

Now, learn to appreciate the nitty gritty of Carnatic music online

Also on the anvil is a course on film appreciation by the organiser NPTEL

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If you love Carnatic music and want to learn about its nitty-gritty to genuinely appreciate it, here is your chance to officially do so; that too, online! The National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL), a joint initiative of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institute of Science (IISc), is now offering an online course to learn to appreciate Carnatic music, which is set to commence from May 1.

The surprise element here is that NPTEL, which is known for quality engineering videos, is venturing into a new area of video teaching – learning to appreciate Carnatic music.

Speaking to Bangalore Mirror, an NPTEL official said when they were researching on music, they saw that "there were many online courses for Western classical music across the world but no such course for our very own Carnatic music and hence decided to introduce it."

NPTEL project co-ordinator Andrew Tangaraj, who is also associated with IIT-Madras, said Carnatic music is a vibrant musical tradition that has evolved and is largely practised in South India and wherever there is a significant diaspora of South Indians. A highly nuanced and tonally rich melodic music, its rhythmic aspect too has been con-



The online initiative was started by IITs and NPTEL

siderably complex. As much as it is rooted in tradition, there has been an immense demand on the improvisational skills of the musicians.

The coming together of these two aspects in a concert can give any 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? (He/she just needs to bring) An interest in music; the willingness to bite into music technically; and the aesthetic differ-

ence from popular music and other forms like Western classical music," an official said. "It would help if you have heard Carnatic music before, but that is not absolutely necessary, because you will hear plenty during the course."

Dr Lakshmi Sreenam, who has been teaching introductory courses on Carnatic and Hindustani music at IIT Madras, will lead the course.

NPTEL is also introducing a course on film appreciation. The course focuses on helping the participants appreciate cinema by understanding its distinct language, its narrative complexity and the way films control and stimulate our thoughts and feelings. Through various examples

from Indian and international cinema, the course will explain how cinema, as a visual medium, engages with us in constructing meaning.

The two-month course is set to begin from May 1 and will have 20 hrs of lectures available on the portal and on the website. The videos can be viewed online (on the portal) or downloaded for self-study (from npTEL.ac.in). Assignments will be given from time to time which will have to be completed and submitted.

These will be scored, according to the instructor Prof Aysha Iqbal Viswamohan, department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras.

COURSE CONTENT FOR CARNATIC MUSIC

- Music in India
- Variety of Music in India - Traditions of art or classical music in India
- Carnatic Music - the southern music
- Musical material.
- The 12 pitches or swara sthanas
- The scale - natural or just tempered scale as opposed to the equal or even tempered scale
- Ragas - the basic melodic facet of Indian music
- What makes for a raga - swaras (note/ tone), gamaka (embellishment), pidi (phrase), graha, nyasa, joava swaras
- Variety of ragas and their classification. The 72 melakarta schema
- Tala - the rhythmic facet
- Concepts of the avartana, samam, and eduppu
- Composition
- Listening to a Carnatic concert - aesthetic and technical aspects



A screenshot of the website detailing the learning programme