ITC Sangeet Research Academy completes 30 years
From the Editor’s Desk

This issue commemorates the 30th anniversary of the ITC Sangeet Research Academy. In the section ‘Memorable Moments’ we feature personal accounts of how the Academy’s story unfolded, through the eyes of well-wishers, ex-scholars and employees. We humbly acknowledge the contribution of our Guru Vidushi Malabika Kanan, whose demise has left a void at the Academy.

Reports of the activities held over the last few months as well as our regular columns appear as usual.

I take this opportunity to thank all those who participated in our discussion on the electronic tanpura. Unfortunately space constraints prevent us from featuring them all. Please do continue to send your valued suggestions to arpita.chatterjee@icssr.org.in

With best wishes,
Arpita Chatterjee
Editor

Executive Director’s Message

A 30-year-old institution may still be considered young, but for a very national cultural institution like ITC Sangeet Research Academy, the 30th anniversary does call for a celebration. ITC-SRA had started and has all along been an experiment, with a kind of uncertainty. However, the fact that it has successfully sailed through different waters of calm and turmoil proves its worth and ensures continuance.

Guru-Shishya Parampara has essentially been a personal relationship. Great musicians and Gurus like Pandit Vishnu Digambar Palurkar and Ustad Aalim Khans did institutionalise this relationship in their institutions Gandharva Mahavidyalaya and Arya Sangh Samaj respectively. But this institutionalisation moved around the talk Guru at the helm and this personal relationship continued with the Guru. A similar pattern was carried on by subsequent Gurus either privately or through their own institutions.

The uniqueness of ITC-SRA is that it brought several Gurus under the common roof of an institution and yet provided for the development of the personal relationship of Guru-Shishya Parampara. Gurus came in the beginning, lived here and faded away as time went by, and they paved the way for new Gurus. Yet the relationship of Guru-Shishya Parampara continued in the institution. This uniqueness, I think, is the inner strength of ITC-SRA, which will take it a long way ahead.

There are, however, certain precautions that need to be taken to ensure that there is no domination of any particular interests, which may drag the institution towards a different course. Raga Sangeet Parampara is definitely bigger than Gurus individually or taken together. While teaching in the traditional way, the training should be open towards creativity and finding new avenues of expression. History shows that traditions confining themselves within the walls of rigid frames and boundaries, tend to suffocate and die soon. Undoubtedly, it is the responsibility of the institutions to take a larger overview of the art and its potentiality of assimilating social and cultural change. Only then will the Parampara continue, retaining its goal and shedding its “old clothes” and shining in “new and contemporary attire”, in keeping with changing times.

Vidyadhar Vyas
Executive Director

Vidushi Malabika Kanan

Around 12:30 pm on Tuesday February 17, 2009, Hindustani classical vocalist Vidushi Malabika Kanan passed away at Mohan Clinic, Mudiali, Kolkata. Born at Lucknow on 27th December 1930, she became a Guru of the ITC Sangeet Research Academy on 2nd July, 1979. Initiated into music at the age of four by her father, Shri Rabindratal Roy, she received systematic training in dhunpad, dhiman and khayal. At 16 she became a regular broadcaster and since then, she participated in a large number of concerts, conferences, National Programmes, Radio Sangeet Sammelan and so on. After her marriage with the noted singer Pandit A Kanan, her style gained a new dimension because he assimilated many good features from his Kirana style and initiated her into thumri singing. She also sang bhajans with equal elan.

Gifted with a high pitched and yet melodiously appealing voice, Malabikaji was an outstanding singer with a rich and systematic style. She had been on the Expert Committee of ITC Sangeet Research Academy, Kolkata till recently. In 2000 she had received the “Sangeet Natak Akademi Award”. A condolence meeting was held at the Academy on Wednesday February 18, 2009.
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Traditions are vulnerable to the passage of time and can become a part of history if not nurtured for posterity. Hindustani classical music was sustained over generations by royal patronage. The gradual disappearance of this form of support led to a dilution of musical traditions and values.

During the mid-seventies, ITC’s top management envisioned that the Company could play a major role to preserve and propagate the rich Indian musical heritage. ITC aspired to go beyond merely nurturing and propagating the priceless tradition of Hindustani Classical Music. In creating ITC Sangeet Research Academy, the objectives were threefold: to create an effective system of training in Indian Classical Music; to buttress the oral tradition of Indian Classical Music with modern research methods and technologies; and to promote and propagate the priceless heritage of Indian Classical Music, beginning with Hindustani Classical Music.

The responsibility to implement the visionary project was taken on by Pandit Vijay Kichlu, a reputed gharanerd musiciian with a national cultural stature. Among the luminaries in the world of Hindustani Classical music who readily identified themselves with the ITC Sangeet Research Academy were Ustad Nissar Hussain Khan (Gwalior Gharana), Vaidushi Hirabai Barodekar (Kirana Gharana), Ustad Ishaq Hussain Khan (Rampur Gharana), Pandit Nivrutibai Sarnaik (Atrauli-Jaipur Gharana), Vaidushi Girija Devi (Benaras Gharana) and Ustad Latif Husain Khan (Agra Gharana). Pandit A. Kanan and Vaidushi Malabika Kanan joined in 1979. Over the years, more than 80 shishyas, many trained from childhood, have been guided by dedicated Gurus within these hallowed portals and have gone out into the world.

The trendsetting concept of Mini Sangeet Sammelans was conceived and began to be implemented in February 1978. The aim of the Mini Sangeet Sammelans was to take music to small towns all over the country. These Mini Sangeet Sammelans have featured such famous musicians as the late Pandit V G Jog, Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma, Pandit Hari Prasad Chaurasia, Ustad Zakir Hussain and the late Protima Gauri Bedi. Since then, ITC Sangeet Research Academy has conducted Mini Sangeet Sammelans across the length and breadth of the country.

ITC Sangeet Research Academy’s Scientific Research Department was also set up in 1978 under the stewardship of Vaidushi Dipali Nag. By 1982, it received recognition by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India, as a Research and Development Institution in the area of Natural and Applied Sciences. In its sophisticated acoustics laboratory, modern scientific methods are used to observe and standardize various musical techniques on the basis of parameters like pitch, timbre, shriti, different musical styles and the acoustics of various musical instruments. The Department has also collaborated on research projects with the Indian Statistical Institute, Jadavpur University and Calcutta University in Kolkata; the Central Electronics Engineering Research Institute, New Delhi and the Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden. The Department also has a library that has several valuable books and journals and has published a monograph entitled ‘Experimental Analysis of Shrutis from Performances in Hindustani Music’.

Going beyond Indian shores, the Academy has presented Hindustani and Carnatic Music programmes to avid international audiences. ITC Sangeet Research Academy organised its first music festival abroad in 1981. It has since followed it up with other festivals and workshops. Visiting musicians have been introduced to keen music lovers in many major cities of USA and Canada. Seminars and workshops on various facets of music have also been regularly organised both in the country and abroad.

In 1981, the Academy also set up and launched its Western Regional Committee with the aim of propagating the riches of Hindustani Classical Music in the musically rich states of Western India. The Western Regional Committee’s Annual International Seminar brings together eminent musicians and musicologists from the different corners of the world. Programmes are organised throughout the year, presenting both young as well as established musicians.

The Academy’s Central Library houses a comprehensive range of books on music. The Academic Research Department has several books and other publications to its credit, including a biannual newsletter and an annual journal. In 1999, the Ford Foundation gave the Academy a grant for the ‘Gharana’ project. In the course of execution of this project, over 5,076 authentic ‘bandishes’ were collected from performing musicians of the various gharanas. These were notated and preserved for posterity.

The recording studio houses a library of audio tapes which is a precious repository of invaluable recordings of old maestros. The studio’s wide repertoire of archival recordings was put together by recording precious music that was earlier in the private collections of several music lovers. Recordings of all performances at the Academy and at the ITC Sangeet Research Academy are preserved here, as are the recordings of the bandishes collected for the ‘Gharana’ project.

In August 2001, the ITC Sangeet Research Academy launched the ITC Sangeet Research Academy website. It provides a worldwide audience a deep insight into the history of Hindustani classical music. It also presents rare recordings and video clips of concert performances. Several other valuable features are frequently added. Since its launch, the popularity of the website has grown in leaps and bounds.

In 2002, an instrumental department was established at the Academy. At present it imparts training on playing the sitar and sarod. While ITC Sangeet Research Academy celebrates the rich musical past of India, the Academy continues to innovate and explore new horizons. As Philip Ogilvie once said, “Tradition is not a tomb in which to hide from progress. It is rich ground, well tilled and with the sunshine of hope for an even greater future. Into it we drop the seeds of our aspirations for a better world and from it they grow strong and well-nourished and bear fruit and become new traditions to nourish others as time passes.”
Almost 30 years ago, when Shri Vijay Kichlu invited me to join the Board of Trustees of Sangeet Research Academy being established by ITC, I was both pleasantly surprised and honoured. Realising that other Trustees, apart from the Chairman of ITC and senior Directors would include such great personalities like Mr. Yehudi Menuhin, Shri Sanjiv Ray and Pt. Ravi Shankar, I felt doubly privileged.

I soon realized that Project ITC Sangeet Research Academy is not one of the many Indian music teaching schools but an institution, unique in its objectives and highly professional in its structure. Added to this uniqueness was the fact that highly respected musicians - icons in the Indian music scene such as late Ustad Nisar Hussain Khan, late Vidushi Hirabai Barodekar, late Pandit Nirrutibba Sarnaik, late Ustad Latifat Hussain Khan, late Ustad Ishhaq Hussain Khan, late Pandit T D Janorikar, late Ustad Yunus Hussain Khan and Pandit Vijay Kichlu honoured the Academy initially, in acting as Gurus, creating a powerhouse of musical training.

Thus the institution propagating and implementing in actual practice the concept of Guru-Shishya-Parampara became a reality. Over the period, great musical luminaries have been produced by the Academy, who pervade the scene of Indian music both nationally and internationally. The institution has untinted and generous support of ITC and it would be no exaggeration to say, that the world of music salutes them for being a trend-setter to enrich Indian music through imparting authentic/genuine training/talim under the Gurukul system.

- Pandit Arvind Parlik, Trustee, ITC-SRA

ITC wanted me to create an institution, but along with the institution I had created a family, which was difficult to leave. The environment is very important factor in any institution of music, particularly where advanced training is imparted. You have to have a very close relationship not only between a master and a pupil but also between the masters and all the pupils. The entire institution moves behind this sentiment. You respect your Guru or any Vidwan like a parent, a mentor or God. This is the basic character of the Guru-Shishya Parampara. If this emotional structure is broken, like forgetting the past and emphasizing the present, it will lead to the whole structure being lost. Music is not any intake of academics or skills. It is the creation of your mind. Your mind and heart have to be prepared. If your mind remains absolutely untrained for this art, then any amount of good training even from the best of Gurus will not work. Ultimately, you are the creator of your music. It depends on your personality, your thinking, your heart, your emotions, your sentiment and your honesty, so the mind has to be trained first.

