

THE ARCHITECTURAL AND LYRICAL NUANCES OF APŪRVA RĀGĀS BY

PAṬNAM SUBRAMANYA IYER

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ABSTRACT

Many rāgas in today's carnatic fraternity survive solely through the compositions composed in those rāgas. There are many rāgas in which there are less than ten compositions and sometimes less than five too. Such rāgas exist through those compositions only. These compositions also act as a blue-print for exploring, expanding and elaborating such rāgas. The legendary 19th century composer Paṭnam Subramanya Iyer has turned as rare, undocumented and eka-kṛti (single composition) rāgas into structured, enduring kṛtis. This paper examines the musicological contributions of Paṭnam Subramanya Iyer in preserving few of such apūrva (rare) rāgas through his compositions, specifically focusing on Simhavāhini, Sindhu Mandāri and his own melodic creation Kadanakutūhalam.

Through a qualitative analysis of historical treatises, structural notation, and lyrical prosody, this study gives a clear approach on how Iyer masterfully intertwined complex musical frameworks. The research explores his innovative and strategic way of inserting certain *vakra* (tortuous) *svara prayōgas* and specific *nyāsa svaras* that define the *lakṣaṇa* (characteristics) of these rāgas. Furthermore, the paper investigates the lyrical dimensions of these *kṛtis*, highlighting how Iyer aligned the *prāsa* (rhyme) and *yati* (caesura) of his Telugu and Sanskrit lyrics with the rhythmic structure. Structural analysis of these compositions demonstrates how Iyer established a definitive pedagogical framework. This study underscores how a single kṛti can systematically codify and preserve an entire rāga, serving as a vital repository for contemporary performers, researchers, and musicologists.

Keywords: *Rare Raagas, Vāggēyakāra, Tyāgarāja, Paṭnam Subramanya Iyer, Carnatic Musicology, Prosody*

INTRODUCTION

Music is universal, offering a source of strength and refuge for individuals navigating the complexities of the world. It is considered as a means to relax the human mind. Music has always been a part of human's life. Indian music is different from world music. It is fully knitted with melodies based on emotions. This melody is created by the *rāgas*, the basic element of Indian music. These *rāgas* not only produce melody, but also enhance spiritual enlightenment, provide therapeutic effects to those suffering from physical and mental ailments and above all form the major resource for a person to realize the values of life. (Nakod & Dr, 2025) Within the South Indian tradition, the Carnatic Trinity established a paradigm where such musical frameworks serve as conduits for profound spiritual and emotional states, including *bhakti* and philosophical introspection.

Understanding a *rāga* not only involves learning to sing a *rāga*, but also listening to imbibe its core and understand the *nāda*, the subtle sound between notes, akin to finding the Self through deep listening (Ahetasamuddin, 2025). A singer or a musician can't achieve perfection or become a skilled one unless he becomes a good listener at first. A good listener with a keen sense of hearing can become a good musician or a singer. When such a singer has musical creativity and a thorough command of both music and language, this leads the singer to become a *vāggyākāra*.

The Carnatic musical trinity - Śyāma Śāstrī, Tyāgarāja and Muttusvāmī Dīkṣitar composed innumerable *kṛtis* with decorative *aṅgas* like *saṅgati*, *svara sāhityam*, *solkaṭṭu*, *madhyamakāla sāhityam*, *ciṭṭasvara*, etc., thus highlighting the melodic aspects of a *rāgā*, thus retaining their own unique individuality. They left a rich musical legacy for future generations in the form of musical forms.

Inspired by the compositions of Musical Trinity, the composers of the Post-trinity period have displayed their creative talent by composing in the *rāgās* not handled by the trinity. The Post-Trinity era of Carnatic music was marked by a significant expansion of the *rāga* repertoire. (Ramasubramanya & Parameswaran, 2026) The Post Trinity period emerged with several new composers. Musicians showed their enthusiasm in doing experiments such as creating new *rāgās*, trying to sing rare *rāgās*, mentioned in the various ancient Musical Treatises.

While heavily inspired by the foundational compositions of the Musical Trinity, subsequent composers did not merely explore and replicate established frameworks. Instead, they demonstrated immense

creative innovation by composing *kṛtis* in both *rāgas* already dealt by trinity and newly explored *rāgās* also.

