3-159-29) and semigods like *dēvāpsara gandharvas* (M—2-10-12), Viśvāvasu (3-43-18), *kinnaras* (M—7-80-29), *hahāhuhus* (M—1-122-59) and others. Besides dance, it contained a variety of *deva gitas* (M-3-43-7) composed in *gāndharvasvāras* (H. 3-133-53) and set to different *divyatālas* (M—13-14-401) which were accompanied by *divyatānas* (M—13-83-10; 2-10-9) and *divyavādītram* (M—5-178-84) consisting of *dēva dumdubhi* (M—13-32-30) *dēvatūrya* (M—8-87-87) and other such *divya vādyas* (M—8-34-45).

Similarly, the *dēśa gita* was meant for pleasing the dignitaries of the mortal world (M—5-156-27). It also consisted of *vividha gītās* (M—7-85-13), *tālas* (M—7-85-17) and *nānā vādyas* (M—8-78-42). The kings (M—1-143-9), *dvīpas* (M-3-90-6) and other leading personalities (M—7-80-2 to 6) were all patrons of this art and a few among them like Pārtha (M—4-2-29), Kuntī (M—5-90-10; 12 to 16), Pāncālī (M—4-18-19), Gān-

dhari (M-11-25-8), Dhiṭtarāshtra (M-12-7-24) were themselves well versed in the art. Those who rendered it at the professional level were called *sūta-māgadha-vandīs* (M-4-18-19), *vaitālikas* (M-4-72-29) and *caranās* (M-1-209-4).

Though the *dēva gāndharva* and the *dēśa gāna* existed as two branches of singing, they were not completely independent or divorced from one another. Many golden opportunities and rare privileges were bestowed upon the *mānushas* and the *amānushas* which helped towards a mutual understanding and appreciation of the arts. Celestial musicians including Narada (M-2-5-9) Tumburu (M-1-122-54) and *devāpsara-gandharvas* (M-2-4-37, 39) came to the world to give recitals during *yajnas* (M-14-88-36 to 40) and similar functions. Sometimes the divine artists stayed in the world as state guests (M-2-4-36). Similarly Partha, and Kṛṣṇa went to Kailāsa and attended the musical activities of the place (M-7-80-38 to 42). Pārtha went to *Indraloka* as a distinguished guest (M-3-43-10, 11). Even an ordinary man could have the rare opportunity of being in the company of *gandharvāpsaras* by observing *karhina vrata* and *tapasya* (M-13-106-37). There were also quite a number of occasions such as the birth of Pārtha (M-1-122-53, 59), festival at *Raivataka parvata* (M-1-219-4, 8, 12) and the battle of *Karnājunas* (M-8-49-75) which were accompanied by the music of both the mortals and the immortals. Above all, the practice of the *dēva gāndharva* had never been restricted to its own artists. Arjuna (M-4-37-21), the princess Uttarā and her friends (M-4-2-29) were all experts of this style. Like Naradaguru (H. 2-89-23) and other celestials (H. 2-89-83), worldly people (H. 2-89-79, 80, 84, 85, 86) were also equally adept in the *chhālīkya gāndharva* (H. 2-89-80) which was connected with the *jalotsavam* and which was performed in unison by experts of all regions.

Thus we find a close link between the two styles which thrilled not only the abodes of gods and kings but also *rākshasa loka* (M-1-211-8), *pātāla* (M-5-102-14), *tapōvana* (M-3-159-20), *viprarshi nilayam* (M-5-109-9), *vana* (M-13-102-20), *varnūnamandala* (M-2-9-26) and *giripradēsa* (M-3-84-93).