We used to go on tours with our scholars and other renowned performers. These tours were not merely an exercise of propagation and promotions for SRA. They were an education for the students. First of all, every concert had one or two scholars. Secondly, the management of the tours was handed over to students, to teach them how to conduct themselves. The relationship between the scholars and the other senior musicians who were living and traveling with them was most important. Ultimately the students had to learn how to manage their own lives.

I firmly believe that unless all this activity is shared with outside people, it would not have much of an impact and it could only be shared with further expenditure, so the activities were limited. I was able to get a grant of $ 150,000/- from the Ford Foundation and we could record about 100 or 125 musicians who told us the entire philosophy of how they learnt, what their ideas were, what material they had. The other subject was concerned with the correction of pronunciation defects through speech therapy. Experts from Europe and USA came to help us with the second subject. But unless that kind of knowledge can be disseminated, it has no purpose. Unfortunately we could not disseminate that knowledge because of lack of funds. From every Gharana there are at least 2,000 or even 3,000 compositions, but who is using it? Is it giving any benefit to any musician? Activities conducted at the Academy should benefit the community of students or music scholars, otherwise they have limited value. In the past, some of our greatest musicians couldn’t even read, but they made sure that the benefit of their learning passed on to others. For the preservation of our heritage we have to continue working in that manner.

- Pandit Vijay Kichlu, ITC-SRA’s 1st Executive Director
Memorable Moments

When I joined in 1977, even the building had not been chosen. I was the first person to come and live at ‘Alden’ with my mother, in the room that has now become the Academy’s dining room. Vidushi Hirabai Barodekar came a month later. Soon the place became like a place of pilgrimage, housing such great performers as Ustad Nissar Hussain Khansahib, Ustad Latafat Khan Sahib, Ustad Ishtiaque Hussain Khansahib, Vidushi Girija Devi, Pandit Nivrutibha Sarmaik, later Pandit T.D. Janotikar and Pandit K.G. Ginde. I had never in my wildest dreams imagined that I, the son of a primary teacher, would be living in the midst of such famous people! It was like the mouse trying to survive in the jungle, along with the lion and the tiger! Besides, I had to make my mark in the world of music, and at that time I had no idea how to do that! Over the years, thanks to my training and my teaching experiences, I have been able to understand just a wee bit. I was lucky enough to be blessed with the advice and fatherly affection of Pandit Vijay Kichlu.

Our country has the most evolved concepts as far as music and spiritualism are concerned, but our people are forgetting this. For success, one needs a good Guru, a good environment, a good support system and the opportunity to be in the company of great men. I have seen the way people used to respect Ustad Nissar Hussain Khan, Ustad Latafat Khan and all the other great performers who were here. While I was learning, I too used to dream about getting that kind of respect. Seeing these great performers inspired us to follow their example.

- Pandit Ajay Chakrabarty, Guru ITC-SRA, in an interview featured in the ITC-SRA FM programme

I came to the Academy in 1979, when Pandit Sunil Bose wrote to me. I was then living in Berhampore. I joined as a scholar under Ustad Ishtiaque Hussain Khan of the Rampur Gharana. At that time the Academy was a musical haven. I was surrounded by the best of musicians, all of whom were people I had admired all my life. I remember the soft-spoken, simple lady whose music was incomparable, Vidushi Hirabai Barodekar. Ustad Nissar Hussain Khan was at heart very soft, although most people were rather scared of him. Ustad Latafat Hussain Khan would insist that I give him vocal support when he performed, even though I was a disciple of Ustad Ishtiaque Hussain Khan. In fact I remember one Wednesday when he had a performance and I was running high temperature. When I told him that I was ill, he was almost in tears, so I didn’t disappoint him. One day he came to our hostel and woke both Ajay and me up saying that he had remembered a bandish and wanted us to learn it immediately, even though he had his own students! He was such a warm and caring person. The ITC Sungeet Research Academy is known the world over to be an institution that produces performers. The facilities provided here for practising, being in the company of Gurus and being constantly guided by them, as well as listening to archival recordings, gave me a new lease of life. If I had remained at Berhampore, how many people would have known me? ITC-SRA gave me opportunities that I could otherwise never have hoped for.

- Pandit Arun Bhaduri, Guru, ITC-SRA, in an interview featured in the ITC-SRA FM programme

Reminiscences are vital sources of pleasure, especially when they are about an Academy as dear to my heart as ITC-SRA. I was one of the first few scholars who joined the Academy.

In the beginning, Appaji (Vidushi Girija Devi) and Ustad Nissar Hussain Khan used to live in New Alipore where they would train their students. Later, all the gurus came under one umbrella in the present campus.

I was the only non-resident scholar of ITC-SRA, as I had a family with children. I used to travel to Appaji’s New Alipore residence every morning – 3 days a week without fail and spend the whole day there. Initially, Appaji trained me in developing the correct vocal resonance and later taught me the nuances of thumri. I must admit it was a slow process but I realised that the learning of traditional Indian Classical music cannot be hurried.

Gradually the number of scholars increased and so did the gurus. Yet the atmosphere was so cordial and homely I used to love to be at ITC-SRA, enjoying the company of all. It was like a big family. The only nightmare to the scholar was the annual graduation test. We all used to look at this event with so much expectation and fear.

My direct association with the Academy came to an end in 1992, but the memories still throb in my heart and will continue to do so till the last days of my life.

- Dalia Rahut, exscholar, Kolkata
In 1974, I began my lessons in classical music under late Pandit A. Kanan. When, in 1979, Guruji joined the ITC Sangeet Research Academy, I continued my musical education there under his supervision. In 1980, I was selected an Academy Scholar and, from then onwards for ten years, I was fortunate enough to live under one roof with Guruji and imbibe as much music as possible from him.

After joining the Academy, I saw several illustrious musicians at close quarters. I was deeply attached to all of them.

I used to go over to Buaaji’s (Pandit Nivruttibua Samalk) place very often; he had great affection for me. He used to tell me anecdotes about music and musicians of the olden days. On many occasions, I played the harmonium with him in various musical recitals.

Jnanababu (Jnanprakash Ghosh) and I had long afternoon conversations in the studio. He had a great stock of stories and, almost everyday, he said something new: his words had a mesmerising effect on me. He had a tremendous analytical acumen: something that influenced me immensely.

Towards the end of my tenure at the Academy, I had the opportunity to take lessons from late Pandit K.G. Ginde. Such learning as his is truly rare among musicians. He was disposed to be kind and gentle; a smile adorned his face all the time. Whenever he asked me to come for my lessons, I went and found that he was waiting for me already, well-prepared, and well in advance of the appointed time. As soon as I entered the room, he would say, “Tanpura lao, aur shuru karok (Bring the tanpura, and start!” Gindeji has left a great influence on my life.

I was associated with the Academy for fifteen long years. All the memories of those fifteen years can hardly be narrated in a small piece of reminiscence as this. However, I must admit that the Academy created an environment for us to learn music, providing us with all other essential facilities at that point of time; this was unimaginable elsewhere in India. Thus, I am indebted to the Academy, indebted beyond release.

- Sandip Ghosh, ex-scholar

The campus has had its share of animal friends and foes. Stray dogs were at one point a matter of grave concern, although at present this is not such a great problem. I well remember an incident that happened when Pandit Babban Rao Haldankar had been a guest of the Academy - at a point of time when the problem was probably at its peak.

The vocalist had been invited to record bandishes for the Ford Foundation project. His recording complete, he was taking a leisurely stroll in the campus, dressed in a kurta and pyjama. Accidentally, his foot stamped the tail of a sleeping dog and the animal was so offended that it bit the pyjama really hard. The vocalist tried to shake him off, only to discover that the animal was virtually hanging from his pyjama! After repeated efforts the animal let go, much to Babban Raajji’s relief.

The following day the animal was discovered by the guards at a corner of the campus dead. I remember telling Mr. Richlu, Executive Director at that time. His rather relieved comment was, “Someone please go and bring Babban Raajji’s pyjama and make sure that all the dogs bite it. We might be able to get rid of a few more of them.”

- A Sen, Administration Manager

I first came to ITCSRA in May ’78 when I was about 9 years old, for the audition of a talent contest to which my music teacher had sent me from Bashirhat. D T Joshi, Rai Chand Boral, Ishtraq Hussain Khansab, Sunil Bose & some other people were judges.

Chandrabhanji accompanied me on the tabla. I remember I had touched everyone’s feet, but not Chandrabhanji’s thinking that he was just a young man! My father later told me that while he looked young, he was indeed very well known, so I should have touched his feet! Anyway, I won the competition and the then Governor, Shri Tribhuvan Narayan Singh gave me the award & I performed that evening as well.

When I was offered the scholarship, it became a great topic for discussion at our village. You see, I grew up in a rural, musically-rich environment where everyone knew me. They were all concerned about sending such a young child away from home. I remember that my father had visited Pandit Rai Chand Boral who assured him that after the training, if nothing I would certainly be able to become financially independent. By God’s grace I have certainly done well for myself.

So much has happened in all these years, I don’t know where to begin! I remember first hearing my Ustad Latafat Hussain Khansahib at a Hafiz Ali Khan Memorial concert held at Kala Mandir which was absolutely mesmerizing! Ever since then I had dreamt of learning from him. Joining ITCSRA as his disciple was almost like an answer to my prayers! I have been associated with ITCSRA for 30 years and I still feel indebted to the Academy for making me what I am today.

- Jainul Abedin, ex-scholar, presently working in the Prefect’s Department
When I joined the Academy, the Tollygunge area was really quite deserted and jackals & wild cats roamed around quite freely. The Academy had pebbled pathways which would make it difficult for cats to move around without making a noise. The place was infinitely more spic and span!

I do however remember one incident with fear. It was about 8 o’clock at night. I was walking across the back lawn towards the main gate, when I heard the rustle of crushed leaves and an instant later I got the feeling that a cold slab of ice had slid over my foot. It all happened so fast that even before I realized that a snake had gone over my foot, the event was over! Thankfully, that was a long time ago and things have changed completely now.

Let me honestly confess that while writing these lines I am momentarily feeling like I have been transported to the ITC Sangeet Research Academy.

