Aids to the Teaching of Music

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Visual aids are an important factor in the teaching of music. Pupils are enabled to grasp musical facts easily when taught with the help of charts, diagrams and other teaching devices. In this case, the eye cooperates with the ear in the assimilation of musical facts. Many pupils learn things more satisfactorily and quickly through visual methods than through aural methods.

Aids to the teaching of music may be classified into: 1. Graphs; 2. Charts; 3. Maps; 4. Pictures, illustrations and portraits; 5. Demonstration instruments; 6. Books.

Graphs

Every song taught is in some raga or the other; and the most fundamental thing relating to a raga is its *arohana* and *avarohana* or the order in which the *svaras* ascend and descend. The *arohana* and *avarohana* are the basis upon which the whole embroidery of the raga is developed. There are heptatonic (*sampurna*), hexatonic (*shadava*), and pentatonic (*audava*) scales. There are ragas wherein the notes regularly ascend and descend and ragas wherein the notes take a zigzag or *vakra* course. These facts can be illustrated through scale-graphs or *arohana-avarohana* graphs. Through these graphs, a pupil is able to see visually, not only the nature of the *arohana* and *avarohana* of a raga, i.e., whether it is *sampurna*, *shadava*, or *audava* and *vakra* or non-*vakra*, but also the *varja* (deleted) *svara* and the *vakra svara*, i.e., the *svara* at which the *arohana* or *avarohana* takes a zigzag course. Graphs based on the frequencies of notes figuring in ragas can be prepared for the use of more advanced students.

Scale graphs are of two kinds:

1. Those based on *svaras*. 2. Those based on *svarasthanas*.

In the *svarasthana* graphs, the graphs are drawn on the basis of the kinds of *svaras* taken by each raga. In these graphs, the vertical arm bears the 12 divisions corresponding to the 12 *svarasthanas* of the finger-board of the Vina. It may incidentally be mentioned that these 12 notes of a *sthayi* are met with in all countries possessing a developed system of music. On the vertical arm, the solfa letters are placed against those *svarasthanas* used in a raga. It is possible to have graphs based on 22 *shrutis*, but the *svarasthana* graphs will suffice for all practical purposes. In practice, although a raga is described only in terms of the 12 *svarasthanas*, still, every musician knows the precise *shrutis* that figure in each raga and which go to contribute to its melodic individuality. The *svarasthana* graphs show at a glance whether a semi-tone or a major tone exists between any two contiguous notes.

Whereas the *svara* graphs of Saveri, Yadukulakambhoji and Arabhi will be exactly allike, taking as they do the same *arohana-avarohana* patterns (s r m p d s - œn d p m g r s), their *svarasthana* graphs will differ inasmuch as their parent scales are different. Likewise will be the *svara* graphs and the *svarasthana* graphs of the following pairs of ragas: Dhanyasi and Abheri; Gauri and Kedaragaula; Rava-gupti and Mohana.

The *shrutisthana* graphs are useful in showing the precise *shrutis* employed in a raga. The *srutisthana* graphs of the European major scale and the Sankarabharana raga will show that whereas the *trishruti Dha* (5/3) is taken by the former, it is the *chatusshruti Dha* (27/16) that is taken by the latter.

The significance of the term '*janya raga*' can be explained by pointing out that the *svarasthana* graph of a *janya raga* follows the same contours as of its *mela raga*, except for the fact that the deleted notes are skipped over.

Charts

Explanatory charts of the following topics can be prepared: 1. Notation; 2. Vina finger-board; 3. 35 talas; 4. Sangati; 5. Compass of musical instruments; 6. Seating or standing plan of members of concert parties; 7. Musical *kolam* charts; 8. Aerial *kolam* charts; 9. Genealogical charts of famous *lakshanakaras*, composers and musicians; and 10. *Sishya-parampara* charts.

Musical Maps

The musical map of a country shows the important seats of music and the places where her great composers lived and wrote those immortal compositions which are the pride of the people. The map can also show the places hallowed by the memory of great composers, places which have musical academies, conservatories and colleges, places noted for music festivals, and places noted for the manufacture of musical instruments. In most cases, the seats of music were the capitals of countries or states, where the rulers, who were themselves musicians and genuine lovers of the art, attracted to their courts the musical talent of their times.

Seats of music are the brightest spots on the cultural map of a country. There lived the cream of the country's musical genius. Musicologists and musical thinkers spent their time there, discussing problems relating to the theory and practice of music.

The principal seats of music in South India during the last three centuries are Bobbili, Ettiyapuram, Karvetnagar, Madras, Mysore, Pudukkottai, Ramnad, Sivaganga, Tanjore, Travancore, Udayarpalayam, Venkatagiri, and Vijayanagaram.

Demonstration Instruments

Instruments like the Grahabheda-pradarshini and Pradarshana-vina are important aids in the teaching of music. Many musical laws, facts and phenomena can be illustrated through them. The phenomena of sympathetic vibration, note frequencies of the 22 *shrutis*, the structure of *gamakas*, the compass, speed and the intensity of the *kampita gamaka*, and

many other interesting things can be explained through the Pradarshana-vina.

Textbooks

Textbooks are an important aid to the teaching of music. Unfamiliar songs given in notation in a book may be given to students. Pupils may be given a reasonable amount of time to reproduce the song. In their attempts to reproduce the songs with *raga-bhava*, they get training in *svarajnana* and *ragajnana* and also training in interpreting the notation symbols.