

# TAGORE ON MUSIC AND MUSICAL AESTHETICS

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Dr. Sitansu Ray

## I

### Introduction

Rabindranath Tagore was both a composer and a critic in the field of music. Apart from composing more than two thousand songs as compiled in his *Geetabitan*, he also expressed his views on the art of music in the forms of public lectures, essays, letters, diaries and discussion etc. The Visva-Bharati Publishing Department collected and compiled such articles and published the anthology in 1966 under the title *Sangit-Chinta* (Thoughts on Music). A thorough study of the articles partially helps one to understand the evolution of Tagore's thoughts on music and the main points of his musical aesthetics. Yet, much remains untold in this anthology.

*Sangit-Chinta* does not exhaustively reveal Tagore's thoughts and ideas on musical art. Lectures, correspondences and discussions were more or less disputatious by nature. While trying to establish his own points of view Tagore had to take up a debating attitude. From time to time his ego overshadowed his sense of harmony and synthesis. As a result long conversation and correspondences cropped up. These, of course, are useful to understand and judge Tagore's thoughts on music. But, his spontaneous and original reflection is something else, which is very rarely found in the disputatious discussions.

The original essence of Tagore's reflections on the art of music can be found in the specific portions of his poems, plays, short stories, novels, essays, letters and nonetheless in some of his songs. Most of his creative writings consist of his undisturbed reflections on music which have been very often overlooked by the erudite scholars of Tagore-literature and the exponents of Tagore-songs too, only owing to the fact that these two faculties hardly synchronize with each other in one critic. But, Tagore was a person in whose personality there was a composite fusion of the faculty of music

along with all other finer faculties which gave rise to his creative writings. Creative writing may not explain the theoretical details of music but what it reveals is, much more important and subtle: his aesthetic outlook towards the art of sonority, i.e., music. As his songs are music and literature at the same time, so also his literature is full of numerous references to music, in the forms of (1) musical theme, (2) musical metaphor and (3) musical imagery.

Let us clarify the above points. The writings which bear the nomenclature of music, and compiled in the *Sangit-Chinta*, as for example, *Sangit O Bhaw*<sup>1</sup> (Music and Feeling), *Sangiter Utpatti O Upayogita*<sup>2</sup> (The Origin and Function of Music), *Sangiter Mukti*<sup>3</sup> (The Freedom of Music) etc. fall under the first category ; i.e., music-literature, thematically consisting of discussions and criticism on music.

When Tagore said—"This is neither a poetic imagination, nor a rhetorical utterance—music is being played day and night throughout space and time," (tr.)<sup>4</sup>—it may be taken as a nice example of musical metaphor. As he himself says that it is not a rhetorical utterance or poetic imagination, there must be some inherent truth in the fact that the cosmos has been conceived of as music.

Now, let us notice the following portion :-

"While coming back from Europe I was as if listening to the tune of *Sanai*, played in a distant festival-house. The tune was, sometimes, that of daybreak and sometimes *Multan* and *Barswan*. Some other day I was travelling from Santiniketan to Calcutta and again I could hear the tune of a *Sanai* while sitting in the railway compartment. I felt surprised indeed. Had I believed it something supernatural, I would have indulged in exaggerated narration. How I have explained the fact is that there was certainly some sonorous sound, however much subtle it may be, in the atmosphere around me and the rest was composed by my music-minded self just as we create visual imagery in a dream out of our sensuous experiences." (translated)<sup>5</sup>.

This is obviously a case of musical imagery, i.e., creation of music in imagination.

These may be metaphors or rhetorical usages, they are by no means irrelevant in the realm of musical aesthetics. A good metaphor crops up out of underlying similarities in two or more things and never out of orthographic or oratorical techniques or figures of speech. When an experience cannot be communicated by direct verbal statement, rhetoric or a metaphor only can express the essence of that experience. A good metaphor is more than a superfluous simile.

In Tagore, we can find that both the sensations caused from the outer world and the realization from the inner life have had their expressions in musical terminology, metaphor and imagery, the study of which will heighten and extend musical aesthetics towards newer findings through newer dimensions. Music is more than a conglomeration of sonorous sound-patterns leading to the theory of objective formalism. Music is imbued with all other finer faculties of a man. Tagore realized the fact and that is why his creative writings are full of musical terminologies, metaphors and imageries. Had he been a litterateur, devoid of musical genius, we might have taken these as mere figures of speech. But, as he was a litterateur combining musical genius these are to be taken as experienced extensions of musical sensitivity towards life and surroundings. Herein lies the justification of interdisciplinary studies of Tagore's literature, musicology and aesthetics.

The essence of the art of music has two aspects. On the one hand its appeal is above all experiences of this earthly world, and on the other, it must have some subtle and intangible relation with all the finer faculties of the human mind. Apparently the two aspects may seem quite opposed to each other but actually this is not so. A sensible co-ordination between the two can be a guard against both the formalistic theory rejecting human sentiments, and the emotionalistic theory indulging in emotional influx. A thorough study of Tagore's thoughts and reflections on music will serve this purpose of co-ordination and conciliation.

We see that Tagore had categorized his songs into six groups—viz (1) *puja* or devotional songs, (2) *swadesh* or patriotic songs, (3) *prem* or love-songs, (4) *prakriti* or songs about nature and the six seasons, (5) *vichitra* or songs expressing various intricate feelings, and (6) *anusthanik* or incidental songs. Apart from these there are the music-dramas and dance-dramas. Among all these, we can assume that religion, love and nature are the three principal sources of Tagore's creativity. I do not devalue *swadesh* and *anusthanik* groups. But Tagore was a lover of mankind as a whole, his patriotic songs cropped up only during a particular historic condition of Bengal and India. As regards the *anusthanik* songs, their purport is much more temporal and situational. The primordial and essential forces of Tagore's creativity are associated with (1) spirituality or the *Religion of Man*, (2) Love or the sublime erotic feeling and (3) the sensitivity to the natural world around us. Songs of the *vichitra* group incorporates the subtle intricacies of various ideas.

Now, these three principal forces have served two purposes. First, they have given birth to numerous compositions and secondly, they have enriched all the branches of creative writings with musical terminologies, musical metaphors and musical imageries and thereby have attuned the whole range of Tagore's works with his musical personality. While going through the vast span of his literature we find that off and on Tagore thought on

music, talked on music and wrote on music. Very often he used musical terminology and metaphor even while describing the experiences other than music. He drew analogy in musical terms in the cases of spiritual realisation, in the cases of beauty, love and affection; in the cases of his identification with the natural surroundings and in the case of all other fine and tender corners of the human heart. To understand Tagore's musicality, a devoted study of the whole range of his reflections on music is equally necessary besides acquaintance with his songs. Therein lies the justification of this kind of inter-disciplinary study.

