

# Factors of Differencing and Differentiation across Time and Space in the Dhrupad Compositions of the Dāgar Bāni

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Amongst practitioners and connoisseurs of North Indian classical music, an impression persists that *Dhrupad*, considered the oldest surviving genre of North Indian classical music, is much more austere, exact, static and implacable than its more modern counterparts, *Khyāl* and *Thumrī*. This is a notion echoed in the scholarship on this subject (for example Neuman, 1985:106; Owens, 1987:169; Ruckert and Khan, 2001:292-293). It has also been, in large part, the ostensible reason cited for the decline of *Dhrupad* on the concert stage. This trend arguably has reversed, and some scholars point to the festivals of *Dhrupad* and its sister genre, *Dhamār*, as being the catalyst for the revival of interest in the form (Widdess, 1994).

The role of festivals in the revival of *Dhrupad* is undoubtedly an important one. But their essential character is questionable. One of the more important festivals, the *Vrindāban Dhrupad Mahotsav* has been largely defunct for several years. On the other hand, as the festivals of *Dhrupad* begin to struggle with organizational, logistical and financial issues, it is difficult to argue that *Dhrupad* has begun to decline in popularity once more. In fact, several prominent members of the present generation of concert musicians are practitioners of *Dhrupad*, rather than *Khyāl* or *Thumrī*. In light of the continuing revival of *Dhrupad* as a major genre of North Indian classical music, a search for the causes of the revival becomes an investigative mission of significance.

While this paper is not intended to be an exhaustive investigation of this type, it does appear that one of the important reasons for the continuing growth of *Dhrupad* has been the intensive teaching and propagation activities attributable to a few musicians of the previous generation. For example, in the present generation, five of the most active and well-known *Dhrupad* musicians, Ritwik Sanyal, Ramakant and Umakant Gundecha, Uday Bhawalkar, and Baha'ud'din Dagar all trace their training to Zia Mohiuddin Dagar and Zia Fariduddin Dagar, two brothers of the very large and prominent Dagar family. By 1990, when Z. M. Dagar suddenly passed away, a number of students had achieved an advanced stage of competency in *Dāgar Bāni* (or style) *Dhrupad*, and their training was seen to completion by Fariduddin Dagar, who continues to train students in India today.

The second important reason for the revival of *Dhrupad* in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries has to be attributed to the high degree of individual stylization that has occurred in the genre. This notion gets to the heart of the

debate about the intrinsically unchanging nature of *Dhrupad*. Whereas the old drumbeat of criticism about *Dhrupad* being a static art form that highly restricts its practitioners' creativity continues, the evidence for the contrary not only exists, but continues to grow. Very approximately, one can define three trains of thought regarding creativity in the community of *Dhrupad* musicians today. Musicians such as Falguni Mitra, a prominent practitioner of *Dhrupad* today, seem to subscribe to the notion of *Dhrupad* as being a highly restrictive genre in its old form. A "reformation" approach is taken to the performance of *Dhrupad* in which ornamentation and instrumentation from *Khyāl* and other genres is incorporated into the performance (Bhawmik, 2002). The musicians of the *Darbhangā Gharānā* discussed extensively by Thielemann (1997) can also be placed in this category. Although these musicians have remained true to their tradition of highly rhythmic compositional exposition, their incorporation of foreign accompanying instruments places them in largely the same category as Mitra.

Whereas the first school of thought actually focuses on the restructuring of the sound of *Dhrupad*, the other two approaches focus their attention on the characterization of musical movement within a more traditional framework. Roughly, the second train of thought can be characterized by a focus on the duration and dynamics of the note. The *rāga* is unfolded in bits and pieces, each musical note acting as a 'brick' in the edifice of the *ālāp* (the rhythm-less exposition of the *rāga* that opens a *Dhrupad* performance). In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the leading musicians of this style were Nasir Zahiruddin Dagar and Nasir Faiyazuddin Dagar, and the tradition is being carried forward today by Faiyazuddin's son Faiyaz Wasifuddin Dagar. In speaking about this approach, Wasifuddin frequently states, "the note is very light," or that "the note has no weight."<sup>1</sup> He seems to imply two separate notions with these statements. First, the note is the inherent, fundamental quantity of exposition, and as such has no intrinsic quality, other than the frequency of the note. Its relative presence (or absence) in a musical performance is controlled by the loudness with which the musician chooses to utter it. Second, the musical note also does not have associated with it any ornamentation. It is the musician's decision to move in one direction or another, towards or away from a note. In a sense, this method can be thought of as a gestalt approach to *rāga* delineation.

