CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

MEDIA A BOON TO CARNATIC MUSIC

This thesis is a humble effort to analyze the role of media in the propagation of Carnatic Music. The first chapter of this work details the objective and relevance of the study. The second one discusses media and music. Propagation of Carnatic Music through different media like sabha, radio, television, newspapers, film etc is the subject of discussion in the third chapter. The fourth chapter is about the relevance of media in the development of Carnatic Music in modern times. The concluding chapter examines how media has become a boon to Carnatic Music. Interview reports, lists of a few Sabhas, some Carnatic Music books, list of top grade artists of All India Radio and photos of some eminent musicians who acted in films are attached as appendices.

Media contributed immensely to the growth, development and popularity of music, the boon and bounty of Almighty. Music, a means of adoration and worship of God in olden days, has entered with pulsating appeal into the hearts and minds of common people, thanks to the media. One can understand the progress of print media through different stages, looking at the ancient cave inscriptions and then moving on to mural works, palm leaves and leaflets, copper plates, coins and so on. Similarly, the flourish of electronic media too goes at par with the rhythm of nature.
Electronic media help music reach millions of across the oceans and continents. Invention of various electronic gadgets such as Gramophone, tape-recorder, CD, DVD, iPod, internet etc is a milestone and these gadgets have played significant roles in the growth, conservation and propagation of music. Microphone with amplifier is an important gadget. It helps to increase the normal voice of a musician to the required level to reach a very large number of people. In concerts without the help of sound system, the vocalist and instrumentalist have to strain to be heard. A high level of voice and sound is but one facet of music.

Recording system is a boon to students of music. In the olden times one learnt music under the guru shishya parampara system which required several years of serious study. If the student is intelligent and dedicated he may learn about forty to fifty percent of what is taught by his guru. In such situations the advantages of recording are unparalleled. Lessons can be recorded and studied later properly. This helps students to better themselves in their studies. The pocket recorders are God-given boons. Recording of lessons by the students for their benefit is a positive aspect of the technology but sometimes it affects adversely because the students become complacent and take it easy. The technology helps to record and preserve the renderings by the old masters. But these, in the form of cassettes, CDs, by themselves do not help to learn music. That can only be done with the help and guidance of an accomplished guru. Recordings cannot be a substitute for a guru. A student of music may
think that he can become a musician with the help of all the electronic gadgets at his disposal and a bit of training from a teacher. But he not realise that something is lost in between.

Due to various limitations, traditions and constraints, music and other art forms were confined to only certain places in ancient times. There was a time when the music of the great Trinity was confined to Thiruvayyar. In those days, only those who travelled to Thiruvayyar could listen to their divine and ageless music. This was one of the reasons for the limited popularity and appeal of music in those days. The only way to enjoy music then was to attend concerts held in temples or when festivals were conducted. Temple festivals and related celebrations helped the fame of many eminent musicians of all times to spread. But, often there was the constraint of time and space. Classical music was practised by people living in ivory towers and it was beyond the reach of common man. Later musical Sabhas came into being and musicians got more opportunities and thus better exposure. The role and influence of the Sabhas in the growth and development of music are greatly acknowledged.

Establishment of the All India Radio and commencement of broadcasts were epoch making events. AIR helped music, which was confined to limited areas reach millions, through their broadcasts. The advent of television further expanded the horizon of music with live video cum audio transmissions quenching the thirst of many to see and hear recorded or live music programmes. These two media have encouraged many musicians, both Hindusthani and Carnatic. But
today the time allotted for classical music is far too little. The performances of great masters in the national programmes of music are aired well near midnight when the younger generation or tired viewers, after the day’s work, retire. The present-day reality shows on TV channels contribute a lot in the propagation of music. Still its negative impact on the systematic and scientific growth of music is real and cannot be refuted.

Revolutionary changes have occurred in the field of music with the use of internet, world space radio, digital, DTV and such highly developed aids and means. Music from any corner of the world is easily accessible at the touch of a button. Great are the contributions of print media, like books, journals, newspapers etc in popularising Carnatic Music. News papers have helped increase the awareness of common man about music and related art forms. The Art Columns in the newspapers in olden times used to provide a detailed account of the significant items performed and those scheduled. But such special columns do not exist now. Certain reviews are found occasionally on Fridays or Sundays in certain papers like The Hindu, The Indian Express etc. But when reviewed by those who are not qualified to do so, errors are likely to creep in. It necessitates the entry of music students in this field to set matters right.

The media that greatly facilitated the wide growth of Carnatic Music during the years past were drama and cinema. As mentioned earlier, most of the actors in them were musicians or music lovers. The sway and influence wielded by films in those days as a mass-
media deserve special mention. The status of talented artists was elevated and their contributions were duly recognized. Bulk of the film songs of the past were based on Carnatic Music. But today only a few music directors follow the Carnatic tradition while composing songs. This is the main reason for the transience of the present day film songs. Most of the songs fail to appeal to our senses and leave a lasting impact, because of lack of classical qualities in them.

The musician’s image is propagated and built up not only by the quality of his music, but also by their flair for showmanship, ability to communicate through different forms of media such as books, articles, journals, cassettes, video recordings, CD’s, AIR, Television, films etc. in a manner which is acceptable not only in India but also to worldwide audiences. The media is now an essential and extremely valuable asset, whose quality and application have to be continuously upgraded to provide better and more faithful communication between the artiste and his audience. At the same time, the artist has to be careful to adopt himself and his music to the media in such suitable manner to ensure more cohesion and less chance of distortion. Thus media plays a blessed role in the growth and development of Carnatic music. But over dependence on media may spoil the spiritual essence of music. So a line has to be drawn to define the extend music can depend on media.

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