

# Priority of Instrumentation In South Indian Music

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## ABSTRACT

*Increased usage of unmatched and unnecessary musical instruments simultaneously in a single Music Composition in South Indian Music is nowadays a tragedy to music lovers. This research is to find out the priority order of the musical instruments used in South Indian Music, taken by a Questionnaire survey from 100 university music students. 86% of the respondents enjoy the voice of a song, 84% of them enjoy the tune of the song, 68% of them enjoy the meaning of the song lyrics, 65% of them enjoy the percussion instruments and only 50% of them enjoy the tonal instruments. The vocal and tune of the song get highest priority of audience. Prioritizing the musical instruments which are used in the Carnatic and Cinema Music in the Audience's purview can be obviously show the music directors that which musical instruments can be usable and which can be avoided to minimize the cost and in the same time increasing the productivity and appreciation. It will help the audience to get more efficient music productions and in also will help the music directors to increase sales. It will also cause to lift-up their popularity among the audience.*

**KEYWORDS** –South Indian Music, Vocal Music, Classical Music, Cinema Music, Tamil Music, Cost-Effective Music Production, Priority of Instrumentation

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Increased usage of unmatched and unnecessary musical instruments simultaneously in a single Music Composition in South Indian Music is nowadays a tragedy to music lovers. This kind of practice is highly distracting the listeners in various factors. The leading and most commonly discussed factor would be the distortion of voice, pronunciation and understanding the meaning of the song would be affected by this kind of issues.

There is some research thinking found in western music in this area of research.

We love giving musicians a lot of options for their songs, but not every option can be right for every song. You should always carefully consider the instrumentation you choose. Not only will the right instruments make your track sound appropriate for its genre, they will also allow you to showcase the parts that are most important to your song.[1]

The above statement expresses the thinking of choosing the correct instrumentation for a song.

Styles of high complexity, on the other hand, are characterized by a large variety of instruments that can only be found in a small number of other styles..... In contrast, album sales of a given style typically increase with decreasing instrumental complexity. This can be interpreted as music becoming increasingly formulaic in terms of Instrumentation once commercial or mainstream success sets in. [2]

The above research finding is taken from the research Abstract deals with increasing and decreasing the instrumental complexity.

Nowadays the world is struggling to find out the cost-effective ways to produce any music. The term effectiveness includes the cost-effectivity too.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines the cost-effective as 'Producing good results without costing a lot of money'. [3]

This research is to find out the priority order of the musical instruments used in South Indian Music, taken by a Questionnaire survey from randomly selected 100 students, who are in 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> year Bachelor of Fine Arts (Music) from the Department of Music, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka.

Prioritizing the musical instruments which are used in the South Indian Classical and Cinema Music in the Audience's purview can be obviously show the music directors that which musical instruments can be usable and which can be avoided to minimize the cost and in the same time increasing the productivity and appreciation. It will help the audience to get more efficient music productions and in also will help the music directors to increase sales. It will also cause too lift-up their popularity among the audience.

The research paper consists of the sections Introduction, Methodology, Discussion and Conclusion. The content of the Introduction would be the Nature of the Problem, previous works in this area of the research and the purpose and contribution of the paper. The Section Methodology discusses about the questionnaire distribution, the questions in the questionnaire and the motivation of the questions in the questionnaire. The Discussion discusses about the answers given by the respondents, the consolidated results of the answers of the respondents in percentages. This section also discusses about the comparisons between the answers given by various respondents for the same questions and the answers given by the same respondent for the questions in a single questionnaire. There is a table summarizes the consolidated response for the all 100 questionnaires. The section conclusion concludes with the findings, conclusions, limitations, recommendation, contribution to the music audience and the music composers or music directors and the suggestions for further research.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

Questionnaire Survey Method is used to gather data from the respondents. 10 questions consists of 100 questionnaires has been distributed among randomly selected 100 students who are in their 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> year Bachelor of Fine Arts (Music) of the Department of Music of the University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka. There are around 300 students learning South Indian Classical Music in 5 different streams Vocal Music, Violin Music, Veena Music, Mruthangam Music and Tamil Sacred Music in the department of music of the University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka. The all students have eight years of previous training in the South Indian Classical Music (Carnatic Music) Vocal, when

they were learning in their 6<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> standards during their schooling. In addition, most of them have passed grade examinations in Carnatic Music Vocal; which is vary from grade 1 to 6, conducted by North Ceylon Oriental Music Society of Sri Lanka. The all 100 respondents returned their filled questionnaires during 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017 to 21<sup>st</sup> October 2017.

The questionnaire consists of the following 10 multiple choice questions.

### 2.1 Question:1

Do you enjoy Carnatic Music, Cinema Music or any other Music every day?