The third train of thought is focused on the phraseology of the *rāga*. The students of Z. M. Dagar and Fariduddin Dagar represent this school of thinking today. The *rāga* is unfolded by a concatenation of phrases considered to be characteristic of the *rāga*. Although musicians in this school of thinking go to great pains not to verbalize the philosophy of *badhat* (the unfolding of the *rāga*)<sup>2</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> This idea was conveyed repeatedly to me during a music lesson I had with Wasifuddin Dagar during his visit to Seattle in 2003.

<sup>2</sup> In fact, Uday Bhawalkar states that the solfege of the *rāga* was seldom taught to him, let alone discussing the *rāga* as a structure resting on the vadi and samvadi.

one could say that the approach is based on the construction of phrases around the sonant (*vādi*) and consonant (*samvādi*) notes of the *rāga*. The phrases build in complexity over the performance, often utilizing microtonal inflections in construction. Students are encouraged to “feel” the *rāga*, and its emotive content, instead of parsing out its structure in strictly theoretical form.

It is believed that vocal music was originally accompanied only by the Indian stick zither, the *Rudra Vinā* (Subramaniam, 1985:9-10). With the decline of the *Rudra Vinā* as a widely practiced instrument, *Dhrupad* musicians over the last century have relied almost exclusively on just the *Tānpurā* drone for accompaniment. Because of the re-instrumentation that is associated with the first school of thinking (which includes the incorporation of the Harmonium and the *Sārangī*), the microtonal nature of movement that characterizes both of the other two styles is severely limited. Because the second two rely only on the voice and the *Tānpurā*, and because of the nature of the training musicians of these styles receive (musicians are often trained in *Rudra Vinā* as an adjunct instrument), movement in a microtonal sense is not only present, but is celebrated as being the basis of the aesthetic that drives the music.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the process of musical stylization. The stylization that has been discussed to this point happens on a rather grand scale. It places musicians in entirely different schools of thought. But I believe that stylistic change is a phenomenon that is observable on a much smaller scale. It is when we consider the cumulative impact of smaller changes over a long period of time that we see the degree of stylistic difference that is associated with completely different philosophies of performance. For the remainder of this paper, the focus of attention will be on the musicians of the third school of thought. In studying the process of stylistic evolution in this school, what becomes very apparent is that *Dhrupad* is not, by any means, a monolithic, unchanging, immovable form, but rather a dynamic, ever-evolving amalgam of individual styles and viewpoints.

The basis for this paper is a series of interviews conducted of musicians from the musical lineage of Zia Mohiuddin and Zia Fariduddin Dagar. These interviews reveal two very different phenomena with regard to musical change, one of which I will refer to as differencing and the other of which I will refer to as differentiation. The processes are distinct in that one is a conscious effort towards change, while the other is entirely subconscious. Both produce changes in *Dhrupad's* musical form. My attention here is focused on the fixed musical compositions associated with *Dhrupad*, and not on the extemporaneous development of the *rāga* found in the first three movements (the *ālāp*, *jodh*, and *jhālā*) of a *Dhrupad* performance. Because of the extemporaneous nature of these movements, stylistic variability is a much more obvious characteristic of these movements. However, we have what appears ostensibly to be a fixed form of music in the composition. Yet the interpretation of this fixed form by different individuals shows great variability. Once processes of change can be identified,

some of the catalysts for these processes are explored. These compositions, it turns out, behave differently when their practitioners are separated across space (the United States and India for example) and time (the late 70's and early 80's, and 2007).

## DIFFERENCING AND DIFFERENTIATION: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

I have been a student of North Indian Classical vocal music since 1980. My first lessons were at the age of eight, from the local music teacher who used to visit our neighborhood in Delhi. One day, she decided to teach me a very old composition, something she called *Dhrupad*. When I asked her what *Dhrupad* was, she told me that it is a very old form of music. The composition that she would teach me was credited to the legendary, almost mythological musician of the Mughal court, Miyān Tānsen. The composition was to be sung in a very strict manner, with great exactitude, with no deviations at all from what she was going to give me. *Dhrupad*, I was told, demanded precision of a very high order, and there was no room for individual interpretation. In subsequent discussions with other musicians and connoisseurs, I was given this same information again and again.

Over the years, I have come to realize that the truth of the matter is, in fact, somewhat different. The great precision, the great exactitude of which my first teacher spoke applies certainly to the *ālāp*, the non-rhythmic, improvised movement that precedes the *Dhrupad* composition (the *pada*). The *Dhrupadiyā* (*Dhrupad* musician) has to be adept at precisely executing the *rāga* at a microtonal level (*śruti*) without sounding out of tune, or off-key. For many years, I believed that the precision associated with the *ālāp* translated into a precise rendition of the *pada* in exactly the form it was composed originally.