The trinity composers have laid a path for the later period composers on how to handle Apoorva *rāgās* or rare *rāgās*. Also, trinity composers set an inspiration for other composers to create and experiment with new ragas and compose in them. This wave of creativity was made possible by new music books written in the early 1900s. These books listed the exact ascending and descending notes for many *rāgas* using the 72 *melakartā* framework, giving composers a clear guide to follow.

The word ‘rare’ is used for referring to something which we do not come across very frequently. When we call a raga as ‘rare’, it means that the raga is either less heard or completely not heard. A raga is considered rare not only because of its infrequent rendering, there are many other factors. We all know that the reasons for popularity of a *rāgā* is either its frequent rendition, plenty of compositions, easy to handle for a musician or receiving a great appreciation from *rasikās*. Tyāgarāja has composed in rare *rāgas* such as Raga Jingla, exemplifying how even restricted melodic repertoires can achieve excellence through precise structural frameworks and profound *bhāva* (Seshamamba, 2025). The pedagogical transmission of the guru–śiṣya *paramparā* is a revered tradition for preserving *rāga* identity (B, 2026). This pedagogical continuity ensures that the dialectic between the *a priori* *rāga* framework—the fixed melodic rules and phrases—and the practice of improvisational performance remains vibrant and historically anchored (Mamidipudi & Murthy, 2023). This ongoing transformation highlights that while the *rāga* framework appears as an immutable structure, it is simultaneously subject to the fluid interpretations shaped by successive generations of performers.

Kṛtis usually help a learner to understand the nuances of a particular *rāga*. There are many *rāgas*, in which there are few *kṛtis* composed, less than five in number. Such ragas have their existence in the form of those *kṛtis* only, thus enabling us to study and understand the nature of those ragas.

This article aims to study about the handling of *apūrva* ragas by Sri Paṭnam Subramanya Iyer.

Research Objective

The main objective of this work is to enumerate the various possibilities of bringing out the distinguished characteristics of the rare *rāgas* handled by Paṭnam Subramanya Iyer.

Research Scope

This paper investigates the musical and lyrical craftsmanship of Paṭnam Subramanya Iyer, focusing specifically on his way of dealing with *apūrva* *rāgās* or rare *rāgās*. The scope is strictly limited to an

analysis of how he structured these rare rāgās and paired them with lyrics within selected compositions. The study does not cover his standard, mainstream rāgā compositions or his historical biography, focusing purely on the structural interplay of melody and text in his rare works. This study does not cover his standard, mainstream rāgā compositions or his historical biography, instead focuses mainly on understanding the approach of the vāggyēyakāra towards a rāga, in order to comprehend its melodic structure, thus enabling musicians to perform it in a better way.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review for this study focuses on the transition of apūrva (rare) rāgas from theoretical concepts in Lakṣaṇagranthas to kṛtis in the Post-Trinity era. Secondary literature indicates that post-trinity composers used early 20th-century music books detailing the 72 mēḷakartā system to experiment with rare scales. Musicological sources emphasize that rāgas with fewer than five compositions rely entirely on single works (ēka-kṛti) as structural blueprints for their survival.

A rigorous cross-examination of primary and secondary sources reveals significant structural gaps, historical contexts, and technical contradictions regarding the rāgas handled by Patnam Subramanya Iyer:

- **Primary Source Treatises:**

Historical musicological texts provide the theoretical foundation for these scales, though they often highlight omissions or discrepancies. For instance, Simhavāhini is completely absent from primary treatises such as the Saṅgraha Cūḍāmaṇi, Saṅgītasārāmr̥ta, and the modern compilation Rāga Lakṣaṇa Saṅgraha. For Sindhu Mandāri and Kadanakutūhalam, primary texts like Nādamuni Paṇḍitar's Saṅgīta Svāra Prasthāra Sāgaramu provide explicit historical scales that directly contradict variants found in other period texts.

- **Secondary Notation and Compilations:**

To analyze the practical execution of these rāgas, modern notation books and edited volumes serve as vital secondary data. This includes authentic notations sourced from Harikēśanallūr Vīṇa A. Subramaniam's Pattanam Subramaniyarin Apūrva Sāhityaṅgal and K.V. Srinivasa Iyengar's Saṅgīta Rasārṇavam, alongside comparative references from P. Sāmbamūrti's South Indian Music (Book III) and Rāga Pravāham.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted for this paper is qualitative, descriptive, and analytical, relying on a systematic examination of the musical and textual structures of the selected apūrva rāga compositions by Paṭnam Subramanya Iyer. The primary data consists of the direct textual, melodic, and notation frameworks of the specific kṛtis. Secondary sources include audio recordings used to analyze performance nuances, alongside notation books and historical treatises such as Saṅgīta Rasārṇavam and Saṅgīta Svara Prasthāra Sāgaramu, to trace scale variations. Finally, this gathered material is evaluated through a dual analytical framework that combines structural melodic analysis (rāga lakṣaṇa) with classical Indian lyrical prosody (sāhitya) to determine how these rare rāgas were technically codified.