To facilitate a grasping brevity out of this vast discourse, I shall cite the materials selectively and not extensively, and I shall divide the next steps of my discourse into the following heads :

- II. The Evolution of Tagore's Thoughts on Music : Tagore as a Music Critic.
- III. Absolutism and Referentialism : Autonomy versus Heteronomy (The Relationship between Music and Human Mind)
- IV. Music and Spirituality.
- V. Music and Love.
- VI. Music and Nature.
- VII. The Conclusion : Music Aesthetics above all Theories.

## II

### THE EVOLUTION OF TAGORE'S THOUGHTS ON MUSIC

(Tagore as a Music-Critic)

Under the auspices of the-then Bethune Society, Calcutta, Rabindranath Tagore delivered what should be regarded as his first lecture, a lecture on music, entitled *Sangit O Bhav*<sup>6</sup> (i.e. Music and human feeling) in the venue of the Calcutta Medical College Hall on the 19th April, 1881. It is striking that he was only twenty years old at that time. The president on that occasion was Reverend Krishna Mohan Banerjee, who whole-heartedly applauded Tagore's discourse. The discourse of that lecture, well-prepared and pre-written, dealt with the role of human feeling in the performing art of music. We may assume that lifelessness and rigidity of most of the then classical singers, of course with the exception of only a few, led Tagore to adopt the point of view contained in that lecture. The main purport was that the theoretical details regarding the hard and fast rules of *ragas* and *raginis* and *talas* should be left aside, and music should be pregnant with human feeling. The poem or the text of a song must be given the same importance as that given to the tune. The tempo of the rhythm of music should be flexible in accordance with the intensity of the feeling contained in the text. The tempo should be slow while expressing pathos, submissiveness, depth and subtle intricacies of human heart, and it should be fast during the outburst of any



kind of excitement. The usual rotation of a big *tala* need not be maintained; only the rhythmic beats are sufficient for the music to be performed. Moreover, in some specific moments of an opera-like drama, based on songs, the *tala* need not be maintained at all, because singing at those moments should be expressive of the specific dramatic situations.

Along with that lecture, Tagore gave ample demonstrations for lively illustrations of his points. Tagore had already composed *Valmiki Pratibha*, in which we can perceive a composite assimilation of the Hindustani *ragas*, *raginis* and *talas* along with the principles of presentation of the Western music. We know that Tagore had a foundation of Hindustani music under the influential association of Vishnu Chakravarty, Yadu Phatta and some others in his boyhood days. He had also gained some acquaintance with Western music during his first visit to England, prior to this lecture. However, Tagore's lecture created a sensation, his demonstrations were full of life and that is why the president of that session made exclamatory remarks.

After delivering the first lecture of his life Tagore went through Herbert Spencer's *Essays*. The essay which was most striking to him was "The Origin and Function of Music"<sup>7</sup> In this essay Tagore found ample support for his own opinions. Thereafter, he preached in several articles that music should not stick severely to old grammar, rather it should become the language of our emotions and feelings, and that is why, the text of a song should have the primary role. Anyhow, he could not stand the pedagogic configuration of sounds and beats devoid of artistic feelings.

But after the elapse of a period of more than thirty years, Tagore contradicted himself. In an essay on music<sup>8</sup> written in 1912 he referred to his first lecture and admitted that he had been wrong then. He rectified his former opinion. He realized that the art of music has its own characteristics and functions, its own charm and beauty; and, therefore, it should not be a slave to the verbal entity of the song. Words are limited to their worldly meaning, but good music leads us to a world beyond. And, that is why the text of the Hindustani classical music is so negligible in relation to its musical appeal.

While writing a foreword to *Thirty Songs from Panjab and Kashmir*, recorded by Ratan Devi (printed and published in 1913), Tagore wrote —

"Listening to her I felt more clearly than ever that our music is the music of cosmic emotion. It deals not primarily with the drama of the vicissitudes of human life."<sup>9</sup>

The quotation obviously records quite a reverse view in contrast to that of his earlier life.

Now, let us notice the next advancements of Tagore's thoughts on music. Having been invited by the-then *Sangit-Sangha*, Tagore wrote and read an essay entitled "*Sangiter Mukti*",<sup>10</sup> i.e., freedom of music, at the Rammohan Library, Calcutta under the presidentship of Sir Ashutosh Choudhury in 1917. In this essay Tagore discussed both Indian and western music. Tagore said that in the domain of the art of music the performer is the via media between the composer and the listener. The performer, in accordance with his own aptitude and degree of talent, may stand as a barrier like a mountain or could play the role of a linking channel. In Western music, the performer has little scope of improvisation. But in Indian classical music the performer has a creative role. The cause of temporal decadence of the Indian classical music was in the fact that some ungifted and pseudo-musical *ustads* were showing their artisanship and skill being incapable of producing the essence of the beauty of music flowing down from the great composers like Tansen and others. Yet, they pretended to be the sole custodians of all the wealth of the Indian classical music. Music should be made free from those so-called connoisseurs and experts. It should be an art to be cultivated by the common cultured people of the country. It should be a part of our general education and enlightenment so that no narrow-minded *ustad* could monopolize the musical heritage. The guide-lines of musical culture should be based on the aesthetic foundation of genuine talent instead of the theories laid down by pedagogues.

In July, 1921, Tagore delivered a lecture entitled *Amader Sangit*,<sup>11</sup> i.e., our music, at the annual function of the *Sangit Samgha*. In this lecture he thoroughly discussed the two ways of musical expression, one being absolute or pure music and the other, the song-form of music, a perfect blending of lyric and its tune. Tagore placed the first form in the up-country, i. e., the north-western part of India as its originator, and the second form in Bengal. He referred to the *kirtan* style of music prevailing in Bengal from the time of Sri Chaitanya Deva onwards, in which both the word-structure and the intricacies of tune and rhythm play vital roles.

Tagore's own compositions are the best examples of perfect fusion of lyric and music. Once Dilip Kumar Roy wanted from Tagore the liberty of variation from the rigid structure of Tagore-songs as regards their tunes. But Tagore could not agree with the proposal pointing to the inalienability of the total form of his musical creations. He may sanction liberty of interpretation by means of a little improvisation to only a very few gifted performers but not to all.