In 2000, I finally had an opportunity to begin studying *Dhrupad* in Seattle, under the direction of Shantha Benegal, a vocalist who had studied her craft from Zia Mohiuddin Dagar.<sup>3</sup> On occasion, I would be privy to practice sessions involving Shantha and her singing partner Annie Penta. The two of them had studied the music together from Dagar Saheb, and although each had also studied with other masters of both *Dhrupad* and *Khyāl*, they shared the repertoire of *Dhrupad* compositions taught by Dagar Saheb. It was during these occasional practice sessions that I began to notice a very curious phenomenon. Their voices were remarkably in sync with each other when they sang a composition together. However, on occasion, there would be a sudden divergence in their individual interpretations of the melody. At these moments, if the divergence was critical enough, both would stop singing. Often a discussion would ensue, and on more than one occasion each would claim that the version she was singing is what she

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<sup>3</sup> Z. M. Dagar is referred to as Dagar Saheb by the *Dhrupad* musicians of the Pacific Northwest. It is this appellation that I will use from here on in this paper.

remembered Dagar Saheb teaching. On very rare occasions, the discussion would turn into disagreement.

As I listened to more and more Dhrupad, I began to realize that differences of opinion regarding compositions were not limited to the *Dhrupad* musicians of the Northwest. In many instances, I came across recordings of musicians belonging to the same *gharānā* (school of music) who had significantly different versions of the same composition. And if the two musicians belonged to different *gharānā-s*, then the difference was likely to be even more drastic. In other words, the unchanging, static nature of *Dhrupad* compositions that I had been told about was not at all true. *Pada-s*, when sung by different individuals inevitably displayed traits of individuality that made each rendition different from the next. Interestingly, when they discuss the subject of *pada-s*, practitioners of *Dhrupad* say that they strive to achieve exactness in their singing. Shantha and Annie disagreed precisely because of this goal of exactness. Both aspired to sing the composition exactly as their teacher, Dagar Saheb had taught them. Yet, they differed in the end result of this pursuit.

How do differences arise in this quest for perfection? As I discovered in investigating this phenomenon further, changes to the composition arise from two distinct types of factors. The first is a conscious effort to make a change in the composition's structure. A *difference* in the composition is purposefully created for particular aesthetic objectives. The second is a subconscious change wrought by a musician, driven perhaps by the same reason as the first type of change, but executed without a conscious effort to bring about the change. These subconscious alterations *differentiate* the performer's rendition from those of other musicians. For these reasons, I choose to call these factors of *differencing* and *differentiation*.<sup>4</sup>

There is no doubt that both of these types of factors produce musical change in the *pada*. But their basic mechanisms are intrinsically different. In the remainder of this paper, the viewpoints of three musicians are incorporated into a discussion of the causes of differencing and differentiation in the *pada-s*. In particular, all of the three students belong to the third train of thought described in the introduction, and all three have received their musical training from Zia Mohiuddin Dagar.

## ZIA MOHIUDDIN DAGAR AND HIS MUSICAL DESCENDANTS

In 1974 the Department of Ethnomusicology at the University of Washington invited Zia Mohiuddin Dagar as a visiting artist, a post he held off

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<sup>4</sup> Those familiar with the basics of Differential Calculus will also recognize a parallel between this terminology and the mathematical terminology. The analogy holds if one thinks of subconscious change as an infinitesimally small movement in the structure of the composition. But I see no reason to belabor this analogy, without obfuscating the primary purpose of the work presented here.

and on till 1981. In that time, Dagar Saheb groomed a number of musicians, both at the university and in the local community, in the art of *Dhrupad*. Although his primary instrument was the *Rudra Vinā*, he taught his students *Sitār*, *Surbāhār* and a variety of other instruments. He also trained a few students in vocal music.

Of the students he trained, three turn out to be particularly significant in this story. The only student he trained on the *Rudra Vinā* was Jeff Lewis, who today is probably the only adept *Rudra Vinā* player in the United States. At the same time, he taught much of his vocal repertoire to Shantha Benegal and Annie Penta.