ANALYSIS, RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Paṭnam Subramanya Iyer has handled several apoorva ragas, out of which, we will be considering four of the rāgās for the study. Kathanakutūhalam is created by himself. The other three rāgās being Simhavāhini and Sindhumandāri. Tyāgarāja has composed a kṛti in Simhavāhini. Paṭnam Subramanya Iyer seems to be the earliest to handle Sindhumandāri.

Kathanakutūhalam and Sindhumandāri are the rāgās in which no composition of Tyāgarāja or any other composer before Paṭnam Subramanya Iyer are available.

1. Simhavāhini

Rāga Lakṣaṇa

Simhavāhini is a janya of 27th mēḷakarta rāga, Sarasāṅgi. It is an upāṅga, shādava saṃpūrṇa rāga with svarasthānās Catuśruti Ṛishaba, Antara Gāndhāra, Śuddha Madhyama, Śuddha Dhaivata and Kākali Niṣāda. Structurally, Simhavāhini resembles Sarasāṅgi, except for the omission (varjya) of Ṛishabha in its ārohaṇa. This rāga is a madhyamakāla pradhāna rāga. This rāga accommodates Āhata and Pratyāhata prayōgas. Dhaivata, Niṣāda in the ārōhaṇa and Ṛishaba in the avarōhaṇa are the svarās with gamakās.

Ārōhaṇa - S G M P D N Ś

Avarōhaṇa - Ś N D P M G R S

Simhavāhini might be an extinct rāgā if not handled by Tyāgarāja. This rāgā is brought to light by Tyāgarāja with just one composition ‘Nenarunchara’ set to Ādi tāla.

If we observe the rāgā, its ārōhaṇa and avarōhaṇa is just as that of Sarasāṅgi, but the only difference is the absence of Ṛishaba in the ārōhaṇa. This point clearly explains why we feel the essence of its mēla, Sarasāṅgi. Simhavāhini is one of the ragas, in which Tyāgarāja has composed only one kṛti.

Historical Context

This rāgā is not mentioned in Sangraha cūḍāmaṇi, Saṅgitasārāmṛta, Saṅgrahacūḍāmaṇi and even the Telugu work Saṅgitasārasaṅgrahāmu. But the notation of the composition is available in the book ‘Paṭṭanam Subramaṇiyarin Apūrvā Sāhityaṅgaḷ’, compiled by Harikēśanallūr Vīṇa A. Subramaṇiam with complete Svarā-Sāhitya-Tālā notation. Ultimately it can be derived that the rāgā Simhavāhini has not been mentioned in the latest work on rāgās namely ‘Rāga Lakṣaṇa Saṅgraha’ authored by Hema Ramanathan (first edition 2004) based on the authentic texts from the ancient to modern period namely, Svaramelākālānidhi, Rāgatālacintāmaṇi, Sadrāgaacandrōdaya, Rāgamañjarī, Rāgamālā, Rasakaumudī, Rāgavibōdha, Saṅgītasudha, Caturdaṇḍiprakāśikā, Saṅgītapārijātā, Rāgattatvavibōdha, Hṛdayakautukam, Hṛdayaparakāśa, Rāgatarāṅgiṇi, Rāgalakṣaṇam of Muddu Veṅkaṭamakhī, Saṅgrahacūḍāmaṇi, Saṅgītasārasaṅgrahamu, Mahābhāratacūḍāmaṇi, RāgaLakṣaṇa and Saṅgītasampradāyapradarśinī.

This is fairly a new rāgā, first attempted by Tyāgarāja and later attempted by Paṭnam Subramanya Iyer.

Description of the composition

“Evarunnaru” is the only kṛti of Paṭnam Subramanya Iyer in the rāgā Simhavāhini. Just like the kṛti “Nenarunchara”. The common point in both the kṛtis is that both the kṛtis start after one and a half beat,

i.e., anāgata graha. As this rāga does not have that much melodic individuality, the kṛti has less saṅgatis.

