
Thyagaraja's Lullabies : A Musical Study

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Abstract

This article examines the lesser-explored category of lullaby-like compositions by Saint Thyagaraja, one of the Trinity of Carnatic music, through a combined musical and lyrical analysis. Although Carnatic music does not formally categorize lullabies (*thalattu pattu* in Tamil or *laali patalu* in Telugu), a few of Thyagaraja's compositions display gentle melodic lines, devotional intimacy, and lyrical tenderness that reflect the essence of traditional Indian lullabies. These pieces reveal a profound blend of *bhakti* (devotion), *raga bhava* (melodic emotion), and simple yet purposeful *tala* (rhythmic) structures, making them both emotionally resonant and pedagogically valuable.

Focusing on four specific compositions, this study investigates their use of *Raga* and *Tala* as well as their potential as teaching tools across generations. Despite their aesthetic beauty and musical depth, these lullaby-like pieces are rarely featured in modern Carnatic concerts. Why are such emotionally rich compositions underrepresented in performances today? What are the challenges or limitations faced by performers in presenting lullabies on stage?

Using internal textual analysis and external resources such as scholarly books, articles, and video recordings, this paper explores the structural and emotional richness of these compositions while questioning their limited presence in the mainstream Carnatic repertoire. Through this focused lens, the study seeks to bring attention to an important but lesser-explored aspect of Thyagaraja's musical and devotional legacy.

Keywords

Thyagaraja , Lullabies, Carnatic Music, Music Analysis, Concerts & Cultural Heritage.

Introduction

Thyagaraja (1767-1847), one of the revered Trinity of Carnatic music, is celebrated not only for his devotional depth and prolific compositional output but also for his exceptional ability to convey tender emotions through refined musical expression. Although approximately 24,000 compositions are traditionally attributed to him, only about 720 are extant today.

Within his extensive repertoire, very few compositions exhibit the qualities of lullabies- marked by gentle affection, devotional warmth, and a nurturing tone. While Thyagaraja is best known for major compositional categories such as the Ghana Raga Pancharatnam, Lalgudi Pancharatnam, Divya Nama Sankeerthana, and musical dramas like *Prahlada Bhakti Vijayam* and *Nauka Charitram*, these works are primarily associated with temple rituals and festivals, and are classified under the Utsava Sampradaya Krithis. As such, they are not traditionally recognized as lullabies within the formal framework of Carnatic music pedagogy.

Indian lullabies, while rooted in folk and domestic traditions, are more than simple soothing melodies. They serve as vehicles of cultural memory, spiritual invocation, and emotional bonding- often addressed to divine figures such as Krishna or Rama. Though not formalized as a distinct genre within Carnatic music, the essence of lullabies persists in compositions characterized by soft, meditative *ragas* and lilting *talas*.

These songs reflect regional languages, customs, and values, offering insights into domestic life, maternal affection, and devotional sentiment. Found across various folk traditions, lullabies frequently blend local dialects with classical and semi-classical elements, often carrying invocations for divine protection, health, and virtue.

With his profound sense of devotion and human warmth, Thyagaraja composed works that evoke the tenderness of a mother's love directed toward the divine. Though not explicitly labelled as lullabies, these compositions embody the same emotional depth and gentleness in musical form. They offer a glimpse into a spiritualized maternal affection, where the devotee becomes a mother figure and the deity is envisioned as a beloved child.

This study explores Thyagaraja's lullaby-like compositions, focusing on their lyrical content, *raga* selection, *gamakas*, and *tala* structure. It aims to uncover how these pieces reveal an aesthetic of devotional tenderness within the broader context of Carnatic musical tradition.

Review of Literature

Previous studies have extensively examined Thyagaraja's biography and major compositions, particularly the *Pancharatna Krithis* and other widely celebrated works. However, limited scholarly attention has been devoted to his lullaby-like compositions, which uniquely intertwine tenderness with spiritual devotion. In *Sangeetha Saurabham* (Vol. 4), Dr. Sripada Pinakapani catalogs a few such pieces in Telugu notation under the category of *Utsava Sampradaya Krithis*. Similarly, *The Spiritual Heritage of Thyagaraja* by C. Ramanujachari and Dr. V. Raghavan briefly discusses these compositions within the context of various *upacharas*, or ritual offerings. While the broader musical features of lullabies have been explored by several scholars, there remains a notable gap in focused research on Thyagaraja's lullaby-like works, particularly in terms of their distinctive musical and lyrical characteristics, performance challenges, and pedagogical value.

Methodology and Approach

This study employs a qualitative, musicological approach combining textual analysis, comparative methods, and performance-based observation to investigate Thyagaraja's lullaby-like compositions. The aim is to uncover their distinct musical and lyrical characteristics, and to contextualize them within the broader Indian lullaby tradition and the Carnatic repertoire.