During his stay in the United States, Dagar Saheb was engaged in a very significant effort of codification and stabilization of his *gharānā*'s vocal composition repertoire. Dagar Saheb was very young when his father, Ziauddin Dagar, had passed away. Since the music was hereditarily passed down from father to son, the main source of knowledge for Dagar Saheb after his father's passing was his own memory of what his father had taught him, and a set of sloppily transcribed notes that contained typographical and musical errors. Part of Dagar Saheb's motivation in coming to the University of Washington may have been to secure a more financially stable situation which would give him the peace of mind, and the time required to do a full and thorough review of his repertoire.<sup>5</sup> Annie and Shantha assisted in his codification efforts, by learning the compositions he was working on, and singing them for him.

After his return to India in 1981, Dagar Saheb continued his teaching activities, in Mumbai. From 1986 till his death in 1990, he took over the training of one of his younger brother's disciples, Uday Bhawalkar. Part of the training Uday received from Dagar Saheb was a detailed knowledge of the compositions of the *gharānā*. Specifically, many of the compositions he learned were precisely the ones Dagar Saheb had been working on in Seattle.

I recently had the opportunity to discuss Dagar Saheb's legacy with Annie Penta, Uday Bhawalkar and Jeff Lewis in Seattle. What each had to say about the compositions of the *gharānā* proved to be very instructive in my quest to understand how changes creep into the rendition of *pada-s*. Unfortunately, Shantha Benegal was traveling in India at the time, and I had to forego gaining her insight into the issues at hand. Uday had arrived in Seattle, some 26 years after Dagar Saheb's last stint at the University of Washington's Department of Ethnomusicology, to take up the same visiting artist's position that his teacher held.

Each of my interviewees has a unique background in *Dhrupad*, and all three came to the study of *Dhrupad* after learning the music of another tradition first. Annie studied vocal music for many years with *Sarod* maestro Ali Akbar Khan in

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<sup>5</sup> This hypothesis, and the events surrounding Dagar Saheb's visits to Seattle were personally communicated to me by Shantha Benegal and Annie Penta.

the Bay Area, before going to India to study *Dhrupad*. After a series of adventures that included a severe bout of Hepatitis, Annie finally ended up in Delhi, where she spent two years studying *Dhrupad* with Nasir Zahiruddin and Nasir Faiyazuddin Dagar. Her musical quest for a teacher finally ended in Seattle, with a long apprenticeship under Z. M. Dagar.

Of course, Annie wasn't alone in her study. She and Shantha Benegal have become informally known as the *Dhrupad* Sisters of Seattle, thanks to the many years that they learned *Dhrupad* together under Dagar Saheb. Serendipity is the theme of Annie's story in many ways. But in one key respect, she believes chance had nothing to do with the way things turned out. Of her association with Shantha, Annie describes her first meeting with her future singing partner in the following way:

“...I met him (Dagar Saheb) and separately, I met Shanth. And separately, she met him. And he scheduled us for our first lesson and we ended up arriving at the same time at his place up on Capital Hill. He knew that our voices were the same, just from talking with us...I didn't sing for him (before)...I didn't have any lessons (with Dagar Saheb) until Shanth and I sang together...”

Perhaps the most important contribution Annie has made to *Dhrupad* is her extensive work in transcribing the compositions she and Shantha learned from their teacher. A sample of this work is shown in Figure 1 below. After Dagar Saheb's death in 1990, Annie collected her transcriptions together in a book. On a visit to India several years after Dagar Saheb's passing, she left a copy of this book at Dagar Saheb's school in Palaspe, near Mumbai. After all of these years, Dagar Saheb's music finally came home, because of Annie Penta's work.

After his tenure at the University of Washington, Z. M. Dagar returned to India to resume his teaching and concert career. In his absence, Dagar Saheb's younger brother Zia Fariduddin Dagar had taken over the task of grooming the next generation of musicians in their tradition. Of the many young musicians Farid Saheb<sup>6</sup> was working with, one particularly promising young man was Uday Bhawalkar.

Uday grew up in Ujjain, a small town in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh, where he studied *Khyāl* in the style of the *Gwālīor Gharānā*. In 1981, the state government granted him a scholarship to study *Dhrupad* with Farid Saheb in Bhopal. Uday describes an intense period of apprenticeship that lasted for four years. The students sang for ten to twelve hours a day, following a strict regimen of voice culturing that began at 4 am in the morning.