Tagore's understanding regarding the appeal of the art of music was that the form of a particular style of music may be regional but the inner appeal of any good music is universal. Language is no bar to music appreciation. A music-lover can react to music without being at home with the verbal structure. Moreover, the art-effect of a successful musical performance

transcends the style of rendering it. In course of a discussion with Romain Rolland on the 24th June, 1927 at Villeneuve, Tagore told him——

“The starting point of arts, poetry, painting or music, is the breath, the rhythm which is inherent in the human body and which is the same everywhere, and is therefore, universal. I believe, musicians must often be inspired by the rhythm of the circulation of blood and breath. A very interesting study would be a comparison of four tunes of different countries. With more developed music things become more complex, and the underlying similarities cannot be systematically traced.”<sup>13</sup>

Folk music of different countries have some sort of subtle similarities, but the classical music of different countries have been developed in different ways. Yet, it was the challenge of the aspect of the universality of music that led Tagore to lay the foundation of research work and comparative study of music of different countries for musicians and musicologists. Dilip Kumar Roy also discussed the aspects of regionality and Universality of music with Tagore. He was searching for the absolute value of his art. Tagore was of the opinion that the absolute value can be determined only in course of the passing tides of time. The superfluous may decay but the essential will remain.

Tagore and H. G. Wells had an illuminating conversation on this point in June, 1930 in Geneva. H. G. Wells believed that “music is of all things in the world the most international”.<sup>14</sup> Both of them thought that one will be able to appreciate the music of different nations by the process of closer acquaintance with them by means of cultural communications. We hope that the cultural evolution of the world as a whole will produce the results in the age to come.

Though Albert Einstein was a scientist, he was a keen lover and critic of music too. In August, 1930 Tagore and Einstein had had an exchange of thoughts and ideas about music. Einstein learnt many essential things about Indian music from Tagore. Tagore explained to him,

“There is in human affairs an element of elasticity also—some freedom within a small range, which is for the expression of our personality. It is like the musical system in India, which is not so rigidly fixed as in the western music. Our composers give a certain definite outline, a system of melody and rhythmic arrangement, and within a certain limit the player can improvise upon it. He must be one with the law of that particular melody, and then he can give spontaneous expression to his musical feeling within the prescribed regulation. We praise the composer for his genius in creating a foundation along with a super-structure of melodies, but we expect from the player his own skill in the creation of variations of melodic flourish and ornamentation. In

creation we follow the central law of existence, but, if we do not cut ourselves adrift from it, we can have sufficient freedom within the limits of our personality for the fullest self-expression."<sup>15</sup>

This may not be true of the style of rendering Tagore-songs but this is quite true of the style of rendering the *khyal* style of Hindustani classical music, which Tagore was quite aware of.

Yet, we may note that Tagore was not fond of too much elaboration, improvisation, showy techniques and jugglery over tonal and rhythmic patterns. He was of the opinion that a demonstration should have an improvisational limit within itself. All to be enjoyed in a *raga*-rendering is its concise conformity. Ornamentation was enjoyable to him only when it regulated for the cause of simplicity and inner unity of the main composition.

Tagore had quite a number of correspondences with Professor Dhurjati Prasad Mukherjee in the nineteen thirties. The topic was music. Most of the letters were published in the form of a book entitled *Sur O Sangati*, i. e., music and its consistency, in 1935.

In the month of January, 1935, Tagore listened to the *khyal* rendering by Srikrishna Ratanjankar at Lucknow. It was just a homely sitting arranged by Nirmal Kumar Siddhanta, Dhurjati Prasad Mukherjee, the-then academicians of Lucknow University and some other dignitaries of that time. Ratanjankar sang *khyals* in *chhayana*, *jayjayanti* and *paraj*. Tagore enjoyed all with utmost concentration; and his appreciative remark, when asked by Professor Dhurjati Prasad Mukherjee, was that the demonstration might have been much more regulated and shorter with a view to maintaining the total unity since, "Art is never an exhibition but a revelation".

The same comments he passed on Kesarbai Kerkar's amorphous style of singing despite her gifted tonal quality and untired practice. Of course, he gave her, on her request, a good testimonial on the official pad of the Visva-Bharati.

However, Tagore's comments may be judged as his personal views since the style of Hindustani classical music has been proceeding in its own way.

### Indian and Western Music Compared

We can sum up the main points of Tagore's comparison between the Indian and the Western music as sought out from his various writings.

(a) The essential spirit of the Indian music lies in its melody while the grandeur of the Western music is manifested in its harmony. The princi-

ple of melody is succession of notes, while that of harmony is sonorous concordance of various notes at a time.

(b) In Indian music, the successive notes are related with one another with a subtle relationship of *meends* and *shrutis*, while the notes used in average western music are straight having independent identity and that is why the key-board instruments used in the western music are generally unsuitable for Indian music.

(c) Indian music may be analogized with the unfathomable spirit of a still mid-night, while the western music with the bustle of a busy day-time.

(d) The life of western music depicts its multitudinous character. The spirit of Indian melody, on the other hand, is identified with its oneness and aloneness. Of course, that One is never secluded but all-pervading.

(e) Whatever is performed in western music is a finished product, already determined by the composer, and the performer has a little scope of improvisation. But every moment of an Indian musician is creative.

(f) Yet, western music enjoys the liberty of time which is rigid in our music. In the course of a discussion with Einstein, Tagore told him—

“In European music you have a comparative liberty about time, but not about melody. But in India we have freedom of melody with no freedom of time.”<sup>18</sup>

### III

#### ABSOLUTISM AND REFERENTIALISM

##### (The Relationship between Music and Human Mind)

Art is made by man and made for man, and yet, ‘art for art’s sake’ is the slogan of the absolutists. It is really very difficult to establish a relationship between art and human mind amidst the jumbles of isms and particularly amidst the tug-of-war between absolutism of the autonomous school on one side and referentialism of the heteronomous school on the other.

The problem is most intricate in the case of music, as it is ethereal and temporal by nature.

We can trace the origin of the autonomous school of musical aesthetics in Johann Fridrich Herbart’s *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*,<sup>19</sup> published in 1831. In the ninth chapter of the work Herbart argues that music has no subject at all and to be beautiful it need mean nothing. It is Herbart who first held that to adhere to meaning is just to lose the internal aspect of music

and to cling to its superfluous associations which may vary from person to person.

