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# rāgam madhyamāvati

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## madhyamāvati

**M**AṄGAḶAM *pāda* *ōr madhyamāvatiyā* — sings Cuddalore Subramanyam, in his famous (numerous rāga) *rāgamālīka*, “*rāgattil ciranda rāgameḍu*”, recently popularized by singer Nityashri. Madhyāmavati is a “*maṅgaḷakara rāgam*”, that is always sung in the concluding segment of any concert. Even though musicians render the Tyagaraja composition, “*pavamāna sudadupaṭṭu*” in *saurāṣṭram* as an appropriate *maṅgaḷam*, the concert usually ends with a brief *ālāpana* of *rāgam madhyamāvati*, at least lasting for a few seconds! Again, the Papanasam Sivan *kṛti*, “*karpagamē kaṇ pārāy*” in *madhyamāvati*, praising Goddess karpagāmbāl of the kapālīśvara temple in Mylapore is often sung (perhaps followed by a tiruppugazh song) prior to the maṅgaḷam. The fact that muttusvāmi dīkṣitar chose *rāgam madhyamāvati* for his *śrīvidyā mantra bījākṣara kṛti*, “*śrī rājarājēśvarīm*” speaks volumes about the auspiciousness of *madhyamāvati*. In his *kṛti*, “*dharmasaṁvardhani*”, Dīkṣitar addresses Goddess Dharmasaṁvardhani of Tiruvaiyāru as “*mādhava sōdari, sundari, madhyamāvati śaṅkari*”.

### scale:

<b>ārōhaṇam:</b>	sa ri ma pa ni śa	(S R2 M1 P N2 S)
<b>avarōhaṇam:</b>	śa ni pa ma ri sa	(S N2 P M1 P R2 S)

An *audava* - *audava janya rāgam* of *meḷam* 22, *kharaharapriya*. Notes taken are: *ṣaḍjam*, *catuśruti riṣabham*, *śuddha madhyamam*, *pañcamam*, and *kaiśiki niṣādham*; an *upāṅga rāgam* which omits “*ga*” and “*ni*” in both ascent and descent.

- *jīva svarams* — *ri* and *ni*, and they both are rendered *dirgham*.
- *chāyā svarams* — *ri, ma, ni*
- *nyāsa svarams* — *ri, ma, pa, ni*
- *graha svarams* — *sa, ri, ma, pa, ni*
- The notes *ri* and *ni* are *kampita svarams*.
- *rañjaka prayogams* - *ri ma pa nī pa ma rī; sa Nī PA; Nī sa ri sa rī; ma ri pa ma nī pa Sa nī Rī Sa; ma pa nī pa Nī pa m*
- Compositions usually commence in *ri* (“*vināyakuni*”), *pa* (“*alagalallala*”) or *ni* (“*nādu paī*”)
- a *tristhāyī rāgam* that portrays *bhakti* and *karuṇa rasam*
- an ancient *rāgam* that is mentioned in “*saṅgīta ratnākaram*”, “*saṅgīta makarandam*”, and “*saṅgīta samaya sāram*”.
- *Madhyamāvati* is a *sarva svara mūrccana kārika rāgam*, in the sense that it lends itself to *graha bedham* techniques. The popular pentatonic scales *hindōḷam*, *śuddhasāvēri*, *udayaravicandrika*, and *mōhanam* result, when *graha bedham* is performed on the notes *ri, ma, pa, and ni*, respectively.
- *Madhyamāvati* corresponds to the *Śēnturuṭṭi paṇṇ* of the Tamil *tēvāram* music.
- It is a *rāgam* having a high concordance, since it takes the first three notes of the cycle of the fifths, that is, *sa, pa, and catuśruti ri*; and the first three notes of the fourth cycle, namely, *sa, ma and ni*.
- A *rāgam* suitable for rendering *ślokams*, *rāgamalikas*, *viruttams*, that are usually sung in the post *pallavi* segment of a concert. Also, it appears in musical dramas and dances. Aruṇācala kavi has employed this *rāgam* for many songs in his *rāma nāṭakam*.

- The *pūrvācāryas* have declared in their descriptions that *madhyamāvati* is a “*su rāgam*” (*śubhakaram* — auspicious). It is said that *madhyamāvati* is so auspicious that it is capable of warding off the sins (*dōṣdam*) caused by singing various *rāgams* in inauspicious moments. So, even a slight rendition or a brief *ālāpanā* of *madhyamāvati* wards off these sins and bestows auspiciousness.

Veṅkaṭamakḥin classifies *madhyamāvati* as a *bhāṣāṅga janyam* number 8, under the *asampūrṇa mēḷam* 22, *śrī*.

Definition —

“*madhyamāvati ssu rāgō'yam madhyama graha samyutah | ga dha lōpādaudavassyāt sāyamkālē pragīyatē ||*”

*mūrccana*

*ārōhaṇam* : *sa ri ma pa ḷ ni sa*

*avarōhaṇam*: *sa ḷ ni pa ma ri sa*

*bhāṣāṅgam*, *auḍavam*; *gāndhāra* and *dhaivata varjyam*; *madhyama graham*; *rakti rāgam*; suitable for singing in late evenings; also known as *madhyamāti*.

