



Carnatic Music

Why in News?

Recently, S. Sowmya was conferred with [Sangita Kalanidhi Award](#) for her contribution to **Carnatic music**.

Origin of Carnatic Music

- Carnatic music owes its name to the Sanskrit term *Karnâṭaka Sangîtam* which denotes “traditional” or “codified” music.
- Composed of a system of Ragam (*Raga*) and Thalam (*Tala*), it has a rich history and tradition.
- Carnatic Sangeet has developed in the south Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. These states are known for their strong presentation of Dravidian culture.

Renaissance of Carnatic Music

- The course of the evolution of Indian music saw the emergence of two different subsystems as Hindustani and Carnatic music. Both the terms emerged for the first time in **Haripala's “Sangeeta Sudhakara”**, written in the 14th century A.D.
- The two distinct styles, Hindustani and Carnatic came into vogue after the advent of the Muslims, particularly during the reign of the Mughal Emperors.
- **Purandardas** (1484-1564), a prolific poet-composer and mystic of Vijayanagar, is considered to be the **father of Carnatic music** (Carnatic Sangeeta Pitamaha).
- **Venkatamakhi** is regarded as the grand theorist of Carnatic music. In 17th century AD, he developed “**Melakarta**”, the system for classifying south Indian ragas. There are 72 Melakartas at present.
- **Tyagaraja** (1767-1847), his contemporaries **Syama Sastri** and **Muttusvami Dikshitar** are together known as the “**Trinity**” of Carnatic music.

Musical forms of Carnatic Music

- **Gitam:** It is the simplest type of composition with an easy and melodious flow of raga.
- **Suladi:** The Suladi is a talamalika, the sections being in different talas.
- **Svarajati:** It consists of three sections, called Pallavi, Anupallavi and Charanam. The theme is either devotional, heroic or amorous.
- **Jatisavaram:** It is noted for the use of rhythmical excellence and the Jati pattern.
- **Varnam:** It is the only form which does not find a counterpart in Hindustani music. This form is called a Varnam because many of the Svara group patterns called ‘Varnas’ in ancient music are interwoven in its texture.
- **Kirtanam:** It is valued for the devotional content or Bhakti Bhava of the Sahitya.
- **Kriti:** It developed from the Kirtanam. It is a highly evolved musical form.
- **Pallavi:** This is the most important branch of creative music. It allows improvisation.

Difference between Carnatic and Hindustani Music

- Carnatic music originated in South India whereas Hindustani music in North India.

- It is believed that the music of India was more or less uniform before the 13th century. Hindustani synthesises with Vedic, Islamic and Persian traditions. Carnatic is comparatively untouched and developed on the original lines.
- Carnatic music has homogenous and Hindustani music has a heterogeneous Indian tradition.
- Carnatic music has a restrained and intellectual character as compared with the more secular Hindustani traditions.
- The major vocal forms of Hindustani music are Dhrupad, Khayal, Tarana, Thumri, Dadra and Gazals. While Carnatic music has several varieties of improvisation such as Alapana, Niraval, Kalpnaswaram and Ragam Thana Pallavi.
- Hindustani music has various *gharanas* like Lucknow, Jaipur, Kirana, Agra etc., wherein Carnatic music no such *gharanas* found.

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