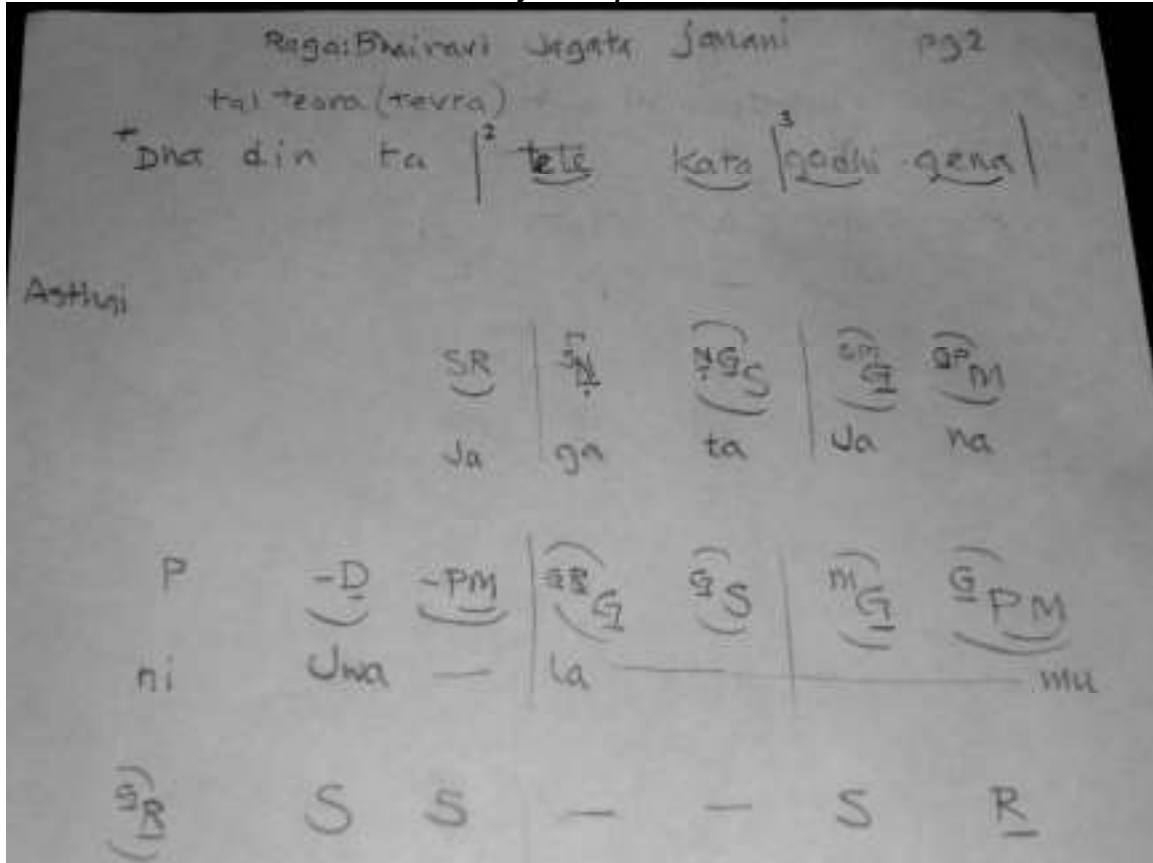
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<sup>6</sup> Fariduddin Dagar is referred to as Farid Saheb throughout this paper. The word “Saheb” is equivalent to “sir” in English, and is used as an honorific for elders.

By 1986, Uday had a very well trained voice, and had begun to develop his own style of singing. It was at this stage that Farid Saheb turned Uday's training over to his elder brother. From 1986 till Dagar Saheb's death in 1990, Uday studied with Dagar Saheb. During this time, Dagar Saheb taught Uday, amongst other things, his vocal repertoire, much of which had been codified during Dagar Saheb's time at the University of Washington.

Since 1990, Uday has pursued a career as a concert musician, and has garnered considerable fame as a rising figure in the world of Indian music. Uday has also started composing *pada-s*. He has a number of beautiful *Dhrupad* compositions to his credit. In pursuing this activity, he has helped to keep the repertoire of *pada-s* fresh and growing.

**Figure 1: A part of Annie Penta's transcription of the composition in Rāga Bhairavī that motivated her to study Dhrupad in India.**



The third musician I consulted for this paper is Jeff Lewis. Jeff first met Dagar Saheb at a summer residency that Dagar Saheb was conducting at Dominican College in the summer of 1976. Jeff had just returned from a five-year stay in Varanasi, where he had studied *Surbāhār* at the Benaras Hindu University from the highly-respected Amiya Bhattacharya, a musician of the

*Seniyā Gharānā*. Although Jeff's style was not similar at all to the *Dāgar Bāni*, Dagar Saheb saw great potential in him, and immediately accepted him not only as a student, but also as an adopted son.