Subbarāma dīkṣitar’s treatise, “*saṅgīta saṁpradāya pradarsini*” gives a *lakṣya gītam* in *tripuṭa tāḷam* by veṅkaṭamakḥi, , the *kṛti* “*dharmasamvardhani*” in *rūpaka tāḷam* by muttisvāmi dīkṣitar, and a *sañcāri* in *rūpakam* by subbarāma dīkṣitar, himself.

Hindusthani *rāgams*, *madhumati sārāṅg* (also known as *madhyamādi sārāṅg*) corresponds to Karnāṭik *madhyamāvati*. It belongs to the *Kāfi thaṭh*, and has the scale *sa ri ma pa ni sa* — *sa ni pa ma ri sa*. The *svarams* taken are:- *tīvra ri*, *śuddha ma*, *kōmal ni*. *vadi* is *ri*, and *samvadi* is *pa*.

There are all sorts of compositions (*varnam*, *kṛhi*, *tillana* etc) in *madhyamāvati*. This *rāgam* has ample scope for *ālāpana*, and *pallavi* expositions are very common. Segments of *rāgamālikas*, generally the concluding segment, feature *madhyamāvati* as a preferred *rāgam*.

The trinity have their share of compositions in *madhyamāvati*, with Tyāgarāja contributing the largest.

There are numerous *rāgamālika* lines featuring *madhyamāvati* that have become famous. Maharāja Svāti tirunāl’s *sāvēri rāga kṛti*, “*bhāvayāmi raghurāmam*” carved out

as a beautiful *rāgamālika* by Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, and popularized by M. S. Subbalakshmi, has the last stanza “*kalita vara setu bandham*” the description of *rāma paṭṭābhiṣēkam*, set in *madhyamāvati*.

Again Svāti Tirunāl’s *daśāvatāra rāgamālika* “*kamalajāsyā*” features *madhyamāvati* in the *vāmana avatāram* line “*kalita vāmana rūpa*”.

Muttusvāmi dīkṣitar concludes his *daśāvatāra rāgamālika*, “*mādhavō mām pātu*”, by invoking Lord veṅkatēśvara of Tirupati as the tenth *avatāram*, in the lines “*kaliyuga vara veṅkatēśam*”, set in *madhyamāvati*.

We already pointed out that the *śrīvidyā bīja mantra kṛti* of dīkṣitar, “*śrī rājarājēśvarīm*” is in the auspicious *rāgam madhyamāvati*.

## Selected Compositions in *madhyamāvati*

### **varṇam**

sādaramiha bhaje, ādi (svāti tirunāl)  
saraguṇa nannela (toruvittiyūr tyāgarājan)

### **kṛtis**

dharma saṁvardhani, rūpakam (muttusvāmi dīkṣitar)  
mahā tripurasundari, rūpakam (muttusvāmi dīkṣitar)  
pannaga śayana padmanābha, ādi (muttisvāmi dīkṣitar)  
śrī rājarājēśvarīm , rūpakam (muttusvāmi dīkṣitar)  
brhannāyakī nannu, tīsra maṭyam (śyāma sāstri)  
kāmakṣi lōkasākṣiṇi, tripuṭa (śyāma sāstri)  
pālīncu kāmakṣi, ādi (śyāma sāstri)  
aḍigi sukhamu levva, miśra cāpu (tyāgarāja)  
alakalalla lāḍaga , rūpakam (tyāgarāja)  
evariccirirā, ādi(tyāgarāja)  
dēvī śrī tapastīrthapura, miśra cāpu (tyāgarāja)  
nagumāmu galavāṇi, ādi (tyāgarāja) - utsava saṁpradāya kṛti

