

Notation Writing System in the Field of Applied Music in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Sri Lankan Applied Music has been influenced by Eastern and Western arts throughout history, nurtured by various genres such as simple music, film music, tele - drama music and stage drama music. Simultaneously with that, Sri Lanka applied notation system has evolved over time from the sources of Western and Indian musical traditions to the present day. Also, there is no direct set of rules has been in place since the inception to the Sri Lankan applied notation system. As a result, it has taken the core elements of the Western and Eastern notation system and built the current notation system by incorporating the subjective knowledge of artists in the field of applied music. The purpose of this research is to find out how the basic features of Eastern and Western notation system have affected Sri Lankan notation writing system and the problems that have arisen with it. Data have been collected from the theoretical study of Western and Indian musical notation system and observations of applied musical notations rules, as well as from interviews with leading scholars in the field of applied music in Sri Lanka. The problem with this research is that there is no symbolic system for above complications of notation writing based on musical literacy and notation writing skills from musician to musician and no symbolic system to show up volume and effect control, dynamics, ornaments and tempo in notation system of applied music. The importance of this research is to solve the problems in the notation system of the Sri Lankan field of applied music and to identify the universally used symbols and techniques and adapt them to the Sri Lankan Musical

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Notations. The observation made in this research show that the symbols used to express the dynamics, the rules of notation writing, ornaments that exist in the use of Western and Indian music have not directly contributed to this.

Keywords - *Applied Music, Musical Notations, Dynamics, Ornaments*

Introduction

There are many different musical traditions that are popular all over the world. Among them there are two major traditions, the West & the East. Western Music is a great tradition that is prevalent and wide spread in most parts of the world. The eastern musical tradition is a musical tradition with different identity characteristics from the western music. In eastern countries including, Japan, India, China & Sri Lanka this music is commonly referred to as oriental music, but differs from one country to another by ethnicities and cultures.

Indian Music

There is no doubt that India was the first country to compose oriental music on a formal academic basis. Therefore, the place of origin of oriental music is accepted as India. The art produced by India has more or less influenced the music of other Asian countries as well. The specialty here is that the music system blends in with the local identity of each country. Not like western music a special feature of this music is that it gives a strong place to the melody. The Indian music is mainly divided in to two systems.

1. North Indian Music (*Hindustani* Music)
2. South Indian Music (*Carnatic* Music)

(Sugathadasa, M.P, 2009)

North Indian music is spread in the north of India and the South Indian music is spread in the South. *Raga* based vocals and solo vocals are widely used in both of these music systems. North Indian music consists of 10 *Melas* and south Indian music consists of 72 *melas*. *Gazal, Bhajan, Tappa, Thumri* can be described as the simple classical singing system in north India.

Western Music

Western music is popular in countries such as Europe, North America, New Zealand & Africa. It's basic tenets are believed to have originated in Greece & Rome. It originated with hymns and the methods followed in the singing of hymns were established as the basic tenets of western music. The 13th century's notation `writing system is considered to be the most advanced notation writing system in the world today. In Western Music, a separate symbolic system is used for orchestral instruments and the choir. And their preservation as a medium of expression had led to the spread of Western classical music today.

Classical Music and Applied Music

The music continues to grow through the two parts that mentioned above.

“Entertaining music directs the fan to a certain purpose. Creates a picture in front of the fan's eyes, that will take your mind to a beautiful rural village. Even so, the pure music does not tell you anything, makes no description, it makes no sense. It will be invited you to a sound festival that filled with tone melodies and tone aesthetics”

(W. D. Amaradeva – 1989)

Classical music is music that has inherent characteristics that do not deviate from standard theories and principals. This is also known as pure music. Classical music is not a mixture of musical traditions. It is used with strict adherence to the rules. A thorough study of the subject is required to enjoy classical music. *Kyal, Drupad, Dhamar, Padam, Thillana* are examples of this music system cantata and sonata of Western music also belong to this music. Applied music is created based on the social needs of different social groups. There is no dependence on the rules. Not like classical music, applied music can be innovated to change in anyway. The use of applied music varies according to the imaginative potential of musician. Applied music does not belong to one tradition but shows a mixture of different musical traditions. Simple music based on the production of human musical taste is called as applied music.