This kṛti is in the format of pallavi, anupallavi and caraṇa. The pallavi starts on mandra sthāyi niṣāda, and both anupallavi and caraṇa on pañcama, thus the graha svaras having anuvādi relation. The nyāsa svāra is ṣaḍja for all three sections.

There are very few dhātu prayogas in this composition. The reason might be to retain the identity of the rāga, and not to go into the influence of its janya rāga.

Sahitya Analysis

Simhavāhini is a soft rāgā blended with karuna rasa. This might be the reason, Iyer in this kriti, asks his ishta daiva, lord Venkateswara, “who else is there to protect me (*evarunnāru nannu brōcuṭaku*)? O courageous one (*dhīra*), the eminent scion (*vara kumāra*) of the Solar Dynasty (*ina vaṁśa*)”.

If we see in the point of view of prosody, Iyer uses both prāsa and yati to enhance the lyrical beauty. Throughout the kṛti, we observe the correspondence of the yati syllables at the commencement of āvartas.

In Carnatic music, Yati refers to the rhythmic or structural shaping of musical and textual phrases within a composition like a kṛti. While it originates from ancient concepts of rhythmic patterns, it manifests beautifully in lyrics (sahitya) and melodic passages as geometric expansions or contractions. Understanding Yati provides deep insight into the structural sophistication and deliberate craftsmanship behind a composer's work. In Telugu musical compositions, Yati functions as a phonetic match rule

between the alliterating initial syllables of āvartas. In the pallavi,

evarunnāru nannu brōcuṭaku

inavaṁśa varakumāra dhīra

In the anupallavi,

bhuvanāśraya mōhana śrī ramaṇa

bhū bhāra haraṇa budha varēṇya

In the charaṇa,

sakalēśvara sādhu hr̥t-saṁcāra

sakala durjana saṁhāra sūra

sakalāgama sannuta caritra sakala

abhīṣṭada yōga śrī venkaṭēśa

If we observe the pallavi section, *e* in the word *evarunnāru* and *i* in the word *inavaṁśa* are the yati letters. In the same way, If we observe the anupallavi section, *bhu* in the word *bhuvanāśraya* and *bhū* in the word *bhū bhāra* are the yati letters.

But if we observe the charana section, we observe both yati and prāsa, where there is a correspondence in the first letters of all the four lines: sakalēśvara, sakala, sakalāgama and sakala resulting in yati and

also the second letter of all the four lines is the same: sakalēśvara, sakala, sakalāgama and sakala resulting in the dvitīyākṣara prāsa. We also can notice that there is a rhyme inherent in the ending syllables of three lines out of four, which is Antyānuprāsa. Antyānuprāsa means the rhyme inherent in the ending syllables of a line or pāda.

sakalēśvara sādhu ḥṛt-sañcāra

sakala durjana saṁhāra śūra

sakalāgama sannuta caritra

Yet Iyer is an ardent Vaishnavite in his devotional aspect. The idea that Vishnu, in his many incarnations and as Rama especially, is not a conception but the reality of God, that all the other deities are his manifestations, is expressed in many kṛtis. This is one such kṛti.

Musical Analysis

We already know that, Tyāgarāja has composed the kṛti ‘Nenarunchara’ in Simhavāhini, and it's the only way to understand this rāgā as there are no available texts in which the lakṣaṇa of this particular rāgā is available. Paṭnam Subramanya Iyer has composed this kṛti in Desādi tālā, following the footsteps of Tyāgarāja. This kṛti is in Anāgata graham, starting after one and half beat or three mātrās.

The pallavi of the kṛti starts with the phrase Ṇ , S , G ; , M , fair and straightforward. In the beginning of the pallavi (Evarunnāru), the syllables ‘va’ and ‘ru’ are couched in emphatic S and G notes, thus establishing Simhavāhini beyond doubt. The S G combination always adds a flavour of its own, and especially the Ga being the antara gāndhāra makes it more impactful.

In the pallavi itself one can get a brief picture of the rāgā in two octaves ranging from mandra pañcamam to tāra pañcamam. Most of the phrases of anupallavi are beautifully carved in the tāra sthāyi.

Just the way the antara gāndhāra occurring in the prayōgam SGM or ṆSGM carries the essence of the rāgā Simhavāhini, the śuddha daivata figuring in the SṆḌ phrase constitutes the life of its mela, Sarasāngi.