Next to Herbart, Eduard Hanslick advanced and elaborated this theory of autonomy. Hanslick went through Herbart and became tremendously influenced by the central thesis. What Herbart suggested but refrained from explaining in details, Hanslick asserted with a determined attitude in his revolutionary work entitled *Vom Musicalisch Schönen*<sup>20</sup> (The Beautiful in Music) published in 1854 and translated into English and various other languages within a few years. The work is revolutionary in the sense that it bombarded the popular doctrine of music as a language of emotions. It does not admit any contribution of Nature to the creation of music. The subjective emotions of human mind and the objective manifestations of nature can be least relevant in the realm of musical beauty. Now, we are prone to ask,— what is, then, the beautiful in music and what constitutes the essence of music? Hanslick's verdict is —

“The essence of music is sound in motion.”<sup>21</sup> The new Encyclopedia of Music and Musicians puts his theory as “beauty in music inheres wholly in the content of the tone-fabric itself.”<sup>22</sup> Owing to this intrinsic exclusiveness and lack of extrinsic reference one may call music an abstract art. But Hanslick emphatically denied its abstractness since it has its concrete dynamic form of sonorous notes. But how does total identification occur between music and a music-lover? Hanslick observed that a genuine music-lover is identified with a successful performance by virtue of musical contemplation which depends on musical intellect rather than on superfluous and amateurish emotions. No extra-musical fantasy beyond the specific form should be given the least indulgence.

In course of time, Hanslick's theory of absolutism or absolute configurationism gained international interest. During the last three decades Hanslick has been thoroughly studied by some Indian musicologists too. More note-worthy fact is that Hanslick's essential thesis has made an access into the realm of Indian classical music also by virtue of some intellectual academicians. Dr. Sadhan Bhattacharya's *Sangite Sundar*,<sup>23</sup> Dr. Amiya-Ranjan Banerjee's *Sangiter Shilpa-Darshan*<sup>24</sup> and some other articles in different journals are examples of this. Yet, to the average musicians and music-lovers, Hanslick is still an anathema on the ground that he was an autonomist.

Now, let us discuss the view-points of the heteronomous school of musical aesthetics. We have already referred to the famous essay “The Origin and Function of Music”, written by Herbert Spencer, a real heteronomist. Once Hegel said—

“In musical tones the whole scale of our feelings and passions, not yet defined in their object, can echo and reverberate.”<sup>25</sup>

We cannot do away with the statement. Deryck Cooke argued in the following way —

“Music is, in fact, ‘extra-musical’ in the sense that poetry is ‘extra-verbal’, since notes like words, have emotional connotations; it is, let us repeat, the supreme expression of universal emotions, in an entirely personal way, by the great composers.”<sup>26</sup>

Howard D. McKinney and W.R. Anderson carefully rejected the absolutism and autonomy of music in their valuable work *Discovering Music* written under their joint venture. Let us notice a specific point of their observations. —

“The musician is envied by all other creative artists; he does not have to mean anything and therefore can mean everything. And so his medium is capable of giving expression to that which has no counterpart in the external world and which belongs only to the inner world of the spirit and imagination.”<sup>27</sup>

But the inner world of our spirit and imagination is always being influenced by the external world and therefore the relationship between music and the external world, however subtle and intangible it may be, cannot be altogether rejected. Of course, the above authors have admitted the impact of the inner world of our spirit and imagination in the domain of music, which had been totally denied by Hanslick.

It is needless to say that gross heteronomy like imitation and representation makes a piece of art poor and shallow. Mimicry cannot be called music. Human spirit, i.e., the inner world derives its force from the sensations caused by the external world and when that force is channelized through the medium of tonal art, it is music. A morning melody never reproduces the sound of birds, the melody of the rainy season does not imitate the sound of thunder or rainfall, and yet, a morning melody is closely associated with the feelings which haunt a sensitive mind in the morning and the melody of the rainy season is obviously related to our feelings in that season. This relationship is not merely conventional, but it has a deeper truth behind it. In the article entitled *Antar-Bahir*,<sup>28</sup> i.e., the internal and the external word, Tagore said that the relationship between the two is not based on similarity but rather on sensitivity. The composer exploits this sensitivity in his creativity. Once Tagore told Rolland —

“The purpose of art is not to give expression to emotion but use it for the creation of significant form.”<sup>29</sup>

So, the form cannot be a dispassionate configuration of sound in motion.

It will be helpful, in our discourse, to observe Arthur Schopenhauer's distinction between music and other arts in the perspective of man's *will* and *idea*. *Will* is something like the dynamic force of our inner self, which is apparently unspeakable; and *idea* is some definite outcome from that *will*. *Idea* is more easily communicable since it has a specific meaning. Now, according to Schopenhauer *ideas* are expressed in all other arts except music, whereas music is the direct expression of will in the form of sonority. The autonomist school of musical aesthetics has failed to realize the truth behind it. In Schopenhauer's own words —

"Music is thus by no means like the other arts, the copy of the Ideas, but the *copy of the will itself*, whose objectivity the Ideas are. This is why the effect of music is so much more powerful and penetrating than that of the other arts, for they speak only of shadows, but it speaks of the thing itself."<sup>30</sup>

Susanne K. Langer, one of the leading aestheticians of the present day, has established the man-music relationship in the following way :-

"The tonal structures we call 'music' bear a close logical similarity to the forms of human feeling — forms of growth and attenuation, flowing and stowing, conflict and resolution, speed, arrest, terrific excitement, calm, or subtle activation and dreamy lapses — not joy and sorrow perhaps, but the poignancy of either and both — the greatness and brevity and eternal passing of everything vitally felt. Such is the pattern, or logical form, of sentience; and the pattern of music is that same form worked out in pure, measured sound and silence. Music is a tonal analogue of emotive life."<sup>31</sup>

We must mention that this analogous character of music was not overlooked by Hanslick. Though he denied representation of feeling in music, he accepted the representational power of music so far as the dynamic properties of feelings are concerned. He differentiated between feelings and the psychical motion accompanying the feelings. So, we can infer that analogy between music and our emotive life is quite valid since music as a time-art can represent the motion accompanying feeling, though not the object of feeling.

Pure autonomy has such a flaw in logic. Owing to the above-mentioned concomitance of musical progression and psychical dynamism, it has been possible to exploit music in theatre and cinema to heighten the effect of action at moments of tension and relief. And, as music has to definite subject, it can be employed to any finer faculty like religion and spirituality, love and affection, sensitivity for natural surroundings around us, humanism and patriotism etc. On this basis music has been successfully set to the lyrics



expressing those finer faculties. Hanslick may call *leider* or song a "morganatic union"<sup>32</sup> of music and poetry but that union may be quite happy if there is no discord between them. Songs composed by Rabindranath and other famous composers of the world are examples of this. Further, song is in no way inferior to pure music since music in a song even if suitably regulated, does not lose its identity and importance in its happy union with poetry.

