



APPRECIATING CARNATIC MUSIC

PROF. DR. LAKSHMI SREERAM

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
IIT Madras

TYPE OF COURSE : Rerun | Core | UG

COURSE DURATION : 8 weeks (17 Aug' 20 - 9 Oct' 20)

EXAM DATE : 17 Oct 2020

INTENDED AUDIENCE : General

Type of Course: Elective UG / PG

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 :

Dr. Lakshmi Sreeram Trained in Carnatic music since her childhood, Lakshmi has been a performer for over 25 years. She also performs Khayal, a north Indian tradition of classical music. She has a Ph.D in Philosophy from the University of Bombay focusing on the idea of dhvani in Anandavardhana's 2019s Dhvanyaloka, a 9th century Sanskrit text in the tradition of Alankarasastra (literary theory). She has been teaching introductory courses on Carnatic and Hindustani music at the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology, Madras. She is also a freelance journalist.

COURSE PLAN :

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 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/ton), 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 avartana, samam, and eduppu

Suladi sapta tala schema

Composition

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

Kinds of composition

Some great compositions

Carnatic music and notation

Improvisation

What is the nature of improvisation in Carnatic music; various kinds of improvisation - alapana, neraval, swara prastara and tanam

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.