Sancharas :

S G M P , - P M G M P D Ṇ Ṣ , - Ṇ D Ṇ Ṣ , Ṇ D P , - Ṇ D P M G R , - S G M G M P M P D , - P
D

Ṇ D Ṇ Ṣ Ṇ Ṣ Ḡ , - Ḡ Ṛ Ṛ Ṣ - Ṣ Ḡ Ḡ Ṛ , Ṛ , - Ṣ Ṇ D P D Ṇ Ṣ , Ṣ Ṇ Ṣ , Ṣ - Ṇ D P P , P M D P M ,
-

D Ṇ Ṣ Ḡ Ṣ Ṣ Ḡ Ṛ Ṣ

2. Sindhu Mandāri

Sindhu Mandāri is a janya of 29th mēḷakarta rāga, Dhīra Śaṅkarābharaṇam. It is an auḍava vakra sampūrṇa rāga with svarasthānās Catuśruti Ṛishaba, Antara Gāndhāra, Śuddha Madhyama, Catuśruti Dhaivata and Kākali Niṣāda. It is a tristhāyī upāṅga rāga. The absence of dhaivata and niṣāda in the ārōhaṇa makes it an ārōhaṇa varjya rāga.

Historical Context

Many post trinity texts refer to this raga. We can also observe that there is no contradiction regarding the janya raga, as all these texts mention this raga under 29th mēḷakarta, Dhīra Śaṅkarābharaṇam. The text Rāga Pravāham gives two different ārōhaṇa and avarōhaṇa for this raga.

1) Ārōhaṇa : S R G M P Ś

Avarōhaṇa : Ś N D P G M D P M G R S

The same is given in the text Rāg Kōśa of Vasant. But if we see Nādamuni Paṇḍitar's Saṅgīta Svara Prasthāra Sāgaramu, ārōhaṇa remains the same, but the avarōhaṇa is given as 'Ś N D P G M D P M R S'. This is supported in many texts like Karuṇāmṛta Sāgaram, Saṅgīta Kaumudī, Saṅgīta Candrikai, etc.

But in the Book - III of South Indian Music, P Sāmbamūrti gives the ārōhaṇa and avarōhaṇa as S R G M P D P Ś and Ś N D P G M D P M R S.

2) Ārōhaṇa : S R G M P Ś

Avarōhaṇa : Ś N D P N D M G R S

There is another version which was given by Muthiah Bhāgavatar.

Ārōhaṇa : S R G M P Ś

Avarōhaṇa : Ś N D P M G M R S

Description of the composition

We can justify the point that Paṭṇam Subramanya Iyer had an influence of his parama guru through this composition. In a few of Tyāgarāja's compositions like Vara Lila Gana Lola and Sarasa Netra, set to Shankarabharanam, Ramincuvarevarura in Suposhini, a raga in which Tyagaraja was the first to compose. It is a janya of Harikamboji, which too is in a way a creation of the composer. "Karuṇincuṭakidē samayamayya" is the only kṛti of Paṭṇam Subramanya Iyer in the rāga

Sindhumandāri. And also, he is the earliest composer to have handled this rāga. The notation of this is available in Saṅgīta Rasārṇavam of K. V. Śrīnivāsa Iyaṅgār.

The structure of the kṛti is pallavi, anupallavi and caraṇa. The whole composition, i.e., pallavi, anupallavi and caraṇa starts on pañcama. The nyāsa svāra is pañcama for pallavi and madhyama for anupallavi and caraṇa. We find no jaṇṭa prayogas and no dhātu prayogas in this composition. The reason might be to retain the identity of the rāga, and not to go into the influence of its janya rāga.

Sahitya Analysis

The composition is in conversational style. In this piece, the devotee prays for God's grace and describes the divine qualities of Lord Veṅkaṭēśa. The musical structure (dhātu) is highly straightforward and contains no saṅgatis. The lyrics flow smoothly, aligning perfectly with the underlying notes, while the varṇameṭṭu is deeply captivating. This composition follows the template of Saint Tyāgarāja's basic kṛtis, such as “Nannu kanna talli” in Sindhukannada rāga and “Girirāja suta tanaya” in Baṅgāla rāga. Because of its simple nature, beginner vocalists and instrumentalists can practice it with great ease.

