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IMPORTANCE OF ODISSI MUSIC IN ODISSI DANCE

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ABSTRACT

Odissi music is the finest reconciliation of harmony with melody, which suffers no diminution of the essential quality of the classical music. The individual character of Odissi Music makes every recital an interpretation and self-expression. The unique identity of Odissi classical music lies in its presentation with equal importance to the Odissi dance and its classical ornamentation. Both Odissi music and Odissi dance have retained its distinctive identity in spite of the diversity in language, religion, and culture that was brought to Odisha's geographical localization by bridging the southern and northern section of India. It is ironic that Odissi music which is the soul of Gotipua dance still continue to endure the debate for its classical status whereas Odissi dance form has already attained the classical status along with its contemporary classical dance forms of India.

Odisha is the state of temples and it's legacy of dance and musical tradition, is clearly reflected through the postures, the expression, the dresses, the instruments carried and the situations depicted, all in the sculptures of the temples like a mirror of ancient past. Odissi Music in its present form has all the attributes of any other classical music form but retaining its own identity with Odissi dance. Jagannatha, the soul and savior of *Odia* breath is "The dynamic" representation of the culmination of such cultural traditions, civilizations, literature and religion in *Uttkala*, Odisha. The dance recital to Gita Govind music by 'Padmavati', poet Jayadeva's wife was introduced as the 'Devadasi' temple dance tradition at the Jagannath temple. Even though this tradition has discontinued, the experts and students of Indian classical dance forms continue to perform to 'Dasavatara' and many other compositions as offering to the Deities in the Hindu temple. The inscriptions from Sovaneswara, Brahmeswara, and from Madhukeswar temples have revealed that dance and music was introduced in the temples as a part of daily rituals. Usually, when music gets tinged with religion, it attains mass appeal and royal patronage. As such the royal patronization of Art and Culture had made the Odishan music developed and enchanting ritualistic to Gods and Goddesses was part of human satisfaction and enjoyment as well. The resultant diversity acquired in language, religions and traditions that coexisted in Odisha has enriched the different art forms including the Odissi music where we see the infiltration of north or south Indian based Raga and Tala but with modifications and into the beats of Odissi music. Whatever mention Odissi has in caves and treatises, the living tradition of the Odissi dance form has been kept up by the Maharis and the Gotipuas. Maharis are the Devadasis from Odisha. 'Mahan' - 'Nari' or 'Mahari' are-the great one, 'chosen one for the seva or service to the Lord. The Maharis would sing and dance for the Deity. That was their seva to the Lord. The Maharis performed dance sequences based on the lyrics of the Geet Govinda (Gita Govinda) of the poet Jayadev. Before the time of Jayadev, the Maharis performed mainly nrutya (pure dance) and abhinaya based on mantras & Shlokas. Various reasons are attributed to the discontinuance of the Mahari tradition of dance and the emergence of the Gotipuas tradition. Gotipuas were young boys dressed as girls and made to dance. The tradition of Odissi dance has absorbed innovation during these processes of mediating the memory of the dance, while holding onto the dance's underlying values. In particular, spirituality remains core to the performance of this dance. Practitioners across generations have regarded the relationship between the master and the disciple as special and sacred. Orally transmitted chants in Sanskrit that are ritually sung by dancers before a performance of the dance reveal the position of reverence that the master enjoys. As a temple-tradition, the space of performance is also considered auspicious. When the dance began to be performed outside the temple, the association of sacredness continued. The sacredness of the body of the dancer and the space where the dance is performed has traditionally been regarded as central to its value-system. Odissi music since then has been formatted to be performed, based on Raga-Ksyudrageeta-Prabandha-Gana, the classical structure of the music nurtured from the composition of the celebrated poet-singer Sri Jayadev to stand with its own identity today. Obviously, Jayadev ushered a new era in the history of Indian Classical music tradition, which can be rightfully be identified as **"The Jayadev music"**. As mentioned, this great composer, musician, and saint-poet of Odisha was an ardent devotee of Lord Jagannath and his flawless masterpiece composition is based with specifications of Udramagadthi prabritti, Ardha magadhi Padasrita giti, Bhinna swarasrita giti and navatalasrita giti of Indian classical music. The impact of the religion of Lord Jagannatha was so strong in Odisha that in the sixteenth century when neo-Vaisnavism was introduced in Odisha by Chaitanya and his followers, it was absorbed into the cult of Jagannatha till Lord Jagannatha came to be regarded as the chief deity of neo- Vaisnavism. With the temple acquiring importance as the focal point of life, the dance as a ritual performed by the Maharis grew in importance. It is this class of dancers who have kept the dance tradition alive in Odisha. The tradition had declined during the last decades of the nineteenth and the early decades of the present century. The causes can be traced back to several historical, political and social factors. A tradition of young male acolytes dressed as female dancers came into being during the rise of the cult of Sakhibhava - a religious movement in which devotees considered themselves the consorts of the Lord. The boys performing as female dancers were called the Gotipuas. They danced outside the precincts of the temple, whereas the Maharis danced inside the temples. Several accounts of this tradition have come down to us in the form of chronicles and other evidence. Thanks to these two classes of dancers the tradition of Odissi dance has survived. Both religion and the temple have thus played a significant role in perpetuating the tradition of dance in Odisha. The tradition of Devadasi dance offering at Jagannath Temple was introduced by poet Jayadeva using his Geeta Govinda. It was performed by Devadasis inside temple in honor of Lord Jagannath and this form of music which has been sung in the world famous Jagannath temple at sacred Puri-Dham as a part of the temple

