

# outrEACH

outrEACH is a non-profit organization founded in Bombay in 1999.

**Our Mission** is to communicate for a cause that we care about.

**Our Goal** is to reach out to marginalized sections of society like the elderly, the disabled, women, children, and people in distress in India; and make positive changes to their physical reality as well as existing attitudes towards them.

**Our Objective** is to curb the largely unreported problem of elder abuse in Bombay, first, by making people aware of its existence and its symptoms, and second, by identifying the abused elderly, encouraging them to open up, and mobilizing them to participate in a dialogue, which will be communicated directly to policy-makers, starting from 2002.

**Our Tool** is communication – verbal to non-verbal, audio to visual, one-on-one to world-wide-web.

### **Projects:**

- Documentary about Elder Abuse (work-in-progress)
- 2-week long press campaign about Elder Abuse in partnership with Bombay Times in January 2000, which was instrumental in the opening of a special police cell for senior citizens in March 2000
- 18 poster designs in collaboration with AGNI and the Times of India for awareness about cleaning up Bombay

### **Humanitarian Services – Played an Active Role in:**

- Collecting and sending over 275 tons of relief material from Bombay to Orissa within a month of the supercyclone in October 1999
- Helping survivors of the major earthquake in Gujarat after January 26, 2001, in collaboration with other NGOs and major corporations

### ***This performance was organized by:***

outrEACH trust  
c/o Rajul Mehta  
15, Nagin Mahal, 4th floor  
82, Veer Nariman Road  
Churchgate, Bombay 400 020, India  
Phone: (91-22) 288-3677

Pixel Obsessive Studio  
c/o May Lin  
436 West 18th Street, 2nd floor  
New York, NY 10011, USA  
Phone: (212) 627-2016  
E-mail: info@pixelobsessive.com

# outrEACH

*presents*

## A Veena Recital



***by Vijaya Krishnamurthy***

**Monday, June 11, 2001, 8:00 pm**

***Your contribution towards this performance  
will support outrEACH to meet its goal.***

## *An Introduction to Carnatic Music*

This ancient and advanced system of music is based on a rational division of the octave, and in this respect, Carnatic music resembles older Western music. Yet, unlike Western music in which the absolute pitch of each note is specified, the Carnatic system is based on a relative positioning of the notes, with a reference pitch provided by a drone instrument, a Tambura, or an electronic Sruthi box.

The music is based on melody or Raga. A specific set of notes in the ascending and descending scales defines a raga and the music is set to a rhythmic pattern called Tala. Indeed, the raga system is complex in that a raga is specified not only by a set of notes, but in addition by precise Gamakas (shifting of the frequency of those notes) and specific phraseology (chains of notes for that raga) and emphasis of certain notes.

A typical concert piece consists of a lyric set in a specific raga and tala, forming a skeleton. Before each main piece, a portrait of the raga is presented as an Alaapana (elaboration of the ascending and descending scales). Depending upon their mood and that of the audience, the musicians embellish this with detailed improvisations, presented extempore. This explains why musicians do not use a script. This is followed by a rendering of the lyric, interspersed generously with imaginative improvisations. Such improvisations, though used as a yardstick by which musicians are judged, however, must be made within the strict confines of the raga and tala. Certainly, this system requires many years of training and has to be learnt from a Guru.

## *The Veena*

The Veena is an ancient musical instrument of India dating back to the Vedic times. It is the ancestor of the Sitar. The Veena went through several innovations and modifications. In its current form, the instrument can be attributed to Raghunath Nayak (17th century) of Tanjavur in Tamil Nadu.

The Veena is 1.5m long, made from jackwood and has two large gourds at both ends. It has a body with a thick, wide neck, the end of which is carved into the head of a dragon. A small resonator is attached to the underside of the neck. The Veena has 24 metal frets embedded in hardened bees-wax, mixed with charcoal powder.

Melody is produced on four metal strings that run above the frets. These are stretched over a wide bridge that sits on the body of the Veena. Three other strings run alongside the neck of the instrument. These are used for maintaining time and for playing the drone. The performer, who sits cross-legged on the stage, rests the small resonator on the left lap. The fingers of the left hand are used to press, pull and glide on the frets, while the fingers of the right hand are used to pluck and twang the strings.

The Veena is a complete instrument and provides the basic components: sruthi (microtones), laya (speed) and sahitya (lyrics). Its main attraction is the mellow tonal quality which is capable of evoking a meditative atmosphere.

Saraswathi, the Hindu Goddess of learning, is usually depicted playing the Veena. Originally, this sacred instrument was used to accompany the chanting of the religious poems or verses or Vedas, but over the years, the Veena has evolved as a solo instrument.

### **Manasashirasa**

*Composed by Sri H.S. Krishnamurthy*

Varnam Raga Lathangi Adi Tala (4+2+2 beats)

Ascending scale: S R2 G3 M2 P D1 N3 S

Descending scale: S N3 D1 P M2 G3 R2 S

Varnam is one of the most complicated musical forms and has a significant role in Carnatic music. It is an abbreviated form of the essential genetic code of raga swarupa, swara grouping, and specific gamakas. It is also one of the best musical forms to practice and to obtain voice control, rhythm, and raga control.

Raga Lathangi is the 63rd mela karta (full scale) raga.

It is a major raga having large number of janya (birth) ragas.

