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Experience the experience



NEXT FROM THE MATRKA STABLE IS SVANUBHAVA, A UNIQUE, ONE-OF-ITS-KIND FESTIVAL ONLY FOR STUDENTS OF CARNATIC MUSIC. IN CONVERSATION WITH T M KRISHNA AND BOMBAY JAYASHREE

Even before the last strains of the Margazhi music season had faded from the venerable *sabhas* of Chennai this year, Bombay Jayashree and T M Krishna (city-based eminent classical musicians and creators of *Matrka*) were crackling their minds and had almost zeroed in on their next big idea. In February, they devised an action plan, and exactly six months later, their idea is brewing to take form and shape in *Svanubhava*, a first-of-its-kind festival (between August 5th and August 10th) that is essentially about music, and exclusively for its students.

The story of *Svanubhava* (meaning one's own experience in Sanskrit) is as interesting as the event itself. In January, Jayashree and Krishna grappled with a common concern that was unanimously echoed by students of Carnatic music. "We came across several youngsters who said they were unable to attend concerts in the season for various reasons; timing, distance, cost of tickets and other logistics' issues," says Krishna, "On one level, it was

heartening to note that youngsters were keen to listen to music; on another, we were genuinely disappointed that nothing was being done to bridge the gap between the artistes and students. We were convinced we had to do something substantial and meaningful for the student fraternity. It was the need of the hour."

In form, essence and spirit, *Svanubhava* draws inspiration from *Matrka's* (Jayashree and Krishna's company) innate philosophy "to celebrate and showcase the richness of Indian art and culture". What sets this musical outfit apart though is its dazzling design. Tailored intelligently and intricately to address the multifarious needs of students (of classical music), this festival (between 9am and 3.30pm) comprehensively weaves together an array of interesting patterns that not only aim to de-mystify the classical genre but also allow aspirants an opportunity to enjoy live, unplugged music in venues that support and encourage the performing arts. "There was one thing both Krishna and I were convinced about," avers Jayashree, "And that was the premise of the festival. It had to be of, by, and for the students."

To add to the young blood, and to create a sense of community, *Matrka* roped in the Youth Association for Classical Music (YACM). "Jayashree and I met each other as students of Carnatic music through YACM," recalls Krishna, "It was a great platform for us to share and exchange ideas; we felt we had to provide today's youngsters an opportunity to feel and share that community experience."

In many ways, *Svanubhava* was sculpted by the nearly 700 students of three well-known institutions in the city - Kalakshetra Foundation, Government Music College and the Music Academy. Together with members of YACM, Jayashree and Krishna brainstormed with these youngsters to chalk out a schedule that would be thoroughly enjoyable. The response, needless to say, was overwhelming. "At the end of it all, we had 500 ideas," reveals Jayashree, "But the amazing part was the crystal-clear clarity with which students voiced their thoughts. For us, as artistes, that was a revelation. Youngsters knew exactly what they wanted in those six days..."

The end result is an eclectic selection of concerts by leading musicians, lecture demonstrations, chat sessions, debates, face-to-face interactions, film screenings and power point presentations too. Among the many components that will keep students immersed in music, is a daily session on the art of listening. "The idea here is to encourage students to listen to a lot of music, and music of different kinds," explains Krishna, "But it's imperative to know what to draw or for that matter, what not to draw out of the music."

Like its format, *Svanubhava* is a confluence of sorts. For six days in a row, students from varied backgrounds and psyches will soak in the pure, undiluted spirit of the classical stream. "We believe it's through experiences like these that the musical community will grow," says Jayashree. So do we...

For detail, check out <http://svanubhava.blogspot.com>.