Status of Music

Classical music enjoyed a supreme status in those days and it was held in high esteem (M-3-213-29). It belonged to *rājasaguna* (M-14-37-14) and was considered as one of the rare luxuries reserved for the enjoyment of kings (M-12-7-24) and *grhashtasramīs* (M. 12-191-16). The Aryans were the sole monopolists of this art and the *samkarajātīs* (3-85-30) and the non-Aryan people like Madrajas (M-8-44-5), Arattas (M-8-44-41), Sākalites (M-8-44-10) and others were never allowed to practice

it. The purity and the pleasing qualities connected this music with all religious, social and cultural activities. It played a prominent part in times of war as well. There was only one main function in which music was not included and that was *śrāddha karma* (M—13-90-6). The popularity of the art was so great that the people were proud to be known after the names of their favourite aspects of the art such as *Gītāpriya* (M—9-46-7), *Kumbhikā* (M—9-46-15), *Vēnu vinādhārā* (M—9-46-21), *Śata ghanṭā* (M—9-46-10), *Vamśanāda*, *Tumbavīna* (M—13-19-19), *Mahāgītā* (M—13-17-117), *Bherisvanā* (M—9-46-26), *Kumbhanābha* (Hari 1-3-76), *Keśayantri* (M—9-46-17) etc.

The routine of the gods connected with the music was attended by the *dēvāpsara-gandharvas* (M—2-7-24, 25) and that of the kings were looked after by the *sūta-māgadha-vandī* (M—7-7-8). The artists were commonly called *rangaśrīpurushas*¹ (M—12-36-30). Society did not prevent the artists from enjoying their life in the most luxurious and carefree manner, with delicious food and drinks (M—7-64-10) and costly dress and ornaments (M—9-46-42, 43). They were well respected and lavishly patronised (M—13-102-24) and during times of invasion and internal troubles, they were sent away to places of safety (M—3-15-14). *Śāstraprayōgas* on those artists who served in the army were also strictly forbidden (M—6-1-32). The artists were given valuable presents during or after performances (M. 1-221-23; 1-142-9) and it was a custom to present gifts to them by different men of high status (M. 1-143-9; H. 2-55-51).

But accepting presents and *annam* offered by the artists was condemned (M. 12-36-30) and *samabhōjanam* too, was not encouraged (M. 13-90-5, 6).

The women artists were all beautiful and charming (M. 2-61-9) and were given equal shares in the musical activities along with men (M. 2-10-12). Both in heaven and on earth, they were expected to serve their lords, not only with their art, but also with their physical charms (M. 11-17-13, 14, 15). Their lords could pledge them (M. 2-61-8, 9, 10) or present them (M. 8-38-18) as they liked.

Science of Music

Yukti-śāstram ca tē jñeyam

Śabda-śāstram ca Bhārata

Gāndharva śāstram ca kalāh

Parijnēyā narādhipa (M. 13-104-147).

“Thou shouldst acquire, King, the science of reasoning as also the science of words, the science of *gāndharva* and the four and sixty-branches of arts”

Through the above verse, Vyasa illustrates that the *gāndharva*, was one of the developed branches of science. This *śāstram* was the oldest of Brahma's creations and it was *Omkārasvarapūjitam* (M. 12-335-37) and *Nārāyaṇātmakam* or godly (M. 12-347-85). Bhūmi had five qualities which were *śabdasparsastathā rūpam ras¹ gandhaśca pancamāh* (M. 14-50-40) and the sound was the basis of music. The sound was "*ākāsa sambhavam* (M. 14-50-54) and was *vāyu gunai saha* (M. 12-184-42). It could be understood only through *śravaṇēndriya* (M. 14-43-33). The *śabda* had two varieties: *susvara* (M. 187-24; 8-38-22) which was *ish-ṭaśabda* (M. 14-50-54) or pleasing sound and *visvara* (Hari 3-122-12) which was *anishṭaśabda* (M. 14-50-54) or displeasing noise like the *ārtasvara* (M. 7-85-10) or *bhinnabhērisvana* (M. 4-22-75). *Sangīta* always emerged out of *madhurasvaram* (M. 3-158-60) or *susvanam* (M. 7-23-85) with a lot of *anuvādis* (M. 12-347-56) or *anunādas*. These melodious sounds which were all *puṇya-svara-s* because God dwelt in them (M. 14-50-55), had many ways of *vistāra-s* or expressions (M. 12-184-41), the notable among them being the auspicious tones of the *paṭaha*, *bhēri*, *mṛdanga*, *sankha* etc. (M. 12-184-41) and the *saptasvaras* (M. 12-184-39) or the *saptavāṇi-s* (H. 3-66-9) called :

Shadjarshabhah sa gāndhāra
Madhyamāh pancamastathā
Atah paramtu vijnēya
Nishāda dhaivatastathā (M. 14-50-52).