Stern autonomy is a focus on form alone. Gross heteronomy is but amateurish interpretation of the slogan 'art for life's sake', full of emotional influx. A proper synthesis of the two illuminates life and art alike, and by virtue of that illumination the feud between autonomy and heteronomy, absolutism and referentialism turns into a healthy conciliation.

We shall see now the relationship of music and human life from a different perspective. As music is the tonal analogue of our emotive life, so also, from the reverse point, our emotive life is quite logically bound to be a lively analogue or an enlivened metaphor of musical art. This logic should be the foundation of incorporating musical metaphors for the advancement of musical aesthetics.

#### IV

#### MUSIC AND SPIRITUALITY

As it is difficult to overcome configurationism with a view to tracing the subtle man-music relationship, so also it is much more difficult to realize the relationship between music and spirituality in an age of modern materialistic trends in all our socio-cultural fields.

Both in Indian and western civilization music has been closely associated with religion and spiritual traits from a remote ancient age. Among the four *vedas*, the *Sama veda* was meant for singing. Though music was forbidden for the disciple class by Manu, Yajnavalkya paid the highest tribute to musical art and encouraged its promotion for spiritual upliftment. Music along with the detailed theoretical studies developed in ancient India.

In the western counterpart also music was highly held. Plato might have banished shallow and sensual music but he realized the spiritual value of melody and rhythm. He clearly said in *Timeus* —

"And so far as vocal music goes, it is given us to be heard for the sake of melody. And melody, since its movements are related to the changes of our own souls, is to be valued, if a man uses his mind in art, not for irrational pleasure, as is the fashion now; rather it is given us to

help us in ordering and assimilating to it the discordant motions of our souls. Any rhythm again was given us from the same source and for the same purpose, to help us in dealing with what is unmeasured and chaotic in the minds of most of us.”<sup>33</sup>

Tagore was expert in chanting Vedic hymns and he realized the significance of uttering the starting and concluding *Om* on a steady note. Tagore called this *Om*kar-music of the boundless infinitude. Once he delivered a nice speech on this *Om*<sup>34</sup> at the prayer hall of Santiniketan. His explanation differs from that of the *Tantrik* sages. He said that *Om* is the synchronization of two things—*rik* on one side, *sama* on the other; Word on one side, tune on the other; the truth on one side and the life on the other. He valued *Om* for its musical effect rather than for any mysticism within it. In the article “Sahitya” of *Sahityer Pathe*, Tagore said that when a piece of music ends, it does not create a nihilistic darkness of silence, rather it is then unified with *Om*, the virtual spirit of the whole Universe.<sup>35</sup> *Om* is the sonorous metaphor of the whole gamut of cosmic feeling. Many examples can be found from the works like *Santiniketan* (the compilation of the speeches of the prayer sessions), *Sanchay*, *Darma*, *Brahmamantra* etc. In a specific portion of *Chhanda* Tagore wrote that only the sound-effects and not the semantics of the hymns of the *Upanishads* lead our spirit to the infinite *Brahman*.<sup>36</sup> Almost similar is the explanation given by *The Pelican History of Music*.

“Thus it is that the *ragas*, like the *mantras* or sacred formulas, are regarded as aspects of and hence as approaches to *Shabdabrahman*, that is, the Absolute (Brahman) conceived as sound.”<sup>37</sup>

*The Oxford History of Music* also records about *Om* as follows —

“In the advanced culture of India the syllable *Om* (arrow) (which is pitched very high in the *udghita* song) is the nail which pierces the whole world and holds it together.”<sup>38</sup>

The continuous drone of *tambura* used in Indian Music is akin to *Om*. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy wrote —

“We have here the sound of the *tambura* which is heard before the song, during the song, and continues after it. That is the timeless Absolute, which as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. On the other hand there is the song itself which is the variety of Nature emerging from its source and returning at the close of its cycle.”<sup>39</sup>

Tagore advised the pupils of Santiniketan as well as all those who attended his prayer service accompanied with music that all our daily life should be guided by the devotional fervour achieved through daily prayer just as a musical performance is based on the principal tune of the *tambura*.<sup>40</sup>

And thus our whole life can be surcharged with the serenity of music. i Tagore said in *The Religion of an Artist* —

“My religion is essentially a poet’s religion. Its touch comes to me through the same unseen and trackless channels as does the inspiration of music.”<sup>41</sup>

Very often Tagore depicted God as a singer or a *Veena*-player and God’s relationship with us as that of the artist and his listeners or that of the teacher and his pupils. In the article *Dharmer Artha*, i.e., the significance of religion, Tagore said —

“Religion is that music-institution where the father is giving music-lessons to his sons, the eternal spirit is emitting sonority for tuning the human spirit” (translated)<sup>42</sup>.

In the chapter “Sri Vilas” of the novel *Chaturanga* we can find out a fine depiction of this communicating relationship between the Artist-Teacher and the listener-pupil. God is as if playing the role of the composer, performer and teacher. He is creating form out of joy inside him and we as listeners are deriving joy out of the performing form. This particular thought on music finds its expression through the version of Shacheesh. In a tense moment Shacheesh tells Damini —

“He loves form, and so, He always comes down to form. But we do not like the confinement of form, and that is why, we have to rush towards the Formless. He is free, and so His play is in bondage; we are captivated and so our joy is in freedom.”(tr.)<sup>43</sup>

Tagore’s philosophy inherent in Shacheesh’s version takes the form of the imagery of a musical metaphor when Shacheesh adds —

“Damini, don’t you realize ? He who sings passes from joy to *Ragini*, and he who listens to, passes from *Ragini* to joy. One comes from freedom to bondage and the other goes from bondage to freedom. Thus the two meet together. He is singing on and we are listening to. He composes and makes us listen to, and we do unfold the form while listening to it.” (tr.)<sup>44</sup>

Similar is the interpretation in the fifth chapter of *Sadhana*.