In the pallavi,

karuṇincuṭakidē samayamayya

kari rakṣaka nā kali dīrccavayya

In the anupallavi,

dharalō nīvaṇṭi daivamu lēdani

paramānandamutō bhajiyiṇcitini

In the caraṇa,

kamalāsanādi sannuta pāda

kamanīya śubha śyāmala gātra

kamalā kalatra kaṇja dala nētra

amarādi pōṣa ādi veṅkaṭēśa

If we observe the pallavi section, **ka** in the word **ka**ruṇincuṭakidē and **ka** in the word kari are the yati letters. In the same way, If we observe the caraṇa section, **ka** in the word kamalāsanādi, kamanīya and kamalā is the yati letter.

But if we observe the charana section, we observe both yati and prāsa, where there is a correspondence in the first letters of the first three lines: kamalāsanādi, kamanīya and kamalā resulting in yati and also the second letter of all the four lines is the same: kamalāsanādi, kamanīya, kamalā and amarādi resulting in the dvitīyākṣara prāsa. We also can notice that there is a rhyme inherent in the ending syllables of two lines of pallavi and anupallavi, which is Antyānuprāsa.

karuṇincuṭakidē samayamayva

kari rakṣaka nā kali dīrcavayyva

dharalō nīvaṇṭi daivamu lēdani

paramānandamutō bhajiyiṇcitini

We also observe that yamakam has been employed in the charanam.

Kamala : Lotus

Kamala : Goddess Lakshmi

Musical Analysis

Sindhu Mandāri is a rāga with a slight western tinge in it. The reason for this is the interval between pañcama and tara ṣaḍja. This rāga is preferred to be rendered without any gamakas to retain its individuality. It is not a raga which is suitable for rāgālāpana, but the plain way of rendering its notes makes it effective when rendered at a fast pace.

By opening the pallavi with the phrase P Ś N , D P, Iyer attempts to establish the rāga. As it was an apoorva vakra rāga, to make it easy to the practitioners, he just incorporated the arohana and the avarohana in the pallavi part itself.

Sancharas :

S R G M P Ś , - Ś N D P G M P M R S , - S R G M P M R S , - R G M P Ś , Ś , - Ś N D P , G M P
M

R S , - P M P M R S , R G M P Ś , - P Ś R Ġ M P Ś , - Ś N D P Ġ M P M R Ś , - Ś N D P G M P
M

R S , - S R G M P M , P M R S , - R G M P , M P Ś , - Ś N D P , G M P M R S

3. Kadanakutūhalam

Rāga Lakṣaṇa

Kadanakutūhalam is a janya of 29th mēḷakarta raga, Dhīra Śaṅkarābharaṇam. It is a vakra sampūrṇa sampūrṇa rāga with svarasthānās Catuśruti Ṛishaba, Antara Gāndhāra, Śuddha Madhyama, Catuśruti Dhaivata and Kākalī Niṣāda.

Ārōhaṇa - S R M D N G P Ś

Avarōhaṇa - Ś N D P M G R S

Because this rāga prioritises rhythm, it gives limited scope for traditional vocal gamakas. However, this rhythmic focus helps build an audience engaging tempo during concerts. It requires a highly scholarly presentation, but when done well, it leaves the audience feeling deeply elated.

Historical Context

In the post trinity period, a major accomplishment is that many new rāgas were created during this era. One such rāga is Kadanakutūhalam, a creation of Paṭṇam Subramanya Iyer. Iyer has drawn inspiration from the raga Kutūhalam, a janya of 29th mēḷakartā, with the following ārōhaṇa and avarōhaṇa:

Ārōhaṇa - S R M N D P N Ś

Avarōhaṇa - Ś N D P M G R S

in which his guru Mānambuccāvaḍi Veṅkaṭasubbayyar has composed a kṛti *Avarakudasramamai* in Ādi tāla. This rāga contained in it an interval of an augmented fourth, i.e., a prati madhyama interval from śuddha madhyama to kākalī niṣāda in the ārōhaṇa, a difficult interval to manipulate. This might have inspired Paṭṇam Subramanya Iyer to create the rāga Kadanakutūhalam.

If we refer to the available texts, we find a contradiction about the rāga under which Kadanakutūhalam is grouped. This raga is referred neither in Saṅgīta Candrikai nor Rāg Kōśa. The text Rāga Pravāham gives two different ārōhaṇa and avarōhaṇa for this rāga under different mēḷakartās.

