Influence of Arabian Music on Indian Musical composition:

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Abstract

Arabic language has an extraordinary musical rhythm and lyrical spirit. Arabian people were rich in music from Pre-Islamic period. During Islamic period the tradition of music and romance were stopped due to Islamic ideology overpowered the peninsula. During the Umayyad period, the pagan spirit has itself asserted again in the holy cities of Hijaj. The Umayyad rulers were patron of music and dance. They imported dancing girls from Europe. The cities of Hijaj and Najd became the centre of love, romance and music. The musician Zyrab has received monthly stipend from the Caliph. The tradition of musical composition and romance were continued to the later periods also. During the Abbasid period, Arabic Sufi poetry received a huge impetus due to its lyrical spirit and Divine emotions. The mystery behind the popularity of Arabic music is that the phonetics of the language itself provides musical sound, rhythmic, awe-inspiring, and resonance to listening.

The continuous victory of the Arabian rulers and expansion of its territory to the Non-Arabian countries has witnessed the influence of music and romance there. Muslim rulers came in India in 7th century and it continued till the defeat of the last king of Mughal and the arrival of East India Company. During this period many Sufi saints came in India to preach the Religion of Islam. Their heart melting Sufi song and musical ornamentation have influenced over the musical system in India. Aim of this article is to analyze how the Arabian music has influenced the Indian musical system which is continuing over the periods.

Keywords: Music, Arab, Sufi Poetry, Phonetics, India etc.
Growth and Development of Arabic Music:

Arabian civilization traced its origin from Europe through Egypt. Likewise, Arabic music originates from Europe and Persia in association with cultural contract among themselves. The term music and song denote in Hebrew are Nagam and anah and in Arabic it is called Musiqi and ghina. During pre-Islamic period Hijaz was a place of commercial importance and the best and real Arabian music comes from Yaman. Fair of Ukaz became a centre of music and art as witnessed in Muallaqat poems. They used the musical instrument are called mizhar (lute), mizafa (psaltery), qussaba (flute), mizmar (reed-pipe) and duff (tambourine).

The author of Iqd al-Farid says that it is clear and evident that origin and source of music are to be traced to the slaves in the market towns of the Arabs such as al-Medinah, al-Taif, Khaibar, Wadi al-Qura and others. Hira was another Semitic cultural centre where Ghassanid kings developed the concept of music and from where Hijaz borrowed more artistic songs. It is admitted that Jubal the Son of Cain is credited with the first song, which was an elegy on the death of Abel. Bar Hebrew, the Egyptian (1289 AD) tells us that the inventor of musical instrument were the daughters of Cain, hence the name for a singing girl which was Qaina. Lamak is the inventor of ‘ud (lute). His son Tubal has invented tabl (drum) and duff (tambourine), his daughter Dilal is claimed to have been responsible for the maa‘zif (instruments with open strings). Poetry was mirror of socio-cultural life of pre-Islamic Arabia. So, poet or soothsayer possessed high social prestige alike at the court of al-Hira and Ghassan, the fair of ukaz and the badawi encampment. The hija was delivered in rhymed prose called Saj and unrhymed poetry as rajaz. The Shair (poet) was doubtless often as much as musician as a poet, although it would seem that he sometimes engaged a musician to chant his verses for him. The female musician also took part in the tribal festivals with their instruments, a custom which continued down to the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). At the battle of Uhud (625) the women led by Hind bint Utba sang war songs and lamented for the slain of Badr. Later on, Islamic ideology overpowered the peninsula, a ban ordinance was implemented on music and it lasted till the reign of rightly guided Caliphs.

During Umayyad period, the pagan spirit has itself asserted again in the cities of Hijaz, Najd and Yaman. The Umayyad Caliphs were patrons of music and dance. Singing girls were hired in their palaces. Musicians and court poets are displayed their best performance during festive period along with dancing girls in the palaces. Abu Uthman Sa’id Ibn Misjah (d.715 AD) was the first and greatest musician of the Umayyad Era. Muwabiyah used to hear him singing Arabic verses to Persian melodies.

