



APPRECIATING CARNATIC MUSIC

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INTENDED AUDIENCE : General

COURSE OUTLINE :

Carnatic music is a vibrant musical tradition that has evolved, and is largely practiced, in Southern India and wherever else there is a significant diaspora of South Indians. A highly nuanced and tonally rich melodic music, its rhythmic aspect too is considerably complex. As much as it is rooted in tradition there is immense demand on the improvisational skills of the musicians. The coming together of these two aspects in a concert can give the listener a musical high.

What makes this music so unique and rich? What happens in a typical concert? What do we look for? Who were the great musicians and composers who have made the music what it is today? These are some of the questions this course will try to answer. What does a student need to bring to this course? An interest in music, a willingness to bite into a music technically and aesthetically very different from popular music-s and other forms like Western Classical music. It would help if you have heard Carnatic music before, but that is not absolutely necessary. You will hear plenty during the course.

ABOUT INSTRUCTOR :

Prof. Lakshmi Sreeram is an Associate Professor, Ahmedabad University. Initiated into Khayal by Smt. Madhubala Chawla under whose guidance she passed with a first class the Visharad exam of the Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, Dr. Lakshmi Sreeram has been trained by masters like Pt. Vasantryao Kulkarni and Pt. Babanrao Haldankar. She continues her learning from the acclaimed vocalist and musicologist Pt. Satyasheel Deshpande. Lakshmi has given critically acclaimed performances at leading festivals and music venues.

Prof. Lakshmi Sreeram has taught elective courses at IIT Madras on Appreciating Carnatic and Hindustani Music and has put together a widely subscribed and well appreciated course on Carnatic Music for NPTEL in 2015.

Lakshmi is a researcher and writer for leading media publications like The Hindu, Firstpost etc. She received the Fulbright Scholarship for 2019-2020 to study improvisation in Jazz at the University of Colorado, Boulder, USA. Since her return she continues to write and research into the principles of Raga Sangeet, exploring parallels in language theories of the Sanskrit tradition.

COURSE PLAN :

Music in India

Variety of Music in India – Folk, popular, religious and classical music.

Musical material

The 12 pitches or swara sthana-s

The scale - natural or just tempered scale as opposed to the equal or even tempered scale.

Raga - the basic melodic facet of Indian music

What makes for a raga – swara (note/tone), gamaka (embellishment), pidi (phrase), graha, nyasa, jeeva swaras.

Variety of raga-s and their classification. The 72 melakarta schema

Tala - the rhythmic facet

Concepts of the avartanam, samam, and eduppu

Suladi sapta tala schema

Composition

Composers - the Carnatic trinity and their contribution; before them and after them

Kinds of composition: Varnam, Kriti, Padam, Javali.

Bhakti and Carnatic Music

Improvisation

What is the nature of improvisation in Carnatic music; various kinds of improvisation - alapana, neraval, swara prastara and tanam. The RTP - Ragam, Tanam, Pallavi.

Presentation of a Carnatic concert - the meshing of the compositional and improvisational aspects.

Accompaniment - its unique nature in Carnatic music, Percussive and melodic instruments, Listening to a Carnatic concert - aesthetic and technical aspects.