



Arts Explorer

Project 2: Become a Raga Mala Poet



- Pick a concert from season 1 or season 2
- Read about the musical style
- Listen to the concert and use the guide to create your own poem
- Send us your poem, and how you created it. You can be featured in our social media and make a chance to become the Raga Mala Poet of the Month.

Ragamala poems are an interesting way to try and capture the experience of music in words. German poet Heinrich Heine famously said 'where words leave off, music begins'. In season 1, poet Sudeep Sen created beautiful poetry with the concerts that captured his experience of the music beautifully.

To help you dig deeper in your artistic experience, you can answer questions about the Raga you want to describe in a poem:

1. If the Raga were an element in nature, what element would it be?

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1. If the Raga were a colour, what colour would represent it best

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2. If the Raga were a time of day, what time of day would it be?

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Send your poem to: admin@sangeet4all.com to be featured on our social media and perhaps become Raga Mala Poet of the month. Read the poem by India's famous poet Sudeep Sen about the concert by Pt Shubhendra Rao and Saskia Rao de Haas for inspiration: how beautifully words can capture a musical experience.

SUDEEP SEN
ISOTOPIC CHORDS
for Shubhendra Rao & Saskia de Haas Rao

1. RAAG HEMANT

Sympathetic strings vibrate in unison —
tensile strength stretch, holding chords intact.

Asymmetrical double-domed sitar marries a cello —
isotopic vibrations going beyond cosmic echoes.

Cello calls for calm — in its baritone there is
a deep yearning for peace in these turbulent times.

Sitar picks up the treble notes — a clarion call
for balance — both instrument sing in harmony.

The rolling sounds of bass notes glide —
making invisible sonic crests and troughs.

It is melancholic, moving, and deeply healing.
From its heavy depths, rises lightness

only a seasoned soul of an artist can match —
heartbeats mapping exactly, the raag scales.

As the bow's sable-hair caress the cello strings,
tonal calibrations expand and contract.

Sitar sings in a centrifugal-centripetal chorus,
nail-plectrum adding shine to the ivory inlay.

Rose and marigold petals, strewn generously
on white linen — a bouquet of ritual colours.

Gold-emboldened Saraswati sits statuesque,
god-like — her veena poised, angled on her lap.

Fleet-fingers fly fleetly over multiple frets —
never tripping or missing a beat.

2. RAAG CHARUKESI, BHOOPALI, BHAIRAVI

Cardinal points — North, South — bipolar axis.
Hindustani longitude, Carnatic latitude, merges.

Melodic umbrella shields elements — keeping notes,
its echoes safe in the womb — *om, aum, om, aum* —

birth, life, death, rebirth — nirvana's perennial song.
Tabla fingers — crossweave, notate, enunciate —

spelling out all, revealing nothing — pure revelation —
atibbanga morphing into *tribbanga*. Iconic isotopes.

Only seven notes exist in all — yet music is infinite.
Amazing Grace dissolves into *Phulay Phulay* —

Raag Bhoopali Bhairavi blending, a trancelike high —
baritonal, meditative — trinity's triadic triumph.



Poetry © Sudeep Sen 2020/1. Photograph © Sanjit Debbar 2021

You can continue with another project: Become a Music Critic or Raga Mala Painter