

Raga of the Month- September, 2019

Raga ShyamDesh

In this month, we shall study Raga ShyamDesh presented by Pandit Rasiklal Andharia. From the name, one can guess that the Raga would be a combination of Raga ShyamKalyan and Des. As per Pandit Bhatkhande, raga ShyamKalyan is a result of combination of Kalyan and Kamod. Prominent phrases of ShyamKalyan SRmPDDP, mPND-mP, mPNS''D-mP are judiciously used. In Raga ShyamDesh, we find introduction of Komal Nishad in Avaroha and Shuddha Madhyam as SRMGR, DMGR, PnDP, S''nDP, R''nDP which makes a melodious combination of Desh with ShyamKalyan possible.

Scale- SRGMmPDnN; Aroha SRmPNS''; Avaroha- S''NDP or S'' nDP, MGR,S;
Important Phrases- 'P'NSR, R'NS, SRmP, RmPDmDP, RmPNS'', mPnDP, mPDMGR, , PMGR, GR'NS; SRmP, mPNDP, mPDmP, MGR, GR'NS; RmPNS'', PNS''R'', S''R''M''G''R'', G''R''S'', PNS''R'' nDP, DmPMGR, RPMGR, GR'NS.

The Raga is conceived and delineated by Late Pandit Balwantrai Bhatt* and the Bandish "Dal Badal Damini Damke" is also composed by him. Presented here is a clip of Raga ShyamDesh presented by Pandit Rasiklal Andharia.

Acknowledgements: Mrs. Swaravandana Sharma (daughter of Pt. Balwantrai Bhatt);
Wikipedia.

Updated on 1st September, 2019.

* Brief Life Sketch- Balwantrai Bhatt was born in Bhavnagar, Gujarat on 23rd September, 1921. He lost sight when he was about 8 years old when he suffered from Smallpox. He received initial training in music in the Victoria Memorial School for the blind, Mumbai. Later he became a disciple of Pandit Omkarnath Thakur of Gwalior Gharana. In 1950, he moved to Varanasi with his mentor setting up a music institution named Kala Sangeet Bharati (now known as the Faculty of Performing Arts) at the Banaras Hindu University. He taught at the university for 31 years.

Apart from being an educator, he was known as an exceptionally talented composer. He was considered a complete *Vaggeyakaar*, one who composes both *Vak* or the word (lyrics) and the *Geya* or the melody. He had a penchant for *layakari*, and many of his compositions incorporate intricate *laya* (tempo) patterns. He is also credited with creating many melodious new Ragas, such as, MadhuSaraswati, MadhuSurawali, ShyamSarang, ShyamDesh, etc.

He edited the Sangeetanjali series of books that were written by Pandit Omkarnath Thakur. He authored a 3-volume book series called Bhavrang Lahari (भावरंग लहरी) which contains many of his compositions. Bhavrang was his pen name.

Balwant Rai Bhatt was awarded Padma Shri in 1990. He was also awarded Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 2004. He was honoured with the prestigious Kalidas Samman in the year 2007–08. He continued to teach till he died at the age of 94 years at his home in Varanasi on 2nd May 2016.