I personally consider ITC-SRA to be my alma mater like many others with whom I shared 12 precious years of my music career. My heart throbbs with pride and joy to state that in ITC-SRA we shared a common language (needless to say it was Hindustani Classical Music) of banter, even though our languages stayed distinct because the trust between us was something to contend with. I learnt in the traditional Guru-Shishya Parampara from the revered Gurus of ITC-SRA, especially Pt. A. Kanan.

Unhesitatingly I am proud to state that the entire credit of whatever I have learnt about Hindustani classical Music, goes to my Guru. Moreover I consider myself to be fortunate to have come in contact with so many eminent personalities of classical music whose valuable suggestions have paved my path. The lyrics, the ragas, the bandishes which I learnt still resonate in my mind and ears. The 12 years at ITC-SRA have given me an edge over others, so that I could shape my life differently, for which I will remain ever grateful.

I sign off with the same lingering delight and spirit which I had, once upon a time, at ITC-SRA.

- Saswati Choudhury, ex-scholar

Way back in 1976, I went to Pandit A. Kanan to learn singing. I met Mr V. K. Ichhlu there. He took me on the first Mini Sammelan tour. At that time, several people were auditioned at Pandit Kanan’s Bhawanipore residence including Bakul Chatterjee, Dalia Rubut, Ajoy Chakraborty and several others. Music sessions were regularly held in that house. In 1978 ITC’s training centre was modified and ITC-SRA’s activities began here at ‘Adeen’.

At the inaugural function under the mango tree, Ustad Ali Ahmed Hussain played the shehnai and Vidushi Girija Devi sang. I had played the tanpura.

Then Ustad Nissar Hussain Khan came with Ghulam Akbar. Ustad Rais Khan, Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma and Pandit Hari Prasad Chaurasia were regularly featured at SRA Music Sammelans and every year we used to organise Mini Sammelans where they would all travel together in the bus and would perform all over the country. In those days each performance was for 3 to 3 ½ hours. Jyotida (Joti Goho), Sandipda (Sandip Ghosh) and I used to play the tanpura. When we first began the tours, I remember Ajodya (Pandit Ajoy Chakraborty) teaching the three of us how to shave! He would supervise when we got ready, making sure that our kurta’s were looking good! One year we had gone to Daltongunj on tour and the car broke down. Ajodya, Jyotida and Sandipda made a fire and waited around it, while I went to Dhanbad to get a replacement clutch plate. It was only after I came back that we could complete the journey.

There are so many incidents that I recall with pleasure and pride, but the most obvious change that I feel I should mention, is the change in the attitude of the scholars. Earlier all the scholars would carry the tanpura or the harmonium, doing all the work quite willingly. That spirit is unfortunately missing these days. Perhaps that may be due to the changes that society has seen in the last few decades.

- Sunil Dey, Administration Department
I joined the Scientific Research Department of ITC Sangeet Research Academy in 1983. I had no idea what kind of research could be done in the area of Indian classical music. That was the beginning.

Days went by and gradually I came to know the area of research and the research methodology. Nearly three decades have passed and the department has published nearly hundred papers in different national and international journals. We have done research in many new, path breaking areas and have undoubtedly enriched musicology. Twice our papers have received the prestigious Sir C V Raman Award from the Acoustical Society of India for the best paper published in their journal. The research work which is being carried out for nearly three decades has earned international fame. Some of our research papers have been cited by foreign scientists in their work. In fact, ITC-SRA is known to several foreign scientists due to its scientific research activities.

I remember one day I was sitting in my office pondering about a particular research problem. Suddenly the sky was overcast with black thunderous clouds and lightning started flashing with strong winds. A breeze flew through my hair and small raindrops landed on my eyelids. I sat alone in my room beside the window and watched the beauty of nature. The acoustics of the rain created a magical ambience. For a time I forgot where I was and who I was. I could imagine that lush, breathtaking, brilliant green, almost hurting my eyes! Those heavily overcast skies, that distant roll of thunder, and the glamorous flash of lightening, that heady fragrance in the air, that quiet stillness which speaks of the raging storm, the breeze - sometimes gentle, sometimes wild - when nature herself sings Malhar. What chance do we have to resist, to meditate, to reflect? This is the essence of Indian music.

At ITC-SRA, I get the rare opportunity to measure and analyse music, and try to explain how and why it enchants us. Acoustic analysis of the songs provides us an objective insight into the nuances of music. ITC-SRA has taught me the essence of music and how it is associated with our life and our society. I can undoubtedly say that this is the only institution in the world where there is a unique fusion between art and science, that is, between the subjectivity of music and the objectivity of science. Working at ITC-SRA gave me an opportunity to interact with the musical luminaries whom I saw earlier in the electronic media. The same classical song which I heard during my college days gives me a different feeling now. I can now easily differentiate and analyse different types of feelings and their relationships. This was completely unknown to me earlier. I have started to realize that happiness is the assimilation of small pleasant moments of life and I wish to preserve these moments in my heart. My experience at ITC-SRA has also taught me that sometimes what I see with my eyes and what I cognize are two different things, as if I cognize something else. Now I am able to cognize many things which I couldn't in the past. I can now feel the essence of music from each and every audible and non audible sound and can almost see through minds.

- Dr Ranjan Sengupta, Manager, Scientific Research Department

I will never forget that day in 1983. I was asked to sing at my first Wednesday recital at SRA. I still remember that I sang Raga Yaman. I was on the stage with the tanpura and as I was just a little girl, the tanpura was a bit large for me! Dipali Dixit (Vidushi Dipali Nag) asked Arun Jethu (Pandit Arun Bhaduri) to play the tanpura for me. After the concert, Vijay Kichha uncle was so pleased that he wanted to give me something. He had a fifty rupee note in his purse which he gave me and told my parents that he would like to offer me a scholarship. I still have that fifty rupee note with me!

In 1989 I received the Gold medal from All India Radio. I was a scholar then, under Guruma Smrt Malabika Kanan. One afternoon the famous light music vocalist Arati Mukherjee came to visit Guruma, hoping to learn from her. At that time, Arati Mukherjee was quite famous, so all Guruma's students and students of all the other Gurus also came to meet her. As soon as Ms Mukherjee requested Guruma to teach her, Guruma told her that I was her only student and that she could learn from Guruma. I was amazed and felt really blessed that Guruma could turn down such a famous singer for a little girl like me!

Another occasion I will never forget was when all the scholars were supposed to sing a composition by Appaji (Vidushi Girija Devi) in a concert. When the rehearsal started, I was out of town. When I came back, Appaji called me to her house half an hour before the rehearsal time so that I could catch up. Appaji started teaching me the song and I learnt it so fast that Appaji composed two more antaras for me to sing!

One Durga Puja all the other scholars had gone home. I didn't go because Guruma and Guruji wanted me to stay with them and perform in a few concerts. There was a lady named Sangeeta Thakur, who at that time was sharing my room with me. I will never forget the love I have received from this lady. One evening, we both thought we should have some fun and decided to cook mutton. We just came back from the market and Rashid (Ustad Rashid Khan) saw us. When he heard about the plan, he said he will cook for us. That was a lovely mutton kosh, but so hot!

The days I have spent at ITC-SRA were the most wonderful days of my life. There are so many lovely memories that you will probably need a whole magazine to hold all of them!

- Chandra Chakraborty, ex-scholar
When I was about 17 years old, Mr. Tikari, then Studio Manager, introduced me for the first time to the world of professional sound recording. The two of us went to New Delhi for the ITC Sangeet Sammelan which was being held at the Kamani Auditorium on 27th-29th December 1978. We recorded several famous musicians such as Pandit Bhimsen Joshi, Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, Ustad Imrat Khan, Vidushi Hirabai Barodekar, Vidushi Mallini Rajurkar, Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma, Pandit Mahadeo Prasad Mishra, Sitara Devi, Zakir Bhai and others. During this period, Mr. Amar Mishra of ITC was kind enough to allow us to make copies from his valuable collection of Indian Classical Music. In a few days I learnt how to copy and make recordings.

When we got back to Kolkata, Mr Tikari allowed me to work as an apprentice in ITCSRA’s studio. I learnt how to handle all the professional recording equipment installed there. We celebrated the 10th year of the Academy at Hotel Mauya Sheraton, Delhi, where Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi came with Mrs Sonia Gandhi and I had the good fortune of shaking Mr. Rajiv Gandhi’s hand. The moment will live forever in my memory. Pandit Ravi Shankar came to the ITCSRA studio twice with his wife and spent some time listening to music and copied some of his own recordings for his own collection. Ustad Vilayat Khan Sahib came and spent two days in the studio listening to Ustad Faiz Khan Sahib’s recordings. In 1982 I was elevated from apprentice to staff member. Since then I have never looked back.

Sound recording equipment has changed so much over the years and our Studio has kept abreast of the changes thanks to Mr Tikari. We moved from recording on magnetic tape, then cassettes and now finally on computers. I must thank ITCSRA for giving me the opportunity to handle the most complex recording equipment as our studio continues to evolve and change with the times.

- Aslam Ansari, Studio Assistant

May Day is internationally famous, and for me, 1st May, 1983 holds a special significance. It was the day I joined ITC Sangeet Research Academy. I was appointed in the Scientific Research Department under Mrs Dipali Nag who was then Head of the Dept.

I spent most of that year helping Mr. Kapoor evolve a filing system for the entire office. Much has happened in the 26 years since then. Over the years I have met many famous musicians, like Ustad Yunus Hussain Khan, Ustad Latafat Hussain Khan, Pt A Kanana, Pt N Sarnaik, Pt D T Joshi, Pt K G Ginde, Ustad Zakir Hussain and many more. I have also met many famous musicologists, such as Pt Bimal Roy, Thakur Jadav Singh, Pt M R Gaitam, Smt Prernita Sharma. I have also had an opportunity to meet many famous scientists, like Prof B D Nagchaudhuri, Prof S Chatterjee, Prof M K Dasgupta, Prof B M Banerjee and others. Many famous persons visited our Scientific Research Department at various times, like the Archbishop of Canterbury, Sri Amar Paul (noted Bengali folk singer), Sri Ram Kumar Chattopadhyay (noted Bengali Tappa singer), Smt Suchitra Mitra (noted Rabindranath singer), Ms Hilary Spurling (Writer from UK). For 20 years and more, the Scientific Research Department has been organising an international symposium and this has given me an opportunity to interact with people from all over the world, for which I am indeed grateful.

One other incident I have never been able to forget is the visit of about 20/25 Fulbright Scholars, perhaps in December 1984. I remember Mr Kichlu’s presentation to them in which he explained the nuances of Hindustani music and he also spoke about the aims and objectives of ITCSRA. His unforgettable comment was, “SRA is not a University, not an educational or professional Institute. Then he asked the audience, “What is it? He explained, ‘SRA is something else’!

