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## LOVE SENTIMENT [SHRINGARA RASA] IN THE ART OF DANCE

Sathyavathi K. R.<sup>1</sup> and Dr. K. Kumar<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Candidate at Manasa Gangothri, University of Mysore.

<sup>2</sup> Professor at the Department of Dance.

### ABSTRACT

*Shringara Rasa is a predominant component in Bharathanatyam and various Indian classical dance forms including Kuchupudi and Oddisi. The importance for Shringara can also be seen in music with the expressions of Abhinayas and love sentiments through appropriate lyrical compositions. The Padams, Javalis and Ashtapadis in the bharathanatyam margha, develops the feeling of contentment and sanctity from its eternal precinct. These compositions illustrate Shringara bhakthi where Krishna, Muruga, Shiva and Rama are the Supreme souls (Paramathma). This short article explains the concept of Shringara Rasa and its components in the divine art of Bharathanatyam.*

**KEYWORDS:** Shringara, Bhava, Rasa, Abhinaya, Jeevatma, Paramatma, Bhakti, Nayaka, Nayika.

### INTRODUCTION

The practice of expressing a Rasa or an emotion, evoked by modes of visual, literature or music has been a major concept of the Indian Classical Art forms. As described by Bharatha in his Natyashastra, "Vibhavanubhava Vyabhichari Somyogadrasha Nishpathihii" That is, a Rasa is born with the combination of Vibhava (causes), Anubhava (consequents) and Vyabhicharibhava (complementaries). Merely, as the blend of various ingredients creates a taste, the combination of Bhavas and Sthayibhavas creates a Rasa. Bharathamuni, having studied

the different moods experienced by a person in numerous circumstances, classified them into eight rasas. Shantha rasa was then added by the others, which together are known to us as the "Navarasas".

Bhava, vibhavas, anubhavas and vyabhichari bhavas are the modes of expressing each of these or a combination of rasas. Each Rasa could be used to illustrate different scenarios. For instance: A mother's love for her child (Vathsalya), the lovers yearning (Prema) for each other or one's devotion (Bhakthi) toward the God can be depicted as Sringara rasa<sup>2</sup>.

Bhava is to convey the state of mind through facial expressions and physical gestures and is quite essential in the Indian dance forms. The term bhava, derived from the Sanskrit word 'Bhoo', implies 'to become'.

**"Vaganga Sathvopethan Kavyarthan Bhavyanthithi bhavaithi"**

One's feelings or Bhava could be made known to others through vachika (speech), angika (movemetsn) and sattvika (emotions). Bhava is further divided into Vibhava, Anubhava, Vyabhichari and Sanchari bhavas and their combination results in Rasas<sup>3</sup>. This implies that Rasa and Bhava are co-dependent, i.e., there is no Rasa without a Bhava or a Bhava without a Rasa. This is illustrated with a classic scenario of Shringara Rasa. The Nayika being the 'Alambana Vibhava' (chief determinant), her surroundings such as the beautiful garden or the moonlight is considered the 'Uddepana Vibhava' (accessory). These result in 'Rati Sthayibhava' in the Nayaka enabling him to portray 'Sthayibhava' by

'Anubhavas' such as a glance or a smile. Together with these, 'Vyabichari Bhavas' such as Autsukya (impatience), Hasya (joy) and Driti (contentment) makes Sringara Rasa<sup>4</sup>.

### **Shringara Rasa [Love]:**

Shringara Rasa is known to be the king of rasas. It has a scope for elaborate studies and representation in all its aspects. Rathi being the 'Sthayibhava' and lord Vishnu, its presiding deity, is represented by the color green. The joy caused by seasons, the enchanting gardens, yearning for the beloved or mere presence of the loved one are characterized as determinants or Vibhavas which accounts for Shringara. Shringara Rasa is divided into

- a) Sambhoga: Vibhavas and Anubhavas used to represent Sambhoga or a 'union'.
- b) Vipralmba or Viraha: The enactment of Anubhavas such as fear, fatigue, jealousy, anxiety, yearning, drowsiness, awakening from a dream, illness epilepsy, death or inactivity represents a Vipralambas. Vipralamba Sringara is further characterized into various divisions such as Ayoga (impatience), Viraha (separation), Mana (abandonment), Pravasa (indignation) and Shapa (curse).

Vak (words), Nepadhyā (dress) and Kriya (actions) are the classifications of Shringara based on the deeds. In addition to Anubhava and vyabhicharibhava, Sringara as well consists of Alambhanabhava and Uddipanabhava<sup>6</sup>.