Sri Lankan Applied Music

Sri Lankan applied music, which has been nurtured by Songs, Film songs, Drama songs and Theme music, is primarily inspired by several musical traditions. Among them, North Indian Music, South Indian Music, Folk Music, Western Music are the main ones. However, it is confirmed that the Indian music tradition has played a major role nurturing in Sri Lanka applied music & school music education. Since ancient times, Sri Lanka has faced many foreign invasions and has received many cultural influences. In later times, due to the *Nurthi* and *Nadagam*, North and South Indian music became popular in Sri Lankan music. Sri Lankan history has shown that Western Music influenced Sri Lankan applied music with arrival of Portuguese in 1505. During the Dutch and British rules, Sri Lanka was also influenced by Western Music.

Since then, Western Music has inspired Chorales, Religious Songs and song genres such as *Baila* and *Kapiringagna*, which have been mixed with Rock, Pop, Jazz and Classical are contributed to the composition of applied musical works.

Sri Lankan Applied Music Notation System

Music gradation has arisen because applied music or any style of music, must be performed simultaneously in accordance with certain regulations when necessary for collective use. Western Music notation writing known as the world's most advanced chart system, is with a complex symbol - based system. The quality of the notation system has contributed to the handling of the singing and playing in western music. It is clear that various technical aspects of Indian music and western music helped to create a notation system inherent in Sri Lankan applied music.

“Elements of school music education were developed by musicians such as Lionel Edirisinghe and Ananda Samarakoon who came to Sri Lanka after studying at Indian universities.” (Fernando, S., 2021)

There is no doubt that the Sri Lankan School music Education was inspired by India as they were educated at *Bhatkhande* and *Shanti Nikethan* colleges in India. But the musical inspirations from Indian musicians who have visited Sri Lanka since the *Nurthi Nadagam* era, which is not related to education is different from the educational level. “The notation writing that entered the Sri Lankan School Education under the influence of Indian culture and the notation writing system received from Indian musicians in different times can be mentioned in two ways” (Fernando, S., 2021)

The syllabus of Indian colleges was used to standardize the notes in the books *Kyal Geetha*, *Abhinava Kyal Geetha*, *Sangeetha Manjaree* which were adapted from the school music educational system.

But applied grammars used in everyday music composition were in the hands of applied musicians.

“The phenomenon changed with the formation of the radio Ceylon orchestra in 1952. Although it started with musicians who studied North Indian music, it has also been associated with musicians who have mastered various genres.” (Fernando, S., 2021)

Among them, were artists inspired by North Indian, South Indian and western music. Artists A.G. Kareem, who mastered the Western music, can be cited as examples. As they progressed as an orchestra or band may be they needed arisen for general notation system to play musical compositions. The main reason for this was the presence of musicians representing different languages amongst these musicians. Some played Western musical notations while others played from Sinhala notation writings. As a solution to this problem, a notation writing system was created using Sri Lankan applied music. There is no set of rules for western Music notation in Sri Lankan applied musical writing system. It has often varied from musician to musician in practical use on Indian and western musical associations from the past. But today it is being used to creatively on the capabilities of a musician’s intellectual potential of the musician. However, despite the use of this system of notation writing in the field of applied music, it appears that there are still many essential elements that have not yet been developed. A symbolic method system based on semantic is used in Western music to create a music composition.

Therefore, classical music can still be played or sung today in the same way as its original form. Due to the mastery of the techniques used in notation writing system has enabled the Notes, Rhythm, Volume and Effects controls, Dynamics and Ornaments of its content to be played them as well as today. And also Western classical notation

writing have been preserved by a print publishing medium to the present. But if a piece of music composed in the 70's and 80's of Sri Lanka applied music is re-composed and played, it may not play the same way. This is not because the publishing media does not protect the notations, but because it does not use appropriate symbols to represent the volume and effect control and dynamics.