“The singer is translating his song into singing, his joy into forms, and the hearer has to translate back the singing into the original joy: then the communion between the singer and the hearer is complete. The infinite joy is manifesting itself in manifold forms, taking upon

itself the bondage of law, and we fulfil our destiny when we go back from forms to joy, from law to the love, when we unite the knot of the finite and hark back to the infinite."<sup>45</sup>

In various places of Tagore's literature and songs we would find that our body is compared to a musical instrument and the manifestations of our vitality to the melodious tunes of a musical performance. He submitted himself to the hands of God so that his whole being may turn into music. While the *Upanishads* say—"lead me to Truth from untruth, to Light from darkness, to Deathless from death"—Tagore's earnest prayer is —

"O my Lord, lead me to the perfect tune from discord." (tr.)<sup>46</sup>

As an ideal lover of music, Tagore said that to be absorbed in the ecstasy of tunefulness is the only way to belonging and to be unified with Him.<sup>47</sup> Thinking about the day to come of ultimate silence, Tagore said —

"My silent *veena* will lie senseless at Thy feet." (tr.)<sup>48</sup>

## V

### MUSIC AND LOVE

Love, the finest wealth of human heart, is the source of all the branches of fine arts including music. As creation is evolved from man-woman relationship, creation of all beauty lies in the mystery of that very man-woman relationship. Beauty is the concomitant attribute of love. And, fine arts are the off-springs of love surcharged with the feeling of beauty. Love, beauty and fine arts make human life aesthetic and therein lies the difference between man and other animals. Religions and spirituality, according to Sigmund Freud, are nothing but sublimation of sex-instincts, the seed of love. The ancient Indian sages propounded that the salvation of life must go through the processes of *dharma*, *artha* and *kama*, i.e., religion, wealth and erotic fulfilment. *Kama* or erotic desire is not related to mere gross sex. Vatsyayana's *Kama-Sutra* is more than sexual lessons. In the third chapter, Vatsyayana says that to acquire the accomplishments of a perfect womanhood a maiden should cultivate the sixty-four arts, the first three of which are vocal music, instrumental music and dancing.<sup>49</sup> In Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* we find "Music, moody food of us that tread in love."<sup>50</sup> Plato had written in his *Republic* —

"The man who has music in his soul will be most in love with the loveliest."<sup>51</sup> (BK 111, Sec. 402).

And the reverse also is true,—the man who has love in his soul will

be most sensitive to music and all other fine arts. The unforgettable aesthetician George Santayana, while delivering his lectures on beauty, did not forget to declare, as if on behalf of all tender-hearted art-lovers, that —

“As a harp, made to vibrate to the fingers, gives some music to every wind, so the nature of man, necessarily susceptible to woman, becomes simultaneously sensitive to other influences, and capable of tenderness toward every object.”<sup>52</sup>

Furthermore, we can add that the experience and comprehension of love heightens, and also deepens, the appreciative power of not only literature but music and all other arts. Samuel Pepys, just like our Ravi Shankar, unpretentiously confessed —

“Music and women I cannot but give way to.”<sup>53</sup>

The quotation above was discovered in Samuel Papy's diary and later on incorporated in the *Home Book of Proverbs, Maxims and Familiar Phrases*. Romain Rolland wrote on Beethoven that he loved many women from his adolescence to old age and any lovely face generated vibrations in his soul, and in every woman he could find his ‘immortal beloved’.<sup>54</sup>

Sigmund Freud unveiled —

“Beauty and attraction are first of all the attributes of a sexual object.”<sup>55</sup>

Charles Darwin, the forerunner and inspirer of Freud, was of the opinion that music had its origin in the amatory feeling and courtship of the early progenitors of man. Gradually and in course of time it attained the status of the branch of fine-arts.

Now, in the light of both the eastern and western thinkers we can try to reassess Tagore's composite reactions to love and music. Besides, Tagore's own philosophy of love, always accompanied by aesthetic fervour and creativity, is to be realized.

Among innumerable instances let us first refer to the following portion of the poem “*Nari*” (Woman) of the book *Sanai* :-

Man's eternal agony in looking for the celestial nectar in earthly intoxications is manifested in poetry and music, painting and sculpture, and in the chantings for worshipping the temple-goddesses.”(tr.)<sup>56</sup>

In the poem *Kritajna* (grateful) of *Purabi* Tagore said —

“As you came to me, music cropped up in my life.” (tr.)<sup>57</sup>

In the letter, written in the form of a poem, Tagore revealed to Amiya Chakravarti the influence of woman in his creative life.

They have lit up my extinguishing lamp and tuned up my loosened strings .. their magic-touch is evermore felt in my music and poetry.”  
(tr.)<sup>58</sup>

In the fifteenth poem of *Patraput* Tagore wrote —

“Woman came to my life as my beloved to set my lyrics into tunes, to pour rhythm into my movements and to yield nectar into my dreams.” (tr.)<sup>59</sup>

Why in poetry alone, in the prose article “Woman and Home” of the book *Creative Unity* Tagore expressed the same truth.

“Creative expressions attain their perfect form through emotions modulated. Woman has that expression natural to her .. a cadence of restraint in her behaviour, producing poetry of life. She has been an inspiration to man, guiding most often unconsciously, his restless energy into an immense variety of creations in literature, art, music and religion. That is why, in India, woman has been described as the symbol of Shakti, the creative power.”<sup>60</sup>

Almost similar is the explanation given by Tagore in the chapter “What is Art?” in his book *Personality*.

“She has to be picturesque and musical to make manifest what she truly is, — because, in her position in the world, woman is more concrete and personal than man. She is not to be judged merely by her usefulness, but by her delightfulness. Therefore she takes infinite care in expressing, not her profession, but her personality.

The principal object of art, also, being the expression of personality, and not of that which is abstract and analytical, it necessarily uses the language of picture and music.”<sup>61</sup>

We also see that woman is not only the inspirational source, but very often art-incarnate or music having taken the form of a female body as found in Tagore-literature. The hero of the short story “*Aparichita*” had identified the appearance and voice of Indrani, his lady-love, with music. Her utterances *gadite jayga achhe*<sup>62</sup> (there is room in this coach) were resonating continuously in the hero’s sensuous mind just like the refrain of a song, and the rhythmic sound of the running train seemed to him the accompaniment of an iron *mridanga*. Next morning, in a junction station, he saw her and felt

that she was, as if, a visible sonority, music having taken the visionary form of her charming look.