- Sabyasachi Ray Chaudhury, Secretary to the Executive Director

As far as I remember, I came to ITCSRA for an interview on October 13, 1988. When I got the interview letter, I was surprised to see the logo of a bird sitting on a table on the envelope. One of my first endeavours after I joined was to find out the meaning of the emblem.

Shrimati Dipali Nag, then Head of the Scientific Research Department, invited me to have lunch with her at the canteen. As expected at any office, I was addressing her as ‘Madam’. Not happy with this form of address, she insisted that I call her “Didi”.

At that time several scientists of national and international acclaim were associated with the Scientific Research Department. In 1989, ITCSRA organised the National Symposium on Acoustics, in collaboration with BITM, ISI and the Acoustical Society of India. I have fond memories of going to Howrah Station to receive Prof K. D. Pavare, Scientist-in-Charge, CEERI Centre, CSIR, who was then President, Acoustical Society of India.

One interesting case of mistaken identity that I have repeatedly faced over the years is being mistaken to be the renowned musician Pandit Manas Chakrabavty. While this is really flattering, I am sure that it happens only because I work at the ITC Sangeet Research Academy.

- Manas Chakraboty, technical assistant, Scientific Research Department
Mr Ananth Vaidyanathan, Mr Bis Kapoor and Mr Kichlu were the people who interviewed me when I first came to the Academy. So much has changed since then.

I remember Ustad Nissar Hussain Khan was a very stern teacher and yet he had a heart of gold. In those days we used to get hundreds of letters every day and replies were also sent. We used to have a franking machine here to send all the letters. Now most people communicate by email, so we don’t get so many letters.

Another incident I remember is in connection with Pandit K.G. Ginde. He always moved around with an umbrella and his box of zarda. That fateful day he sat down for lunch and asked for someone to bring his food. While eating he asked for a few more chapattis. One of the girls went to get it. In the meantime he suddenly fell off the chair and was groaning. In minutes people gathered around to help, but in vain. Before they could take him to hospital, he had passed away. Just after that, a box of zarda came by courier for him. We returned it, since it would not be of any use to any of us.

One occasion I will never forget was when I was travelling by train to my home at Orissa. A gentleman came up to me and said, “You look very familiar. Where do you work?” I said, “At the ITC Sangeet Research Academy.” He said, “Can you help me? My son is very interested in learning music. Will you make the necessary arrangements so that he can learn?” I said, “You should visit the Academy and find out the rules and then apply.” I remember the gentleman was so indebted that he found a seat and offered it to me instead of sitting himself.”

- Raghunath Panda, Assistant, Administration Department

25 years ago, ‘Akleen’ was very different. Painted saffron, the main thoroughfare was the second gate which is closed now. There was also another gate with pillars on Netaji Subhash Bose Road, which is how the Academy got its address. Unfortunately that side was plagued by some squatters who would create a great nuisance, which is why that gate was completely blocked.

So many birds and even some animals frequented the campus, filling the atmosphere with their cries. The ambience thus created was really a haven for young musicians. Now most of these youngsters have made their mark in the world of music and we can see them regularly on television.

While working on a Systems Documentation project with ITC some time in September 1999, I was chatting with V.V.R. Babu and Nari Narayan, the latter sadly no more with us, one afternoon over lunch. This is when I first learnt of the plans for a website for ITC-SRA. The dapper Nari was expounding on ideas and plans and it all sounded so exciting that willingly, I soon jumped in, tossing in my ideas too. The conversation lasted well beyond lunchtime and soon after, I was approached by ITC to assist with the ITC-SRA website in the role of webmaster. The marriage of pristine Hindustani classical music and the worldwide web was a unique and scintillating concept and I was happy to be part of the project.

I must mention that the very ambience of the Academy played a role – the verdant lawns, the serene ambience, the 200 year old building watching over you, maybe a ghost or two and the music... always the music. All of this contributed to the feeling of worshipful awe which translated into a passionate love affair with the website!

Great musicians have been members of the Expert Committee, regularly advising the scholars. Wednesday recitals often drew such large crowds that the rooms next to the auditorium had to be hastily converted to accommodate the audience. Mini Sammelan tours lasting for two months, ITC Sangeet Sammelans in the metropolitan cities, international tours and graduation tests twice a year, were all a part of the training scheme. The greatest musicians of India were regular visitors to the Academy.

Cricket matches, football matches and picnics had earlier been regular activities at the Academy. Now Independence Day and Republic Day celebrations have also been added. I feel really blessed for getting the opportunity to be a part of this institute.

- Haridas Haldar,peon

A huge quantum of work went in before the website was actually launched on the last day of August 2001. The web design team, the technical team from ITC, the gurus and music experts from ITC-SRA worked round the clock. D Day took place at the Maurya Sheraton, New Delhi. I had to present the website before an August audience, at the end of which the chief guest, Shri Murli Manohar Joshi declared the website open. I remember getting a stab of panic when Shri Joshi, in his speech, requested that we all speak in Hindi – and I wondered how I’d ever manage a translation. Wisely, I stuck to English. I have never forgotten the thrill of those early days.

It has been nearly 9 years since. Much has happened. The website has grown in leaps and bounds, both physically and in popularity. As for myself, my own music education has grown with the website, thanks to the cooperation of all the wonderful people immersed in their art at the Academy. The excitement lives on. But Hansadhwani still remains the only ragas that I can identify right away!

- Ratnakoli Bose, Webmaster
The 16th ITC Sangeet Sammelan, Kolkata, began at the Alden lawns on Friday, January 16, 2009. In pursuance of its aims to promote, preserve, propagate and present the heritage of Hindustani Raga Sangeet, this year’s Sammelan had been planned as a tribute to the age-old Indian tradition of teaching - the Guru-Shishya Parampara, the methodology that has been used at the Academy for the last 30 years.

Mr Nazeeb Arif, Vice President, Corporate Communications Department, ITC Ltd., was the Chief Guest, while Dr Vidyaadhar Vyas, Executive Director, ITC-SRA and Gurus Ustad Abdul Rashid Khan and Vidushi Girija Devi came to the dais to light the inaugural lamp. The coveted ITC Award was presented to Ustad Ali Ahmad Hussain Khan, a senior Shehnai player of Kolkata. In his acceptance speech, the Ustad praised the commendable work done by the Academy and hoped that this would continue so that the age-old traditions that are under constant threat in the present-day scenario, would remain alive.

On Friday, the evening began with a vocal performance by Kumari Manali Bose, disciple of ITC-SRA Guru Pandit Arun Bhaduri. She has been an ITC-SRA scholar since June 2006. The young vocalist began with khayals in Raga Marwa, the first set to vilambit ektaal ‘Jhajhana mora jhanakaye’, followed by another in drut teentala ‘Bandhori bandhanawad’, followed by a tarana in drut teentala. She then presented a tappa in jaun’ in drut teentala. This was followed by khayals in Raga Shahnai ‘More aae kunwar kanhae’ in jhaptala and ‘Mandirwa mein mori saa’ in drut ektaal. He concluded with ‘Karan mori lagi’ set to teentala in Raga Bhairavi. He was accompanied by Shri Swapnan Mukherjee on the tabla and Shri Jyoti Goh on the harmonium.

The second day’s programme began with a sacred recital by Shri Abir Hossain, ITC-SRA scholar since March 2002, disciple of Pandit Buddhadev Das Gupta. He played alap, jod, vilambit and drut teentala gats and jhala in Raga Shudhi Sarang. He was accompanied on the tabla by Shri Samar Saha. Next to perform was ITC-SRA guru Pandit Arun Bhaduri with his disciple Aadarsh Saxena, a scholar of the Academy since October, 2005. He began his performance with khayals in Raga Bhimpalasi, ‘Bari beguman na kari’ set to ektaal and ‘Karam karo more sae’ set to teentala. He then presented khayals in Raga Hansadhwani ‘Lagi lagan pari sakhi sang’, set to teentala and ‘Khan pan sudh

Samarth has been an ITC-SRA scholar since July 2003, while Sameehan became a scholar in June 2003. The artiste began with khayals in Raga Sampurna Malkauns ‘Baraja rahi’, set to vilambit teentala and ‘Kita dhundana

buddh sab bisar gairi ali’ in drut ektaal. He concluded with a dadra ‘Tadpe bin balam mora jyta’. He was accompanied by Shri Tarak Saha on the tabla and Shri Jyoti Goh on the harmonium. The next item was a tabla
recital by Pandit Anindo Chatterjee, disciple of late Pandit Jnan Prakash Ghosh, Expert Committee Member when the Academy was founded. He presented teentala, with innumerable variations including tisra jati, peshkar, qaida of Punjab and Lucknow gharanas, qaida rela of Benaras gharana, gat, tukra and chakradhar to name a few. The nagma in Raga Machhuvanti was provided by Shri Ramesh Mishra, while his disciple

Rupak Bhattacharya provided tabla support. After a short interval that evening, ITC-SRA Guru Ustad Mashkoor Ali Khan presented a vocal recital, with vocal support by his disciples Arshad Ali Khan and Sandip Bhattacharya. Arshad has been a scholar of the Academy since 1992, when he was but a child, while Sandip became a scholar in 2003. The artiste began with khayals in Raga Puriya Kalyan, ‘Ras ke bhare delhi te rai nain’ set to vilambit jhumra tala and a tarana in teentala. He concluded with the popular bandish ‘Koyelia kook sumave’ in Mishra Kharnaj. He was accompanied by Shri Gopal Mishra on the tabla and Shrimati Rupashree Bhattacharya on the harmonium. After this was the sarod and sitar jugalbandi by ITC-SRA Gurus Pandit Buddhadev Das Gupta and Pandit Manilal Nag, accompanied on the tabla by Pandit Ananda Gopal Bandopadhyay. They played alap, jod, vilambit & drut teentala gat and jhala in Raga Kaunsri Kanhada. The concluding item that evening was Pandit Ajoy Chakrabarty’s vocal recital, accompanied by his disciples Anal Chatterjee and Deborshi Bhattacharjee. Both Anal and Deborshi became scholars of the Academy in December 2008. Ably accompanied on the tabla by Shri Chandrabhanji, he presented khayals in Raga Bihag, ‘Kan mo Karanpohi’ in vilambit ektaal, ‘Chintna na kar re’ in jhaptaal and ‘Ab to rat logi’ in teentala. He

concluded with the famous ‘Hari om tatas’, providing a befitting finale for the Sammelan.

