

Raga of the Month- May, 2016

Desi/Deshi

Raga Desi is a traditional - *Paramparik* Raga. Its GaanSamaya is Second Quarter of the day, i.e. between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. It is therefore, rarely heard in concerts; however, it is a very popular and melodious Raga. There are basically 3 variants of the Raga which are documented- one using only Komal Dhaivat (it was known by the name DesiTodi in the past), another using only Shuddha Dhaivat and the third using both Dhaivats. The first form is close to Raga SuddhaDesi of Melkarta no. 20 NataBhairavi (Asavari Thata) and the second version resembles Raga SuddhaDesi of Melakarta no. 22 Kharaharapriya (Kafi Thata). Also documented is one more variety of Desi; namely Komal Desi or Utari Desi which uses Shuddha Rishabh in Aroha and Komal Rishabh in Avaroha.

The prominent phrases of Raga Desi, in all the forms, are- PdP Rg-(S)R-S or PDP Rg-(S)R-S depending on whether Komal or Shuddha Dhaivat is used. Chalan of the Raga using Shuddha Dhaivat is given below:

S, (R) 'n-S, S- S->'P, 'D-'P, 'D'M-'D'P-(P)S, R—g (S)R ('n)S;

S, 'P'n R RS 'nS, RRMMP, P-D-P,P-M-D-P, Pg-RgSR- ('n)S;

SRMPD-MPS", RMPnS", R"M"P"-R"g"S"R"S", S"->P, P—D DP, DM—P-R, R—gRR-S.

Phrases to be avoided- SRgMP, Halt on R, Use of n in Avaroha- Kafi;

-PDS", Stress on Shuddha Madhyama- Barwa;

The chalan of the first version of Desi, using Komal Dhaivat, which is also known as, DesiTodi, differs from the one explained above. This form of Desi resembles Asavari, hence Aroha may take the form SRMPdS" or SRMPdnS". However, the vakra form of Avaroha S"P, PdMPg-Rg(S)RS, which is characteristic of Raga Desi, is prominently noted.

It will be of interest to visitors to know that there are 18 Ragas scale-congruent with Desi (Shuddha Dhaivat form), of them the popular Ragas are Bageshri, Bhimpalasi, Kafi and RayasaKanada. Audava Aroha, vakra Avaroha and ChalanBheda are characteristics of Raga Desi.

References- 1) Kramik Pustak Malika- Vol.6- Pt. V N Bhatkhande;

2) RagaVidnyan- Vol.5- Pt. V N Patwardhan;

3) RagaNidhi- Vol.2- Prof. B SubbaRao;

4) LecDemo- Pt. Ramashreya Jha- Article Desi; Parrikar.org

Although documentation shows different versions based on use of either Shuddha or Komal Dhaivat, artists prefer to use one Dhaivat prominently and make subtle use of the other Dhaivat, to enhance beauty of the Raga.

Please listen to an audio sample of Vidushi Kesarbai Kerkar with emphasis on Komal Dhaivat and excerpts of a recording of Ustads Nazakat Ali & Salamat Ali.

(Updated on 01/05/2016.)