

**Appreciating Carnatic Music**  
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**Lecture -64**

**Accompaniment Percussive Accompaniment-the Mridangam**

Percussive accompaniment and art of percussion in general is highly evolved is very complex in carnatic music. The primary percussive instrument is Miruthangam. (Refer Slide Time: 00:42; Tamil explanation begins) (Refer Slide Time: 04:35; Tamil explanation ends)  
(Refer Slide Time: 00:50)



The miruthangam is the primary percussive instrument in carnatic music and there are, what are called “Upa pakka vathiyam”. The word for accompaniment or accompanying instrument in carnatic music is “Pakka Vathiyam” and miruthangam is a pakkavathyam  
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And we have Upa pakka vathiyam that is subsidy of accompanying instruments. And these are, we have three or four more popular once are the gatam. Which is simply a clay pot. We have the kanjira, which is a instrument held in one hand and we have morsing. Do you have idea of what about accompaniment is about? We can start with a comparison with accompaniment in kKhayal.

In Hindustani music with tabla what is a kind accompaniment the tabla offers in a kKhayal performance. Now what happens is in a tabla is, there is a tal and the tal is associated with particular set of syllables or set of strokes that is called theka. Now for the most part the tabla player will play the theka. So in every sense the tabla player is the person who maintains the tala cycle. So if we have tal like then tal.

This is 16 mathra cycle and na din din tha are name of the strokes on the tabla involving the single hand or both the hands. Tabla as you know two drums. So the tabla player would be maintaining the just these cycle and most part you will be hearing only the "na din din tha" "na din din tha" "na din din tha" "na din din tha" that is" din tha" and if it is "na din din tha".

And at only and in certain points, the tabla player would improvise mostly when the lead performer indicates. He may improvise there, so the tal is kept by the tabla which is why Khayal performer does not perform tal with his hand. Now in carnatic music the tala is maintained by the

lead performer. The percussive instrument the percussive accompanist actually accompanies the music. The percussive accompanist looks to the tala maintained by the performer, the lead performer and that is the basic reference.

If you observe carefully how the miruthangam accompanies, you will see that whatever sangathi being produced, whatever phrase or movement being produced by the performer by the madid performer that is translated into miruthangam as well. So to demonstrate suppose you have (Singing Starts: 08:24) (Singing Ends: 08:35). This one sangathi. There will be a certain way miruthangam accompanist.

Now this is the sangathi and the miruthangam accompanist will mirror, anticipate and mirror. He will play the miruthangam in such a way as to mirror this sangathi or (Singing Starts: 08:58) (Singing Ends: 09:02) This will be completely different performance in the miruthangam. So unlike as is said in Hindustani music, (Singing Starts: 09:11) (Singing Ends: 09:13) this is a kKhayal in hamsadhwani (Singing Starts: 09:19) (Singing Ends: 09:29) suppose I have to sing the same in the Khayal.

The tabla player will not play something different still go on” na din din tha” “na din din tha” “na din din tha” “na din din tha”. The role of the tabla and miruthangam as percussive accompaniment are very different and infact to a large extent texture of carnatic music. The way it sounds, this because of how the miruthangam accompanies is the lead performers. In fact the miruthangam player need to be as much a musicians.

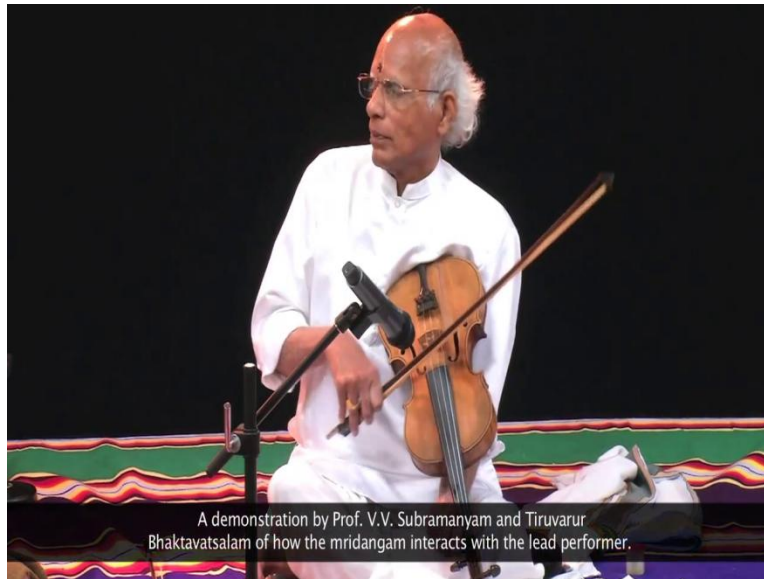
He needs to not just know is miruthangam and also he needs to know music, he must know compositions and he need to know how improvisation happens. so in improvisation suppose we take swara prasthara (Singing Starts: 10:23) (Singing Ends: 10:25).

Now this is one way of doing the edupu (Singing Starts: 10:33) (Singing Ends: 10:35). The miruthangam player ah ah seasoned miruthangam artists will actually anticipate how the singer is going to take the edupu (Singing Starts: 10:50) (Singing Ends: 10:56) and so on. So there are infinite possibilities about how the Avarthana can be filled with swaras? How they can be?

How the swaras can be grouped? And how they can be split and the performer is going to improvise?

But the miruthangam player is expected to anticipate and they do anticipate to a great extent. (Music Starts: 11:27) (Music Ends: 12:24). The talam is again different Rupaka talam “tha” is called eka thisuram this is called muthai ippu the finish.

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(Music Starts: 12:37) (Music Ends: 14:56) Now the miruthangam player anticipates how he varies his strokes. There cannot be of uniform volume, they have to be soft strokes, they have to be strong strokes, loud strokes and denser phrases more spread out phrases. Even in miruthangam you have phrases.

So all this makes for the art of the all, this in much, much more for the art of the miruthangam accompaniment. And more than anything else miruthangam accompaniment can make or break the concepts. As we speak of miruthangam accompaniment, nourishing the concepts “cutcheriya poshikarathu” poshikarathu means to nourished it, nourishment how you lift the concert to a another level.

The role of a miruthangam player is extremely important. We will now listen to Thiruvarur Bakthavatchlam leading miruthangam vidwan . As he speaks about few aspects of miruthangam accompaniment. He is accompanying veteran violinist V.V. Subramanian

(Music Starts: 16:25) (Music Ends: 17:45)

The glimpse of Ananda bhairavi the tala is adi and it starts in the middle of the first finger.

(Music Starts: 18:02) (Music Ends: 18:03). When you start, the muruthangamist have to notice

first, the kala pramanam the speed, tempo accordingly we have to play (Music Starts :18:30)

(Music Ends: 18:31), not like that. How to start? How to accompany?

It is very bad to accompany very, very bad. Now I will show you how to accompany, suppose if I

did the reverse thing; don't do that please. (Music Starts: 19:02) (Music Ends: 19:03)

Miruthangam players don't stop immediately, have to observe after that have to do some pause, gap.

(Music Starts: 19:30 Tamil explanation begins) How to play with violin? How to accompany the

vocal? How to accompany the veena? I should know. Anticipation is most, most important for

especially for the accompanist, especially for the miruthangam player. (Music Ends: 26:32 Tamil

explanation Ends)