The research will proceed through the following steps:

1. **Compilation and Selection:** A curated list of 4 Thyagaraja's lullaby-like compositions will be drawn from authoritative sources such as *Sangeetha Saurabham* (Vol. 4) by Dr. Sripada Pinakapani and *The Spiritual Heritage of Thyagaraja* by C. Ramanujachari and Dr. V. Raghavan.
2. **Musical Analysis:** The selected compositions will be studied in terms of Raga structure, rhythmic framework (Tala), tempo, melodic contour, and ornamentation (gamakas). Special attention will be paid to features that evoke a soothing or nurturing musical atmosphere characteristic of lullabies.
3. **Lyrical and Thematic Study:** The textual content will be analysed for devotional and maternal imagery, gentle tone, and emotional intimacy.
4. **Comparison with Traditional Indian Lullabies:** Thyagaraja's compositions will be compared with traditional Indian lullabies, both classical and folk (e.g., *jo achyuthananda*), focusing on melodic simplicity, repetitive motifs, and emotional content.
5. **Contextual and Ritual Relevance:** The role of these compositions in *Utsava Sampradaya* rituals and devotional settings will be investigated. This includes their function within the daily worship cycle, especially during evening or *sayankala* segments involving lullaby sequences.
6. **Performance Analysis Using YouTube Recordings:** Selected performances of lullaby-like compositions available on platforms such as YouTube will be used as key resources. These recordings offer valuable insights into interpretive variations, stylistic nuances, tempo choices, and

expressive delivery by different artists. Both concert and pedagogical recordings will be considered to evaluate practical aspects of performance and teaching.

7. **Pedagogical Implications:** The study will assess how these compositions are taught and internalized by students of Carnatic music.

Analysis, Results and Discussion

In this research, I have selected four compositions by Thyagaraja that are notated and also available in both audio and video formats. Very few of his lullaby-style compositions are documented or accessible. The selected lullabies are:

1. **Uyyalalugavayya** - Neelambari - Khanda Chapu Tala
2. **Laali Yugave** - Neelambari - Rupaka Tala
3. **Laali Laali Ani** - Harikambhoji / Khamas - Adi Tala (*Originally composed in Raga Harikambhoji, but also rendered in Raga Khamas*)
4. **Jo Jo Rama** - Ritigowla - Adi Tala

Musical analysis

Ragas

In Carnatic music, Ragas such as Neelambari, Anandabhairavi, Kapi, Yadukula Kambhoji, and Bilahari are commonly associated with lullabies due to their soothing and gentle nature. In this article, I have chosen two compositions in Neelambari: *Uyyalalugavayya* and *Laali Yugave*.

Among the remaining two, one- *Laali Laali Ani* - was originally composed in Harikambhoji, but an alternative version is also found in Khamas. I have provided links to the available video renditions of these compositions in the references. Notably, *Laali Laali Ani* is rendered by Mangalampalli Balamuralikrishna in Harikambhoji, while a version sung by M. S. Subbulakshmi is set in Khamas.

The fourth composition, *Jo Jo Rama*, is composed in Ritigowla.

Neelambari

Neelambari (from *Neela* meaning blue, and *Ambaram* meaning sky or cloth), is a janya raga derived from the 29th melakarta, *Dheera Shankarabharanam*. It is renowned in Carnatic music for its serene, soothing character and its deep association with lullabies. Characterized by soft, gliding *jaaru gamakas* and gentle melodic contours, Neelambari evokes a sense of calmness and tenderness, qualities that mirror the act of cradling a child.

This inherent softness makes Neelambari an ideal vehicle for expressing emotions such as motherly affection, devotion, and nurturing care. Its tranquil melodic movement has led to a long-standing belief in its ability to induce sleep, a quality that has firmly rooted the Raga in the tradition of Indian lullabies.

Historically, Neelambari has been used in both devotional and lullaby compositions. One of the earliest examples is *Jo Achyuthananda*, attributed to the 15th-century saint-composer Tallapaka Annamacharya, which combines lullaby-like simplicity with devotional intensity. In the broader Carnatic repertoire, Neelambari continues to be a preferred Raga for compositions that seek to convey the lullaby-like emotion of quietude, care, and spiritual surrender.

This is a Bhashanga Raga, as it incorporates Kaishiki Nishadam in specific phrases, such as *P D N D N P*. Characteristic prayogas like *S (G S)* produce a distinct aesthetic through a gentle Digu jaaru (descending glide), reminiscent of the soothing motion of a cradle. This Raga is traditionally rendered in Vilamba kala (slow tempo) to fully express its emotional depth and subtle nuances.

The melodic range (sthayi) spans from Mandra Nishadam to Thara Madhyamam, offering a limited but expressive scope for elaboration (Nookala, 2004).

