CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

All through the musical history of our country we have seen significant changes in the modes which change the course of musical thought every few centuries. We all know the antiquity of the Raga system. This system being here for more than 3000 years has held to its roots. No amount of time traversed has been able to change the general direction of this. In the context of the study which I did during this thesis I am left with more understanding of the functions of music particularly performing music. Yet I stand corrected on many fronts. I started this study to examine a thought which was forming in my mind that somehow the violin is more important than the Veena. This proved to be both right and not so right. Yes the violin has its place here in the Carnatic music scene and it is here to stay. But the place which is held for ages by other instruments like Veena flute and others cannot be diluted by advent of any other instrument. The electronic age we live in has altered many facets of performing arts. Music cannot escape such a change because by nature classical music is cultural. But the number of concerts of Veena still remain
miniscule. The audiences are still unaware largely about the appeal and beauty of the sound of Veena. There is a popular saying in kannada which means that “that which is not seen will soon fade from the mind”. This is true when you look at the way the Veena has become kind of rare. There are a niche group of rasikas who will be loyal forever and listen to Veena concerts in full. This number is very low and dwindling. We are many times made aware of the fact that the number of people preferring classical music to other forms are dwindling even in other forms like a vocal or other instruments as well.

There comes a time in any endeavour where one has to accept certain changes that happen because of factors which cannot be in the control of a performer. A classical musician has to deliver the music which will hold the attention of the audiences. Sometimes the numbers cannot be important. Always one cannot be playing to the galleries. A musician who is successful is the one who hold on to the purity of music and practices a certain amount of classicism. This group of musicians are not mere performers or entertainers. They are the bearers of the torch of classical music which is the essence of the Indian cultural heritage.
Nowadays we get to hear music more often of the classical variety. At least it is classified as that. The increasing number of people learning and choosing to be performers is one reason. Unfortunately this is not enough. A musician is born that way. Only a handful of these musicians are capable of filling music halls without the so called advertisement. It is time to examine the reasons. There is nothing wrong in promoting an artist for his or her efforts. It becomes a folly only when it is done with the intention other than talent and hard work as also the natural curiosity and dedication towards music.

Contemporary music of our times has both good and bad features. The music democratised and has been accepted by all. Many of the listeners are getting intelligent choices. The advent of the web is the greatest phenomena which has brought music to everybody’s fingertips. The one good thing about the YouTube or other forms of music via internet is that all the serious listeners who may have been deprived of good listening are provided with rich music to which they have access at their convenient time and comforts of privacy. This sometimes becomes crucial to a serious listener as nowadays most of the concert goers go to the sangeeta katcheris just for vanity. We are witness to conversations among
each other as also talking on cell phones inside a concert hall when the music is in progress. This disturbs the concentration of someone to whom the music matters. Hence a large number of people now are turning to net music. There are other advantages as well when you can sit in front of a computer and have a choicest best of music to listen to. One doesn’t have to travel in the high traffic zones and sometimes be disappointed to finds the halls full or not getting a vantage point to get the best of music.

When we examine the democratic though under the instrumental music concert variety there have been a deluge of ideas. Like most of the times when there is over enthusiasm to produce something “different” generally the causality is the music itself. No matter what the changes are some of us true classical connoisseurs cannot migrate to other forms under any circumstance. The thoughts which are the cause of change for e.g. a few decades ago there was the anti-Nautch movement protesting the dance forms entering the echelons of pure music, these kind of things have become a thing of the past. The practice that a woman musician was largely not encouraged to learn or perform now has become fashionable. Just as the preferences of people change in most things the likes and dislikes in music also
have changed. Not all of them are good. All of us who care for the heritage should sit up and take notice. The public taste has become appalling in some areas. It is regrettable that this is not given adequate serious thought by the intellectuals who govern the genres of music. If the cultured audience disappears there is no doubt in the art itself losing its sheen. A musician will only relax and dole out whatever the audiences prefer. It is the responsibility of both the artist and the listener to challenge themselves to understanding difficult compositions. During the times of the king patrons the musicians amongst themselves always competed to give the more and more complex and difficult musical pieces. In the erstwhile Mysore samsthana the kings who were themselves musicians encouraged and rewarded musicians for their classicism.