1) Under the 28th mēḷakartā,

Ārōhaṇa : S R M D N G P Ś

Avarōhaṇa : Ś N D P M G R S

This ārōhaṇa and avarōhaṇa is found in Saṅgīta Svara Prasthāra Sāgaramu.

2) Under the 29th mēḷakartā, again we find two versions.

a) Ārōhana : S R M D N G P Ś

Avarōhana : Ś N D P M G R S

The same is given in Book - III of South Indian Music, Saṅgīta Kaumudī, etc.,
and also followed by all the vāggyēyakāras of the present times.

b) Ārōhana : S R M D N P Ś

Avarōhana : Ś N D P M G R S

This version is quoted from Pālai Yāli.

Description of the composition

The composition begins after a 3 - letter pause, Anāgata graha. This composition is composed in the Western style and is felt more interesting when heard on instrument rather than on the vocals.

The pallavi starts on the Ṣaḍja, anupallavi on the Gāndhāra, caraṇam on Panchama and ciṭṭasvara on Ṣaḍja. Hence, we can consider that the graha svaras of this rāga are S, G and P. Here, the graha svaras of pallavi and anupallavi are related as anuvādī and that of pallavi and caraṇam are samvādī.

The nyāsa svaras for this rāga are R and S. This can be justified by the fact that, in the kṛti, pallavi and ciṭṭasvara end on Ṛishaba whereas anupallavi and caraṇam end on Ṣaḍja. The composition ranges from mandra sthāyi Pañcama up to the tāra sthāyi Madhyama. We find no jaṇṭa prayogas and no dhātu prayogas in this composition. The reason might be to retain the identity of the rāga, and not to go into the influence of its janya rāga.

Kadanakutūhalam is a bright and radiant rāga. This might be the reason for Iyer to choose this rāga to praises the holy qualities and brave actions of Lord Rāma.

Sahitya Analysis

This composition is embellished with Sanskrit words and phrases.

In the pallavi,

raghuvaṃśa sudhāmbudhi candra śrī

rāma rāma rāja rājēśvara

In the anupallavi,

agha mēgha māruta śrīkara

asurēndra mṛgēndra vara jagannātha

In the charaṇa,

jamadagnija garva khaṇḍana

jaya rudrādi vismita bhaṇḍana

kamalāptānvaya maṇḍana

agaṇitādbhuta śaurya śrī venkaṭeśa

If we observe the pallavi section, **ra** in the words **rag**huvaṃśa and **rā**ma is the yati letter. In the same way, if we observe the anupallavi, **a** in the words **a**gha and **a**surēndra and **ja** in the words **j**amadagnija and **j**aya in the caraṇa section are the yati letters.

We also can notice that there is a rhyme inherent in the ending syllables of three lines of charana, which is Antyānuprāsa.

jamadagnija garva khaṇḍana**na**

jaya rudrādi vismita bhaṇḍana**na**

kamalāptānvaya maṇḍana**na**

Musical Analysis

Kathanakutūhala is a joyful *janya* rāga derived from the 29th *meḷakartā*, Dhīraśaṅkarābharaṇam. It uses all seven notes of the parent scale but features a highly irregular, zigzag (*vakra*) ascending pattern. The scale moves upward and descends in a completely linear, straight sequence. The core musical identity of the rāga hinges entirely on the clean execution of the dramatic leap from *niṣāda* back down to *gāndhāra* before resolving upward to *pañcama* and the higher *ṣaḍja*.

True to its name, where *kutūhala* translates to extreme curiosity or celebration, this rāga evokes a bright mood of wonder (*adbhuta rasa*) and brilliant energy. Unlike many traditional rāgas that rely on heavy vocal oscillations, its character emerges from crisp, flat notes (*alpa-gamaka*) and geometric precision during pitch transitions. This rapid, jump-heavy structure makes it an exceptional showcase for instrumentalists. In the composition "*Raghuvaṃśa Sudhāmbudhi*", Patnam Subramanya Iyer leverages this playful geometry to maintain a rapid, driving tempo (*madhyama kāla*) that keeps listeners completely engaged.

Set to the 8-beat Ādi Tāḷa, the composition cleverly maps its celebratory lyrics to the technical highlights of the rāga. The *pallavi* launches immediately on the high octave *ṣaḍja* (Ṣ), instantly injecting energy before cascading downward through a smooth, linear descent to anchor the rāga's

boundaries. The *anupallavi* and *carana* shift focus toward the higher notes to match the epic imagery of the lyrics, using ascending bursts. The absolute climax of the piece is its iconic ciṭṭasvara passage a fast-paced solfege segment that utilizes staggered rhythmic steps to create a thrilling musical experience before resolving smoothly back into the main theme.