### 2.2 Question:2

Do you enjoy Carnatic Music, Cinema Music or any other Music at least once in a week?

### 2.3 Question:3

What is your preferred time of a day to enjoy music?

### 2.4 Question:4

What is your preferred equipment to enjoy music?

### 2.5 Question:5

What are your preferred languages to enjoy music?

### 2.6 Question:6

What are your preferred tools to enjoy music?

### 2.7 Question:7

What is your priority order in enjoying the music elements?

### 2.8 Question:8

What is your priority order in enjoying the music instruments?

### 2.9 Question:9

What is your priority order in enjoying the voice of avocalist?

### 2.10 Question:10

What is the 1<sup>st</sup> line of the song which you enjoy highly nowadays?

### 3. DISCUSSION

The research is purely based on the responds received from the questionnaire survey. Therefore, beginning discussion from the responses of questionnaire survey one by one is the correct way of research process.

#### 3.1 Do you enjoy Carnatic Music, Cinema Music or any other Music every day?

97% of the respondents answered as YES for this general question. Motive of the question is to open up their mind before asking the specific questions and to identify the strength of the responds for the specific questions. In other word, to increase the validity of the responses, the above question is asked. 97% of the respondents enjoy music. Therefore the answers for the following questions will be having high validity for this research.

#### 3.2 Do you enjoy Carnatic Music, Cinema Music or any other Music at least once in a week?

63% respondents answered as YES and 9% of them answered as NO. This question is asked the data to be used as a supplement for the 1<sup>st</sup> question, if sufficient responses are not received for the 1<sup>st</sup> question only. But, for the 1<sup>st</sup> question, 97% respondents answered as YES. Therefore the response for the 2<sup>nd</sup> question can be omitted and it seems to be the respondents didn't understand the question well, because the percentage of the answer YES is lower than the answer YES given for the 1<sup>st</sup> question. It is a contradiction.

#### 3.3 What is your preferred time of a day to enjoy music?

69% respondents prefer to enjoy music in their leisure times and 68% respondents in nights. Other times morning, noon, evening, midnights and weekends are selected by the respondents below 47%. The motive of this question is to test the audience whether they answer all questions genuinely or not. Their answer confirms that they answered the questionnaire genuinely, because they are day time students and their possible times

for the music enjoyment are nights and leisure times. Even though in the weekends they used to go to tuition classes and doing their home activities, they can't find time to enjoy music.

#### 3.4 What is your preferred equipment to enjoy music?

98% of the respondents answered as they enjoy music on their mobile phones and usage of television, radio, home theater, computer, CD player and video deck is below 67%. The motive of this question is also to verify the validity of their responses to the following questions. Validity is conformed. Because they are the music students and they have the limited financial facilities, they manage to enjoy music with their smart phones. Also another motive of this question is to determine the quality of the output of their listening instrument through the quality of the speaker of the smart phone. Sometimes if they enjoy music through a good home theatre system, their priority of music instrument may vary. Therefore in this case it can be considered that their priority of instrumentation is based on the sounding of the musical instrument through the smartphone speaker or smartphone earphone.

#### 3.5 What are your preferred languages to enjoy music?

Tamil language is preferred by 100% respondents. Other languages are also preferred by lower than 36% respondents but along with Tamil language. Tamil is the mother tongue of the all respondents. The motive of this question is to cross-check whether they are giving much priority to the lyrics and meaning of the song.

#### 3.6 What are your preferred tools to enjoy music?

78% of the respondents enjoy music in earphone, 49% are in speaker and below 41% enjoy in sound boxes and headphones. If this response is discussed along with the response received to the question 4, it can be learnt that 78% of the respondents enjoy music using their smart phones along with earphones. Therefore it can be

concluded that more than 3/4 of the audience enjoy music using their smart phones along with earphones. Therefore in this case it can be considered that their priority of instrumentation is based on the sounding of the musical instrument through the smartphone with earphone.

### 3.7 What is your priority order in enjoying the music elements?

This question is the backbone of this research. The answers of the respondents clearly show the reality of the music enjoyment of audience. 86% of the respondents enjoy the voice of a song, 84% of them enjoy the tune of the song, 68% of them enjoy the meaning of the song lyrics, 65% of them enjoy the percussion instruments and only 50% of them enjoy the Aerophones, Chordophones and Electrophones. The vocal and tune of the song get highest priority of audience. The meaning of the lyrics is connected to the pronunciation of the vocalist and the meaning gets the second priority. The percussion instruments generally don't disturb the vocal and the pronunciations, thus the percussion instruments get the third priority of the audience. The tonal instruments are usually played along with the vocal, repeating the vocal and mostly this type of instruments are used to follow the vocal. Therefore, there are higher possibilities to interfere, distort or distract the clarity of the vocal, pronunciation and the meaning of the lyrics. These can be the reasons for the least priority is given to the tonal instruments by the audience.