From Dominican College, Dagar Saheb and Jeff traveled back to Seattle, where Dagar Saheb unilaterally appointed him as his assistant at the university. In that capacity, Jeff was responsible for helping Dagar Saheb teach Indian music to the Ethnomusicology students. In return, Dagar Saheb would sit with Jeff and give him instruction in the intricacies of *Dāgar Bāni ālāp*. Eventually, Dagar Saheb would shift Jeff's training from the *Surbāhār* to the *Rudra Vīnā*. Today, Jeff is considered by many to be one of the finest *Rudra Vīnā* players in the world.

As with Uday and Annie, Jeff credits much of his outlook on life to Dagar Saheb. All three musicians I interviewed exhibit a generosity of spirit, a willingness to give freely of their music and of their time. In describing Dagar Saheb, all three speak of this same generosity of spirit. It is clear that Dagar Saheb's students learned much from him, aside from the music.

**Figure 2. Z. M. Dagar's Musical Descendants interviewed for this paper (l to r): Annie Penta, Uday Bhawalkar and Jeff Lewis.<sup>7</sup>**



### MUSICAL CHANGE: AN EXAMPLE

To make the processes of differencing and differentiation a bit clearer, it may help to consider an example. As part of my inquiry into the nature of change in the *Dhrupad* compositional repertoire, I requested Annie Penta and Uday Bhawalkar to sing the same composition for me. Importantly, the selected composition had to be one that both learned from Dagar Saheb. I recorded these renditions and proceeded to transcribe them. The composition selected was in the *Rāga Bhimpalāsī*, an afternoon melody that is pentatonic in ascent and heptatonic in descent, as shown in Figure 3 below.

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<sup>7</sup> Picture of Jeff Lewis provided courtesy of Niranjan Benegal.

Figure 3: The scale of Rāga Bhimpalāsī, the rāga in which a sample recording of the same composition was taken from Annie Penta and Uday Bhawalkar.



The text of the transliterated composition in Braj and my attempts at translating it into English are shown below. The composition has a few interesting aspects textually. The Hindu god of love, *Madana*, is spoken of as exhibiting tens of millions of forms. I believe this to be an allusion to the cowherds and milkmaids who typically accompany Krishna (here referred to as *Gopāla*) in his divinely erotic play (*rāsa*). Their love for Krishna is metaphorically described as being equivalent to ten million *Madana*-s. It is very difficult to adequately capture the meaning of the word *rāsa* in English. Here, because the composition extols the mesmerizing qualities of Krishna, I've referred to it as magic. But the word magic doesn't quite explain what is meant by *rāsa*.

COMPOSITION TEXT

TRANSLATION

**Sthāyī:**

kunjana men raco rāsa  
adbhuta gata liye gopāla  
kunḍala ki jhalaka dekha  
koṭī madana ṭhaṭhkyo

**Sthāyī:**

On the verdant meadow,  
Gopala spins his astounding magic.  
The sparkle of his golden earrings,  
Stupefies the ten million gods of love.

**Antarā:**

adhara to suranga ranga  
bānsari so hāta sanga  
aisī chabī dekha dekha  
mohana ke mukaṭa para  
mero mana aṭakyo

**Antarā:**

His lips adorned with color,  
Play on the flute in his hand.  
What a wondrous sight  
He is to behold!  
My mind is utterly transfixed.

From listening to Uday and Annie, I think it is fairly evident that the source of the composition is the same. Structurally the performances are quite similar. Yet, two things strike me as being particularly important. First, Annie's rendition is at a somewhat faster pace. Second, Uday's rendition is considerably more ornamented. It is sufficient for now to simply keep in mind that these two observations can be made about their renditions. As we proceed with our discussion, a few good reasons for these observations do arise. Whether these are conscious stylizations (differencing) or subconscious ones (differentiation) is

not obvious at first glance. But a second glance proves to be quite fruitful in understanding the nature of these artifacts of performance. To capture some sense of how much difference there is in their individual interpretations, I offer my transcription of the first stanza of each rendition in Figures 4 and 5.

**Figure 4: Transcription of the First Stanza (Sthāyī) of Annie Penta’s Version of the Composition.**

kun ja na men ra cho ra sa  
a da bhuta gata li ye go pala  
kun da la ki jha la ka de kha  
ko ti ma da na ta ta kyo

**Figure 5: Transcription of the First Stanza (Sthāyī) of Uday Bhawalkar’s Version of the Composition.**

kun ja na men ra cho ra sa  
a da bhuta gata li ye go pala  
kun da la ki jha la ka de kha  
ko ti ma da na ta ta kyo

The degree to which these interpretations differ is left for the reader to judge. But it is hard to argue that there are no differences. This is a particularly striking example of musical change within a supposedly slow-changing and old

tradition. It is striking not because of the degree of change, but because the change seems to have taken place rather quickly, in less than one musical generation.