Notable compositions in Neelambari Raga include several works by prominent composers. Saint Thyagaraja contributed masterpieces such as *Ennaga Manasuku Raani* in Adi Tala, *Uyyalalugavayya* in Khanda Chapu, *Laali Yugave* in Rupaka, and *Sri Rama Rama* in Misra Chapu (Nookala, 2004). Muthuswami Dikshitar composed *Amba Neelambari* in Adi Tala, while Tallapaka Annamacharya composed *Tholiyu* in Khanda Chapu. Swathi Thirunal also contributed to the Raga with his *Kantanodu Chennu Melle*, a *Padam* in Rupaka Tala. These compositions not only highlight the Raga's soothing nature but also its versatility in devotional and lullaby-like expressions.

Saint Thyagaraja, in particular, composed a few lullaby-style *Krithis* in this Raga, employing delicate jaaru gamakas, slow tempo, and a confined swara range, perfectly capturing the gentle, rhythmic motion of cradle-rocking.

Harikambhoji and Khamas

Both Harikambhoji and Khamas are melodically rich and ancient Ragas in Carnatic music, and while they are not as traditionally associated with lullabies as Neelambari or Anandabhairavi, they possess qualities that lend themselves beautifully to soothing, gentle compositions, including lullabies.

Harikambhoji, the 28th Melakarta Raga, is a Sampoorana Raga, known for its calm and graceful character. It lends itself well to soothing renditions, especially in Vilamba kala (slow tempo), where gentle gamakas

and soft transitions can be effectively highlighted (Nookala, 2004). These qualities make it particularly suitable for lullabies and devotional compositions, as exemplified by *Laali Laali Ani* rendered by Mangalampalli Balamuralikrishna.

Khamas, a janya raga derived from Harikambhoji, is distinguished by its aesthetic charm and vakra-arohana phrases. The raga is classified as a bhashanga raga due to the use of kakali nishada prayogas in phrases such as S N S and D N S. However, according to some scholars, kakali nishada is not employed by Thyagaraja and Muthuswami Dikshitar in their compositions set in Khamas. Renowned for its soothing appeal, Khamas is frequently featured in padams and javalis. Its ornamental gamakas and melodic sweetness create a tender, emotional atmosphere that aligns beautifully with lullaby-like expressions. The version of *Laali Laali Ani* sung by M. S. Subbulakshmi in Khamas demonstrates how effectively the Raga can be adapted for lullabies, offering a more lyrical and expressive rendering compared to its Harikambhoji counterpart.

Undedi Raamudokadu (Rupaka Tala), Dinamani Vamsa (Adi Tala) & Enduku Nirdaya (Adi Tala) are few Krithis composed by Thyagaraja in Kambhoji Raga (Nookala, 2004).

Some of the compositions in Khamas include Seetha Pathe (Adi Tala) by Thyagaraja, Saarasadala Kanda (Triputa Tala) by Muthuswami Dikshitar, and Brochevarevarura (Adi Tala) by Mysore Vasudevacharya.

Ritigoula

Ritigoula (also spelled Reetigowla) is a janya Raga of Kharaharapriya (22nd Melakarta) and is well known for its depth, devotional mood, and soothing emotional quality. While it is not as commonly associated with lullabies as Neelambari or Anandabhairavi, its soft, flowing phrases and meditative atmosphere make it highly suitable for gentle, cradle-rocking compositions.

The Raga features a vakra (zigzag) structure and is rich in gamakas, particularly on the Gandharam and Nishadam swaras. Ritigoula is often rendered in Vilamba kala (slow tempo), enhancing its contemplative and calming mood (Nookala, 2004). Its restrained melodic movement contributes to a soothing ambiance, ideal for lulling a child to sleep. Phrases like N..D M & G M P M G R S... beautifully mimic the gentle motion of rocking a cradle, adding to the lullaby-like character of the Raga.

This Raga evokes a deep sense of bhakti and tenderness, both of which align well with the emotional character of lullabies. A notable example is *Jo Jo Rama*, a lullaby-like composition in Ritigoula, where the Raga's tranquil nature supports the imagery of a mother lovingly putting her child to sleep.

Raaga Ratna Maalikache (Rupaka), Nannu Vidachi (Misra Chapu), and Dwaitamu Sukhamaa (Adi) are a few notable compositions by Thyagaraja in this Raga (Nookala, 2004).

Talas

Among the selected lullaby compositions, two are set in Adi Tala, one in Kanda Chapu, and another in Rupaka Tala. The use of these gentle, cyclic Talas reflects a deeper cultural context, as lullabies in Indian tradition date back to ancient times and have been passed down through generations, both in classical and folk music traditions.

Lullabies are fundamentally meant to soothe and calm, which is why composers often choose Tala structures that are smooth, flowing, and less rhythmically complex. Adi Tala, being an 8-beat cycle, offers a balanced and predictable rhythm ideal for slow, rocking motions. Rupaka Tala (3-beat cycle) and Kanda Chapu (5-beat cycle) also lend themselves to gentle swinging patterns, mimicking the natural cadence of rocking a cradle. These Talas allow the composer and performer to emphasize expressive gamakas and fluid melodic movement, rather than percussive complexity.