Amit Ray of *Shesher Kabita* told Lily Ganguli in passionate words —

“You and me, and the flowing Ganges, and the stars of the sky — altogether make a complete harmony — Beethoven’s Moonlight Sonata” (tr.).<sup>63</sup>

Queen Sudarshana, the heroine of the drama *Raja*, listening to the King’s *veena*, the symbol of his unending love, told the king —

“When you play your *veena*, it seems to me that I myself am the music played on it.” (tr.)<sup>64</sup>

The Vaishnava composer, Govinda Das called Radha, in one of his poems, the *Panchama Ragini*. Tagore, very fond of Vaishnava poems, justified the identity by the logic that the unspeakable sensitivity transmitted by the *rage* or *ragini* should be the most appropriate metaphor of the charm of Radha.<sup>65</sup>

A poem of the book *Punascha* is named *Komal Gandhar*, which characteristically unfolds Tagore’s reaction to this note and the association of his soft corner with musical sensuousness. A few lines of the poem may be cited :-

“The *tanpura* of her life is sonorously attuned, but she is not aware of it. Her movement and pause, and all the chores of her daily life are resonant with the *tans* of *Bhairabi*, the mystery of which I cannot make out. That is why I have given her the name *komal gandhar*. I don’t understand why tears of my eyes glide out from the core of my heart when she casts her glance at me.” (tr.)<sup>66</sup>

The tuned *tanpura*, here, represents a simple, flawless and innocent life. *Tans* here stand for the chores of her daily activity. *Komal Gandhar* signifies feminine softness in this poem and *meend* is the expression of the poet’s affectionate bent.

A significant metaphorical use of the rhythm called *jhamptal* is used in the novel *Shesher Kabita*. Amit told Banya —

“The course of human life is peculiar. Apparently it seems to be regularly successive, but really this is a chain of unexpected events. Creations evolve through sudden collisions and unexpected blasts. Time proceeds in *jhamptal*. Banya! You have changed the rhythm of

my life, and in this rhythm the tune of your life has come to a perfect harmony with that of mine." (tr.)<sup>67</sup>

When Amit spent his lovely days at Shillong, a sudden collision between his motor car and that of Labanya (called Banya by Amit) brought them into meaningful acquaintance with each other. The accident was not serious, but, on the contrary, this collision changed the course of their lives. They happened to come closer to each other. The impact of unforeseen events of human life is symbolized by the unequal beats of *jhamptal*.

The hero of the short story *Chorai Dhan* describes his happy conjugal life through musical terms.

"Marriage is just a detailed from of programme-music. Its refrain remains the same, but its melodic improvization extends to newer stages day by day. I have comprehended this from Sunetra. She has her unending wealth of love, the *ragini Sahana* is being played day and night in her being." (tr.)<sup>68</sup>

The most passionate tactile sensation also has been identified with sonic pleasure, and therefore, expressed by means of musical imagery. Let us comprehend the following lines from the poem "Manas Sundari" of Sonar Tori :-

"O my beloved, I can get into the inner mystery of yours by close embrace with you. Your heartbeats will strike the strings of my heart like fingers and produce the waves of sound of music . . I myself shall vibrate with tunefulness." (tr.)<sup>69</sup>

Similar is the imagery, tactile but corresponding to musical pleasure, in the following lines of the poem "Jyotsna" of Chitra :-

Shiver my person with the memory of the embrace. Let my veins resonate with the music of the infinite. Let my heart burst into an ecstatic joy and spread over the sky like the continuous tune of music." (tr.)<sup>70</sup>

The starting of a love-song goes thus :-

"Do make me your *veena*, take hold of me and let my strings resonate with your lovely fingers." (tr.)<sup>71</sup>

As our organic body is compared to a *veena*, its nervous system is like the strings producing tones and overtones, and the heartbeats and pulsations rhythmic beats. All feelings, — spiritual, sensuous and even sensual, find their rhetoric in musical terms. The sensual feelings of Bimala out of



her extra-marital infatuation with Sandip in the novel *Ghare Baire* have been described by her thus :-

“My *veena* of flesh and blood, of thinking and feeling, was played in his hands. I would like to abuse those hands and this *veena* too. Till (I cannot deny that) the *veena* resounded. And, when its music reverberated all along my day and night, I turned irrationally merciless.” (tr.)<sup>72</sup>

This reminds George Santayana's *The Sense of Beauty* correlating the germ of aesthetic value and the irrational part of our nature, the former springing from the latter.<sup>73</sup>

Of course, it should be borne in mind that despite such sensual imageries, Tagore's ideals of art and livelihood never indulged in carnal trends. His love was not confined to real woman but was transcendent towards the ideal of eternal woman. He never suffered from Byronic excitement because he had a 'cadence of restraint' in his heart and he utilized the whole gamut of his feelings to the cause of creativity. Not only union, but separation too supplied the urge of creativity in his aesthetic personality. The eternal cry of his romantic heart was turned into innumerable songs. In the poem number twelve of *Patraput* he said —

Streams of music have come out from the dark cave of the lonely and hungry heart. (tr.)<sup>74</sup>

Music was indeed a bridge for communication<sup>75</sup> to him — a communication towards his *Muse*. Not only that, music was to him the next of love.<sup>76</sup>

Tagore realized that the tangible world vanishes away in its due course and the remainings are only poetry and music. The experiences of life are only means, while, to be absorbed in music, is the ultimate value and goal to attain.<sup>77</sup>

And thus, his love and love-songs have access into the realm of spiritual ones. In this region of aesthetics his love and spirituality have an affinity to each other.

## VI

### MUSIC AND NATURE

As perception through visual sense is closely associated with painting, sculpture and architecture, perception through auditory sense is related to the world of music. Tagore loved nature as much with his eyes as with his

ears. Nature came to him with both her visible and audible aspects. One of his early poetical works had been given the title *Chhabi O Gan*, i. e., picture and music. Picture belongs to the landscape and the natural surroundings around us and music to what is called *Soundscape* (a recent coinage), the sonic properties of nature. In the poem entitled *Dhwani* (sound) of *Akash-Pradip* composed in later years Tagore recollected his sensitivity to *soundscape* as experienced from his childhood. Let us notice the first few lines:—

I was born with my strings actutely tuned. Sounds produced all around have had their vibrations and resonnances continued in my nervous system. (tr.)<sup>78</sup>

The sounds were from various sources; the shrill cry of the flying kite, the quarrelsome barking of distant dogs, the prologned voices of the street-hawkers, the loud voices of the horse-riders, the quacking of ducks in the nearly reservoir, the ringing of school-bell, the whistle of the steamer on the Ganges etc. Tagore was sensitive to all these natural sounds. This sensitiveness became more intense when he came in contact with country life. He revealed this to his niece Indira Debi in a letter<sup>79</sup> written from Patisar. Sensitiveness to natural sounds along with aptitude for the art of music led Tagore live in a tonal world. He was gifted with a sonorous musical voice and was brought up in a congenial musical atmosphere. And, after all, he was music-minded to an extreme degree.