Western classical music is a tradition that has been preserved by a medium of expression, since time through semantic notation writing based on symbols. Comparing and changing the system of notation writing in Sri Lankan applied music is something that should not be done in terms of regional and cultural factors. Research should be done on whether it is possible to create and update a symbol system that can be used to represent volume and effect control, Dynamics, Ornaments, Singing and playing styles, Rhythms in the Sri Lankan applied notation system inspired by those traditions and the Indian musical traditions. There is no research books that has been written in Sri Lanka on the issues that have arisen in Sri Lankan applied music and beyond. As a result, these research papers are intended to provide a complementary source for literary research for researchers and students in the field of study.

Data Analysis

“Music combination is used for beautify the background of the creation. No musical style has been developed in Sri Lanka, that goes Simultaneous with the melody to beautify its background. And also there were no any rhythm styles in traditional music. From an investigative point of view it can be proved, in the early days.”

(Wickramasinghe, J.,2016)

Figure 01 - Kaviya Oba

1. Intro. C/G#TRK - සිංදු ප්‍රභව ගීත - 4/4 Dm Am
 2. Chorus Dm F G# Dm Am
 3. Verse Dm Gm F Gm Dm Am
 4. Bridge Dm Gm F Gm Dm Am
 5. Outro Dm Gm F Gm Dm Am

Figure 02 - Sande Andura Lowa

Adlib $\frac{VIO}{NRURDN \dot{R} \dot{U} \dot{P} \dot{S} \dot{N} \dots \dots \dots [P \dot{U} \dot{R}] \times 4}$ bell (E^{m7})
 FT $\dot{D} \dot{N} \dot{D} P \dot{U} R \dot{U} P \dots \dots (M') \dot{U} P \dot{U} P \dot{U} P \dots \dots \dots [N \dot{P} \dot{U}] \times 4$ bell (E^m)
 $\frac{VIO}{\dot{S} \dot{N} \dot{P} \dot{U} \dots \dots \dots \dot{N} \dot{D} + \dot{N} \dot{D} + \dot{N} \dot{D} + \dot{N} \dot{D} + \dots \dots \dots}$ FT (A^{m7})
 $\dot{R} \dot{N} \dot{D} \dot{P} \dots \dots \dots \dot{D} \dot{P} + \dot{D} \dot{P} + \dot{D} \dot{P} + \dot{D} \dot{P} + \dots \dots \dots$ FT (E^m)
 $\dot{N} \dot{P} \dot{U} \dot{R} \dots \dots \dots \dot{N} \dot{U} \dot{R} \dot{N} \dot{D} \dots \dots \dots$ (A^m) (D) (D^7) (U)
 Zpobwaw $\dots \dots \dots$ Zpobwaw

Intro (G) (C) (G) (A^{m7}) (G) (C)
 $\frac{VIO}{N \dots \dots | S \dots \dots | N \dots \dots | S \dots \dots | N \dots \dots | S \dots \dots |}$
 bell $\frac{bell}{NN \dot{R} \dot{R} \dot{N} \dot{N} \dot{D} \dot{P} \dot{D} \dot{D} | NN \dot{R} \dot{R} \dot{N} \dot{N} \dot{D} \dot{P} \dot{D} \dot{D} | NN \dot{R} \dot{R} \dot{N} \dot{N} \dot{D} \dot{P} \dot{D} \dot{D} |}$
 $\frac{(G)}{| + \dot{R} \dot{U} R | + \dot{R} \dot{U} R | + \dot{R} \dot{U} R | + \dot{R} \dot{U} R |}$ (E^m) (B^m) (G)
 cck $\frac{cck}{\dot{P} \dot{R} \dots \dots | \dot{P} \dot{R} \dots \dots | \dot{P} \dot{R} \dots \dots | \dot{P} \dot{R} \dots \dots |}$