"I shall speak at length of the numerous qualities of sound, *shadha*, *rishabha*, together with *gāndharva*, *madhyama* and likewise *pancama*. After this should be known *nishada* and *dhivata*".¹

Out of these *svaras*, *grāmas* and *rāgas* might have developed.

Grama murcchana and raga

Harivamśa refers to *shadgrāma* in general (Hari-2-89-82) and *gāndharagrāma* in particular (Hari-2-93-24) with the significance in a dramatic presentation. The text also speaks about *mūrccana* (Hari-2-89-81), *ragas* (Hari-2-93-23) and even a *raga* by name *dēvagandhara* (Hari-2-93-23). But to my knowledge, none of these terms have been mentioned in the epic. The word *gāndhāram* however, occurs in the following verse with a musical significance:

Vijēva madhurālāpā
'Gāndhāram' sādhu mūrccatī

¹ The translation of the verses is based on the English version of *Mahabharata* by P.C. Roy.

Avyabhāshata pāncālī,

Bhīmasēnamaninditā (M. 4-17-14).

"The faultless *Pāncālī* addressed Bhīma in a voice sweet as the sound of a *viṇā* emitting the *gāndharva* note".

Tana

Ancient *tāna* has been defined as *tanyatē gīta manēnēti tānam*¹ (that by which a song spreads itself is called *tānam*). It is also suggested that it could denote a prolonged note² or *svara vistāra*³ etc. As in present-day music, these *svara prastāya* might have existed in vocal and instrumental music and might have expressed themselves through *nibaddha* and *anibaddha* forms. Vyāsa is not very clear in explaining the characteristic features of the *tāna* of his times. He informs us about its existence (M. 2-10-9) and its variety and purity (M. 2-4-39).

Songs and Compositions

A brilliant array of *gānas* were composed to suit different moods and occasions of heaven and earth. The occasions connected with musical activities were almost identical in both the worlds. But man, being mortal, ever changing and ever different from one another, it was in his world that more occasions occurred that demanded suitable songs and music. Thus there were songs and music for birth (M. 1-122-53), education (M. 1-134-6 10), love contests (M. 1-187-24) marriage (M. 4-72-29), *vividhābhishēkas* (M. 7-7-7, 8 9) processions (M. 4-68-23 to 25), *svagata* (M. 14-59-8), daily routine like going to sleep (M. 2-58-36) and awaking from sleep (M. 5-90-15, 16), festivals (M. 1-218-4), *yajna* (M. 12-29-75, 76), recreations (M. 1-209-31), military marches (M. 7-84-22-23), victory (M. 9-46-97), death (M. 1-126-10), funeral ceremony (M. *Strī-parva* 23-38) and salvation (M. 12-17-18).

The ancients considered *aucitya* and *lalitya*⁴ as the fundamentals and *vyakta*, *pūrṇa*, *madhura*, *surakta*, *samā* etc. as the qualities of ideal songs. Vyāsa's references to the terms *madhura* (M. 1-70-38), *sama* (M. 3-43-28), *manarama* (M. 3-46-27), *pushkalapadākshara* (M. 12-38-20), *samāśavidhi kalpita* (M. 12-348-53) etc. prove that he also was in favour of these principles. According to him, ability to compose such songs was a rare gift (M. 14-31-6), and besides gods (M. 13-17-117), only *kavi-pungavas* (M. 3-231-49), kings (M. 12-152-9) and sages (M. 12-57-40)

1 Sabda kalpa druma.

2 Sanskrit-English dictionary by Apte.

3 A Sanskrit-English dictionary by Monier Williams.

4 Story of Indian Music by O.C. Gōsvami.

were blessed with it. When composed by poets according to principles, the songs became *vidusha-priyam* (M. 1-1-28), *cittabudhiharam* (M. 5-109-9), *sarvamangala mangalyam* (M. 13-17-24), *pavitram* (M. 13-17-20), *caturvēda samanvitam* (M. 13-17-15), *āyushyam*, *śokaghnām*, *pushṭi-vardhanam* (M. 7-52-23, 24). The songs provided not only delight and knowledge but also salvation (M. 3-114-12).