Farewell Dr. (Pt.) V. Vyas

Dr (Pt) Vidyadhar Vyas has chosen to leave ITC-SRA due to unexpected personal reasons. He will by returning to his home in Mumbai. With a heavy heart we bid him adieu, wishing him peace, good health, happiness and continued musical success in the years ahead.

Welcome Mr. R. Mathur

On June 15, 2009, Mr Ravi Mathur takes over as Executive Director of ITC Sangeet Research Academy. An Engineering Graduate with an MMS from Bombay University, he joined ITC in 1971 through campus selection, choosing to specialise in Human Resources. His 36-year career with ITC began in the factories of the FMCG Division. He was also in the Hotels Division at the inception of ITC Mughal in Agra and ITC Maurya in Delhi and has been a part of ITC’s Packaging and Printing Business. He retired in 2007 as General Manager, Corporate Human Resources.
Rang Basant

Every year ITC Sangeet Research Academy organises a cultural programme to celebrate the advent of spring. This year’s programme was held at 6.30 p.m. on Friday, March 13, 2009, at the lawns of the Academy. The concert began with vocal performances by ITC-SRA scholars. Guided by Guru Falguni Mitra, scholars Sucheta, Manali, Anal, Deborshee, Adarsh and Pinaki presented a dhrupad in Raga Bahar, teevra tala “Aaj bahata sugandh pavan” and a dhamaar in Raga Adana “Bajata miridanga gavata dhamaar”. This was followed by khayals in teentala, Raga Sohini “Rang na daro shyamji” and Raga Basant Bahaar “Aayi basant ki bahaar” which were sung by scholars Samarth and Sameechan, guided by Guru Ulhas Kashalkar. Scholars Sucheta, Manali, Kasturi, Sohini and Priyanka sang khayals in Raga Desh, teentala “Khelana aaye hori” and Raga Shahana, ekta “Ata jhum jhum kar asay”. Both these compositions were by Guru Arun Bhaduri who had also trained the scholars. Under Guru Mashkoor Ali Khan’s guidance scholars Arshad, Sandip, Samarth, Sameechan, Adarsh, Anal, Deborshee and Pinaki presented a bandish ki thumri in Raga Kafi “Dekho roko na chhail, gail mori” and a khayal in Raga Basant, ekta “Gaili gaili aindhi aindhi”. Scholars Sucheta, Manali, Anal, Deborshee, Samarth and Sameechan along with general class students Kasturi, Sohini and Priyanka performed the last few compositions which were under Guru Ajay Chakrabarty’s guidance. These included a hori dadra in Raga Tilak Kamod “Kaun khele tumse hori kanhaiya”, a bandish ki thumri in Raga Kafi “Dekho aali hori khelata nandala” and a hori rasiya “Najo naina ri nukkeeley”. The performers were accompanied by Shri Jyoti Gohio and Shrimati Rupashree Bhattacharya on the harmonium, Shri Gopal Mishra and Shri Sandip Kumar Ray Chaudhuri on the tabla, Shri Babua Lodh and Shri Biswarod Das on the Dholak, Shri Sanjiban Acharya on percussion and Shri Apurba Lal Mani on the pakhawaj.

This was followed by a performance of semi-classical music by Shrimati Prabhati Mukherjee. She was accompanied by Shri Manas Chakrabarty on the tabla, Shri Pratap Roy on the accordion and Shri Pradip Mukherjee on the percussion. She presented bandishes made famous by her Gurus Begum Akhtar and Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan.

ITC Sangeet Research Academy invites applications for admission to its general classes and scholarship course

Eligibility:

Applicants should have successfully completed Class X (Secondary school).

Each applicant must send an audio cassette/ CD containing half an hour of a recent (not more than 3 months old) recording (vocal - vilambit and drut khayal/ dhrupad/ thumri or instrumental - sitar/ sarod), together with a bio-data.

Selection:

ITCSRA’s Expert Committee will screen and evaluate the music.

Once evaluation is completed, shortlisted applicants will be invited to appear for the final audition and interview before our Expert Committee and will be sent an admission form.

The applicant will be required to come to Kolkata at his/her own expense.

Finalists with a high level of talent and a fair knowledge of theory will be taken as scholars, while those whose skill sets are deemed promising will be taken on as general class students. The decision of the Expert Committee will be final and binding.

Selected Scholars will be given a stipend in addition to free boarding and lodging on campus.

Applications should be addressed to:

The Prefect, ITC Sangeet Research Academy, 1 N.S.C. Bose Road, Kolkata - 700040.
**Musical Wednesdays**

In the last few months, several visitors and some Gurus have performed on Wednesday evenings at the Academy auditorium. On December 24, 2008, the Academy had a unique Wednesday recital. The first hour comprised archival recordings. The first recording was that of a recital by Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan singing Raga Bhupali at erstwhile Expert Committee Member Pandit Jnan Prakash Ghosh’s Dixon lane residence. The next recording was a Raga Sagar sung by Pandit Omkarnath Thakur.

The next part of the evening comprised the performance of a percussion ensemble lead by Vidwan S.Sekhar. The Ensemble comprised Vidwan S.Sekhar (Mridangam), Shri Somnath Roy (Ghatam), Shri Subrata Manna (Tabla), Shri K.Gopakumar (Chenda) and Shri Kunal Padhy (Drums). The basic rhythm cycle chosen was aditala. The group began with an introduction played in unison. After this the performers played 2 rounds of solo portions of the chenda followed by the tabla, mrdangam, ghatam and finally the drums. The group again played in unison for a short while, building up to the climax wherein the individual instruments played 8 beats, 4 beats, 2 beats and 1 beat in rotation, thus aesthetically bringing out the differing tonal quality of each instrument.

On December 31, 2008, Vidushi Purnima Chaudhuri performed at the Academy. Closely following the footsteps of her Guru Pandit Mahadev Prasad Mishra of Benaras and with the valuable guidance of Padmabhusan Vidushi Girija Devi, Vidushi Purnima Chaudhuri has received wide acclaim with her thumri, dadra, kajri, chatti, hori and tappa, emerging as a torch bearer of the Benaras gharana. She also sings khayal which she learnt as a child from Pandit A Kanan. She began the evening with khayals in Raga Shyam Kalyan “Sawan ki saanjh mein” and “Neend na avar piya bina”. She then presented a thumri in Mishra Khamaj “Sachi kaha mose biyan”, followed by “Aaj sakhi shahm sundar”, a dadra in Raga Mishra Mand which she had learnt as a child from Pandit A Kanan. This was followed by a tappa “Veere de janiya”, a thumri in Raga Manj Khamaj “Jag padi main to piya ko jagaye”, a bandish thumri in Raga Tilak Kamod “Rokona dagar meri shyam” and a dadra “Dagara bicha kaise chalo”. She concluded her performance with “Lagata karajaya mein chot” in Raga Bhairavi. She was accompanied by Shri Samar Saha on the tabla and Shri Jyoti Goho on the harmonium.

The second Wednesday in January brought Ustad Shaukat Hussain Khan ‘Niazi’. Son of the legendary late Ustad Sharafat Hussain Khan Sahib of the Agra-Atrauli gharana, he was initiated into the world of music at the age of five by his father. After his father’s sudden demise, he received guidance from his maternal uncles Ustad Yunus Hussain Khan and Ustad Mubarak Ali Khan. He continues to take guidance from Shrimati Purnima Sen, a disciple of Ustad Sharafat Hussain Khan. He began his performance with khayals in Raga Bihag, vilambit ektaal, “Dhan, dhan re” and drut teentala, “Harat ali tum ho mahabali”. He then presented khayals in Raga Chandrikaums, “Kanha tumhare karan”, vilambit ektaal and “Mori pakad baiyan chheda”, drut teentala. He concluded with a bandish in Raga Suha-Sughrai “Naino so dekhii maine”. He was accompanied on the tabla by Shri Gopal Mishra, while Shrimati Rupashree Bhattacharya provided harmonium support.

This year Basant Panchami, celebrating the advent of spring, was on January 31, 2009. In Bengal this Hindu festival is associated with the worship of Goddess Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge, music and art. At the Academy the occasion was celebrated the following Wednesday. The evening began with a performance by ITC-SRA Scholar Deborshee Bhattacharyee, disciple of Pandit Ajay Chakrabarty. He began with a Saraswati Vandana in the dhrupad style, based on Raga Desh, after which he presented another Saraswati Vandana in Raga Hansadhwani. The concluding artiste ITC-SRA Guru Pandit Arun Bhaduri presented khayals in Raga Saraswati. They were accompanied on the tabla by Shri Gopal Mishra while Shrimati Rupashree Bhattacharya provided harmonium support.
The third Wednesday in February brought Shrimati Sanjana Patankar, disciple of Dr. Ashwini Bhide Deshpande, to the Academy. The recipient of several scholarships, she is a regular artist of All India Radio and has performed in several prestigious conferences and music circles in India and overseas. She began her evening’s performance with khayals in Raga Shree, after which she presented khayals in Raga Karnatak Basant, concluding with a Hori. She was accompanied by Shri Swapnan Mukherjee on the tabla and Shrimati Rupashree Bhattacharya on the harmonium.

The third Wednesday in March featured a sitar-sarod jugalbandi by Shri Ganesh Mohan and Shri Pradeep Barot. Shri Mohan’s playing style aims at a synthesis of three Gharanas, as he has learnt from Pandit Gopal Nag, Pandit Manilal Nag, Pandit Ajay Sinha Ray and Pandit Arvind Parikh and is greatly influenced by Pandit Nikhil Banerjee. Shri Pradeep Barot’s approach to music is traditional and yet highly creative. Initiated by his father, he also learnt from Shri Vasant Rai, a disciple of Ustad Allauddin Khan, before becoming a disciple of Vidushi Annapurna Devi. That evening they began with alap, jod, gat and jhala in Raga Shree, followed by a gat in Raga Gavati and a dhun. They were accompanied on the tabla by Pandit Samar Saha.

Ex-scholar Janab Waseem Khan performed on the last Wednesday of the month. Grandson of Ustad Basheer Khan Sahib of the Agra Gharana, he took his initial taalim from his maternal grandfather Ustad Ata Hussain Khan Sahib at the age of six. Thereafter, he learnt from his father Ustad Nasem Ahmed Khan Sahib. In July 1999, he became a scholar of ITC-SRA under erstwhile Guru Ustad Shafi Ahmed Khan, who is one of his grandfathers. He left the Academy in April 2003, after becoming an A grade scholar. That evening he presented khayals in Raga Jayatangi, Yamanti Nat and Sohini. He was accompanied on the tabla by Shri Sandip Kumar Roy Chaudhuri while Shrimati Rupashree Bhattacharya provided harmonium support.