chorus
 $\frac{(G)}{| \dots \dots | \dots \dots | \dots \dots | \dots \dots |}$ (E^m) (C) (G) (A^{m7}) (C) (F) $(oboe)$
 $\frac{(D^m)}{| \dot{R} \dots \dots | \dot{U} \dots \dots | \dot{S} \dots \dots | \dot{S} \dot{U} P | + \dot{U} \dot{S} | ++ \dot{N} \dot{S} | \dot{R} \dot{N} \dot{S} \dot{R} \dot{N} + |}$ (G) (D) (VIO) (G)
 $\frac{(G)}{| \dots \dots | \dots \dots | \dot{S} \dot{N} \dot{D} \dot{P} \dot{M} \dot{U} | \dot{R} \dot{S} \dot{N} \dot{D} \dot{P} \dot{M}' | \dots \dots | \dots \dots | \dot{P} \dot{D} \dot{N} \dot{S} \dot{R} \dot{U} |}$ (D) (VIO) (G)
 $\frac{(bell)}{| \dot{M} \dot{P} \dot{D} \dot{N} \dot{S} \dot{R} | \dot{R} \dot{P} \dot{P} \dot{R} \dot{P} | \dot{N} \dots \dots | \dots \dots | \dots \dots | \dot{D} \dots \dots | \dot{M}' \dots \dots |}$ (B^m) (C) (A^m) (D)
 $\frac{(G)}{| \dot{R} - \dot{S} | \dot{N} \dots \dots | \dot{N} \dot{R} \dot{N} | \dot{S} \dot{R} \dot{U} \dot{R} \dot{S} \dot{N} \dot{D} \dot{P} \dot{M} \dot{U} \dot{R} \dot{S} | \dot{N} - \dot{S} \dot{R} |}$ (G) (VIO)
 1st Inter $\frac{1st Inter}{+ \dot{P} \dot{D} | \dot{N} \dot{R} \dot{N} | \dot{S} \dot{R} \dot{U} \dot{R} \dot{S} \dot{N} \dot{D} \dot{P} \dot{M} \dot{U} \dot{R} \dot{S} | \dot{N} - \dot{S} \dot{R} |}$ (G)

FT $\frac{FT}{+ \dot{N} \dot{P} \dot{N} \dot{P} | \dot{N} - \dot{S} \dot{R} | + \dot{N} \dot{P} \dot{N} \dot{P} | + \dot{D} \dot{N} \dot{S} \dot{R} | \dot{U} \dot{M}' \dot{P} \dot{D} \dot{N} \dot{S} |}$ (VIO) (E^m) (D) (D^7)
 $\frac{(G)}{| \dot{R} \dot{P} - | \dots \dots \dot{S} \dot{N} \dot{D} \dot{P} | \dot{D} - \dot{N} | \dot{D} - \dot{N} | \dot{D} - \dot{N} | \dot{D} \dot{N} \dot{D} \dot{P} \dot{M} |}$ (FT) (A^m) (F) (D) (S^m) (G)
 $\frac{(G)}{| \dot{P} - \dot{D} | \dot{P} - \dot{D} | \dot{P} - \dot{D} | \dot{P} - \dot{D} |}$ (E^m) (F) (G)
 VIO $\frac{VIO}{\dot{U} | + \dot{P} \dot{U} \dot{N} |}$ (G)

Figure 03 - Aradhana

sic, the Indian influence also has a direct bearing on the rhythm time signature.

❖ **7/8 Time Signature**

According to the Western music 7 quavers should be included in one bar. But when we create a notation, there should be 3 crochets in first bar and 4 crochets in second bar. In North Indian music, it is similar to the *thal* “*Deepchandi*”. The tempo 5/8 also used in applied musical notation system according to North Indian *thal* known as “*Jap thal*”.

❖ The chord arrangements in Sri Lankan applied music is also based on Western prototypes features.

❖ The names of musical instruments of applied music are named by the glossary of Western music. Example: - Guitar, violin, cello, Lead Guitar

All the above segments in Sri Lankan applied notations are formed timely by the association of Indian and Western music. But the areas, that have not been built up to the present need to be studied.

Volume , Effect Control and Dynamics

Although Sri Lankan notation system consists of various symbols and names mentioned above. It is problem that no any symbols system has been developed for the volume, effect control and dynamics, which are a key component of music. Volume, effects control and dynamics are play a major role in music composition.

If it used properly, it can arouse emotions and set desired background for it.