To refer to a song Vyāsa uses the terms, *gīta* (M. 4-2-29), *sāma* (M. 2-61-10), *gēya* (M. 3-46-27), *gādhika* (M. 3-85-30), *stava* (M. 7-82-3), *gādhā* (M. 11-23-14) and *stuti* (M. 1-209-4). Most of these terms though denote a particular type of composition, according to commentators, and have been used by Vyāsa only in a general sense which includes hundreds of songs dealing with various sentiments like *raudra* (M. 2-80-8), *vīra* (M. 11-23-14), *karuṇa* (M. 3-135-54), *kāma* (M. 14-13-12), *śānta* (M. 3-159-20), *bhakti* (M. 3-114-12).

Tala and Laya

The growth of rhythm or *tāla* started along with different types of vedic singing. The practice of *tāla* was mainly two-fold, *sa-śabda* or with beats and *nī-śabda* or without beats¹. The *sa-śabda* time measure was kept with the clapping of the hands and the *nī-śabda* with the waving of the hands and this method was called *kriya*. Out of these two fundamental processes, the *gandharva* had evolved various types of *tālas* like *sama* (M. 3-158-97), *śampā* (M. 13-19-18), *samyā* (M. 2-4-38), *sāmya* (M. 7-72-12), *pāṇitāla*, *sutāla* (M. 13-19-18)². etc. which have been mentioned in the epic. Vyāsa incidently directs our attention to a set of people called *pāṇisvanikas* (M. 12-53-4), who kept the rhythm by clapping their hands during music performances, a practice which is as old as the *vedas* and which is modern enough to be observed in present day instrumental recitals.

Laya and Pramāṇa

By the word *laya*, is meant general timing³ that goes along with *tāla* to make a music performance an orderly and balanced process. There are mainly three kinds of *laya* namely *vilamba*, slow, *madhya* medium, and *druta*, fast⁴. The *Mahābhārata* refers to the *laya* in general (M. 2-4-38) and *druta* in particular (M. 7-85-13) while all the *layas* have been mentioned in *Harivamśa* (Hari-3-132-21). According to some scholars, *laya* suggests the unison of the song with the *vinā* or the *mṛdanga* and *pra-*

1. Historical development of Indian music by Swami Prajnananda.

2. Some of these talas may be identical.

3. "Story of Indian music" by O.C. Gosvami.

4. A Sanskrit-English dictionary by Monier-Williams.

māṇa refers to the three kinds of speeds¹. Vyāsa's treatment of the word *pramāṇa* (M. 2-4-38) is so casual that it cannot lead us to any satisfactory definitions.

Sthana

Early music employed the terms *ucca-nīca* and *samāhāra* to denote the high, low and the middle notes. Later on when the seven notes and the different registers came into vogue, the word *ucca* was used to mean the higher register and two terms *mandra* and *madhya* were coined to indicate the lower and the middle octaves. The registers were collectively called *sthānas* or *sthāyīs*. Vyāsa also accepts the word *sthāna* in the same sense (M. 2-4-38) and refers to the higher register as *ucca* (M. 5-121-27).