We have already seen that Eduard Hanslick, the leading Absolutist, had perceived no music in nature. According to him nature is quite destitute of music since “there is nothing beautiful in nature so far as music is concerned.”<sup>80</sup> His logic was thus:—

“Even the purest phenomenon in the natural world of sound—the song of birds has no relation to music, as it cannot be reduced to our scale.”<sup>81</sup>

Really, there is no role of bird’s song in the art of music. Tagore, when he was just seventeen years old, could not enjoy Madam Nilsson’s singing in London as she tried to imitate bird’s song. Music is not so coarsely a representational art. In poem number twenty-eight of *Balaka* Tagore said—

You have given song to the bird and the bird sings, it yields nothing more. You have given me voice, and I yield more than that; I perform music. (tr.)<sup>82</sup>

It is true that man produces music out of his own fertile imagination, he creates from within. But Tagore would never say that nature is destitute of music.

What Tagore told Romain Rolland in 1926 is noteworthy in this respect.

"Music should capture the delight of bird's songs, giving human form to the joy with which a bird sings. But it would not try to be a representation of such songs."<sup>83</sup>

Such is the subtle relationship between nature and music, which Hanslick ignored. The time-theory of Indian music is based on the changes of natural atmosphere during different moments of day and night. The season-melodies also express close affinity to respective seasons. The Autonomists cannot get into the mystery of this.

Under the auspices of UNESCO newer researches have been undertaken and carried on on the world of *soundscape*. All the sonic properties of the universe are being examined with acute seismographic minuteness and it is inferred that "the universe is held together by the harmonies of some precise acoustic design, serene and mathematical"<sup>84</sup>

It reminds us of Pythagoras's concept of the cosmic music or music of the silent spheres. Not only the sonic properties but the luminaries also have been associated with sound from the time of Pythagoras. A semi-scientific explanation has been given by Tagore about this in his *Shabda-Tattwa* (phonetics) and *Pancha-Bhuta* (five basic elements). In *Shabda-Tattwa*<sup>85</sup> Tagore referred to the mystery of the usage of adjectives of sound in some cases where there is no sound at all. The word 'loud' is an adjective of sound, but very often we say 'loud colour'. All our five senses are inter-linked with one another in our psychic region. This inter-relationship has been termed synaesthesia by the modern psychologists. Here we are concerned with the sense of hearing. We say 'tone of a picture' to indicate its balance and colourfulness. To express physical pain we say 'cutting pain', 'gnawing pain' 'tearing pain' or 'bursting pain'—all bearing adjectives attributed to sound. Reversely, sound is also sometimes attributed to the adjective associated with the sense of vision. As for example—a good music illuminates our soul. Thus light and sound have a mutual agreement with each other. In this way the silent spheres full of innumerable luminaries seem to emit cosmic music.

In *Pancha-Bhuta*<sup>86</sup>, Tagore explained that the emotional faculty of human mind is keenly sensitive to all the objects of light, colour and sound etc. There is a latent but powerful effect of the vibrations of light, heat and sound on the sympathetic vibrations of our nervous system. This fact has given birth to the idea of cosmic music among the ancient Greek thinkers.

What is teleologically explained in *Shabda-Tattwa* and *Pancha-Bhuta*,

has been uttered in emotional ecstasy during the speech delivered at the prayer hall at Santiniketan :-

“Were we able to realize the manifestation of the whole universe through our aural sense, we would have recognized it as music. We must open up all our senses to enjoy the grand music of the universe. It is neither a poetic fancy, nor a metaphorical uttering, — I am really enjoying the music of the sphere in the aura of the boundless sky and the ever-passing time.” (tr.)<sup>87</sup>

This level of Tagore’s thoughts on music tends to merge with spirituality of his own.

Tagore often reacted to the rising and setting sun, and his reaction was musical. Besides his numerous songs of a dawn and dusk he has described his musical reaction in various places of his works. Let us take the very first poem of *Patraputa*. The venue was the mountain-top of Darjeeling. The time was that of sunset. All the excursionists were silently enjoying the colourfulness of the western sky along with the earth below. The *esraj* with them for their pastime was laid silent on the ground. All of a sudden the poet turned back and as by chance it was a full moon day, the rising full moon came to his sight with all amazement. The poet was amazed with this sudden conglomeration of the golden west and the silvery east. Now the depiction of the concluding portion of the poem runs thus :

The artiste plays *alapa* on his *veena* everyday. In the moment that day, when there was no bustle, there occurred an unforeseen synchronization of the golden and the silvery tunes. The *ragini* which resounded that day submerged into utter silence as the moment passed away. The player as if broke off his *veena*. But I had witnessed the most charming tune of that moment. I could utter —

Astonishing ! (tr.)<sup>88</sup>

So the poet did not only perceive the world through music, but also perceived music through the world. In his famous song *Jagate Ananda Yajne* he said —

My vision roams about perceiving the world of beauty to my heart’s content; and my earshot has also been fully satiated with the tune pervaded all over. (tr.)<sup>89</sup>

While the Upanishad had told *Madhumat Parthivam Rajah* (the earthly dust is full of honey), Tagore added —

The earthly particles are full of music. (tr.)<sup>90</sup>

## VII

## CONCLUSION

Rabindranath Tagore was much more musical and music-minded than the average music-mongers. His realization and creativity transcended all the average humdrum theories, definitions and superfluous norms,—but he absorbed the essence of this celestial art. Intuition was much greater in Tagore than convention.

Tagore's contemplation on aesthetic philosophy of music was based on perpetual liveliness rather than on formulation of any ism. He started his artistic career as an emotionalist but in course of growing experiences and realization he reached the state of perfect equilibrium. It is remarkable how much he associated music with human life and how high he elevated it to a loftier plane.

Due importance having been given to the dynamic configuration of the performing art of music, musical aesthetics cannot be confined to configuration alone since it has its relational aspects with life and the whole creation. Those relational aspects have been revealed through musical terminology, musical metaphor and musical imagery extensively used in Tagore-literature to denote and connote devotion, love and all other finer faculties of human heart. Music was more than an art-form to Tagore. It became his spontaneous terms of expression because musical sensitivity permeated the whole gamut of his mental and spiritual life.

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