“Controlling the volume, intensity and softness of sound for express to emotions or embellishment is a special feature of Western classical music”

(Solang A., Sumathipala., 2014)

Not only in western classical music but also in applied music of Sri Lanka, the production of tunes according to the above rules shows a good musical restraint in listening to that music. Furthermore, the aforementioned change and control of voice in Western Music composition is so well symbolized that even a group of singing not playing can be properly presented according to those rules.

“The Western music use the following terms to control the volume and effects.

- Forte – Loud
- Piano – Soft
- Mezzo forte - Moderately Loud
- Mezzo piano - moderately Soft
- Crescendo- Gradually getting loud
- Decrescendo - Gradually getting soft
- Pianissimo - Very soft
- Fortissimo - very loud
- Staccato - Shot and detached
- Lagato - Play the not smoothly
- Forzando – Forcing the tone
- Dolce - Sweetly
- Accent – Strce the note (Wijewickram, U., 2009)

If the inspirational symbols or a technical method could be created or used for Sri Lankan music notation system it will assist towards a successful orchestral performance.

Ornamentations

The following methods is used to embellish the tones of Western classical compositions. But, no symbolic methodology has been developed to express this in Sri Lankan applied music.

- ❖ Trill - The relevant tone is played using a semitone or a whole tone above it.

(Chiththamani, Rath – annual)

Rhythm

This is called the measurement process used to compile and measure a group of doses (Rathnasekara, 2021). The amount of rhythm in a piece of music can be understood from a process, called as beats, These beats are also known as strokes. A stroke that is kept in equal proportions for a certain period of time can be identified as a rhythm. The speed obtained based on the value obtained due to the measurement process known as beat is called Tempo. The tempo is also called as “*Laya*”.

“Although terms are used to indicate tempo in Western music, but there is no method to indicate different rhythms in applied music.

- ❖ A tempo - in time
- ❖ Andante - At a walking pace
- ❖ Allegro - Fast / quick
- ❖ Grave - Very slow
- ❖ Allegretto - Rather fast
- ❖ Vivace - Lively , Quick
- ❖ Presto - Quickly , Rapidly
- ❖ Moderato - At a moderate pace
- ❖ Rallentando (rall) - Gradually getting slower
- ❖ Ritardando (rit)- Gradually getting slower
- ❖ Accelerando (accel) - Gradually getting faster
- ❖ Meno mosso – Less Moved
- ❖ Piu mosso– Move Move

(Wijewickram , U., 2009)

It is essential to create a methodology to show the above Western musical rhythms as well as the Sri Lankan applied musical notation system. This will minimize the tempo changes that may occur in orchestra concerts.

Conclusions and suggestions

Due to the influence of the main musical systems, there was no symbolic system or proper system to note Volume and Effect control, Dynamics, Ornamentation, Rhythm patterns of Sri Lankan applied music. Indian music has been associated with Sri Lankan music for over 100 years and also that tradition has rooted in Sri Lankan music education. The above techniques were not used in the notation system of Indian music. The dynamic of all of instruments was changed to suit the mood of the singer and player. In Indian music, the 1st note and the 5th note or the 1st note and the 4th note are taken as a pitch and given to the artists. Therefore it was not necessary to show the technical features in the notation system.

Inspired by the above, those features may not have been used in notation system of Sri Lankan applied music. However, at present Sri Lankan applied music has spread to various events such as Simple music, Film music, Drama music, and Theme songs. Presently live concerts and visual programs are being created as orchestral music. If the above techniques can be incorporated into applied notation system as a specific symbols or set of rules, the orchestral music can be improved in many aspects. The symbols used in Western music can be used to express Dynamics and Ornamentation or it should to create a set of symbols that fit in to applied music. It is not necessary to show a large range of rhythms like in Western music and the tempo of the song has to be shown.

Therefore, adjusting the relevant tempo will prevent change in the music. Resolving the problems that have arisen in the Sri Lankan notation system shown in the above chapters and the below is a transcript of a song that I wrote while currently re-studying the notes. With updating the notation system of applied music for Volume and Effect Control, Dynamics, Ornamentation, Tempo using the symbols, it can be seen as a major improvement in the music industry.

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