The final piece of information in this study that proves to be very useful is a recording of Shantha Benegal and Annie Penta singing this composition many years ago in Dagar Saheb's presence. I received this recording from Jeff Lewis. What stands out about this recording is that there is no significant difference between the version I transcribed from Annie's recording in Figure 4 above, and the version that is performed in the old recording. Therefore, whereas the version left behind in Seattle by Dagar Saheb seems to have remained relatively unchanged, at least one of his students in India, Uday Bhawalkar, seems to have either received a somewhat different version, or one that has changed over time due to factors of differentiation.

### COMPOSITIONAL CHANGE ACROSS SPACE AND TIME

Dagar Saheb's sojourn to the Pacific Northwest, as previously stated, seems to have been at least partially motivated by a desire to spend time codifying his repertoire, a feat he apparently achieved quite well before his return to India. The recordings that Annie and Shantha have made, along with Annie's transcriptions, prove definitively that the codification of a large number of compositions was complete. This knowledge was left behind in Seattle, in the form of transcriptions and recordings, and in the form of the music in the memories of Shantha and Annie. Dagar Saheb also took what he had done and brought it back to India, where he proceeded to teach these same compositions to his students in India. Amongst these individuals was Uday.

Over two and a half decades after Dagar Saheb's last residency in Seattle, the compositions that Annie sings and the compositions that Shantha sings are still largely the same, but on occasion show individual stylizations that can produce disagreements. And certainly, with regard to the music that Uday produces, there seem to be significant variations in the composition from the version that Annie sings. In fact Annie's version seems to conform to the version recorded by Annie and Shantha in Dagar Saheb's presence many years ago.

These cases are important, because they illustrate the growth of divergence in compositional form across separations in space (India versus the United States) and in time (the early 80's versus the 2000s). In some sense, the compositions of the *Dāgar Bāni* appear to be going through independent evolutionary processes.

Why are differences arising across space and time? It is remarkable that Annie is able to reproduce a piece of music in almost exactly the same form she sang it two decades ago. This is probably attributable to the fact that Annie relies on the transcribed notation as an aide memoir, a tool for remembering exactly

what Dagar Saheb taught those many years ago. Annie's transcriptions not only record what she learned, but also act as a record of the final compositional form approved by Dagar Saheb. That is, whenever Annie transcribed anything, she would show Dagar Saheb her work and get his blessing on the notation she had written up. On the other hand, it is very interesting that Dagar Saheb forbade Uday and his other students from transcribing what he was teaching them.

Based on these facts, it would appear that transcription played a very different part in Dagar Saheb's thinking in Seattle as opposed to his thinking in India. It is useful to understand the purpose of transcription in each case. As Dagar Saheb codified the compositions of his *gharānā*, he needed a mechanism to record what he was doing. It would seem that Annie's transcription provided the perfect tool for this purpose. On the other hand, when Uday and his colleagues studied from Dagar Saheb, they were studying to become professional musicians, who need to have the ability to quickly recall compositions from memory, to perform them spontaneously on stage. It is probably the case that Dagar Saheb promoted the use of memory as the primary tool of recall to train his students in India for such eventualities.

I believe there is also a secondary reason for eschewing transcription in the community of professional musicians in India. Although it is never stated as such, the gentle and gradual corruption of a composition through the faults of memory, or through spontaneously produced unscripted ornamentation of the composition is probably a valuable tool in introducing genetic mutations in the repertoire. These in turn, keep the creative, dynamic aspects of the repertoire fresh.

It can therefore be argued that the repertoire is changing due to these factors much faster in India than it is in Seattle, where the transcriptions of the original compositions allow musicians to reproduce the compositions much more uniformly.

So much for time! But what about space? It is very easy to argue that the milieu in which *Dhrupad* is learned, performed, taught and kept alive in India is significantly different from its counterpart in the Pacific Northwest. While the Seattle musicians (Jeff Lewis, Annie Penta and Shantha Benegal) I have mentioned do have *Dhrupad* students, it is difficult to compare the learning environment in Seattle with the environment in India. Clearly students in India have much greater exposure to all kinds of Indian music. In addition to regular contact with one's teachers the Indian student has access to concerts and recordings of musicians from across the broad spectrum of styles that constitutes Indian classical music. Therefore, the influence of other styles is much greater on the student in India than it is on the student in Seattle. Even if these other styles are not purposefully incorporated into one's music, there is much to be said for subliminal influences that do not occur, for the most part, on students of *Dhrupad* in Seattle.