Saṅcāras

S R M D N G P , - P M G R S , - S R R M M D D N N G P , - P M G R S , - M D N G P Ś , - Ś

D P M G R S , - D N G P Ś , Ś , - Ś N D P , M G R S , - S R M D N G P Ś - Ś R M D N G P Ś , - Ś N D P M G R S , - P Ś N D P , - M D N G P , - R M D N G P Ś , - Ś P M G R

S , - S R M D , R M D N , - M D N G , D N G P , - N G P Ś , - Ś N D P M G R S

CONCLUSION

It is a stark reality in Carnatic music that many rare (apūrva) rāgas hang on by a thread, surviving solely because a few scattered compositions keep them alive. This paper shows how the 19th-century composer Patnam Subramanya Iyer used the structured kṛti format as a deliberate tool to rescue, codify, and preserve these fragile, undocumented, or single-composition (ēka-kṛti) scales. By strategically embedding specific zigzagging note sequences (vakra svara prayōgas) and anchoring resting notes (nyāsa svaras), Iyer did not just write songs—he effectively drew up the definitive technical blueprints (lakṣaṇa) for rāgas like Simhavāhini, Sindhu Mandāri, and his own brilliant invention, Kadanakutūhalam.

Musically, Iyer's genius was highly practical. He managed to sketch out the complete identity of these rare rāgas using minimal structural variations (sangatis), keeping their lines clean so they would not get swallowed up by the heavy influence of their parent melākartā scales. Heavily inspired by Saint Tyāgarāja, he found a way to balance strict musicological rules with genuine emotional appeal. His kṛtis "Evarunnaru" (Simhavāhini) and "Karuṇincuṭakidē samayamayya" (Sindhu Mandāri) package loose, abstract melodic concepts into clear, teachable forms. Meanwhile, his famous "Raghuvamśa Sudhāmbudhi" showcases his ability to build an entirely new, high-energy rhythmic landscape using the playful geometry of Kadanakutūhalam.

Lyrically, the way Iyer matches his words to his music shows an incredible grasp of classical prosody (sāhitya). His clever placement of structural pauses (yati), initial rhymes (dvitīyākṣara prāsa), and

clever line endings (antyānuprāsa) across his Telugu and Sanskrit verses is not just for poetic flair. Instead, the text acts as a rhythmic skeleton that perfectly mirrors and locks in the melodic jumps of the apūrva notes. Ultimately, Patnam Subramanya Iyer's rare compositions are vital, self-contained musical archives. They bridge the old gap between dry musicological theory (lakṣaṇa) and the actual living art of concert performance (lakṣya), ensuring these rare rāgas stay alive for future generations of musicians and researchers.

FUTURE SCOPE

By breaking down the structural, technical, and poetic layers of Patnam Subramanya Iyer's work, this study opens up several concrete paths for future research and practical study:

- **Comparative Performance Studies:** Future research could dig into 20th and 21st-century archival audio recordings to see how different musical lineages (bāṇīs) actually interpret Iyer's written notations during live concert performances.
- **Digital Musicology and Data Modeling:** Researchers could use computational audio tools to map out the exact note durations, pitch frequencies, and transitional patterns of the tricky vakra phrases in Sindhu Mandāri and Kadanakutūhalam, building data-driven models of rare scales.
- **Standardizing Classroom Pedagogy:** There is room to design specific academic curricula around single-composition (ēka-kṛti) rāgas, tracking how music students internalize awkward, wide scalar leaps (like the sudden jumps in Kadanakutūhalam) using Iyer's structural framework.
- **Cross-Disciplinary Therapeutic Research:** Because these specific musical frameworks evoke such distinct psychological moods—like the deep compassion (karuṇa rasa) of Simhavāhini or the bright wonder (adbhuta rasa) of Kadanakutūhalam—future empirical studies could test their actual physiological and psychological effects on work-related stress and emotional regulation.
- **A Wider Post-Trinity Historical Mapping:** The analytical model used here can be scaled up to profile other overlooked post-Trinity composers who spent time digging up forgotten scales from ancient texts, creating a much larger, clearer picture of how rare rāgas have been preserved over the last two centuries.

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