

Breaking the Shell

IF the evolution of the 'raga' into its present form had been determined historically (and there is every reason to believe that it was so determined), then the "sampurna raga" indicates a phase of the evolution which was consciously and dialectically directed by the intellectual climate of an urban elite. In Indian music, at any rate, the parent "ragas" seem to have been begotten by the filial "ragas." Before the "raga" concert had taken shape in the cultural circles of the Indian cities of the early Hindu period, there had been "ragas" of a rudimentary type—most of them, perhaps, pentatonic scales, or

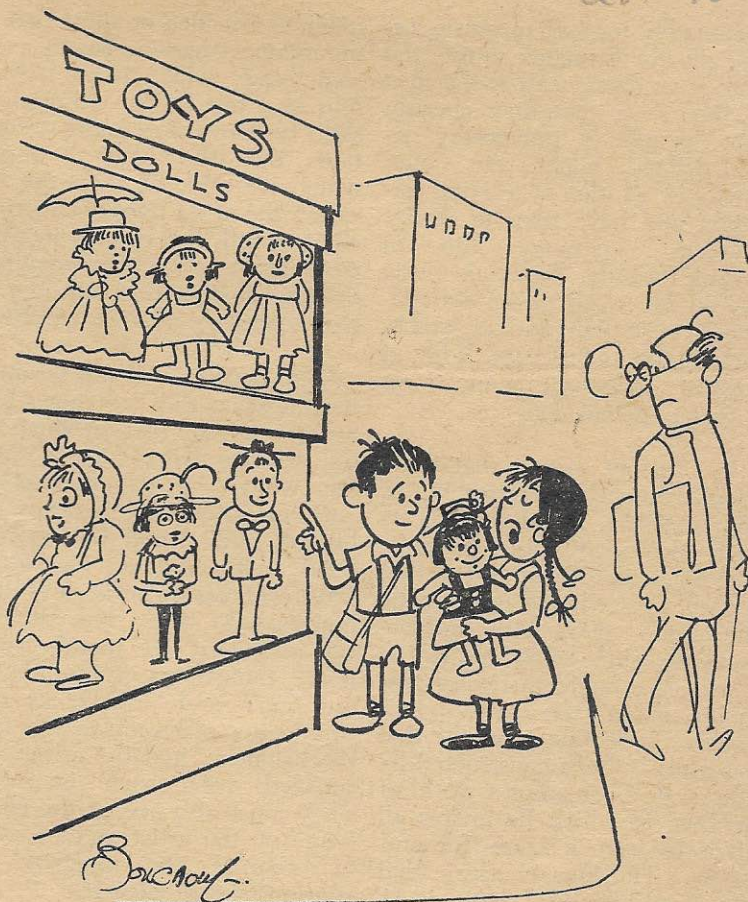
even merely "murchanas." For example, in the folk music of both the north and the south, we have the beginnings of a raga like "Nadanamakriya"; but the "raga" could not have had its present structure, because most of the folk songs of this "murchana" do not go beyond the lower tetrachord of "Nadanamakriya." The range is from the tonic ("shadja") to the dominant ("panchama"), with occasional descent into the leading note ("rishada") below the tonic. In this form, Nadanamakriya seems to occur in Western music also, especially in some of the Hungarian dances. From this "murchana" to the present form of Nadanamakriya was an easy step, because the completion of the "raga" above the dominant came to be based on the observed form of the folk tune, and from the "rishada" below the tonic to the "rishada" of the octave was fixed as the range of the raga. This was, perhaps, due to the *gestalt* urge to conceive of a thing in its complete form. From "shadja" to "panchama" and back to "shadja" might have constituted a whole structure in itself—but the extrusion into a note below the "shadja" might have set the human sensibility to achieve a *gestalt* structure by extending the "raga" beyond the lower tetrachord upto the "nishada" of the octave.

But the evolution of "Mayamalavagaula" as the raga into whose general pattern of "swaras" many ragas including Nadanamakriya were fitted, could not have been as spontaneous or as unconsciously directed as the form of Nadanamakriya. There was, doubtless, an intellectual principle acting in the evolution of this raga—an intellectual principle that must have conformed to the intellectual climate of the early Hindu period in which urban life had developed its social institutions and philosophic systems. Mayamalavagaula was not a synthetic product, perhaps; it may not have been the result of putting bits of ragas together to form a common denominator for all of them. But it was a common denominator, nevertheless, based on just those intellectual assumptions which sought to substitute the multiplicity and independence of a phenomenolo-

gical approach to existence by the unity and interdependence of a monistic approach. An objective reading of history would reveal that the movement towards monism in Indian thought was a logical development from the "nagaraka" culture; that Sankara's "advaita" was somehow prefigured in the intellectual assumptions of the "nagaraka" world view, just as surely as platonic idealism was prefigured in the intellectual assumptions of the Athenian culture, and Hegelian absolutism was prefigured in the intellectual assumptions of the national state, which again was a predominantly urban feature, because for the masses, at any rate, nationalism began and ended with the satisfaction of the basic physiological and biological urges.

Child is the father of man—this seems to be largely true of the Indian raga. The raga arose out of all that preceded it; but its identity as a raga was conferred on it by the intellectual culture of an elite whose problems were not the same as our problems. Hence in adapting the raga structure to express our needs and concerns, we have to use it in ways which may not

To achieve this, we have to re-examine our fundamental assumptions about the 'raga.' The most gratuitous of these assumption is that the form of the 'raga' is that which is fixed by custom and legitimate example. Custom here is equated with the usage permitted by an elite, and legitimacy is confined to the sanction of "people of universally acknowledged talent, experience and practical skill." Un-



"No, thank you. We too must observe some planning."