### **Love sentiments [shringara Rasa] in the Repertoire of Bharathanatyam:**

Love and romance are known to be the favorite theme for the poets and artists since the renaissance of art. Writers and composers from around the world, such as Kalidasa or Shakespeare, have portrayed unconditional love as the important factors in creation and sustenance. Hence one wouldn't be surprised that love has its prominent place in Dance. The ability to present Shringara Rasa is considered as the highest qualification in Bharathanatyam, Kathakali, Kathak, Manipuri and Odissi<sup>7</sup>. The eternal love between Radha and Krishna, Shiva and Parvati, Muruga and Valli are the main examples depicted in various classical or folk dance forms. To interpret the Nayika bhavas in padams and Javalis of Kshetraya or to present Ashtapadis from Jayadeva's 'Gita Govinda' was a major test for a professional temple dancer, Devadasi. Various composers such as Moovalur, Sabhapathi, Yuvaranga, Sarngapani, Shanam Seenayya, Kasturi Ranga, Ghanam Krishna Iyer and others have made it possible for today's dancers to select their choice of songs from their wide range of compositions on Shringara Rasa<sup>8</sup>.

### **Padam**

Padam is a form of Nrithya, composed purely of abhinaya. 'Padam' (song) is derived from Sanskrit, 'Pada' which means foot or a word. Padams are compositions which are mostly devotional and specifically suited for dance performances. Shringara and Bhakthi are its predominant Rasas<sup>9</sup>.

Padam is broadly divided into three types: Pada with Sringara Bhava, Pada full of Bhakti Bhava (devotion) and Pada with gods and goddesses as the prominent characters.

A Pada with Shringara Bhava as its predominant rasa consists of songs with Nayaka-Nayika bhavas illustrating the love sentiments between man and woman. The expression joy of lover's union, sorrow of separation, feeling of envy, fear of losing one's beloved and eagerness to meet are various scopes of expression. Nayaka and Nayika are the main characters in Shringara bhava padam.

A dancer who has experienced the vagaries in life is considered able to depict the soulful 'abhinaya' during performance<sup>10</sup>. A dancer must be familiar with various Nayikas such as Sweeya, Parakiya, Samanya, Uttama, Madhyama, Adhama, Mugdha, Madhya and Pragalbha, as defined in Bharath's Natyashastra. The combination of any of these above mentioned nayikas results in various life situations, some of which are mentioned in the literature<sup>11</sup>.

### **Javali**

Javali is a light classical music originated in Travancore in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was later introduced in Mysore and popularized in other parts of India<sup>12</sup>. Javalis are songs depicting love of laymen and are presented in various dance and music concerts. 'Javali' is derived from the Kannada

word 'Jhavali' which means song or poetry. The term also means gesture of eyes in Marati. The compositions of Javali evokes pacchai Shringara, that is, prema bhakthi, whereas, a padam evokes Madhura Bhakthi (divine love)<sup>12</sup>.

### **Ashtapadi**

Astapadis are compositions of Love and separation, longing and despair. Ashtapadis is so much more than portraying the Nayaka-Nayika bhavas<sup>20</sup>. Ashtapadis from Jayadeva's Gita Govinda are the most interesting part of Bharathanatyam recital. It consists of 12 chapters which are sub-divided into prabandhas. These prabandhas, divided into group of eight couplets, are known as Ashtapadis. . Gita Govinda is a Sanskrit classic with uplifting phrases and resonating poems. The classical theme of love between Lord Krishna, the Nayaka, Radha (Nayika) and Sakhi, her companion who unites the lovers together is elaborated in Gita Govinda. Jayadeva is known to be proficient in poetical (alankara) as well as emotional elaboration<sup>13</sup>. His compositions are filled with passion with the sense of decency and decorum making way for free emotional expression and gratification of desires<sup>14</sup>.

Ashtapadis elaborates on the relations between the Jeevathma and Prarmathma, their viraha (Vipralamba Shringara), and their union. Here, Radha is the Jeevathma and Krishna, the paramatma or in other words Radha, the individual and Krishna is the supreme soul<sup>15</sup>.

### **CONCLUSION**

A classical dance performance is judged by the expression of various Rasas as the art is highly sought for and acclaimed to the highest degree. Hence, it is highly appreciated for a dancer to cultivate the skills to showcase the inner emotions in forms of facial expressions and gestures.

In the devotional art of Bharathanatyam, Shringara Rasa is considered the best path in approaching the Lord. Padams consisting of Rati bhava, used to illustrate Madhura bhakthi (devotion), and Ashtapadis are known to bring one closer to God.

Shringara Rasa has been utilized vastly in various art forms such as poetry, painting, sculpture as well as dance. Great composers including Jayadeva, Kshetrayya have composed songs with Shringara Rasa as the main component, treating themselves as Nayika and the God as the Nayaka. The relationship between the lovers is merely an allegory for one's devotion towards the Lord. As Indian art forms are deeply religious, one must note that Shringara Rasa is also expressed as the love for the eternal one, that is, the agony of the Athma to be reunited with the Pramathma.

1. Panorama U.S.K - Page 141
2. Kalanidhi - Page - 44
3. Approach - Bhagyalakshmi Page - 121
4. Panorama - page 241
5. Panorama - - Page 243
6. Approach - Bhaga - Page - 133 & 134
7. Panorama - Page - 246
8. Panorama - Page - 246
9. Approach - Page 178
10. Panorama - Page - 263
11. Aspects - Page - 20
12. Aspects- Page - 180
13. Panorama - Page - 265
14. Nayaka - Nayika Bhedha Rakesh Gupta - Page - 213
15. <http://www.rasikas.org>

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