The second Wednesday in April brought Shri K. Upendra Bhat. Beginning his musical career under Sangeeth Vidwan Shri Narayan Pai of Mangalore, Shri Bhat received further training under Pandit Madhav Gudi, a senior disciple of Pandit Bhide Joshi. In 1980, after moving to Pune, he has been receiving regular tālum from his legendary Guru Pandit Bhide Joshi. He began the evening’s performance with khayals in Raga Puriya Dhanashri, followed by a thumri in Raga Khamaj. On request he also presented khayals in Raga Tilak Kamod, Basant and Kalashri. He was ably accompanied on the tabla by Shri Jishnu Sircar, disciple of Pandit Anand Gopal Bandopadhyay, while Shrimati Rupashree Bhattacharya provided harmonium support.

The third Wednesday in May brought ex-scholar Shrimati Rajashree Gosh to the Academy. Initiated into Hindustani vocal music at a tender age, she subsequently emerged as a gold medalist both in the B.A. and M.A. in khayal, from Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata. In 1986 she received the National Scholarship, being trained by Pandit Amiya Ranjan Banerjee. Later she became a scholar at the ITC Sangeet Research Academy, under the able tutelage of Vidushi Girija Devi and Pandit Arun Bhaduri. She also supplemented her talim under Pandit K.G. Ginde. She began the evening’s performance with khayals in Raga Nand, after which she sang a khyal in Rag Ramdas Malhar. She then sang two hadras, one in Raga Pahar and the other in Raga Khamaj. On request she concluded with two Bengali Pratati songs. She was ably accompanied on the tabla by Shri Samar Saha, while Shrimati Rupashree Bhattacharya provided harmonium support.

CSM Concert

The seventh ITC-SRA concert at the Sandhi Hall, Calcutta School of Music, was held on February 14, 2009. Scholar Sucheta Ganguly, disciple of Pandit Arun Bhaduri, began with khayals in Raga Yaman and a parana composed by her Guru Pandit Arun Bhaduri. She then presented khayals in Raga Basant. On request she sang a khayal in Raga Hameer, concluding with a thumri in Raga Bhatnari “Rasake bhare tore nain” . Shri Sandip Kumar Roy Chaudhuri ably accompanied her on the tabla while Shrimati Rupashree Bhattacharya provided harmonium support.
Study of Nonlinearity in the Indian Flute

Unlike other woodwind instruments, a flute produces its sound from the flow of air against an edge. The flutist changes the pitch of the sound by opening and closing holes in the body of the instrument, thus changing the effective length of the resonator and its resonant frequency. By varying the air pressure, a flute player can also change the pitch by causing the air in the flute to resonate at a harmonic other than the fundamental frequency without opening or closing any holes.

The bouncing of the air stream across any hole creates an effect leading to a swirl or vortex. This excites the air contained in the usually cylindrical resonant cavity within the flute. Once the air in the flute is vibrating, some of the energy is radiated as sound out of the end and any open holes. The jet of air from the player’s lips travels across the embouchure-hole opening and strikes against the sharp further edge of the hole. The sound production in the transverse flute is governed by the coupling between the mouth or embouchure hole in which the flute player blows and the flute tube.

Schematic diagram of an Indian flute showing the swirl or vortex.

Non-linear dynamic modeling for source clearly indicates the relevance of chaotic approaches in understanding flute signals, which essentially contains varying complexity as a mode for information transmission. Such nonlinear dynamics may be studied by measuring the fractal and correlation dimensions along with other higher order moments of the produced acoustic waves. In our work fractal dimension (Dq), correlation dimension (D2) and the higher order moments and their correlations were studied for sound signals of five Indian flutes played by an eminent classical flutist. The results showed that fractal dimensions are not dependent on the pitch. The fractal and correlation dimensions do not show any discrimination but multifractality and intermittency behaviour is reflected thereby depicting nonlinearity.

Frontiers of Research on Speech and Music 2009, Call for Papers

Organised by ITC Sangeet Research Academy, Kolkata; CDAC, Kolkata; Sir C V Raman Centre for Physics and Music, Jadavpur University, Kolkata and ABV- Indian Institute of Information Technology & Management, Gwalior.

Dates 15-16 December 2009

Venue ABV- Indian Institute of Information Technology & Management, Gwalior.


Call for Papers Researchers are invited to submit extended abstracts (1000 words) of original unpublished research work in the related fields by [E-mail: fserm2009@gmail.com] in MS Word format by August 30, 2009. Alternatively, a hardcopy of the abstract can be sent to Prof. A. K. Datta, Chairman, Organising Committee- Frontiers of Research on Speech & Music (FRSM - 2009), Scientific Research Department, ITC Sangeet Research Academy, Tollygunge, Kolkata 700 040. The submitted abstracts will be reviewed carefully and only accepted papers will be published in the Symposium proceedings.
The Western Region of ITC-SRA undertakes several activities in the promotion of Indian music with a view to spreading the banner of ITC-SRA in Suburban Mumbai. Concerts of promising as well as some established artistes are organized at prestigious venues such as the NCPA auditoriums. Such events are also organised presenting Carnatic music in co-operation with highly reputed institutions like Sri Shantakumarananda Sangeet Sabha, Fine Arts Society and others. The Programmes organised in the last few months are listed below:

<table>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Music Circle</th>
<th>Artistes</th>
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| 19th Oct '08 | Music Triangle - Santacruz | V Balakrishnan - Violin recital  
Accompanists - K B Ganesh - Mridangam  
Shaktidharan - Ghataam | Kalina Bhakti Samaj Hall,  
Kalina, Mumbai |
| 13th Nov '08 | Iyer Foundation  
Venu Veena Vani | Sanilkant Gupta - Flute  
Accompanist - Kalinath Mishra - Tabla  
Pt. Ramesh Prem - Vichitra Veena  
Accompanist - Pt. Sadanand Nayarappally - Tabla  
Pt. Girish Waghare - Vocal  
Accompanists - Pt. Balkrishna Iyer - Tabla,  
Shri Mukund Petkar - Harmonium | Ravindra Natya Mandir,  
Prabhadevi, Mumbai |
| 30th Nov '08 | Gana Kala Vidya Nilayam,  
Goregaon | Smt Priyadarshini Varadaraj  
Accompanists - Shri R Madhavan - Violin,  
Shri Rajesh Srinivasan - Mridangam | Goregaon |
| 7th Dec '08 | Bhaleta Rasika Ranjani Sabha,  
7th Dec '08 | Chinmaya Sisters & Party | Anushakti Nagar |
| 21st Dec '08 | Gana Kala Vidya Nilayam,  
Goregaon | Smt. Priyadarshini Varadaraj - vocal  
Accompanists - Shri R Madhavan - Violin,  
Shri Rajesh Srinivasan - Mridangam | Goregaon |
| 19th Feb '09 | Sangit Mahabharati,  
Juhu, Mumbai | Ustad Hashmat Ali Khan (New Delhi)  
tabla solo | Sangit Mahabharati  
Juhu Scheme |
| 21st Feb '09 | Music Triangle - Santacruz | Smt Hema Balasubramanian  
- Carnatic Vocal  
Accompanists - Shri Sridhar Parthasarathy - Mridangam  
Smt Mangala Vaidyanathan - Violin  
Shri Srinivasan - Gopalakrishnan - Ghatam | Kalina Bhakti Samaj Hall,  
Kalina |
| 22nd Feb '09 | Shruti, Borivali | Vidushi Purina Chaudhuri (Benara)  
semi classical (Bhajan, thumri, tappa) recital  
Accompanist - Shri Shankhochar Lahiri - Tabla | ASFEE Auditorium,  
Malad (West) |
| 14th Mar '09 | Dombivli Fine Arts,  
Dombivli | Kumari Amruta Venkatesh - Carnatic Vocal  
Accompanists - Shri R Mahadevan - Violin  
Shri Arjun Ganesh - Mridangam  
Shri N Rajaram - Ghataam | Kudai Hall  
Dombivli (East) |
| 22nd Mar '09 | Bandra Sangeet Sabha,  
Bandra | Youth Festival  
Shri Sreekar Katti - Staar  
Shri Anjali Khandre - Vocal  
Kumari Asavari Kambrelkar - Vocal | Chetana College, Bandra (East) |
International Seminar - Reconsidering Fundamental Issues in Indian Art Music

The ITC Sangeet Research Academy, Music Forum and the National Centre for the Performing Arts (N.C.P.A.), Mumbai jointly organised an international seminar with the theme 'Reconsidering Fundamental Issues in Indian Art Music' at the N.C.P.A. on January 11 & 12, 2009. The inaugural address was delivered by Shri Ashok Vajpai, Chairman, Lalit Kala Academy. This was followed by the presentation of the Music Awards 2008 by Mr. Hans Ramaker, Consul General of the Kingdom of Netherlands. The ITCSRA Award went to Pandit Dinkar Panditkar and Pandit Suresh Talwalkar. ITCSRA Awards for Promising Artists went to 4 prize winners of the AIR competition 2008, namely Kumari Noopur Avinash Kashid of Mumbai for Hindustani Vocal Classical Music (Khaal), Shri Ganesh Papal of Pune, Special Prize Winner for Hindustani Instrumental Music (Percussion), Kumari S. Sriranjani of Chennai for Karnatic Vocal Classical Music and Shri Mailai Mahendran of Chennai, Special Prize Winner, Karnatic Instrumental Music (Nagaswaram).

The theme paper by Pandit Arvind Parikh acquainted the audience with the traditional tenets followed by Indian music without questioning its real validity in terms of actual performance. Hence reconsidering these fundamental issues, he said, was both essential and useful. He pointed out that this seminar would make a beginning to question certain accepted tenets in relation to performing musical practices and implied beliefs.

The first session based on philosophical issues was moderated by Prof. Frans de Ruiter, Chairman Royal Academy of Fine Arts The Hague, where Dr. Ashok Ranade spoke on the nature and function of music and reiterated that every generation must think about the fundamentals afresh.

Prof Joep Bor from Leiden University, Rotterdam moderated the session based on the Rasa theory where the panelists were Prof. N. Rammathan, Dr. Harsha Daheja and Prof. Bharat Gupt. Talking about the relationship of raga and rhythm with rasa, Shri Chitravina. Ravikiran explained how a particular raga or rhythm conveys a particular bhava or rasa. The session based on Time theory in music, had Pt. Shikumara Sharma as speaker, with panelists Shri Chitravina Ravikiran, Prof. Richard Widdess and Shrimati Shrutti Sadolikar. Pandit Shikumara Sharma confessed that since it has become ingrained in our psyche, playing Raga Yaman in the morning is considered sacrilege. The Gundecha brothers pointed out that the soul of our music resides in the raga.

