



## A REVIEW ON CONTEMPORARY ODISSI MUSIC AND ITS TRENDS

## Arts

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## ABSTRACT

The rich musical heritage of Odisha has yielded a bountiful crop in the shape of Odissi Dance and Music. Human emotions have always been bursting at the seams to be expressed through melodic voice modulations or rhythmic body gestures. Historical evidence indicates that dance and music were being actively pursued in Odisha under royal patronage as early as the second century BC, and that by the tenth century AD, Odissi music had solidified as a unique classical genre. The treatises clearly indicate that Odissi is one of the few schools of Indian classical music, with a unique system of Raga and Taala as well as a rendition style that is lyrical in movement and features ornaments that resemble waves. There are always two halves to a tradition: written and oral. The majority of the numerous treatises on this unique musical style were written between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## KEYWORDS

MUSIC, ODISSI, ART, SONG

The holy country of Lord Jagannath, Utkal, also known as Odisha, is renowned for its artistic brilliance. One of the things that makes Odishan culture unique is its quest of excellence in literature, music, sculpture, and other artistic mediums. The state of Odisha is located on India's northeast coast, and the coastal areas of the state are where most people hear Odissi music. The mardala (a two-headed barrel drum), gini (little cymbals), tambura (the drone), harmonium, and/or violin are typically used to accompany the solo singer; in other genres, flute, sitar, and other instruments are also utilised. The majority of the song texts utilised were written in the Odia language between the 16th and the early 20th centuries by poets who worked at the courts of royal estates or close to the great temples in Odisha; Sanskrit songs, or ashtapadis, from Jayadeva's Gitagovinda (12th century) are also included. Many of these songs' plots are based on the adventures and experiences of Radha and Krishna, the "divine lovers." Odissi music is now played in sporadic concerts in cities, auditoriums, or outdoor stages; it can be found on a limited number of CDs and is occasionally broadcast on the local All India Radio station; it is also accompanied by a variety of genres in Odissi dance and drama. Financial support for the music comes from a number of public and private organisations and associations as well as the ongoing interest of parents and future generations of music students.

The writers of Odissi songs typically put their compositions to specific ragas and talas. Until the 20th century, there does not appear to have been an indigenous form of Odia notation; the raga and tala indications, along with the specifics of the text, probably provided generally accepted boundaries within which individual performers had some freedom to express themselves (this seems to be the case today). While there are significant changes in the specifics, Odissi ragas and talas generally share many traits with Hindustani and Karnatak music.

Odissi ragas are classified into three groups by many gurus and scholars: those that are named after and (almost) exactly like Hindustani or Karnatak ragas; those that are named after ragas of other systems but have significantly different qualities; and those that are unique in both name and content. This scheme probably does mirror historical reality after all; some ragas would have originated locally (within the basic bounds of the pan-Indian raga system), while others would have undoubtedly come to Odisha from other parts of India, maybe undergoing some sort of transformation along the way. The repertoire of Odissi music encompasses several song genres, and performances can also take on diverse forms contingent on the occasion and goal of the show. Nowadays, the most typical format for a solo vocalist performance starts with an alap, which is a relatively freeform introduction and development of the raga without the accompaniment of percussion instruments. It then progresses to the song text performance and the establishment of the tala, which is accompanied by percussion. Finally, it concludes with a variety of improvisational techniques (like tans) and variations on the provided melody and text. Odissi music is frequently described as being unique due to its use of ornamentation, which frequently gives its melodies an undulating, cascading sound, its "medium speed" (it does not utilise the extremes of slow and fast tempos found, for example, in Hindustani

music), and the syncopated rhythms of the mardala.

The definition of "classical" in the Odishan context appears to have solidified over this time as well. In Odisha, the English term has a convoluted past. The comprehensive dictionary Purnachandra Odia Bhasakosha, which has definitions in both Odia and English, contains one of the earliest instances of the phrase in relation to Odissi music. The English definition of "Odissi Sangita" is provided in the entry: "Songs composed by the classical Odia poets." But in Odia, the word "classical" is translated as "prachina," which simply means "old" or "ancient"—certainly one aspect of what is meant by "classical" in the West. Occasionally, the English phrase can also be transliterated into Odia (perhaps re-Romanized as "klasikal"), as in the works of Kalicharan Pattanayak. However, the popular understanding of "classical music" links it to the Shastriya Sangita concept in Sanskrit. Presently, there is a strong yet consistent argument made for Odissi as a shastric music, or a type of classical music in this respect. For instance, Jiwan Pani argues as follows: Any regional music style in this nation that claims to have a unique and Shastric system must meet these requirements:

- The custom dates back more than a century.
- One or more written shastras form the foundation of the system.
- Even if there are fewer than 100 ragas in the system, there are still plenty at its core;
- both the system's core ragas and those taken from other systems are distinguished by a unique style.