Vocal and instrumental music were based and disciplined on these principles. The technical perfection and the aesthetic appeal won for it the supreme status of the *vēda* (M. 3-91-15) and *gāndharva* could not be acquired without *kaṭhina tapasya* (M. 13-106-36, 37), and could not be heard without *śrēyas* (M. 5-26-7). The tried forms of this *veda* always functioned as complementary to one another and they were almost inseparable. Dance was the visual presentation of *rasa* and it required the assistance of *gāna* and *vādyā* for expressing the different sentiments effectively and appealingly. It is interesting to note that there existed a popular and a powerful branch of art which also had similar aims and dependence. It was known as *kathāyōgam* (M. 14-15-6; 5-11-14; Hari.-2-89-9), the traditions of which is still surviving in the hands of the *bhāgavatas* under the name *harikathā kālakshēpam*.

Musical instruments

Innumerable varieties of *vichitra vādyas* (M. 3-14-156) belonging to *dēva sangīt* and *dēśa sangīt*, have been mentioned in the epic. Vyāsa's constant references to the terms *vinā* or the stringed instrument lead one to assume that it was foremost among the musical instruments and that it was inseparable from all kinds of vocal and instrumental music of the classical traditions.² The *vinā* which was auspicious enough to be included in certain rituals the *dēvabrāhmaṇa pūja* (M. 5-40-10) could be a drone (M—14-77-26) like the *tānpura* or a playing instrument (M. 7-61-7) like the harp or the lute. The earliest drone might have evolved out of the primitive bow whose sound perhaps suggested the buzzing of the bees. This seems to be one of the reasons for terming a particular string of the old *vinā* (Pt.

1. Smy. P. C. Dharma, in Indian Culture Journal (1938).

2. For a detailed study on the instruments see author's "Vyāsa pratibha on Instrumental Music" Bhavan's Journal 4th December, 1956.

C. S. Pant) or the *vīṇā* itself (O. C. Goswami) as *bhramara tantra* or drone string. Vyāsa's references to *dhanurtantrī* (M. 3-22-8; Hari-3-60-37) and *jhankāraśrutī* (M. 3-100-14) that accompanied the *sāma gīta* of the *Brahma saṁhita* (H. 3-36-20) invariably support these statements.

Being a chorded instrument, the *vīṇā* was grouped under the *tantri* varieties. Vyāsa's references to the terms *tantrī* (M. 7-72-36), *vamśa* (M. 13-17-99) etc. prove that the age old method of classifying the instruments into stringed, wind, metals, and drums was then in practice. *Harivamśa* clearly illustrates the same idea through the verse *tatō ghanam ca sushiram* (Hari-2-93-22). The *yantra* (M. 14-77-26), *tantrī* (M. 13-114-15), *vallakī* (M. 13-79-26), *vīṇā* (M. 1-217-14), *tumba vīṇā* (M. 13-17-99), *kacchapī* (M. 9-54-19), *mahatī vīṇā* (Hari-1-54-8) etc. are considered as stringed instruments while the *vēnu* (M. 1-221-26), *gōmukha* (M. 4-72-27), *gōvishāṇika* (M. 6-43-8) and the *śankha* (M. 7-195-46) are grouped as wind instruments. Under the *avāṇḍha vādyas* have been mentioned the *paṇava* (M. 3-54-26), *bhēri* (M. 8-49-63), *pēśi* (M. 6-51-23), *mṛdanga* (M. 7-39-31), *ānaka* (M. 6-51-23), *duṇḍubhī* (M. 6-44-9), *krakaca* (M. 7-39-31), *tūrya* (M. 8-87-11), *āḍambara* (M. 4-72-27), *diṇḍīma* (M. 7-195-47), *marddaḷa* (M. 8-44-19), *muraja* (M. 5-141-35), *pushkara* (M. 5-94-21), *ālinganga* (M. 7-40-16), *gharjdhara* (M. 7-39-31) etc. Various types of *ghanṭas* (M. 13-106-63), *maṇīs* (M. 2-61-9) and even those ornaments like the *kinkīṇī* (M. 5-131-41), *kāñchi* (M. 13-107-67), *parihāṭaka* (M. 4-19-26), *mēkhala* (M. 13-107-30), *kalāpa* (M. 3-112-5), *nūpura* (M. 13-79-26) which jingled tunefully and rhythmically from the body of the women artists are considered as *ghana-vādyas*. Besides the *caturvidha vādyas*, the simple earthen wares were called *ushtika* (M. 3-15-7) and *kumbha* (M. 9-46-26) etc. too have been casually mentioned by the author. Using *ghaṭa* along with other musical accompaniments is still a tradition in the South Indian music.