The next session dealt with grammatical issues related to laya and talas. The discipline and loyalty to Gharana tradition in the art of tabla, the relevance of dasha prana, the laghu kaal unit of laya, the adequacy and potentiality of teentala and other topics related to rhythm were discussed in detail by Pandits Suresh Talwalkar, Arvind Mulgaonkar, Nayan Ghosh and Bhai Gaitonde.

Grammatical issues about the raga were discussed the next day by panelists Prof R. Widdess, Prof. Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy, and Shrimati Suvarnalata Rao. The validity of
vadi, samvadi, aaroba, and avroha versus chalan was deliberated upon by Dr Ashok Ranade, Pandit Arvind Parikh and Dr Vidyaadhar Vyas, with panelists Prof Joel Bor, Dr Allyn Miner, Prof Bharat Gupte and Shri Amarendra Dhaneshwar. The acoustic environment relating to performance and listening had Shri Avinash Oak as moderator and Shri Miltind Raorane and Shri Khushrau Jilla as panelists.

The concluding session was moderated by Pandit Arvind Parikh with the participation of all the panelists. The enriching seminar attracted a sizable music-loving audience, many of whom were students who provided an enthusiastic floor response.

- Manjari Sinha.

Western Region Radio programmes

The Western Region of ITC-SRA had sponsored a half-hour radio programme broadcast on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of the month on Asmita Vaahini of All India Radio, Mumbai, featuring young performers. On September 13, 2008, Bangalore vocalist Shri Kaushik Aithal presented khyals in Raga Saraswati, accompanied on the tabla by Shri Gurumurthy Vaidya, while Smt Medha Bhatt provided harmonium support. On September 27, 2008, Mumbai vocalist Shrimati Puja Athavale presented khyals in Raga Bilawal, accompanied on the tabla by Shri Abhay Datar, while harmonium accompaniment was by Shri Mandar Roopji.

On October 11, 2008, Pune vocalist Kumari Gayatri Gaekwad sang khyals in Raga Yaman. She was accompanied by Shri Ramakant Gaekwad on the tabla and Shri Suryakant Gaekwad on the harmonium. On October 25, 2008, Bangalore vocalist Shri Kaushik Aithal presented khyals in Raga Malkauns, accompanied on the tabla by Shri Gurumurthy Vaidya, with Shri Ravindra Katoti at the harmonium.


On January 10, 2009, Shri Manas Kumar presented Raga Madhuvanti on the violin. He was accompanied by Shri Rakshandas Panchal on the tabla. On January 24, 2009, the programme featured Shri Gandhar Chaudhul presenting khyals in Raga Multani, accompanied on the tabla by Shri Rakshandas Panchal and with Shri Shashidh Kumar on the harmonium.

On February 14, 2009, the programme featured a solo tabla recital by Shri Rakshandas Panchal. He presented teental while the nagara was provided by Shri Niranjana Lele. On February 28, 2009, Shri Atinaram Bicholkar presented Raga Kirvani on the jaltarang. Shri Rakshandas Panchal provided tabla support.

Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything.

- Plato

Congratulations

We most heartily congratulate the following musicians:

Sangeet Natak Akademi Ratna (Akademi fellows) - Prof R.C.Mehta, Shri Bhupen Hazarika
Sangeet Natak Akademi Award - Prof M.R.Gautam, Pandit Ullhas Kashalkar, Pandit Ramesh Mishra, Pandit Krishna Ram Chaudhury, Vidwan Puranam Purushottama Saxtri, Vidwan B. Sasi Kumar, Vidwan Mannargudi A. Easwaran, Shri Ningsombam Ilobei Singh
Padma Bhushan - Prof R.C.Mehta
Padma Shri – Shri Mattanmoor Sankaran Kutty, Dr Kiran Seth, Shrimati Aruna Sairam, Smt Leela Omcherry, Bhai Nirmal Singh Khalsa.
In this section we feature readers' opinions on different topics. This time we discuss the electronic tanpura.

I would like to address the matter of the usefulness of the electronic tanpura in the juxtaposition of two categories, one being 'convenience', the other being 'quality'. The matter of convenience is most readily grasped on a practical level, while more musically essential matters are often conveniently ignored. Seeing that these electronic commodities have largely been accepted by most musicians, it would seem that practical convenience is rated far above quality. However, using cloned tanpuras imposes an unnatural uniformity on music, which in the long run will corrupt undoubtedly the tonal purity of Indian Classical Music. With sadness and frustration I have noted over the years that the quality that I have been so devoted to (giving optimum tanpura support) is no longer appreciated by many artists, who appear to be more comfortable singing (or playing) with their boxes. This may be illustrated of another way in which the electronic tanpura is found to be convenient, in that it is less critical and demanding it is far easier to appear generally tuneful, singing with a lifeless box than to bring a raga to life with immaculate intonation. It is for this reason, apparently, that many musicians prefer to do without the real thing that will expose a lack of sensitivity to the finer qualities of swara and shrutis. We find ourselves in the situation where, for sheer convenience, authentic tonal purity and variety is denied to the audience who are given a bleak surrogate instead. In a contrary sense to what Zahiruddin Dadarshah said, "tuning a tanpura creates intelligence", using pre-programmed synthetic and artificial sounds as the basis of shrutis is debilitating and demeaning. Not only that we get bland performances, devoid of surbharana or real charm, the very essence of raga is muddied and reduced to formal patterns, an empty form without real flesh, blood and soul. If however, both musicians and the audience are content with more superficial performances filled with empty pyrotechnics instead of surbharana, the electronically cloned tanpura will reign undisputed and will indeed be found very useful.

- Martin Spink, Tanpura artist and jivari-maker, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Basically the origin of tanpura is deeply rooted in the philosophy of Naad-yoga. An ideal instrument to produce the anahat by means of shadha, it represents the three constituent sounds of celestial Omkara, i.e. sounds that generate from the navel, heart and throat points of the spinal cord of a human body. Due to this lone reason the tanpura plays a pivotal role in the arduous journey of musical awakening that is commonly called sadhana or riha. Loosely called a drone instrument, the tanpura, with its resonant, echoing, formlessly swirling sound, creates a trans-like state that helps the musician to shut out from everything around him, even his own thoughts, and lose himself in the ocean of music where his chosen raga becomes his beacon.

It requires an aural sophistication to be able to tune and then play the tanpura to perfection. Ustad Ali Akbar Khan once slapped his tanpura companion because of his incompetence. Uneven balance of the weight of the fingers can destroy the complete setup of microtones that emanate from the deep resonances of the three notes and completely spoil the mood! This fact is based on pure science. Celebrated scientist Sir C V Raman was probably the first to propound the scientific principles that govern this amazing instrument. The acoustic properties of the resonator and the correct posture prescribed for tanpura playing play an important role in creating the appropriate atmosphere. The most important part of the tanpura are the slits and the fine thread of cotton, silk or wool. Placed at a significant point under each string on the bridge, these thread pieces actually help produce an unusual number of harmonics and sub-harmonics that are very important, both scientifically and aesthetically.

Ustad Faiyyaz Khan preferred four tanpuras during his recitals. An innovative Ustad Amir Khan used tanpuras with six strings and introduced nishads to tanpura tuning. Even modern-day musicians cannot do without the conventional tanpura due to its indispensable charisma.

Despite everything, many of today's jetset musicians depend heavily on the easy-to-handle and easy-to-carry digital electronic tanpura nowadays. And it is a boon for students. All one needs is to hit the button of a desired scale and, to a great extent, every thing else is taken care of. No hassles of carrying, no problems in tuning, and no assistance required for playing.

Age had withered the beautiful Malabika Kanu's voice, but till her last she loved to spend hours with the little electronic tanpura reverberating in her musical solitude...

- Meena Banerjee, Kolkata

My father and guru, Pandit Amarnathji of the Indore gharana used to say, pointing the fingers of his right hand in the direction of his chest, "Stereo to aapne andar bata hai", meaning of course that the external is the expression of the internal. You could say that about the electronic tanpura also-"tuning to aapne andar bata hai," and that speaks volumes about the difference between the electronic and the real tanpuras. Tuning the real tanpura takes years to accomplish-depending on how well your psyche is in tune with your soul. Though the electronic tanpura is of course created to be totally at one with the real tanpura, and saves time, tuning time, you don't go through any journey, or process, of tuning the instrument with your 'self'.

A master or maestro is one whose tanpura 'listens' to him. Tanpura jinka 'keha maane' - but there is no such dialogue with the electronic tanpura. In fact if you are dependent on the electronic tanpura for singing, this lack of dialogue will affect your upaj in the long run. With its portability, the electronic tanpura has many uses, especially when you travel and for the bharoses. However, on the concert platform it is an external voice. While the tanpuras give the musician the 'sur', the electronic tanpura gives the 'sur' to the audience.

- Bindu Chawla, New Delhi
It is a fortunate thing for Hindustani Art Music that musicians are very busily flying all over the country and abroad for performances. But unfortunately as a result most of them have no time left for maintaining the acoustic tanpura! Who has the patience left to tune the acoustic tanpura meticulously in this fast age? In the last 10 years, I have observed that many artists have lost the capacity of discerning the nuances of the frequency spectrum produced by the acoustic tanpura. Many Gurus use the electronic tanpura while teaching, so I fear that the technique of tuning the acoustic tanpura, jauari kholana, plucking the tanpura in an even pace without detuning it, listening to the beautiful harmonics and ambient sound of the acoustic tanpura is going to be an unknown area for students of music in the coming years. Use of well-maintained tanpura jodi is a rare phenomenon nowadays.

Let us try to analyse why artists are neglecting acoustic tanpuras. Most of the concert halls are air-conditioned, but the green-rooms are not. Many auditoriums are designed in such a way that the blowers are placed on the head position of the artist. The temperature fluctuation detunes acoustic tanpuras easily and that disturbs the artist’s mood! So a musician depends more on electronic tanpura which is relatively stable.

Even though we have good transportation all over the country, carrying delicate and bulky acoustic tanpuras, has become a difficult task now days - especially in air transport where the security checks give trouble to musicians thinking that they are transporting some ammunition!

Making and maintenance of acoustic tanpura is a hard job due to rarity of master craftsmen and lack of good raw material. Many artists are unaware of the technique of jauari kholana - which was a common thing in earlier times.

