

Understanding & Harmonizing Raga Mayamalavagowla

Basic Analysis based on Western Interval Naming, Comparison with similar scales, Modes, Finding Chords (Harmony from Scales / Raaga)

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Mayamalavagowla the Raaga

Mayamalavagowla has the following notes (in Indian solfege / notation) :

- ārohaṇa (ascend) : S R1 G3 M1 P D1 N3 S
- avarohaṇa (descend) : S N3 D1 P M1 G3 R1 S

Using interval names, the raga can be written as:

- Sa - the root
- ri - minor 2nd
- Ga - major 3rd
- ma - perfect 4th
- Pa - 5th
- dha - 6th
- Ni - major 7th

Using 'm' for minor and 'M' for major :

Raga Mayamalavagowla : Root m2 M3 4 5 m6 M7 Root

C Mayamalavagowla

Let us take Mayamalavagowla starting from C - C as the root (Sa).

In the previous section, we found that the raga mayamalavagowla when spelled in terms of the interval names looks like this :

Root m2 M3 4 5 m6 M7

When C is the root, let us find out the remaining notes :

C Mayamalavagowla : C Db E F G Ab B C

Writing the scale using all the different alphabets : We could have written the scale as C C# E F G G# B C, but when C# is written as Db and G# is written as Ab, we get to write the scale using all the different alphabets without repeating C and G.

Understanding by Comparison

Mayamalavagowla Raaga & Major Scale (Ionian) - 2 notes difference

C Major Scale : C D E F G A B C (Root M2 M3 4 5 M6 M7 Root)

C Mayamalavagowla : C Db E F G Ab B C (Root m2 M3 4 5 m6 M7 Root)

The second note (D - Db) and sixth note (A - Ab) are the two notes that are different.

To get Mayamalavagowla from the Major Scale (Ionian) :

1. Change the Major 2nd note to a minor 2nd. Minor 2nd will be notated as b9 (flat ninth) when used in a chord name.
2. Change the Major 6th note to a minor 6th. Minor 6th can be called a #5 (sharp 5) or b13 (flat 13th) when naming a chord.

Mayamalavagowla Raga & Phrygian (minor) - 2 notes difference

C Phrygian Scale : C Db Eb F G Ab Bb C (Root m2 m3 4 5 m6 m7 Root) - *the All minor Scale (not a formal name)*

C Mayamalavagowla : C Db E F G Ab B C (Root m2 M3 4 5 m6 M7 Root)

The third note and seventh note are the two notes that are different.

To get a Mayamalavagowla from the Phrygian scale :

1. Change the minor 3rd note to a Major 3rd. Changing the quality of the 3rd note makes the scale to change from a minor to Major. Mayamalavagowla is a major scale because its third is a major while phrygian is a minor scale because its 3rd is a minor.
2. Change the minor 7th note to a Major 7th.

The minor 2nd is a common factor for both the scales which can be used in Suspended flat ninth chords. But be aware of the minor 3rd - major 3rd differences.

The 7th chords change

Due to the minor 3rd and minor 7th notes, **the Phrygian scale has the minor 7th chord** - Root, minor 3rd, 5th, minor 7th

Due to the major 3rd and major 7th notes, **Mayamalavagowla has the Major 7th chord** - Root, major 3rd, 5th, major 7th

Modes of Mayamalavagowla

Write the modes, find the chords, name them

Here we go through the different modes of Mayamalavagowla, starting from each of the scale note and running through its octave, taking the notes from Mayamalavagowla scale.

Chord suggestions are found from each mode. It is possible that all the notes of the chords found cannot be played on the guitar at the same time. Omit 5th or 3rd and try the chord, listen if it sounds alright.

This exercise will

1. show us how to form chords from the scale notes, and
2. use the interval names to name the formed chords.

First mode of Mayamalavagowla

The first mode is the scale Mayamalavagowla as it is, from Sa to Sa. First mode of C Mayamalavagowla will be from C to C.

Notes	C	Db	E	F	G	Ab	B	C
Intervals	Root	m2	M3	4	5	m6	M7	Root

Chords for first mode of Mayamalavagowla

The Root, M3, 5th and M7th notes form a Major 7th chord. These notes are shared by the Major Scale (Ionian) too.

Minor 2nd and minor 6th are the notes which make MayaMalavaGowla different from major scale. So using minor 2nd (flat 9th) and/or minor 6th (#5) can make the chord more characteristic of Mayamalavagowla.

For example, for C Mayamalavagowla, each of the following chords with root C could work :

- Root – M3 – m6th : augmented chord
- Root – M3 – 5th : major chord
- Root – M3 – 5th – M7th – 4th (11th) : major 11th chord
- Root – 4th - 5th – M7th – b 9th : sus b9 chord (*refer Jazz Theory Book by Mark Levine. Section on Phrygian Mode of Major scale.*)
- Root - major 3rd – 5th - major 7th - flat 9th (to get this chord, play the major 9th chord and make the Major 2nd note a minor 2nd)

Second mode of Mayamalavagowla

To find the second mode, we start from the second note of Mayamalavagowla.