Even in Indian folk traditions, lullabies often adopt simple rhythmic cycles, typically in 3, 5, or 6 beats, aligning with the natural rhythm of human movement and breath. This connection between rhythm, emotion, and physical comfort is what makes these Talas especially suitable for lullabies across both classical and folk forms.

Lyrical Analysis

The lullaby compositions selected are primarily in Telugu, a language deeply rooted in the Carnatic music tradition and favored by composers like Thyagaraja for its expressive and lyrical quality. While compositions such as Uyyalalugavayya, Laali Yugave, and Laali Laali Ani are in Telugu, reflecting the devotional and emotional depth characteristic of lullabies, Jo Jo Rama is composed in Sanskrit. Sanskrit, an ancient liturgical language, has been integral to Carnatic music since its early development and was extensively used by composers such as Muthuswami Dikshitar. These pieces exemplify how the melodic and rhythmic elements of Carnatic music blend with vernacular expression to create soothing musical experiences passed down through generations.

Meaning of Uyyalalugavayya Sri Rama

Pallavi

uyyalalugavayya sri rama

(O Sri Rama, come swing gently in the cradle- uyyala)

Anupallavi

sayyāṭa pāṭalanu sat- sarvabhāuma

(The emperor of good (virtue), please enjoy lullaby songs)

Charanam 1

kamalajadyakhila surulu ninu kolva

(Lakshmi and all the celestials come to behold You,)

vimalulaina munindrulu dhyanimpa

(And the pure minded sages meditate on You)

kamaniya bhagavatulu guṇa kirtanamulanalapambulu seyaga

(The charming devotees sing about Your divine qualities and glory - Come O Rama, swing in the cradle)

This verse describes the divine admiration Rama receives from gods, sages, and devotees, who surround Him with song, meditation, and praise, creating a serene and loving environment.

Charanam 2

naradadulu merayucu nutiyimpa

(The celestial sage Narada and others shine as they sing Your praises,)

saramulu бага vinucu ninu nammu

(The wise listen keenly and place unwavering faith in You,)

varala sada brocucu veda sara sabhalanu jucucu sri rama

(You, Sri Rama, always protect Your devotees and preside over the essence of the Vedas - Come, O Rama, swing in the cradle.)

This verse highlights Rama's presence as one revered by saints like Narada and as the protector of the faithful, further reinforcing the peaceful and divine imagery.

Charanam 3

nava mohanaṅgulaina sura satulu

(The nine celestial musicians (navarasas) with enchanting voices,)

vivaramuga paḍaga na bhagyama

(Sing in great detail- what a fortune for me to witness this!)

navaratna maṅṭapamuna tyagaraja vinutakṛti punina sri rama

(In the jewelled pavilion (navaratna maṅṭapa), Sri Rama, adorned and praised by Thyagaraja, resides -Come, O Rama, swing in the cradle.)

The final verse is a personal reflection by Thyagaraja, expressing the blessing of witnessing such divine musical adoration, with Rama resplendently seated, praised, and worshipped.

Meaning of Laali Yugave Ma Pali Daivama

Pallavi

laali(y)ugave ma pali daivama

(Swing gently, O my protecting deity!)

This line is a loving invocation to the Lord (Rama), inviting Him to swing in a cradle- “Laali Yugave” meaning “May the cradle rock,” and “Ma pali daivama” referring to “my guardian deity.”

Anupallavi

laali(y)ugave nunu gali tiṇḍi panpu paini

(Let the breeze cool you as the cradle swings gently)

Here, the composer sets a serene and comforting scene: the baby Lord is lying in a cradle, enjoying the breeze, and lovingly being rocked.

Charanam

pammina veḍuka mira tammulatonu

(Surpassing even joyful festivities shared with younger brothers,)

kammani viḍemosaguva janakatmajatonu

(You exhibit charming grace alongside Sita - daughter of Janaka,)

bomma devara taṇḍri bhumisula toḍanu

(The father of Lord Brahma (Vishnu) and companion of Earth’s protectors,)

sammata muna Tyagaraju sannuti seyaga (laali)

(With Thyagaraja’s heartfelt approval and praise, the cradle rock)

This verse blends imagery, emotion, and devotion:

- Rama is depicted as more delightful than any celebration with His brothers (like Lakshmana, Bharata, and Shatrughna).
- He is shown with Sita, as the divine consort.
- He is referred to as the father of Brahma and protector of the universe, underscoring his supreme divinity.

- Finally, Thyagaraja, with reverence and emotion, sings his lullaby in praise.

This composition evokes the tenderness of a mother or devotee singing to lull a divine child to sleep, blending poetic beauty, musical grace, and devotional fervour.