The golden age of Abbasid period started with the development of secular literature, scientific researches and Islamic philosophy. The emergence of Ghazal poem and Sufi poem has provided a new spirit to music for lyrical spirit and devotional emotion. The courts of Abbasid Caliphs were crowded with professional musicians and dancing girls and they received gifts and stipend regularly from the Caliphs for their outstanding performance. The musicians enjoyed wealthy and patronage and some of them like Ibrahim al-Mausili, his son Ishaq al-Mausili, Mukhariq, and others, were even the “boon companions” of the Caliphs. Habib Hassan Touma identifies the five components that characterize Arabic music are—

- The Arab tone system; that is, a musical tuning system that relies on specific interval structures and was invented by al-Farabi in the 10th century
Rhythmic-temporal structures that produce a rich variety of rhythmic patterns, known as Awjan or “measures” that are used to accompany metered vocal and instrumental genres, to accent or give them form.

A number of musical instruments that are found throughout the Arab world that represent a standardized tone system, are played with generally standardized performance techniques, and display similar details in construction and design.

Specific social contexts that produce sub-categories of Arabic music, or musical genres that can be broadly classified as urban (music of the city inhabitants), rural (music of the country inhabitants), or Bedouin (music of the desert inhabitants).

Arab musical mentality responsible for the esthetic homogeneity of the tonal-spatial and rhythmic-temporal structures are outcome of supernatural talent spread throughout the Arab world whether composed or improvised, instrumental or vocal, secular or sacred.

**Contribution of Arabian Scholars to Music:**

Arabic music has a long history of interaction with many other regional musical styles and genres. It represents the music of all the peoples that make up the Arab world today. Some Arabian scholars who wrote musical books are—Al-Kindi (801–873 AD) was a notable early theorist of Arabic music. He joined in proposing the addition of an improvised fifth sequence to the ‘oud. He published several tracts on musical theory, including the cosmological connotations of music. He identified twelve tones on the Arabic musical scale, based on the location of fingers and the strings of the ‘oud. Abu al-Faraj (897–967) wrote the Kitab al-Aghani, an encyclopedic collection of poems and songs that runs to over 20 volumes in modern editions. Al-Farabi (872–950) wrote a notable book on music titled Kitab al-Musiqi al-Kabir (The Great Book of Music). His pure Arabian tone system is still used in Arabic music. Al-Ghazali (1059–1111) wrote a treatise on music in Persia which declared, "Ecstasy means the state that comes from listening to music". In 1252, Safi al-Din developed a unique form of musical notation, where rhythms were represented by geometric representation. A similar geometric representation would not appear in the Western world.

In the early 20th century, Egypt was the first in a series of Arab countries to experience a sudden emergence of nationalism, as it became independent after 2000 years of foreign rule. Any English, French or Turkish songs got replaced by national Egyptian music. Cairo became a center for musical innovation.

Female singers were some of the first to take a secular approach. Egyptian performer Umm Kulthum and Lebanese singer Fairuz were notable examples of this. Both have been popular through the decades that followed and both are considered legends of Arabic music. Across the Mediterranean, Moroccan singer Zohra Al Fassiya was the first female performer to achieve wide popularity in the Maghreb region, performing traditional Arab Andalusian folk songs and later recording numerous albums of her own.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Arabic music began to take on a more Western tone – Egyptian artists Umm Kulthum and Abdel Halim Hafez along with composers Mohammed Abdel Wahab and Baligh Hamdi pioneered the use of western instruments in Egyptian music. By the 1970s several other singers had followed suit and a strand of Arabic pop was born. Arabic pop usually consists of Western styled songs with Arabic instruments and lyrics. Melodies are often a mix
between Eastern and Western. Beginning in the mid-1980s, Lydia Canaan, musical pioneer widely regarded as the first rock star of the Middle East fused English lyrics and Western sound with Middle-Eastern quarter tones and microtones and became the first internationally successful Lebanese recording artist.