Since we started with C Mayamalavagowla (the scale starting with C as root), to find the second mode, we start from the second note Db. (more about modes)

Notes	Db	E	F	G	Ab	B	C	Db
Intervals	Root	m3	M3	#4	5	m7	M7	Root

Chords for second mode of Mayamalavagowla

- Root - m3 - 5th - m7 : minor 7th chord
- Root - M3 - 5th - M7 : major 7th chord
- Root - M3 - 5th - m7 : dominant 7th chord
- Root - m3 - 5th - M7 : minor major 7th chord
- Root - m3 - #4 (same as b5th) : diminished chord

Each of the above chords with Db as root could work for C Mayamalavagowla.

For example when playing C Mayamalavagowla, Db minor 7th will have notes within the C Mayamalavagowla scale, and can be tried as a possible harmony.

Third mode of Mayamalavagowla

To find the third mode, we start from the third note of Mayamalavagowla.

Since we started with C Mayamalavagowla (the scale starting with C as root), to find the third mode, we start from the third note E.

Notes	E	F	G	Ab	B	C	Db	E
Intervals	Root	m2	m3	M3	5	m6	M6	Root

Chords for third mode of Mayamalavagowla

Chord Suggestions :

- Root - M3 - 5th - M6 : Major 6th chord
- Root - M3 - m6 (same as #5th) : augmented chord
- Root - minor 2nd (same as b9) - 5th : sus b9 chord

Each of the above chords with **E as root could work for C Mayamalavagowla**. For example when playing C Mayamalavagowla, E augmented will have notes within the C Mayamalavagowla scale, and can be tried as a possible harmony.

Fourth mode of Mayamalavagowla

To find the fourth mode, we start from the fourth note of Mayamalavagowla.

Since we started with C Mayamalavagowla (the scale starting with C as root), to find the fourth mode, we start from the fourth note F.

Notes	F	G	Ab	B	C	Db	E	F
Intervals	Root	M2	m3	#4	5	m6	M7	Root

Chords for fourth mode of Mayamalavagowla

Chord Suggestions:

- Root - m3 - 5th : Minor
- Root - m3 - 5th - M7 : Minor Major 7th chord
- Root - m3 - #4 (same as b5th) : diminished chord
- Root - M2 - 5th : sus 2 chord
- Root - m3 - Major 7th - Major 2nd (9th) : Minor major 9th chord

Each of the above chords with **F as root could work for C Mayamalavagowla**. For example when playing C Mayamalavagowla, F minor chord will have notes within the C Mayamalavagowla scale, and can be tried as a possible harmony.

Fifth mode of Mayamalavagowla

To find the fifth mode, we start from the fifth note of Mayamalavagowla.

Since we started with C Mayamalavagowla (the scale starting with C as root), to find the fifth mode, we start from the fifth note G.

Notes	G	Ab	B	C	Db	E	F	G
Intervals	Root	M2	m3	#4	5	m6	M7	Root

Chords for fifth mode of Mayamalavagowla

Chord Suggestions :

- Root - m3 - 5th : Minor
- Root - m3 - 5th - M7 : Minor Major 7th chord
- Root - m3 - #4 (same as b5th) : diminished chord
- Root - M2 - 5th : sus 2 chord
- Root - m3 - Major 7th - Major 2nd (9th) : Minor major 9th chord

Each of the above chords with **G as root could work for C Mayamalavagowla**. For example when playing C Mayamalavagowla, F minor chord will have notes within the C Mayamalavagowla scale, and can be tried as a possible harmony.

Sixth mode of Mayamalavagowla

To find the sixth mode, we start from the sixth note of Mayamalavagowla.

Since we started with C Mayamalavagowla (the scale starting with C as root), to find the sixth mode, we start from the sixth note Ab.

Notes	Ab	B	C	Db	E	F	G	Ab
Intervals	Root	m3	M3	4	m6	M6	M7	Root

Chords for sixth mode of Mayamalavagowla

Chord Suggestions :

- Root – M3 – m6th (sharp 5th) : augmented
- Root - m3 – M7 : Minor major 7th without fifth note
- Root - M3 - M7 – m3 (#9th – play one octave high than root) : Major 7th #9th (no fifth)
- Root – M3 – M7 – 4th (11th note): Major 11th chord (no fifth)
- Root – M3 – M6th : Major 6th chord (no fifth)
- Root – M3 – M7th - M6th (13th note) : Major 13th chord (no fifth)

Each of the above chords with **Ab as root could work for C Mayamalavagowla**. For example when playing C Mayamalavagowla, F minor chord will have notes within

Understanding Raga Mayamalavagowla

the C Mayamalavagowla scale, and can be tried as a possible harmony.

Seventh mode of Mayamalavagowla

To find the seventh mode, we start from the seventh note of Mayamalavagowla.

Since we started with C Mayamalavagowla (the scale starting with C as root), to find the seventh mode, we start from the seventh note B.

Notes	B	C	Db	E	F	G	Ab	B
Intervals	Root	m2	M2	4	b5	m6	M6	Root

Chords for seventh mode of Mayamalavagowla

There is no 3rd or 5th or 7th in this mode. We could just try making chords by taking every alternate note, for example. Else according to which note is being used in the melody, we could try adding other notes.

The 7th mode of Major scale and Melodic minor gives us Locrian and Super locrian scales , both of which are 'flat five' scales. Seventh mode of Mayamalavagowla also has a flat five and no fifth.

Chord Suggestions :

- Absence of 3rd, 5th and 7th in this mode prevents us from forming any standard named chords for this mode

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