In a similar vein, Ramahari Das asserts that classical position is contingent on three factors: Three characteristics are seen in any music that is deemed to be shastric. The first is custom (Parampara), which is the unhindered flow of music. Another is system (prabidhi), which refers to applying grammar or musical notation. Lastly, and maybe most crucially, is application (prayoga), or a unique way of doing things.

Hindustani and Karnatak music currently takes up every possible space in the art music world; this viewpoint appears to have been largely accepted even in early 20th-century Odisha, as previously indicated. Therefore, it seems automatically unnecessary and undermines the fundamental structure of India's musical geography to label any other genre of music as classical in this context. For example, where is the third space in a north-south bifurcation? Because of this, and in contrast to dance, music is purely regional, and it is quite unlikely that a non-Odia Indian could currently study Odissi music and feel a connection to the greater country of India.

At least one indirect forerunner to the current drive to elevate Odissi music to classical rank is the Tamil Isai Iyakkam movement, which emerged in the 1930s and advocated for Tamil music. According to Lakshmi Subramanian and Amanda Weidman's descriptions, this movement aimed to redefine Karnatak music by reestablishing its roots in Tamil, the native language and music traditions, rather than advocating for a distinct and autonomous classical tradition as the proponents of Odissi do. Rendering approaches involve using unique Gamakas (different ways of treating notes) and expressing "Padis" (a

unique style of writing in a distinct metre in a Prabandha) through a sophisticated Taal system. A particular mention should go to the great musicologists and gurus who have worked so hard to bring this rich tradition to this level. Their efforts alone have reinforced the foundations of Odissi music in several ways, such as through student instruction, book writing, solo and duet performances, lecture-demonstrations, and backing Odissi dance performances. The great pioneers of Odissi music are Kabichandra Kalicharan Patnaik, Singhari ShyamsundarKar, Sri Nrusinghanath Khuntia, Pt Apanna Panigrahi, PtTariniCharan Patra, Pt. Upendra Tripathy, Pt.Nilamadhav Panigrahi, Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra, Sri Narayan Tripathy, Sri Narayan Behera, SriMarkandeya Mohapatra, Sri Kashinathpujapanda, Smt Binapani Mishra, Sri Jiban Pani, Sri ShyamSundar Dhir, Sangeet Sudhakara Balakrushna Das, Pt. Bhubaneswar Mishra, Pt. Raghunath Panigrahi, Dr. Damodar Hota, Guru Gopal Chandara Panda, Sri KirtanPadhi, Sri Biswanath Pujapanda, SriSukadev Patri, Guru Banamali Moharana, Sri Harmohan Khuntia, SmtShyamamani Devi, Sri RakhalCh. Mohanty, Sri Padmacharan Panda, Guru Mahadev Rout, Sri Banamali Maharana, Prof. RamhariDas, Smt. Binapani Nayak and many more. With the individual efforts of the Gurus, writers and performers, Odissi music has taken a shape which has attracted the music lovers even beyond the boundaries of Odisha. Numerous Odissi musicians have surely been produced with the help of government institutions like, Utkal University of Culture, Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya and the Odissi Research Centre, which have also perpetuated this history internationally by arranging events and offering scholarships. Special recognition is obviously due to the contributions made to this sector by the National Music Association, Puri's Jaga Akahadas, Cuttack's Kala Bikash Kendra, Utkal Sangeet Samaj, and Cuttack's Kalinga Bharati. Many books have been created for the benefit of art enthusiasts in Hindi, English, and Odia. The fact that non-Odissi artists and those from other countries are expressing interest in learning Odissi music is quite fascinating to watch. Numerous international students are also investigating the topic. Odissi music, both vocal and instrumental, is becoming more well-known thanks to several festivals held across the nation.

There is a high demand for Odissi music repertoire CDs, which are widely available on the market. Both the parents and the young people are really interested in their children learning Odissi music and are expressing a strong desire for this to be their career. Thus, the artists' and Gurus' efforts continue. Odissi music, whether performed vocally or instrumentally, has a worldwide appeal. When utilised as an accompaniment for a solo, duet, or group performance, the mardala—the only percussion instrument employed in Odissi music—takes centre stage among the other instruments. The continuation of the flame has been carried by a number of academics and gurus, including Guru Janardan Das, Guru Satchidananda Das, Guru Dhaneswar Swain, Guru Kelu Charan Mohapatra, and Guru Banamali Moharana. The music of Odisha is deeply ingrained in its surroundings, growing and receiving more recognition every day from music enthusiasts and critics worldwide.

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