Music Concerts

There were a number of *śālas* (M-4-22-3) or concert halls meant for presenting the art. The *Harivamśa* also gives an exhaustive picture of these (Hari. 2-29-1 to 14). A concert platform was known as *ranga* (M. 1-134-10) and the party of artists *saṁgha* (M. 7-85-7). The assembly was called *saṁgha* (M. 2-10-9) or *Samāja* (M. 1-219-11). A traditional concert is suggested through the metaphorical description of the *sangīta* of the *mahāvana* which runs as follows:

Mēgha tūrya ravōddāma

Madanākulitān bhr̥sām

Kṛtvaiṇa kēkā madhuraṇī

Sangītam madhura svaram (M. 3-158-60).

“Inspired by the notes of the cloud-trumpets, the passionate peacocks begin a melodious concert through their sweet voices.”

A colourful description about the *gāndharva* of the battle field found in *Mahābhārata* (M. 8-22-8) as well as in the *Harivamśa* in almost identical terms also is worth quoting here:

*Dhanurjyā tantrī madhuram
Hikkātāla samanvitam
Ārtta svanita ghōshāḍhyam
Yudham gāndharva-mābabhau (Hari. 3-60-37).*

“The battle field concert, consisting of *jyā*—the stringed instrument, *hikkā*—the rhythmical accompaniment and the *ārttasvara*—the song proper, was in full swing.”

A typical concert which has much in common with our present-day practice is illustrated through the verse:

*Miśrāduṇḍubhi nirghōshair
Śankaścā ḍambarai saha
Vīṇā naivādyā vādyantē
Śamyātāla svanai saha
Mangalyānica gītāni
Nagāyanti (M. 7-72-11).*

“Mingled with the beat of drums and conches, the sweet *vīṇā* is nowhere played upon, according to *śamyātāla*. The auspicious and delightful songs also are not sung”.

Audiences

Vyasa is very particular in conveying that an ideal performance of traditionally trained artists (M. 2-4-39) should be presented only before *vidvat sadas* (M-2-the description of different *sabhas*) consisting of genuine lovers of art and enlightened critics and not before those who were pseudo lovers and ignorant critics (M. 12-142-11 to 16). The havoc the latter type of people caused to the art has been well explained by the shrewd poet through the following verses.

*Apakvamatayō mandā
Najānanti yathā tatham
Yathā jya śāstra kuśalāh
Sarvatrayukti nishṭitāh
Parimushṇanti śāstrāṇi
Śāstra dōshānu darśinah*

Yijnāna martha vidyānām
Na samya gitivartatē
Nindayā paravidyānām
Sva vidyām khyāpayanti ca
Vāgastrā vakcchari bhūtā
Drugdha vidyā bhalā iva
Tān vidyā vañijō viddhi
Rākshasāniva Bhārata
Vyāēna sadbhir vilhitō
Dharmastē parihāsyat (M. 12-142-12 to 16).

“Wicked men of immature understanding, can never know things truly like those persons unacquainted with the scriptures are unable to be guided by reasons in all their actions. With eyes directed to the faults they decry the *śāstras* and thereby bring disaster to true knowledge. Such men, by despising the wisdom of others, proclaim the superiority of their own knowledge. They have words for their arrows and weapons, and they will speak as if they are real masters in their field of studies. Oh Bharata, they are the traders in learning and *rākshasas* among men. By the aid of mere pretexts they cast off that morality and idealism which have been established by good and wise men”.

Dr. Leela Omcherry, is on the teaching staff of the Music Department of Delhi University. She writes and lectures widely and also performs as a classical vocal artiste. She has done intensive research on musical references in the epic, “Mahabharata”.