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Mathematical Thought and Zoomorphism in the Rhythmic Practice of Carnatic Percussion Performance

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Carnatic vocal and instrumental music of South India features many aspects of musical expression devoted to Hindu philosophy. Many of the musical instruments, *raga*, *swara*, compositions, and lyrics are associated with Hindu deities. Numerological and zoomorphic symbolism pervade Carnatic music as expressions of Hindu philosophy. South India's art music tradition is almost entirely based on vocal music. The pervasive use of Hindu philosophy in Carnatic vocal music is easily identifiable because of the amount of iconographical and lyrical evidence demonstrating Hindu devotion. Much of the instrumental music in the Carnatic tradition is based on vocal composition tying that repertoire to Hindu philosophy as well.

In sound-based analyses of instrumental Carnatic percussion performance practice, recurring mathematical and zoomorphic phenomena are apparent such as the prevalence of bovine symbolism and rhythmic divisions, subtractions, and additions based on the numbers two, three, and five. In many examples of cadential formulae used in Carnatic percussion music in different *talas*, zoomorphic influence and mathematical thought frequently occur simultaneously. This poster will demonstrate approaches to music analyses of rhythmic phrasing in Carnatic percussion music that shows both evidence of mathematical thought and zoomorphic symbolism.