Elements of Arabic Music:

Modern Arabic music has been dominated by musical trends which emerged from Cairo, Egypt. The city is generally considered an ancient cultural center in the Arab world. Innovations in popular music and the influence of other regional styles have also abounded from Morocco to Saudi Arabia. In recent years, Beirut has become an important city where singers can easily sing in various Arabic Dialects. Other regional styles are also enjoyed popular music status throughout the Arab world. The maqam consists of at least two ajnas, or scale segments. Ajnas is the plural form of jins, which in Arabic comes from the Latin word genus, meaning "type". In practice, a jins is either a trichord (three notes), a tetra chord (four notes), or a penta chord (five notes). A maqam usually covers only one octave (usually two ajnas), but can cover more. Like the melodic minor scale, some maqamat use different ajnas when descending and ascending. Due to continuous innovation and the emergence of new ajnas, and because most music scholars have not reached consensus on the subject, a solid figure for the total number of ajnas in use is uncertain. In practice, however, most musicians would agree there are at least eight major ajnas: rast, bayat, sikah, hijaz, saba, kurd, nahawand, and ajam. Commonly used variants such as nakriz, athar kurd, sikah beladi, saba zamzama. For example, Mukhalif is a rare jins used almost exclusively in Iraq, and it is not used in combination with other ajnas. The archetypal Arabic music collection in Egypt and Syria is known as the takht, and includes, instruments such as the ‘oud, qānūn, rabab, ney, violin riq and dumbek. In Iraq, the traditional band, known as the chalghi which includes only two melodic instruments—the jowza (similar to the rabab but with four strings) and santur—accompanied by the riq and dumbek. The Arab world has incorporated instruments from the West, including the electric guitar, cello, double bass, oboe, jazz and other foreign musical styles.

Influence of Arabic music:

The names of a number of musical instruments used in classical music are believed to be derived from Arabic terms, though many of the instruments themselves were already used in Europe. Words with Arabic origins include: lute, derived from ‘oud, rebec (an ancestor of the violin) from rebab, guitar from qitara, naker from naqareh, adufe from al-duff, al-boka from buq, mizhar (lute), mizafa (psaltery), qussaba (flute), mizmar (reed-pipe), duff (tambourine), al-anafil from al-nafir, exabeba (a type of flute) from al-shabbaba, atabal (a type of bass drum) from al-tabl, atambal from al-tinbal, the balaban, castanet from kasatan, and sonajas de azófar from sunuj al-sufr. Some of these words were used only in Spain and southern France. A number of medieval conical bore instruments were likely introduced or popularized by Arab musicians, including the xelami (from zulami).

Arabic Rock Song:

Rock music is popular all over the world. There have been many Arab rock bands along the years that combined rock, metal and alternative rock sounds with traditional Arab instruments. Arabic rock has been gaining a lot of attention lately in the Middle East with bands like Cairokee, Jadal, Autostrad, El Morabba3 and Akher. The Tunisian rock band mirth is
gaining popularity worldwide. The band Hoba Hoba Spirit from Morocco is also gaining popularity, especially in the Maghrebi region. The Indian rock band, Mirth reverses musical migration taking place with Arab music increasingly influencing Bollywood's music composers. Such as Ya Ali, the hit song from the Hindi film Gangster. It has Turkish, Arabic and Afghan versions. The Hindi tune was plainly lifted from these originals. Another Hindi song called Kahna kaho is a straight copy of Amr Diab's hit, Tamally Maak. Night clubs occasionally mix both versions and nobody seems to care about the copyright infringement. Composer AR Rahman specializes in them and much of his more recent output has a Sufi influence, with a distinct beat and tone. Arabic music has a vibrant tone which attracts the Indian listener. The Arabic music is eloquent as it originated from Arabic poetry, which in turn gave rise to the maqam or melodic tones. Perfect maqams is found in contemporary Bollywood song ‘Subhan Allah’ of the movie Fanaa. The words and beat are repeated in the background and provide a resting place for the overlapping melodies.