services gradually took the form of traditional Odissi music as known today. One does not require surveying the history, delving deep into texts and characteristics of Odissi music system to understand its classic style if he at least reads and listens to Geeta Govinda of Sri Jayadeva. As this sacred piece of lyrical poem contains all the salient and distinguishing features of classical music, the reader or listener get to appreciate the uniqueness and wholesomeness of Odissi as another system of classical music in the domain of Indian music. The arts in Odisha have flourished from ancient times. Architecture, sculpture, temples, the living traditions of dance, music, painting, and the all-pervading influence of the religion of Jagannatha have had a symbiotic growth. The art of Odissi thus has a long history. The Natyashastra refers to four vrittis (different modes of delivery), Avanti, Dakshinatya, Panchali, and Odra Magadhi which flourished in the different regions of India. Odra here refers to Odisha. Obviously different regions had different kinds of dance and music traditions each distinguished by its special nature and technique." Innumerable inscriptions" prove that dance and music were a part of the life of the people. The kings extended their full support to its growth and development. The intimate relationship experienced between the Odia poetry and music presentation in Odissi syle is a unique feature on which the aesthetics of the specific style is built. The art of Odissi dance and music suffered on account of political instability, the Muslim invasion, the desecration of the temples and the loss of independence, the lack of patronage of the landlords to both the Maharis and the Gotipuas dancers as a class of entertainers. The quality of dance deteriorated and by the time the Odissi dance came to be known to the outside world it was like a mere shadow of its glorious tradition .Some of the gurus, who were trained earlier as Gotipuas dancers were supported by the Rasalila parties and the theatre groups who helped preserve the continuity of Odissi dance. Odissi dance is usually performed to the accompaniment of Odissi music. By simply reading or listening to Geeta Govinda of Sri Jayadeva, the classical architecture of this composition becomes obvious. This form of music is associated with its classical dance style, the popular Odissi dance and has evolved independently to present day status alongside Hindustani and Carnatic classical music system, coded with all ingredients of Indian Classical form. It must be emphasized on the single most unique feature of Odissi music. The classical music tradition of Odisha also remain unaffected and independent due to its association with the tradition of Lord Jagannath, patronage by the mighty emperors of Utkal, and the tremendous impact of great Odia musicians like Sri Jayadeva, Hari Nayak, Narahari Mohapatra, Krushnadas Badajena Mohapatra and many others. The ancient Odissi music was perceived in general as The Odia music which existed in the form of Laghu Sangeeta, Loka Sangeeta, and Palli Sangita, Kendara Sangeeta etc. Odissi music is claimed to have developed from these different Odia Sangeeta. The traditional Odissi dance is usually performed to the accompaniment of Odissi music. The accompanying vocal and instrumental music presented as part of the Odissi dance performance is the Odissi Music known today. There are certain authentic and authoritative texts on Odissi music which are excellent indices to the development of the music. With the musical tradition at Jagannatha temple of Puri, Odisha, Gita Govinda was highly popularized all over India and Odisha becomes a melting point for various traditions and culture, including, from both south and north. It is therefore natural that Odissi tradition has not been influenced by the two major schools of Indian Classical music. There are certain texts on Odissi music which are authentic and authoritative and provided excellent indices to the development of the music. It is worthy to note that the discovery of a rare statue from the world famous Buddhist center, Lalitgiri, Bhubaneswar aptly looks back on the ancestry of music, dance, and Vadya to the Mouriyan age. According to the world renowned specialist on statue theory, these sculptures provide the feeling as if beating Pakhawaj rapturously, along with the dance of the Nagas. This is a likely indicative of such Odissi dance and music that nowhere to be seen in India.

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