Innumerable compositions are lost to the public because of the neglect. We often hear musicians complaining that they are singing the same old compositions because they are preferred by the audiences. For example many musicians perform in wedding functions and other such places. In this platform we can only play very few pieces so as to engage the audience. Raghuvamsha sudha or endaro mahanubhavulu. Not to say that these
compositions are not great but the repetition gets boring to the performer as well as the other supporting artists on stage. The lack of encouragement to instrumental concerts is another worrisome feature. All India radio can become a powerful factor in spreading music and moulding correct standard without the select few holding sway in gradation of artists. Talent should be the only criteria in selection. Whenever one attends a music conference and other such events it leaves one with the impression that it was vocal music alone that mattered in the realm of art. It is a pity that Veena, flute, gotuvadyam and other instruments are looked down. Violin because of its pakkavadya status is still in the centre of action. This is the country where all the gods are identified with one or the other musical instrument. God himself is Nada Brahma. Siva with damaru, Saraswathi with Veena, Krishna with flute, and Nandikeswara with mridanga. Musica festivals without concerts of Veena are unthinkable but this thing happens year after year.²²
Besides being the national instrument of India, the veena as been of use in helping man to understand many of the facts, laws and phenomena relating to music. It is the listening world that stands to lose by not being provided with opportunities of listening to

²² Prof.P.Sambamoorthy, South Indian Music, Book-5
concepts of instrumental music. Some of the delicate gamakas, nuances and tonal shades are characteristic of particular instruments. Melodic pictures of ragas are easily comprehended by listening to concerts of instrumental music. A determined effort should be made to create an interest in instrumental music. As it is, it takes many years of arduous practice to attain proficiency in instrumental music and if even those few who have attained high proficiency are not allowed opportunities to perform in music festivals, it is a matter of sorrow.

The above cited passage from the very learned Prof. P. Sambamoorthy sums up the feeling of lacunae I feel as a Vainika sufficiently. It may be the general feeling of many vainikas and other instrumentalists. The few chances an instrumentalist has to express his or her thought are the efforts such as the one which is undertaken here. Many of the researchers are doing the same. This is one factor which is encouraging in the system. Systematic development of listening habits among the public should be undertaken by the organisations responsible for musical activities. There can be many things written about the cause and effect of music as a result of the increased activity in the musical world. The sociological impact can be even more if more and more concerts
are arranged and general public are encouraged to listen to
concerts of all kinds. Classical music should become a way of life
for all. From the small window of opportunity that I have and the
view of cultural elegance I can summarise that may be crime also
can be reduced if youngsters are made a part of music in any
respect. If more halls and museums are built and the presentation
becomes interesting, no doubt that more number of people will get
involved. Since the onus of preserving the arts lies with sangeetha
sabhas and other such organisations these should maintain the
environments conductive to the preservation and development of
high standards. Veena and other neglected instruments when
planning the concerts by these organisations will have to be
relooked and changed urgently.

The dynamic process that the carnatic classical performing
music has attained an almost perfect evolution. Just as the name
suggests the dynamism cannot be ever complete. In this sense the
music of our times and in the pattern it is presented is perfect to
most listeners and also musicians. But the areas which require
more study or modification is also an area to be looked into with a
view to complete the circle of learning to listening and may be
enjoying the music.
On many occasions during the researching of this work and also as performer on the Veena I have come across numerable events in which one feels there should be change. It is true that the audiences are the decisive factor in the way the concerts are arranged. Yet there are so many areas which require attention if not urgently but definitely.

In the course of my study there have been innumerable conversations with performing artists and non-performing musicians and general listener as also some experts in the field. Most common opinions of this gamut of important elements of music are unanimous. The areas which were discussed were:

- Role of Veena and the frequency of the Veena recitals
- Amplification and the finer aspects in relation to the artist’s involvement in them during a concert
- Remuneration(This subject is not added in the observations and conclusion as this is not relevant to the subject of the study
- Role of the percussionists
- Role of the co-artists like Vocal support and violin support as the case was
- Tuning of various instruments-The flute and khanjira were extensively discussed by some musicians who were playing in instrument ensembles and the recording artists, particularly stringed instrumentalists.

I will broadly and briefly where required touch upon the importance of all the above said areas of discussions. The opinions are as varied as the performing areas of all the artists involved. Some of these artists requested anonymity. I have decided to put forth only the ideas and the relevance and not discuss individual style or other factors of the artists performing areas.

Firstly the Veena concerts. Anybody who has heard the soulful rendering of the Veena by the greats in this area, like emani Shankara shastri, S.Balachader to Dr. Chittibabu or many other famed Vainikas know the impact the Veena can create on the minds of listeners. The well executed raga alapana or a tanam cannot be equalled by any other instrument. The sound strains are nothing short of heavenly. It is often described as the Queen of instruments. Not to be left behind some Violinists go about comparing and taking the ground that the violin is the King of Instruments. These banters as they may be the hard factor of the
current facility is that the Violin is the King in the performing music. This theory was established with the few examples in the previous chapters. Why this happened and the answers to this question is not simple. To put these quest for understanding why the vainikas and the Veena.