FOOLYRICS

The Shrikes

The Grey Shrike recalls gory tales
Of torture and death on sharp nails,



The Grey Shrike

For on thorns of the shrubs
Where he hunts, mice and grubs
And lizards alive he impales.

The Minivets

In dark forest glades when you think
You see red lights flicker and wink,



The Scarlet Minivet

Here, chasing winged insects
The Scarlet Minivets
With heads, it seems, dipped in
black ink.

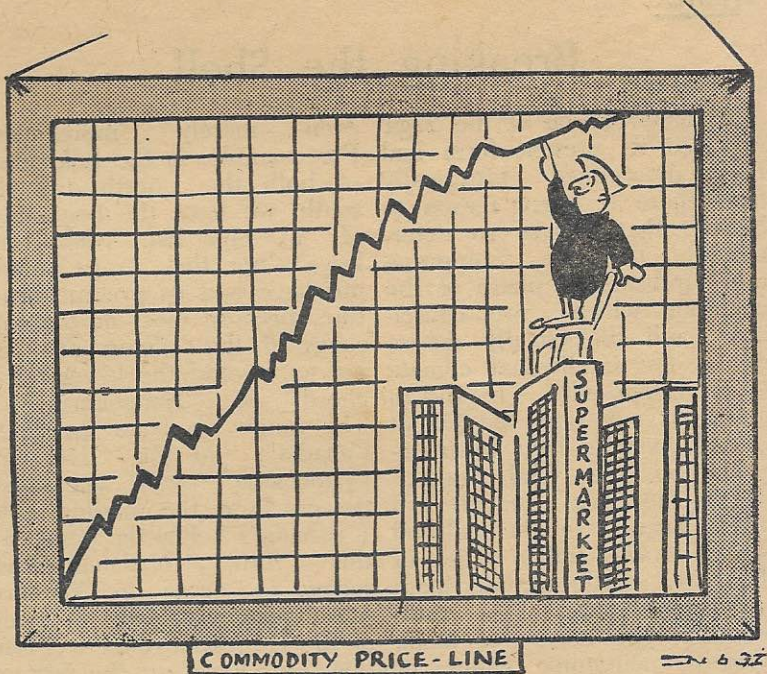
L. J. GARDNER

fortunately for Indian music, especially for Karnatak music, the elite is as crustacean as the idea of the raga that they cherish. The "people of universally acknowledged talent, etc., etc." have lost all idea of a living tradition and have tried to render musical experience into an arcane formula. Karnatak music should be saved from its self-chosen custodians and allowed to reenter the mainstream of life at a point where it connects up with our actual concerns.

We do not mean that there should be a democratisation of Indian music. In art there is no such democratisation possible. But what we do suggest is that Indian music should cease to be the jargon of an elite and become the idiom of the individual artist. We ought to realise that in his music, the artist is not merely reflecting a world that has already been constructed by others; he is creating a world of his own in which he invites all of us to have a home for ourselves. The idea of music that the "traditionalists" have is si-

milar to the idea of sport that a mountaineer has—he has to scale something which is set before him as a test for his endurance, skill, resourcefulness and resolution. But the idea of music which we advocate is one in which the artist does not merely climb a hill, but creates it, projects it out of his own imagination and invites us to join him in the experience of such creation.

The musician will still be singing the ragas that we know; but he may not be singing them in the way we expect him to sing. He would be communicating with his audiences in terms of his art, and would be answerable to them as an individual artist with his own vision of and approach to life. He will not be permitted to mouth such inane things as "sampradaya" and 'guru' and 'bhakti' as any explanation of his music. Nor can the listeners and the critics be satisfied with such inanities. They must also accept the challenge of the artist and be able to recognise the integrity or spuriousness of his art.



This is a consummation devoutly to be wished. It would lift Indian music from the morass of mediocrity and false ideas of tradition and purity and give it a character and purpose that will better accord with our purposes and concerns.

AEOLUS

FEIFFER

RECENT RIOTS AND CHARGES OF POLICE BRUTALITY HAVE BROUGHT NEW FOCUS ON THE GRIEVANCES OF THE NEGRO COMMUNITY.



BUT NO NEW FOCUS HAS BEEN BROUGHT ON THE AREA THAT SERIOUSLY DESERVES ATTENTION—THE GRIEVANCES OF THE POLICE.



LOSS OF STATUS, LOW PAY, A SENSE OF CULTURAL DEPRIVATION, AND GRAVE IDENTITY PROBLEMS HAVE INCREASINGLY ALIENATED THE POLICE MAN FROM HIS COMMUNITY.



WHERE A POLICE OFFICER COULD ONCE FEEL A SENSE OF MASCULINITY AND PRIDE HE IS TODAY RIDDEN BY A SENSE OF INADEQUACY AND RESENTMENT.



CONTINUED LACK OF COMMUNICATION PLUS FORCED RESTRAINT ON PICKET LINES THROUGH WHOM THEY COULD ONCE CHARGE FREELY HAVE BOTTLED POLICE FRUSTRATIONS TO THE BREAKING POINT.



THE IMPOSITION OF CIVILIAN REVIEW BOARDS CAN ONLY THREATEN THE POLICE-MAN'S LAST REMAINING EMOTIONAL OUTLET: BRUTALITY.



IF THE LONG HOT SUMMER IS NOT TO BE FOLLOWED BY A TEAR GASSY WATER HOSEY CATTLE PRODDY AUTUMN THE VOICE OF THIS DISENFRANCHISED MINORITY MUST FINALLY BE LISTENED TO!



UNLEASH YOUR LOCAL POLICE.



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