Influence of Sufi Music:
Sufi love songs are often performed as ghazals and Qawali, a solo genre accompanied by percussion and harmonium, using a repertoire of songs by Sufi poets. Sufism is a dimension within Islam that seeks the divine truth and knowledge by deepening one’s relationship with the Creator. It is believed that the word ‘Sufi’ has its origins in the Arabic word ‘suf,’ or wool, referring to the garment worn by the original adherents of this faith. Sufi traditions first entered into the Indian subcontinent during the early rule of the Delhi Sultanate in 12th century. The Sufis established Khanqas, a place open to all, a haven for food, shelter, love, respect and support for everyone. Instead of advocating any religion, they advocate the idea of love towards the Supreme Creator and attaining spirituality without any boundaries. Now, Sufism is most popularly and widely known for its poetry and its music, with songs that attempt to unite the musician and the listener with the Divine inspiration. Sufi singers often perform poetry, thus, leading to multiple versions of the same song; this also means that it is often worth our time looking up the meaning of the lyrics of these songs.

Any person who has knowledge of both outer and inner life is a Sufi. Sufi made its headway into Sufism highly regarded for reconciling brotherhood among countries through its music. The heightened emotions of Sufi music have its roots in Morocco, Egypt, Senegal, Indonesia, Turkey, Iran, The Balkans and Caucuses. The classical Arabic poetry incorporated with the music leaves us in a trance. The 'brother performers' hold hands in a circle, chant and dance and refute rhythm. On the contrary, in Syria and Turkey, Sufi music has melancholic melodies, it is called 'Dervish' there and performed with the musical instruments like Our, Rabab, Qanun, to Ney and Zukra.

Sufi music is called Qawwali in India. It was introduced in India by Shankar-Shambhu and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan which took the audience to an emotional rift. There has been a significant overlapping of others music genres in India before Sufi found its feet in Indian subcontinent, such as Qawwali, Qaul, Qalbana, Ghazal and other folk music. There are famous shrines of the bygone Sufi saints which are predominant tourist destinations in Delhi and Ajmer. Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia's shrine and Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti respectively. The eloquent and powerful poetry, the exciting music, either on the beats of the duff or the table, the melodious strings of the santoor, the saj and the rabab along with the flute/shehnai or the musical notes from the harmonium, are enough to transport one into an altogether different space, leaving in a trance.
In India, Sufi music became popular when Bollywood started using this music genre. It further gained popularity through various Sufi music fests organized across the country and renowned Sufi maestros such as the Late Nusrat Fateh Ali khan, Rahat Fateh Ali Khan, Kailash Kher, Abida Parveen, Wadali Brothers, Nizami Brothers, A.R. Rehman, Smita Bellur, Harshdeep Kaur penetrated the hearts of millions.

Sufi music has a meditative effect on our brain. It helps relaxing the mind with the spiritual effect of the lyrics and use of different musical instruments. The ever-evolving form of Sufi music will continue to remain a favorite amongst music lovers, because it is music about love of hereafter.

**Conclusion:**

The supernatural talent of pre-Islamic Arabian bard reflected in their poetical compositions having meter, measure, rhyme and rhetoric are the source of Arabian music. On the other hand, perfect phonetic performance of Arabic language provides musical sound itself. The Qur’anic verses are awe-inspiring and resonance to listening. The nature of Arabic language is that the frequent recitation of some short verses provides musical ornamentation. The emergence of popular genre of Ghazal poem and Sufi poem having lyrical spirit and Divine love has contributed to further development of Arabic music in the peninsula. Royal patronage of Arabic musicians has resulted to receive the Arabic music a huge impetus. Cultural assimilation with Europe during Abbasid reign resulted heart melting musical compositions. The expansion of Arabian territory into non-Arab regions, the influence of soulful music equally impacted on the adherents of all religions. Influence of Arabic music in Indian sub-continent started with the Sufi song. Some Sufi songs were composed in Urdu, Hindi, and Bengali languages and these are sung in the Arabic musical rhythm. Arabic music further gained its popularity for incorporating it in the Hindi Movies in the form of Ghazal, Qawali, and rock song. Recently, the filmmakers are dubbing some Arabic Rock song into Hindi to make the movie hit.

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