This raga is suitable for singing at night.

### **Sri Mahaganapathim**

*Composed by Sri Muthuswami Dikshitar*

Keerthana Raga Gaula Mishrachapu Tala (3+4 beats)

Ascending scale: S R1 M1 P N3 S

Descending scale: S N3 P M1 G3 M1 R1 G3 M1 R1 S

Sri Mahaganapathim is a composition about Lord Ganesha, where the composer describes Ganapathi as the elephant faced one, elder brother of Guruguha and son of Shiva, remover of impediments, who is worshipped by mankind.

Mutthuswamy Dikshitar is one of the trinities of Carnatic music, known for introducing grammar in music. His compositions are mainly in the Sanskrit language which include the complete series of songs to illustrate 72 metadata scheme. They create a different ethos and effect, which is evocative and sublime.

This raga is a janya raga of the 15th mela karta Mayamalavagaula.

It is an ancient, auspicious raga, suitable for singing at the commencement of a concert.

### **Gnanamusagaradha**

*Composed by Sri Thygaraja*

Keerthana Raga Poorvikalyani Roopaka Tala(2+4 beats)

Ascending scale: S R1 G3 M2 P D2 P S

Descending scale: S N3 D2 P M2 G3 R1 S

Thygaraja, one of the trinities of Carnatic music is a prolific composer who has composed more than 3,000 compositions on his favorite deity Sri Rama. In all his compositions he has expressed nine forms of Bhakti (devotion) towards Sri Rama. A great composer from Tamil Nadu, he has composed in the Telugu language. Being a great devotee of Sri Rama, Thyagaraja prays to god to bless him with divine wisdom in this song.

Raga Poorvikalyani is a janya raga in the 53rd mela karta Gamana-shrama. This is an evening raga and the old name is Gamakakriya.

### **Suryamurthe**

*Composed by Dikshitar*

NavaGraha Kriti Sourastra Raga Dhruva Tala (4+2+4+4 beats)

Ascending scale: S R1 G3 M1 P M1 D2 N3 S

Descending scale: S N3 D2 N2 D2 P M1 G3 R1 S

This is a composition about the Sun where the composer describes Surya as the self-luminous, Lord of day, full of radiance, illuminating the universe which is bound by cause and effect; adorned by noble men, well-known for bestowing gifts like good health. He goes on to describe the Sun like fire that destroys heinous sins, foremost among all stars and planets, witness of all actions, having the divine chariot drawn by 7 horses, father of Karna, and identical to Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva in bestowing devotion and salvation.

Sourastra raga is derived from 17th mela karta raga Suryakantam. A popular raga which evokes the Bhakti Rasa (devotional mood), it is mostly rendered in Vilamba (slow speed) and Madhyakala (medium).

## **Jaya Janaki**

*Composed by Purandaradasa*

Nata Raga Khandchapu Tala (2+3 beats)

Ascending scale: S R3 G3 M1 P D3 N3 S

Descending scale: S N3 P M1 R3 S

A composition in the Kannada language by Purandaradasa, father of Carnatic music. This is a song about Sri Rama, son of Dasharatha, husband of Sita, known for his simplicity and humility, and the one who showers his blessings on his trusted devotees.

Nata Raga is a janya raga in the 36th mela karta Chalanata.

## **Thillana**

*Composed by Swathi Thirunal*

Raga Dhanashree Adi Tala (4+2+2 beats)

Ascending scale: S G2 M1 P N2 S

Descending scale: N2 D2 P M1 G2 R2 S

A composition by Swathi Thirunal, the Maharaja of Travancore in Kerala who was a great patron of music.

Raga Dhanashree is a janya raga from the 29th mela karta Shankarabharanam.

## **Sri Venugopala**

*Composed by Dikshitar*

Kuranji Khandchapu Tala (2+3 beats)

Ascending scale: N3 S R2 G3 M1 P D2

Descending scale: D2 P M1 G3 R2 S

This auspicious raga can be sung at all times. Due to limitations in its swara sancharas (permutation of notes), this is sung in madhyma sruthi only (M1 as base).

Kuranji is a janya raga in the 29th mela karta Shankarabharanam.

## **About Vijaya Krishnamurthy**

Vijaya Krishnamurthy started her training in Veena at the age of ten under the guidance of the late Ganakala Bhushan Raja Rao, and later Sri H.S. Krishnamurthy. Vijaya gives full credit to her parents for encouraging and supporting her music studies.

Vijaya hails from Bangalore, and has a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from India, which she followed with an M.S. in Computer Science at Drexel University in Philadelphia. She worked as a Professor in Computer Science at the University of Wisconsin for 3 years, followed by 5 years at the Montgomery College in Maryland. While in Maryland, she trained in vocal music under Sri Raju Sounderajan.

Vijaya is a software professional currently living in New York city. This program marks her first New York performance.

## **Credits**

Venue: Pixel Obsessive Studio  
Exhibition & Program: 'outrEACH', Rajul Mehta

## **Thank You**

Support from India: Satish Nandgaonkar  
Photo Credits: Sudhakar Olwe, The Times of India  
Press Clippings: Bombay Times – outrEACH campaign  
International Clippings: [www.globalaging.org](http://www.globalaging.org)

Video Recording: Ryuhei Shindo  
General Support: Michiko Hirano  
Rashmi, Karina