In terms of tuning, transportation, maintaining electronic tanpura is more ‘user friendly’. They are more ‘stable’ than acoustic ones. However, most of the electronic tanpuras available in the market have a difference in shadja jodi and kharaj. It gives me a feeling of discomfort. Most importantly, they do not have the natural frequencies of Pancham, Madhyam – but they have tampered ratios of these notes. Surprisingly, there are very few musicians who can make out the difference of these natural and tempered ratios! This induces an uneasy feeling to my ears, trained according to Hindustani Art Music. (I think, that musician’s ears are so used to listening to tampered notes, that hardly anyone is capable of identifying the natural ratios!)

If the manufacturers of electronic tanpura improve on these issues, I feel it will be more useful. Nowadays, many artists are preferring to use another option – they record their own acoustic tanpura tuned by themselves and make a loop for several hours, storing the sound file on iPods or laptops, to which they give a line-out to the amplification system in a concert. For me, this is a better option than using the electronic tanpura available in the market. This gives the effect of the acoustic tanpura more than that of the electronic tanpura.

-Chaitanya Kunte, Pune

Here are some reasons why the electronic tanpura is useful:

1) It is portable and easier to carry;
2) The sound quality as per the latest models is almost equivalent to the manual tanpura;
3) It does not need tanpura players;
4) Cost is lower than manual tanpuras in most cases;
5) Tuning is easier because of the digital technology - the DRONA can be manipulated in a better way because of the recent technology.

However, there are some drawbacks namely:

1) In a manual tanpura a larger volume of air is brought into resonance(vibration) which results in a sound production which is almost unmatched;
2) In a manual tanpura the sound is more organic because it is played with the human hand. This organic quality prepares a better foundation for singing.

If I am asked to choose between the two in Indian conditions, I shall definitely choose the manual tanpura.

-Aniruddha Bhattacharya, ex-scholar ITC-SRA, Kolkata

The justification of the usage of the electronic tanpura varies in the context of the different situations an artist faces. Personally, I do not use an electronic tanpura (e-tanpura) during raiya. I would not recommend any music sadhaka to do so either. I did try it briefly and from my experience, I can safely say that it is quite harmful. It would be better to use one good natural tanpura (n-tanpura) with carefully and skillfully worked “jauari” during raiya. The shruti impact is the maximum in the n-tanpura. It may be noticed that, quite often, even before the singer begins, one can tell which raga will be performed just by the atmosphere built by the sound of a pair of good, well-tuned n-tanpuras. This can never happen with an e-tanpura.

However, the e-tanpura as an additional drone during concert performances is, in my opinion, a useful aid. Artists who travel widely, cannot afford to carry their n-tanpuras everywhere and often face the problem of having to do with sub-standard ones. To some extent, knowledge of tanpura maintenance can help adjusting/reparing these, prior to a concert. This can nevertheless be a sore inconvenience during the concert. The problem of heavy lights, air-conditioned auditoriums with non-airconditioned greenrooms, bad n-tanpuras and sometimes, tanpura players who do not know how to bring out the optimum sound of the tanpuras, are all practical difficulties where the e-tanpura comes to the rescue. Moreover, if the n-tanpuras were good anyway, the e-tanpura drone would only add to it. Therefore, there is nothing to lose, really. Overall, in my opinion, it is quite a useful tool as an additional aid, but definitely not to be used independently, as far as possible.

-Samarth Nagarkar, Kolkata
Congratulations

Pandit Ulhas Kashalkar, Guru, ITC-SRA has been selected for the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award 2008 for Hindustani Vocal Music. A goldmedallist at his post graduation in music, Ulhasji is a much soughtafter performer all over India and abroad. Trained under Pandit Gajananbua Joshi, after initial grooming by his father, Shri N. D. Kashalkar and Pandit Ram Marathe, Ulhas’s delineation of a khayal, assimilating the ashtangi-pradhan styles of Gwalior, Jaipur and Agra, brings out a methodical and yet spontaneous portrayal of alap, bolalap, meend, gamak, mutki, bolrana, tana and layakari. He joined ITC-Sangeet Research Academy, Kolkata, as a Guru in 1993.

On February 13, 2009, at the 30th Convocation ceremony of Burdwan University, Pandit Buddhadev Das Gupta, Guru, ITC-SRA, was awarded the Doctorate of Literature for his outstanding achievement in the world of music, literature and academics. The award was handed over by the Governor, Shri Gopal Krishna Gandhi. Trained for 38 years by the late maestro Pandit Radhika Mohan Maitra, he is the senior most exponent of one of the most authentic sarode gharanas today, the Semi-Shahjahanpur Gharana.

ITC-SRA scholar Sucheta Ganguly, disciple of Pandit Arun Bhaduri received 3 prizes awarded by SNDT Women’s University, including a gold medal for excellence in music. These were in recognition of her graduation examination. Her Excellency Shrimati Pratibha Patil was the Chief Guest while Hon.Governor and Chancellor of Universities, Higher Education, Shri S.C.Jamir presided over the Convocation function.

Mallar Rakshit, general class student of Guru Pandit Buddhadev Das Gupta has been awarded the National Scholarship by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. Mallar has been learning from Pandit Das Gupta since he joined the Academy in 2006. Earlier he was learning from Shri Supriya Banerjee, disciple of Vidushi Annapurna Devi.

Samarth Nagarkar, presently a general class student of Guru Pandit Ulhas Kashalkar has received the Junior Fellowship from the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. Samarth was initiated into Hindustani classical music by Shrimati Aditi Upadhye and later learnt from Pandit Dinkar Kaikini, before joining ITC Sangeet Research Academy as a scholar being trained by Pandit Ulhas Kashalkar.

Retirements

Hailing from a cultured family, Mrs Krishna Chaudhuri was born at Kolkata. Educated at Bangalore, she travelled to different parts of India after her marriage. She joined ITC Sangeet Research Academy in 1981. Her contribution to the different activities undertaken at the Academy was unparalleled. Be it the Sangeet Sammelans, the house magazine, the music circle, she played the pivotal role. She retired as Chief Manager in February 2009, leaving a void that has been felt not only by members of the Academy, but by all those who have been frequent visitors to it.

Born in Mumbai, Shri Chandrabhan Sreesundar was trained from the age of eight by Pandit Badri Prasad Mishra of the Benaras gharana. Showing a keen interest in tabla as well as in vocal music, he quickly matured into a highly sought after tabla player of the country. A sensitive accompanist to both instrumental and vocal artists, he has had the distinction of accompanying maestros such as Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, Ustad Sharafat Khan, Vidushi Hirabai Barodekar, Pandit Jitendra Abhisheki, Pandit Basavraj Rajguru, Pandit Vinayak Rao Parwadhan and Vidushi Manik Verma. He has been a casual staff artiste of All India Radio, and has participated at most of the prestigious music festivals in India as well as abroad for over three decades. Simple and true to his art, Chandrabhanji has been a full time faculty member right since the inception of ITC Sangeet Research Academy. His retirement has been felt most by the scholars who looked forward to his assistance during riyaz sessions.
Welcome to our new Scholars

Born on February 3, 1985, Deborshee Bhattacharjee received his initial training from his mother, Smt Reeta Bhattacharjee. He was ten when he started learning under Pandit Ajoy Chakrabarty, and continues to train under him at ITC-SRA, becoming a scholar in December 2008. A post graduate in Commerce, Deborshee has been a prolific performer from the age of ten. He has won the West Bengal State Music Academy competition in both junior and senior categories as well as receiving numerous other prizes. A regular artist of All India Radio, Kolkata since 2006, in 2007 he accompanied his Guru on a concert tour of UK.

Born at Burdwan on March 11, 1984, Brajeswar Mukherjee was initiated by his parents and later learnt from Shri Hara Kumar Chatterjee and Shri Asit Roy. Later he was accepted as a disciple by Pandit Ajoy Chakrabarty and continues to train under him at ITC-SRA, where he is a scholar since May 2009. In 2005 he came first in the B.A Examination in music from Calcutta University and received the “Dhananjay Bhattacharya Award”. Since 2000 he has been teaching at Shrutiinandan, the music school established by Pandit Ajoy Chakrabarty. Since 2003 he has accompanied his Guru on the harmonium or provided vocal support in concerts in different parts of India as well as USA, Canada, UK and Middle East. A B-High graded artist of All India Radio, he had earlier won the Govt. of India’s National Scholarship. In 2009 he stood 1st Class 2nd in the Masters degree in Music from Calcutta University.

Born on October 4, 1986, Priyanka Mitra was initially trained by Shri Sanjay Dubey of Siliguri. Subsequently she joined Shrutiinandan and learnt under Smt Chandana Chakraborty, Smt Kaushiki Chakraborty and finally under Pandit Ajoy Chakrabarty. Graduating with honours in music, she is presently completing her M.A. She stood 1st in khayal, 2nd in bhajan and raga vadhi in the Dover Lane music competition and won the Pandit Ravi Kichlu Foundation award in bhajan. In May 2009, she joined ITC Sangeet Research Academy as a scholar being trained by Pandit Ulhas Kashalkar.

Born on July 23, 1986, Saker Sahu learnt the violin for 15 years from Shri U. Radhakrishna Jha, from the age of 5. He has completed his MA in Music (Violin) from Indira Kala Music University, Khairagarh. A recipient of ‘Sur Ratna’ and gold medal from Bhatkhande Lalitkala, he also won the All India Radio music competition in 2006, ITC Sangeet Research Academy Promising Artistes award in Mumbai (2007), ‘Surmani’ from Sur Singer Samsad Mumbai (2007) and National Scholarship (2007-2008). He has performed in several parts of India. Since May 2009, he has joined the ITC Sangeet Research Academy as a disciple of Pandit Ajoy Chakrabarty under whom he is learning the gayaki ang.

Alumni update

- Chandra Chakraborty has been residing at London after several years in Johannesburg. In July she will be visiting India and Bangladesh on a concert tour.
- Dalia Rahut went on a concert tour of USA in December 2008. She performed and conducted workshops at New Jersey, Seattle and California. In February 2009, after her return to Kolkata, she performed at the jugalbandi festival with Vidushi Purnima Chaudhuri.
- Koushik Bhattacharjee toured France, Germany, Norway & other countries of Europe from November 2008 – February 2009. He has also received the Vocational Award from Rotary Club of Salt Lake City. A CD entitled ‘AB’s Rhymes & Rhythms’ has been released featuring Nursery Rhymes in English, Bengali & Hindi for which he was responsible for the music direction, composition and arrangement.
- Sabina M. Islam 2006 she has been a visiting of Indian Classical Music.
- Shirin Sengupta is on a Rahaman has performed at the 105th Shastriya Sangeet Sammelen at Amritsar. Since teacher of Indian Classical vocal music in New York City under American Academy concert tour of Europe, performing at Switzerland, the Netherlands & Germany.