CHAPTER IV

THE RELEVANCE OF MEDIA IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CARNATIC MUSIC IN MODERN TIMES

Science, developed by man has always been in his service. Man’s brain and mind are more powerful than anything so far known in this world. All developments and advances, we see around and from which we benefit, are the brain child of man. In effect, there is nothing that we know of or invented so far can be compared to human brain. The 20th century saw the invention of tape, cassette recorder and player. Their size got reduced with miniaturisation resulting in the advent of microchips and similar micro devices. With advancement of digital electronics, digital sound with fidelity not imaginable before came into use. With computers and internet making their debut, sound technology took another leap. However, the soul and life of music is human voice and his creativity, sensitivity and emotions. With the advancements in electronic technology, the computers are capable to churn out any type of ragas. But these computers have to be programmed by a human using his brain. It is up to one to use these tools to his or her advantages, as complement to teaching, learning, and archiving methods.

“The movement of the music industry into the ‘Digital Age’ marks a revolution in the quality of the reproduction and the versatility of music distribution. The digital language of computers has been incorporated into
nearly every aspect of our lives including audio and visual entertainment. In order to take advantage of digital music and the versatility it can provide, we need to understand some of the features of digital encoding of musical information, along with a discussion of tools that can be used to manipulate and process digital music”.  

In the modern times it is difficult to imagine any aspect of music that is not touched by technology. As listeners, we hear recorded music that has been perfected with the help of advanced digital techniques. As a performer, one uses instruments and perform on stages that have the benefit of countless technological advances in materials and design. As a composer and arranger, one no longer rely on pencil and paper alone to present music; powerful computers, printers, and electronic sound devices provide additional resources for the creative thinking and working. Those educators and scholars, engaged in thinking, writing, and talking about music, use many advanced tools to support their analyses and illustrations. Certainly the music we hear today is much different from the one that the previous generation heard.

Previously, music was largely confined to temples, royal or princely courts. Music performance during marriages went on for several days. Musical discourses (Harikatha Kalakshepam) and dance dramas provided entertainment and educative music. The strident

developments in the audio cassette manufacturing industry are responsible to a large measure, for the change in the temperament of audiences today. One needs to seriously review the merits of this development. This has contributed immensely in making Carnatic music accessible and affordable to millions of interested people.

In this era of Information Technology, any kind of Music is just a click away. Radio, television, music festivals, film music, cassettes, CDs, internet are all medias of entertainment, and are also medias of mass education which have created general awareness about music. Sometimes, it is surprising to see the extent to which the young students of music acquire the talent to imitate their idols without having any personal contact or coaching from those great masters. Today one receives education in music mainly through three channels: 1) the institutions established solely for this purpose (Music Departments in Universities, Music Universities etc); 2) educational institutions where music is taught as one of the subjects along with others (schools and colleges - here the aim of music education is to create taste for and awareness of music among the students) and 3) Gurus either at the Gurukula or online platforms like Skype.

Now, every music institutions have modern and well-equipped books and audio library. Students can themselves record their recitals periodically and evaluate the progress in their performance. Today availability of internet connection is imperative in any educational institute. The students can access information on different topics in
music, listen to umpteen hours of recordings etc., via internet. Students in India and abroad can avail the facilities of Distance Education Courses in music, initiated via internet conferencing. It allows two way communications between the tutor and the learner.

“Digital libraries- that is, large collections of recorded, printed, and encoded media- will transform the way we teach music theory, as much as digital technology has transformed commerce, communication, entertainment and scientific research. Indiana University established the first major digital music library with the launch of variations. Variations provide online access to over 9000 hours of CD-quality audio to computers within this building. It is used for the vast majority of student listening in the school, both for course reserves and for personal, and it is also used in technology equipped classrooms such as this one in face to face teaching.

The variation to digital music library takes a significant next step towards actually transforming how the students learn by changing the nature of their engagement with the library’s content. This is a multi-disciplinary research project being carried out at Indiana University under a four-year grant from the National Science Foundation. The purpose of these Multimedia Music Theory Teaching or (MMTT) tools is to enable students and instructors to interact with the music in its various formats not just passively listen or look at. These tools will provide in a single application a number of capabilities otherwise available only in separate
programmes, and they are designed specifically to work in a digital library environment.”

Music today has become an inevitable part in the life of men and women of every walk of life. Even children carry small recorders to listen to songs. Short recorded pieces are heard every time when alarm goes on in clocks, when cell phone rings and even when a vehicle is put in reverse gear. Today ‘fusion music’ has a market of its own. ‘Track’ recording has made the job of vocalists easy and now music is available with different kinds of orchestration. Sometimes small pieces of music are made at different times, at different places and with different artists.

The television sponsor different competitions, concerts and also awareness programmes which create great love for, as well as interest in music among the youth. South Indian channels like Doordarshan’s ‘National’, ‘DD4’ and DD Bharathi, ‘Asianet’, ‘Kairali’, ‘Amritha’, ‘Victors’, ‘Sun’, ‘Jaya’ and devotional channels like SVBC, Sankara etc, conduct music programmes, and play a major role in popularizing Carnatic Music.

All India radio has been doing great service to classical music by broadcasting concerts of musicians, past and present, great and not-so-great.

‘Thought’ is said to be the fastest faculty of human beings, in which one can reach anywhere, think of anybody and act mentally the

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30 Ibid., 200-201
way one wants, in seconds. But without hesitation, one can today say that, while ‘thought’ is intangible, here is a media, INTERNET, capable to travel at great speed and record any sound aesthetics, within seconds, that too perfectly. A recital which was once occasional and local, now can claim to be an all-time musical experience, excite anybody, anywhere and anytime. Once, listeners were totally dependent on the performing artists, waiting for their sweet will and convenience for entertainment. Today, the situation is different. One can leisurely see or listen any performance any time one likes. Today it is the electronic power which brings about miracles. It helps a man switch his voice to that of a woman, the voice of an old dada changes to that of a baby, a stringed instrument makes the sound of wind and from a metal bell, the syllables of percussion emanate. All these, and much more are the miracles of the electronic equipments.

Electronic media has made a major difference in the way students of music are trained. Earlier, the student had to be continuously looked after by the guru personally. But today the students record the proceedings in classes and take them home for practice. And the guru and his sishya need not come face to face and can live in different places or even countries. They can either have communication over phone or visual teleconferencing (via satellite).

The role of ‘internet’ in the development of Carnatic music is very important in modern times. There are a number of World Wide Web sites available for Carnatic music. Some of them are:-
THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CARNATIC MUSIC
The relevance of media in the development of carnatic music in modern times

- www.carnaticmusic.com
- www.sangeetham.com
- www.carnatica.com
- www.southindianmusic.com
- www.sruthi.com
- http://carnatic.ejb.net/music.html
- www.medieval.org/music/world/carnatic.html
- www.carnatica.net
- www.karnatik.com
- www.carnaticindia.com
- www.carnaticbooks.com
- www.tyagaraja.com
- www.sangeethapriya.com
- www.carnaticcorner.com etc

Thus, a very important factor for the development of music has been facilitated with the advent of electronics. One cannot forget that a very great majority of electronic devices are mass-produced with difference in their quality and performance. The quality of microphone and amplifying, recording, transmitting and receiving equipments, with their limitations, play a great role in bringing the music from the artist to the audience.