Meaning of Laali Laali Ani

Pallavi

laali laali ani yuchera vana

mali malimito juchera

(Swing, swing gently like the breeze, O Lord, as I see you in the tender, graceful cradle)

In the pallavi, the composer lovingly invites Lord Rama to be gently rocked, as the cradle sways softly with grace and ease. The imagery conveys calmness and a gentle rhythm akin to a mother rocking her child to sleep.

Charanam 1

deva deva(y)ani pilichera mahanubhava

bhavamuna Talachera

(O divine Lord, I call upon You, the Great One, who is adored and revered by all, Your greatness resplendent)

In the first charanam, Thyagaraja addresses Lord Rama as the Divine Being, full of supreme virtue and greatness, worthy of adoration by all living beings.

Charanam 2

rama rama(y)ani palikera nishkama kama

ripu nuta rara

(O Rama, who has no selfish desires and is the enemy of lust, I sing Your name and pray with devotion)

Here, the poet reflects on Lord Rama's selflessness and purity (free from desires or "nishkama") and praises His victory over desires and temptations. The repetition of "Rama" emphasizes devotion.

Charanam 3

kori kori ninu kolichera mama

dari dari sadbhajanara

(I yearn to hold You, O Lord, and my heart is drawn to You for the eternal path of devotion)

The third charanam reflects the deep longing for divine union with Lord Rama. The phrase "kolichera" conveys a sense of affectionate longing, while the mention of sadbhajana alludes to the importance of following the path of true devotion.

Charanam 4

raja raja(y)ani pogadera tyagaraja

raja(y)ani mrokkera

(O King of kings, Thyagaraja prays to You, the supreme sovereign of all worlds)

In the final charanam, Thyagaraja addresses Rama as the supreme king of all realms, invoking His regal and divine presence. Thyagaraja praises Him as the king of kings, the ultimate ruler who governs all creation.

This composition is a devotional lullaby that speaks of Lord Rama's divine qualities, from His greatness and selflessness to His supremacy and the love He inspires in His devotees. The soft, repetitive phrases of the laali (lullaby) refrain invoke a sense of calmness, akin to a mother singing to her child, and the lyrics serve both as a prayer and a celebration of the divine.

Notation of the Keerthana in Raga Harikambhoji, Tala Adi, from *Sangeetha Sourabham* (Vol. 4) by Sreepada Pinakapani (Pinakapani, 1999)

Laghu (l₄)

Dhrutha (0)

Dhrutha (0)

; p, p, dnś, śśnddp	ṁ, pśn ndp	mrgm, m,
.. Laa.li. Laa.. li.ya.ni.	.. yu..che..	ra ... va. na.
; p dndp, dpmggrs,	; rgmpdn	śrś nddp
.. ma.. li.. ma... li.mi.	.. tho...ju.	che... .ra.

Fig.1

As shown above in *Figure 1*, every stanza, including the Pallavi, there is a noticeable pattern where each Avarthana (cycle of tala) begins with a word that is sung twice. For example, in the Pallavi, it starts with "Laali laali ani pilichera vana." In the next Avarthana, the word "vanamali" is split and rendered as "mali mali," following the same rhythmic structure. This type of word division and repetition is consistently

observed throughout the composition. The image above shows the notation of the Pallavi, which supports this recurring pattern across the entire piece.

Meaning of Jo Jo Rama

Pallavi

jO jO rAma ananda ghana

(O Rama, the embodiment of bliss and joy, I call upon You!)

In the pallavi, the composer immediately establishes a tender, loving tone, invoking Lord Rama as the source of bliss and joy. The phrase "Ananda Ghana" can be understood as the dense embodiment of bliss - a fitting tribute to the Lord's divine presence.

Anupallavi

jO jO dasharatha bAla rAma jO jO bhUja lOla rAma

(O Rama, son of Dasharatha, O Rama, who swings on the arm of your mother!)

The anupallavi praises Lord Rama's childhood and His attachment to His mother, Kausalya. The phrase "bhujala" refers to Rama being lovingly held in his mother's arms, evoking the image of a child in a cradle.

Charanam 1

jO jO raghukula tilaka rAma jO jO kuṭila taralaka rAma

(O Rama, the jewel of the Raghu dynasty, O Rama, the one who conquered the crooked and mischievous!)

The first charanam highlights Lord Rama as the pride of the Raghu dynasty and also refers to His victory over evil forces, notably Ravana, symbolized here as the "crooked" enemy.

Charanam 2

jO jO nirguNa rUpa rAma jO jO suguna kalpa rAma

(O Rama, the one without attributes (nirguna), O Rama, the one who embodies all good qualities-Suguna).

This verse acknowledges Lord Rama's transcendence beyond all attributes (nirguṇa) and emphasizes His perfection in virtue and qualities (suguna). It reflects the spiritual and ethical ideal that Lord Rama represents.

