

Godly Gowri Manohari Raagam

Gowrimanohari is a peaceful and divine raga that brings joy. This raga is ideal for prayer. The *arohana* and *avarohana* are symmetrical, giving rise to a harmonious flow of phrases. This raga is a sampurna scale, the 23rd melakarta in the 72-melakarta scheme. The raga Gaurivelavali in Dikshitar's system of music is closely related to this raga, save a few minor differences.

The notes in this raga include *sadja*, *chatusruti rishaba*, *sadharana gandhara*, *suddha madhyama*, *pancama*, *chatusruti dhaivata*, and *kakali nishada*. The gamakas in Gowrimanohari are graceful, the *rishaba*, *nishada* and *madhyama* being vital notes, lending themselves to a variety of tonal oscillations.

In classical music, the important kritis include exquisitely-structured 'Guruleka' and 'Garudagamana Vasudeva' of Thyagaraja, 'Kaumari' of Dikshitar, and 'Gowrimanohara' of Papanasam Sivan. 'Brovasamaya' is a cleverly-crafted kriti of Garbhapuri Srinivasa Iyengar. Dr. V.V. Srivatsa's 'Kausaleya' is also a fine piece in this raga.

In film music, a striking piece is 'Nee Thaan Allamal' from "Velaikari. It begins with a "Nee thaan allamal" swarakshara at the nishada.

This raga gained popularity with the monumental 'Paattum Naane' from Thiruvilaiyaadal, composed by K.V. Mahadevan and rendered by T.M. Soundararajan. In the phrase, 'Padum Unnai Naan Padavaithene', the catchy prayoga PDNSD,P/MPGR is aptly positioned, typical of the raga. Interesting instruments — the veena, the flute, percussion... — have been used in this piece. The kalpanaswara exchanges at the end of the piece are an aural treat.

'Gowrimanoharaiyai Kanden' from Mazhalai Pattalam, with music by M.S. Viswanathan is an attractive piece in this raga. Starting with the phrase, PDNSDP, this song proceeds melodiously in the voices of Vani Jayaram and S.P. Balasubrahmanyam. The interludes are rich, with the strings section weaving phrases with flourish.

Ilaiyaraaja has composed several enchanting pieces in Gowrimanohari.

In 'Adhikaalai Nilave' (Uruthi Mozhi), the " nishada and the rishaba are emphasised, and the dhaivata is avoided. 'Boopalam Isaikkum' from Thooral Ninnu Pochu in the same scale is mellow and symphonic, while 'Kannan Naalai' from Ilamai Kolam begins with a solemn alapana before taking on a jolly, Westernised feel.

'Solai Poovil' in Vellai Roja, sees the charanam culminate in a complete sweep over the octave.

Ilayaraja surpasses himself in 'Muthamizh Kaviye Varuga' from Dharmathin Thalaivan. The fragrance of Gowrimanohari wafts by unassumingly at first, but as the song progresses, it entrances us.

'Doorathil Naan Kanda' from Nizhalgal in S.Janaki's honeyed voice is a different depiction of the raga. In the phrase 'Venguzhal Nadamum Geethamum', the sweep across the octaves is stunning.

While considering Gowrimanohari in the film scenario, one must also take into account Patdeep, a Hindustani raga derived from this scale. Patdeep appears often in films — deliberately in some pieces and incidentally in others. Patdeep is essentially Gowrimanohari sans rishaba and dhaivata in ascent. In descent, all the notes occur in

Patdeep. 'Doorathil' is, in fact, suggestive of Patdeep.

Patdeep comes off beautifully in 'Kanna Varuvaya' from Manadhil Urudhi Vendum, the phrase MPN negotiated diligently and with poise each time.

In Saaz Aur Awaz, the song 'Saaz Ho Tum' (singer: Mohd. Rafi; music: Naushad) begins in a brilliant Patdeep. In the line 'Jhanjar Chanki', the improvisations are interesting, the swaras coming off like fireworks. The raga changes in the charanam in a few phrases.

The classical portions in S.D. Burman's 'Megha Chaaye Adhi Raat' from Sharmilee, sung by Lata Mangeshkar, is set in Patdeep.

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