It can be argued that whereas the student in India might be influenced by *Khyāl*, the student in Seattle might be influenced by grunge, or some other Seattle sound. But one can also argue that the affinity of non-*Dhrupad* genres practiced in India to *Dhrupad* is much greater than the affinity of non-*Dhrupad* genres practiced in Seattle to *Dhrupad*. Therefore, it is more likely for musicians in India to incorporate non-*Dhrupad* elements into their music than it is for a Seattle musician to do so. If this argument is accepted, then it is apparent that the pace of change due to factors of milieu is probably much greater in India than it is in Seattle.

Space and time are therefore important axes against which evolution of compositions can be measured. Further, it would seem that due to the factors I've mentioned the rate of evolution in *Dhrupad* compositions in Seattle as opposed to India is significantly slower.

### SPECIFIC FACTORS OF DIFFERENCING AND DIFFERENTIATION

Both Uday Bhawalkar and Jeff Lewis subscribe to the notion that the composition is a generator of emotive content. They differ slightly in their interpretation of the origin of that emotion. For Uday, the semantic meaning of the composition is very important. The words need to be portrayed in music, to adequately express the emotion that is trapped in the poetry of the composition. In Jeff's view, the composition captures a facet of the *rāga*, and the emotion that arises from the composition seeds the emotive content produced in the exploration of the *rāga*. The common denominator for both, however, is that emotional expression comes first in the performance of a composition.

Since each musician strives to bring out emotion (either associated with the composition or the *rāga*), by definition according to Jeff, there must be individual stylizations in the way different musicians sing the same composition. Let us consider the different cases that have arisen in this study. Each of these cases can be analyzed to determine if change was brought about by factors of differencing or differentiation.

The disagreements in compositional melody which arise when Shantha and Annie practice together clearly result from factors of differentiation. Often each participant is convinced that she remembers the phrasing that Dagar Saheb taught. However change has occurred, it is clear that the change has gone unnoticed by the participants. But this phenomenon is very different from Dagar Saheb's codification effort, which clearly resulted in differencing changes in the repertoire. On a number of occasions, Annie recalls missing a class or two with Dagar Saheb, and returning to find that Dagar Saheb had completely reworked a composition in her absence. This conscious decision to change and modify, augment and diminish the music of a composition is a clearly a differencing operation.

In speaking about the stylistic differences he sees between his music and Annie's and Shantha's, Uday says that Dagar Saheb seems to have taught him the same compositions at a slower tempo than what he taught Shantha and Annie. After discussing it with Annie and Shantha, Uday has come to the conclusion that Dagar Saheb taught them the compositions in a faster tempo because of the considerably longer breath male performers have, in comparison to female performers. The resulting changes Dagar Saheb made are differencing changes, because of the conscious effort to alter the compositions (changing their tempo).

The second trait of the comparative recordings made by Uday and Annie mentioned above is that Uday's music appears to be more ornamented. Clearly, Uday's music is removed in both space and time from Annie's music. Since Uday's teachers did not permit him to transcribe, it is entirely likely that faults of memory might have altered the original composition in Uday's mind, leading to a different pattern of ornamentation. Second, Uday is in the Indian milieu. Therefore, his version may be more ornamented because of stylistic influences of other genres. Regardless of whether it is an issue of transcription or of cross-genre influence, it is clear that the changes that have occurred are differential, and not differenced.

## CONCLUSION

In this investigation of *Dāgar Bāni Dhrupad* compositions, it is very apparent that *Dhrupad* compositions are not static, unalterable entities. They are flexible constructs that allow for individual expression. In introducing the notion of differencing and differentiation, I have attempted to show that change in *Dhrupad* compositions is of two distinct types, one purposeful alteration and the other subconscious perturbation of the composition. The musical example presented in this paper clearly shows that musical stylization is not an uncommon phenomenon, although the reasons for it can be quite complex. The complexity arises from separation in space and time, and the individual evolutionary paths that can arise from these axes of change. Finally, we have considered a few specific instances of differencing and differentiation. The list we have presented is by no means an exhaustive list, but gives insight into the types of factors involved in musical change.

Finally, it is important that we recognize the crucial and widely underappreciated role that musicians in the Pacific Northwest have played in the long-term survival of *Dhrupad*. The codification work that Dagar Saheb performed during his time at the University of Washington allowed him to form a well-defined, well-crafted repertoire of *Dhrupad* compositions. Today, several leading artists of *Dhrupad* owe their training to Dagar Saheb. Without the

support of the Ethnomusicology Department at the University of Washington, the repertoire of these leading musicians might have been considerably poorer.

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