Charanam 3

jO jO ravi shashi nayana rAma jO jO phaṇivara shayana rAma

(O Rama, the one with the sun and moon as His eyes, O Rama, who lives on the serpent-bed)

Here, the cosmic vision of Lord Rama is depicted. The phrase "Ravi Shashi Nayana" refers to His eyes being like the sun and moon, symbols of light and compassion. "Phanivara Shayanna" refers to Lord Rama's divine resting place, resting on the serpent Ananta, which alludes to His connection to the eternal.

Charanam 4

jO jO mṛdu dhara bhaṣa rAma jO jO manjuLa veṣa rAma

(O Rama, the one with a soft and sweet speech, O Rama, the one with a charming form)

This verse extols Lord Rama's gentle speech and charming appearance, which are often praised in the context of His divine grace and beauty.

Charanam 5

jO jO thyagaraja arcita rAma jO jO bhakta samaja rAma

(O Rama, adored by Thyagaraja, O Rama, the beloved of all devotees)

The final charanam emphasizes Thyagaraja's deep devotion to Lord Rama. The composer himself venerates Lord Rama, who is loved by all devotees, making this a heartfelt tribute to the universal appeal and divinity of Rama.

This composition is a devotional lullaby that portrays Lord Rama in His divine splendour - from His birth to His gracious qualities, His victories, and His connection to the cosmos.

In this composition, the repeated phrase "Jo Jo" serves as a soothing, melodic pattern that mimics the gentle rocking motion often associated with putting a child to sleep.

Thyagaraja's repetitive, tender phrases invoke the Lord as a loving child and as a supreme being, making this piece a fitting lullaby that combines devotion, affection, and spiritual reverence.

Analytical Study of Melodic and Notational Aspects

This section examines the melodic structures and notation-based features of Thyagaraja’s lullaby-like compositions. All the notations presented below are sourced from *Sangeetha Sourabham (Vol. IV, Telugu)* and have been translated into English for reference and analytical purposes (Pinakapani, 1999).

Uyyalalugavayya Sri Rama

; - s , s r g , m ,	p ; , p m m g r g
.. Uy . ya .. la .	lu ... ga . vai ...
 m ; ; ; ,	r g m p m g r g  s
yya	sri ... raa ... ma .

Fig.2

The above *Figure 2* notation represents the *pallavi* of “**Uyyalalugavayya**”, composed in *Kanda Chapu tala* (10 *aksharas* per *avarthana*) and set to *Raga Neelambari*. The wave-like symbol denotes the *Kampita gamaka* on *ma*, while the arrow indicating a glide from *ga* towards *sa* signifies the *Digu* (descending) *jaru gamaka*, which beautifully evokes the cradle-like oscillation characteristic of *Raga Neelambari*. The composition begins with an *anagata graha* (or *anagata eduppu*), where the *tala* cycle starts before the lyrical entry, leaving a gap of two *aksharas* (*jaga*). Furthermore, the notation is written in *Chitra Tama Marga*, one of the *Tala Dasa Pranas*, and it is notated in the second speed (*Dwitiya Kala*).

Laali Yugave Ma Pali Daivama

 s - s , s ṇ s r g ,  m d p ,	p p m m  ; ; ; p m
.. - Laa li yu ... ga ...	ve ma .
g r - g m p , p , n p p m	 m ; ; ; r g p m g
.. - pa . li dai .. va .	ma

Fig.3

The above *Figure 3* notation represents the *pallavi* of “**Laali Yugave Ma Pali Daivama**”, composed in *Rupaka tala* (12 *aksharas* per *avarthana*) and set to *Raga Neelambari*. The wave-like mark indicates the *Kampita gamaka* on *ma*, while the arrow showing a glide from *ga* to *sa* represents the *Digu* (descending)

jaru gamaka, which beautifully conveys the cradle-like motion that is characteristic of Raga Neelambari. The composition begins with an anagata graha (or anagata eduppu), where the tala cycle starts before the lyrical entry, leaving a gap of two aksharas (jaga). In addition, a horizontal line above the swaras signifies a change in speed, where four aksharas are rendered within two aksharas. The notation is written in Chitra Tama Marga and it is notated in the second speed (Dwitiya Kala).

Laali Laali Ani

Laghu (1₄)

Dhrutha (0)

Dhrutha (0)

; p, p, d n ś, ś ś n d d p	~m, p ś n n d p	m g r g m, m,
.. Laa.li. Laa.. li.ya.ni.	.. yu..che..	ra ... va.na.
; p d n d p, d p m g g r s,	; r g m p d n	ś ś ś n d d p
.. ma.. li.. ma... li.mi.	.. tho...ju.	che....ra.