### 3.8 What is your priority order in enjoying the music instruments?

In contrast with the above response, the Violin gets 77%, the Flute gets 74%, Veena gets 69% and the percussion instruments get below 64% priority from the audience. It clearly shows that the students didn't understand the question and also the percentages tally with their self-bias of their own chosen instruments and their intention to learn these instruments. More than 95 percent of the respondents' major subject is vocal music. They prefer to master in the violin as well

because it is one of the offered subjects in the department and also the instrument is easy to buy and easy to handle. Most of the students prefer to learn flute but it is not offered by the department, due to lack of resources. The instrument Veena is preferred to be mastered by a good number of students next to violin because that is the only option to play songs other than violin. Therefore they expressed their learning preference instead of the listening preference for the particular question. After identifying the contradiction, one of the researchers had a discussion with the respondents and asked whether their answer for the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> question is correct? They answered as the 7<sup>th</sup> is correct and they misunderstood the 8<sup>th</sup> question and answered with their learning preferences instead of listening preferences. Therefore the responses for this question can be omitted.

### 3.9 What is your priority order in enjoying the voice of a vocalist?

This question is asked to cross-check their answers whether they really enjoy music daily as per they stated in the answer for the 1<sup>st</sup> question. The answers confirm their earlier statements. 73% response received for the singer Unnikrishnan who is one of the top artists in both South Indian Cinema and Carnatic music industries. S.P. Balasubramaniam who is one of the senior top artists in the cinema industry gets 61% responses. Hariharan who is also a top singer in the cinema industry gets 58% responses. Others get below 54%. Anyhow the results show that the respondents carefully answered the questions.

### 3.10 What is the 1<sup>st</sup> line of the song which you enjoy highly nowadays?

This question is also asked to cross-check the audience. 91% of the audience given cinema song lines, 53% of the audience given Carnatic music song lines and only 12% of them stated other song categories. The answer validates their previous responses to other questions.

and cinema Music, taken by a Questionnaire survey from randomly selected 100 students, who are in 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> year Bachelor of Fine Arts (Music) from the

Ques. No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
%Res.										
a	Yes 97	Yes 63	Morning 43	Mobile 98	Tamil 100	So.bo. 41	To.Ins. 50	Mru. 64	Har. 58	Cine. 91
b	No 03	No 09	Afternoon 13	TV 67	Telugu 22	Speaker 49	Per.Ins. 65	Thab. 42	Unni. 73	Clas. 53
c			Evening 47	PC 24	Hindi 36	Hd.Ph. 33	Vocal 86	Drum 16	Ba.Mu. 17	Oth. 12
d			Night 68	Deck 07	Mal. 10	Ear Ph. 78	Mean. 68	Gat. 17	Bala.Su 61	
e			Midnight 04	Radio 52	Eng. 20		Tune 84	Gen. 11	Ilia. 21	
f			Leisure 69	Ho.Th. 30	Others 09			Bon. 03	Uthith. 06	
g			Weekends 09	Cd Pl. 15				Dol. 04	Sesha. 10	
h								Tha. 18	Bom.Je 30	
i								Udu. 03	Nith. 52	
j								K.B. 40	Suth. 23	
k								Vio. 77	Chit. 54	
l								Vee. 69	Chin. 18	
m								Sit. 05	SAtha. 15	
n								Gui. 26	Jan. 24	
o								Flu. 74	Susi. 20	
p								Nad. 32	Shrey. 40	
q								Arm. 14	Other 08	
r								Saran. 08		
s								Other 01		

**4. TABLE-1**

**Consolidated Responses of the Questionnaire**

Table-1 shows the questions and the responses received as per discussed in the section 3-discussion from 3.1 to 3.10.

**5. CONCLUSION**

This research has found the priority order of the musical instruments used in South Indian classical

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The answers of the respondents clearly show the reality of the music enjoyment of audience. The vocal and tune of the song get highest priority of audience. The meaning of the lyrics is connected to the pronunciation of the vocalist and the meaning gets the second priority. The percussion instruments get the third priority of the audience. The least priority is given to the tonal instruments by the audience.

The research finding is limited to South Indian Music. There are high possibilities for this research finding based on the purview of the audience who are educated with music already. This finding might not

be fit to the music enjoyment of the layman audience in music. Also the research finding is limited to the purview of the Tamil audience who live in Sri Lanka.

Further research can be extended or replicated with different audience with other nations, different audio

equipment and tools, other languages and general music lovers who are layman in music. Also further research can be conducted using other research methods like experimental or action research to test the results of this research finding.



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