nalinalōcana ninu gāka, miśra cāpu (tyāgarāja)  
 nādupai balikēru narulu, khaṇḍa cāpu (tyāgarāja)  
 mucçaṭa brahmādulaku, ādi (tyāgarāja)  
 rāmakatāsudhārāsa, ādi (tyāgarāja)  
 rāma nāma bhajarē , ādi (tyāgarāja)  
 rāma समयamu brōvarā, ādi (tyāgarāja)  
 vināyakuni valenu, ādi (tyāgarāja)  
 veṅkaṭeśa ninni, ādi (tyāgarāja)  
 śaraṇa śaraṇanucu, ādi (tyāgarāja)  
 śrīrāma jayarāma śrīngārārāma ādi (tyāgarāja) – prahḷāda bhakti vijayam  
 bhāvayē padmanābham, āsi (svāti tirunāl)  
 dēvakīsuta pāhi mām, ādi dhyāyāmi (svāti tinunāl)  
 śrīraghurāmam, khaṇḍa cāpu (svāti tirunāl)  
 kōsalendra māmavāmita, ādi (svāti tirunāl)  
 śrī[padmanābha kalayitum, miśra cāpu (svāti tirunāl)  
 sādaramiha bhaje, ādi (svāti tirunāl)  
 sārasamukha sarasijanābha, ādi (svāti tirunāl)  
 smarati nu mām sadayam, ādi (svāti tirunāl)  
 vanajākṣam cintayeham, ādi (svāti tirunāl)  
 vandān vandān bharatan (aruṇācala kavi) – rāmanāṭakam  
 gītāmudamey , ādi (kōtisvara iyer)  
 pārthasārathi nannu (rAmanAthapuram śrīnivādsa iyengār)  
 śaravaṇabhava guhanē (pāpanāśam śivan)  
 karpagamē kaṇṇpārāy (pāpanāśam śivan)  
 kaṇṇā kāttaruḷ, ādi (pāpanāśam śivan)  
 adbuta lilaikaḷ, ādi (pāpanāśam śivan)  
 āḍādu aśāgādu vā kaṇṇā, ādi (ūttukkāḍu veṅkaṭa kavi)  
 ānamaṭṭum 'sonnēn, ādi (ūttukkāḍu veṅkaṭa kavi)  
 āśaiyinai pārāḍi, ādi (ūttukkāḍu veṅkaṭa kavi)  
 eṅgē eṅgēyaḍiannamē, ādi (ūttukkāḍu veṅkaṭa kavi)  
 śaṅkari śrīrājarājeśvari, ādi (ūttukkāḍu veṅkaṭa kavi)

sundara nandakumāra, ādi (ūttukkāḍu veṅkaṭa kavi)  
sundara nanda vaikuṅṭha harē, ādi (ūttukkāḍu veṅkaṭa kavi)  
nannu brova rādā, ādi (mysore vāsudēvācāriar)  
rāmābhirāma, ādi (mysore vāsudēvācāriar)  
śaravaṇabhava, ādi (kavikuṅjara bhārati)  
śrī paramēśvara, ādi (muttiah bhāgavatar)  
śrīrāma jaya bhauma, ādi (muttiah bhāgavatar)  
śrīmad tripurasundari, ādi (muttiah bhagavatar)  
maṅgaḷa pradambulicu, rūpakam (ponnayya pillai)

(this is only a meagre list covering major composers, and is certainly not exhaustive!)

I have heard a *tillānā* in madhyamāvati, composed and rendered by N. Ramani. The *maṅgaḷam* composition, “*maṅgaḷam pradambulicu*” by the Tanjore Quartet has been in vogue as a dance piece. There are plenty of film songs in south Indian languages that are set in *madhyamāvati*.

## some allied rāgams

### śrī

The *rāgam śrī* is very close to, and often mistaken for *madhyamāvati*. It is an *auḍava vakra saṁpūrṇarāgam*, with the scale:- sa ri ma pa ni śa; śa ni pa dha ni pa ma ri Ga ri sa.

According to Dikṣitar school of *asampūrṇa mēḷa paddhati*, *rāgāṅga rāgam 22* is *śrī*.

**lakṣaṇam (Definition)** (*Veṅkaṭamakhin*):

*śrī rāgaḥ sagrahaḥ pūrṇaḥ cārḥē cālpadhaivataḥ |*  
*avarohē ga vakraḥ syāt sāyam gēyaḥ śubhāvaha.h ||*

**ārohaṇam:** sa ri ma pa ni śa

**avarohaṇam:** śa ni pa dha ni pa ma ri ga ri sa

The notes taken are: *ṣaḍjam*. *catuśruti ri*, *śuddha ma*, *pañcamam*, *catuśruti dha*, *sādhāraṇa ga*, *kākaḷi ni*. In the *ārohaṇam*, *dha* and *ni* are absent. Only the *ārohaṇam*

permits *vakra sañcāra*. In fact there are two *vakra sañcārams*. The *rāgam* gets a beauty by the elongation and *gamaka* on the note *ga*.

While *śrī* almost resembles *madhyamāvati*, the omission of the notes *dha* and *ga* in *madhyamāvati* makes a clear distinction. Phrases like “*pa dha ni pa ma ri ga ri sa*” are repeatedly employed while singing *śrī* insisting on the usage of *dhaivatam* and *gānghāram*. Hence while rendering *madhyamāvati*, care should be taken not to touch these notes even slightly. While *śrī* has greater majesty and depth, *madhyamāvati* has greater number of compositions.

### **mañiraṅgu**

*mañiraṅgu* is another *janyam* of *kharaharapriya* with scale *sa ri ma pa ni sa; sa ni pa ma ga ri sa*. It has the same *arohaṇam* as *madhyamāvati*, but takes the note *ga* in *avarohaṇam*, which is not allowed in *madhyamāvati*. It omits the *dha*, which is present in *śrī*.

### **puṣpalatika**

The *rāgam* *puṣpalatika* with the scale — *sa ri ga ma pa ni sa; sa ni pa ma ga ri sa* — is another *rāgam* closely related to *madhyamāvati* or *śrī*. This *rāgam* has been popularized by Tirupati Narayanaswami’s unique *kṛti*, “*ika nainanā*”.

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