Fig.1

The above *Figure 1* notation represents the pallavi of “**Laali Laali Ani**”, composed in Adi tala (32 aksharas per avarthana) and set to Raga Harikambhoji. The wave-like mark indicates the Kampita gamaka on ma, which enhances the gentle, lullaby-like mood characteristic of the composition. The composition begins with an anagata graha (or anagata eduppu), where the tala cycle starts before the lyrical entry, leaving a gap of two aksharas (jaga). Furthermore, the notation is written in Chitra Tama Marga and it is composed in the second speed (Dwitiya Kala).

Jo Jo Rama

Laghu (1₄)

Dhrutha (0)

Dhrutha (0)

p ; , m ; , m g p m <u>m</u> g g , r	s ; ; , s ,	s ṇ s , s g m ,
Jo ... jo ... ra	ma ... a .	nan da gha na

Fig.4

The above *Figure 4* notation represents the pallavi of “**Jo Jo Rama**”, composed in Adi tala (32 aksharas per avarthana) and set to Raga Reetigowla. The composition begins with a sama eduppu (or sama graha), where the tala cycle and lyrical entry start at the same time. The presence of phrases such as S;;;,

indicating rg,rs,, as anu swaras, highlights the subtle oscillations and gentle melodic movements that are significant features commonly associated with lullabies. The notation is written in Chitra Tama Marga, one of the Tala Dasa Pranas, and it is composed in the second speed (Dwitiya Kala).

Comparison with Traditional Indian Lullabies

These compositions, though thematically akin to traditional Indian lullabies, are distinguished by their musical sophistication and structural intricacy. They frequently incorporate comforting syllables like *jo jo* and *laali*, which are common features in lullabies across India. Although simple in structure, they exhibit substantial musical sophistication.

India's diverse cultural landscape reveals a shared emotional approach to lullabies across regions—expressing tender, motherly love. In Carnatic music, this sentiment is further elevated by the imaginative use of raga, tala, and carefully chosen lyrics. The genius of the composer lies in his ability to evoke profound emotions using minimalistic and accessible musical material.

Contextual and Ritual Relevance of Carnatic Ragas & Talas in Temple Traditions

In Carnatic music, ragas serve not only as melodic frameworks but also carry deep ritual and symbolic significance, particularly in temple rituals. Ragas like *Neelambari*, *Kapi*, *Yadukula kambhoji*, and *Anandabhairavi* are associated with specific times of the day and devotional moods, and are integral to temple services (sevas) such as *Suprabhatha Seva*, *Unjalaa Seva*, and *Pavalimpu Seva*. For example, *Suprabhatha Seva*, the morning awakening of the deity, employs serene ragas like *Bowli*, creating a calm atmosphere. During *Unjala Seva*, in which the deity is ceremonially rocked on a swing, lullaby-like ragas such as *Neelambari* and *Anandabhairavi* are used to evoke tenderness. In *Pavalimpu Seva*, performed at night to put the deity to rest, ragas like *Neelambari* and *Kapi* are used to create a calming effect, with lyrics including lullaby phrases like *Uyyala*, *jo jo* and *laali*.

Khanda Chapu (5 beats) and *Misra Chapu* (7 beats) talas are favoured in lullaby and Unjala compositions due to their asymmetrical rhythms, which mirror the natural movement of rocking or swaying, enhancing the nurturing atmosphere. These talas complement the devotional purpose of these rituals by providing a rhythmic framework that aligns with the physical motions involved in the rituals. The use of diverse talas, including *Adi Tala* (8 beats) and *Rupaka Tala* (commonly 3 beats), further emphasizes the adaptability of rhythm in evoking different emotional responses within a temple setting.

These ragas and talas are not only essential for setting the mood and tone of the rituals but also play a key role in creating an immersive spiritual experience. By carefully selecting ragas that correspond to the time of day and emotional context, and pairing them with rhythmic cycles that align with the ritual

actions, temple music enhances the devotional atmosphere and deepens the connection between the deity and the devotee.

Performances Analysis Using YouTube Recordings

During this study, it was challenging to find lullaby-like compositions performed by multiple artists due to limited documentation from the 19th and 20th centuries. Not many recordings were available, and several of them were of poor quality, making it difficult to clearly hear the words and tunes. Some compositions were preserved through recordings of concert performances, while others existed as individually recorded albums, which further complicated their analysis. These compositions, being more intimate and gentler in nature, require a specific aesthetic setup to truly bring out their essence.

Documentation of such compositions is crucial to preserving this legacy and passing it on to future generations as a bundle of knowledge. During live performances and concerts, I observed that these lullaby-like compositions are often not presented due to their distinct genre.

Challenges in Performing Lullaby-like Compositions in Concert Settings

- **Emotional Connection:** Lullabies are emotionally tender and often deeply rooted in temple rituals, making it hard to recreate the same intimate atmosphere in a concert setting.
- **Audience Expectations:** Concerts often focus on virtuosic and complex pieces, while lullabies are simpler and more repetitive, potentially not engaging the audience in the same way.
- **Vocal Control:** Maintaining the soft, soothing tone required for lullabies can be challenging, as concert performances usually demand more powerful vocal delivery.
- **Rhythmic Precision:** Lullabies often use complex Chapu talas like *Misra Chapu* (7 beats), requiring precise rhythmic control, which can be difficult to maintain in concert settings.
- **Concert Environment:** The dynamic, high-energy concert atmosphere contrasts with the calm, intimate nature of lullaby-like compositions, making it harder to preserve their gentle, nurturing feel.

In performing these compositions, instrumentalists play a key role in enhancing the soothing atmosphere. Their contributions include:

- **Supporting Vocal Tone:** Instruments like the *veena*, *flute*, and *violin* must produce soft, warm tones that complement the gentle vocal delivery. Percussionists should focus on subtle rhythms rather than intricate patterns.
- **Rhythmic Precision:** Instrumentalists must skillfully execute complex Chapu talas like *Misra Chapu* (7 beats) and *Khanda Chapu* (5 beats) to maintain the delicate balance of the composition.

- **Creating the Right Mood:** Instruments help set the emotional tone, with smooth, flowing playing mimicking the swaying motion of a cradle, adding to the tenderness of the piece.
- **Controlled Improvisation:** Instrumentalists must avoid excessive ornamentation, focusing on supporting the composition's simple, nurturing qualities.

Despite these challenges, many lullaby-like compositions are still performed today as semi-classical devotional songs in live performances, often towards the end of concerts or as part of temple rituals. Experiencing these compositions live creates a unique atmosphere, one that is difficult to replicate in a recording. The live performance allows the emotional connection and soothing nature of the lullabies to come through more powerfully, creating a truly special experience for the audience.

Pedagogical Value of Lullaby-like Compositions

Lullaby-like compositions in Carnatic music offer unique pedagogical benefits. They enhance *bhava* (emotional expression), voice modulation, and aesthetic sensitivity. These pieces are typically rendered in Vilamba kala (slow tempo), which helps students develop patience, precision, and depth in rendition. They also serve as an introduction to Chapu talas like *Misra* and *Khanda Chapu*, training students in handling asymmetrical rhythmic cycles. Beyond musical technique, they immerse students in the devotional and cultural essence of Indian temple traditions. Teaching and preserving these works ensure the transmission of India's rich cultural legacy, offering a deeper appreciation of its spiritual and artistic heritage. Thus, these compositions serve not only as artistic expressions but also as pedagogical bridges linking performance, devotion, and culture.

Conclusion

Among the greatest contributors to lullaby-like compositions in Carnatic music is Saint Thyagaraja, celebrated for his inventive use of raga, tala, and emotionally resonant yet simple lyrics. His deep devotion (*bhakti*) to Lord Rama is evident throughout his works, which continue to inspire spiritually and musically. Thyagaraja's introspective approach secured his place as a central figure in the golden age of Carnatic music. His compositions remain iconic for their artistic brilliance, profound spiritual depth, and philosophical insight.

His legacy has influenced countless musicians and devotees, strengthening the bond between music, culture, and spirituality. Lullaby-like compositions, though rarely featured in concerts, are notable for their subtle beauty, devotional richness, and cultural depth. Often performed in sacred temple rituals like *Pavalimpu Seva* and *Unjala Seva*, they use soothing ragas such as Neelambari, Ritigowla, and Anandabhairavi with Chapu talas to evoke maternal affection and divine intimacy.

These pieces hold significant pedagogical and aesthetic value, teaching restraint, emotional expression, and rhythmic precision. Preserving and performing them sustains the legacy of composers like Thyagaraja and Tallapaka Annamacharya, ensuring this cultural treasure endures for future generations.

Despite challenges in regular performance, these compositions remain part of semi-classical devotional music, often concluding concerts or temple rituals. In live settings, their emotional resonance and soothing qualities emerge deeply, offering a unique, intimate experience for the audience.

Future Scope

The study of Thyagaraja's lullaby-like compositions opens several focused avenues for further research. Comparative analyses of lullaby pieces by composers such as Muthuswami Dikshitar, Syama Sastri, and Tallapaka Annamacharya may illuminate regional stylistic affinities and shared aesthetic principles. Pedagogically, these simple yet profound compositions are ideal for training expressive sensitivity and a refined command over musical aesthetics (rasa and bhava). They help students internalize tone control, subtle gamaka, and emotional nuance. Systematic documentation and revival of lesser-known lullabies will aid preservation and broaden the teaching repertoire, while interdisciplinary studies can examine their therapeutic potential for stress reduction and sleep-related well-being. By pursuing these research avenues, the study of Thyagaraja's lullaby-like compositions can continue to evolve, deepening our understanding of their aesthetic, emotional, and spiritual significance within the Carnatic tradition and enriching their preservation, performance, and pedagogy for future generations.

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