India is the land of ancient culture. It is also the land of immense amount of talent. The talent in the area of performing carnatic classical music is perhaps equal only to itself. The exponents of various instruments are are stalwarts and knowledgeable. In most cases the activity of performing music is for life. A musician cannot escape the sweet clutches of his chosen Musical Instrument ever He or she will only want more of this. The Veena player typically is the same in all the areas. All Carnatic musicians learns the same basics and advanced lessons in the subject. As and when a learner achieves the coveted place of a performer the equations start to change. The Veena as everybody knows is a bulky Instrument. It is said that it is also a difficult one to master. A good performer on the instrument know the difficulty and makes appropriate corrections.

The mindful adjustments can only be limited to keeping the Instruments safe before, during and after a performance. Keeping
the Instrument concert ready. Attending to the problems if any on the given Instrument as and when they arise with promptness. Keeping the practice regular. Improving the repertoire and making adjustments to suit his or her expertise or limits in areas like ability for speed and the gamaka rendering capacity which is raga specific all come under the list of do’s in the performing world.

The idea of a perfect Veena concert is for some schools the gayaki style, some others the maximum sound production of Veena and so on and so forth. To put these quest for understanding why the vainikas and the Veena stands a step below any of the other kinds of concerts I took some references from the already researched facts\(^{23}\) of some Veena exponents and researchers. I want to put forth the accomplished and famed names in order of their birth year (not accurate and may be incomplete)

- Karaikudi Brothers (1883-1936) brothers.
- Veena Dhanammal (Younger Contemporary of karaikudi brothers)
- Devakottai Narayana Iyengar (1905)

\(^{23}\) L. Annpoorna, Veena tradition in Indian music
- K.S.Narayanaswamy (1914)
- R. Pichumani (1920)
- Emani Shankara shastri (1922)
- S. Balachander
- Rajeshwari padmanabhan (1939)
- Kalpakkam swaminathan
- Ranganayaki Rajagopalan (1932)
- R.K. Suryanarayana (1945)
- Chitti Babu
- E. Gayathri

I would like decipher the dwindling numbers of Veena exponents across the years. Note that starting from around the 40’s born the number of vainikas save for a few like Chittibabu, suryanarayan and Gayathri we hardly have any more performers who have created a flutter in the field of music. The newer players are not mentioned here.

The gradual decrease in the concerts are not because of the lack of technique or the talent. The schools of Veena mentioned above, even the names will have to be taken with a lot of humility and care by us. The great thoughts and heritage has been doubtlessly passed on by these greats to their disciples. The
learned school of karaikudi or the self-taught Balachander, all have the fact common to them that the process of continuance has halted somewhere on the way. The good thing could be that these visionary musical stylists may have left the traditional knowledge in the form of vocal or some other medium. In case of T.N. Sheshagopalan we can see that although he trained under Veena C.S. Sankara Sivam he took upon the vocal as his first choice. He started on the Veena only quite recently after he established himself as an accomplished vocalist.

This subject of the “Second Choice” needs to change. So many of the wanting students and the rasikas are may be left out of the good rasa of Veena Banis and the speciality of a String because of the lack of the number of concerts. Prince Ramavarama who also is a veena player has always held that he prefers to express his music via his vocals rather than the Veena.

So many times we have heard the problems about the size constraints in carrying the Veena around. Sincere efforts have been made by many Vainikas to reduce the size or alter the components but sadly none has sustained. We have the dismantalable Veena packed into a suitcase for easy travel. Mostly this has been a disaster for a regular traveller. Once transported
and rearranged has worked. In my Interview with Dr. Mrs. Suma Sudhindra, a well known Veena exponent of Karnataka who travels world over with her Veena has disclosed the difficulty in such a Veena being tonally correct after assembly.

These factors are also climate specific. The weather conditions can wreck a regular Veena itself when there are temperature changes. The dismantlable Veena is more susceptible for irregularity of sound because of this reason alone. When we take into account the frequency with which a travelling musician has to dismantle and arrange is a very scary proposition. So many other factor relating to the stage performance has been discusses amply in this work earlier.

When one considers the violin the scene changes dramatically. Open any invitation of a concert there will be a violinist always and in more number of times in mention. The reasons again are the same as mentioned for Veena but in reverse. The making of a violin as discussed in the earlier chapters is a fine art. European technique has to be saluted here for their quest in perfecting the production of a violin. The scientific approach although the traditional handling of various components to build a violin has been perfected. The Veena as often hailed as
an epitome of all musical instrument still has a few areas in line for improvement.

The ease and the effort coordinated by every violinist who supports on some occasion and plays solo is mainly responsible to get the violin into the scene. It is here to stay. A century or so ago it was inconceivable to think of a foreign instrument at the centre stage of Indian music. Today we have it in the midst of us. Just like some other essential ingredient of our daily life is imported from all sources music cannot be any different. Perhaps there will come a day when Veena will get a place of prominence in our music or it will be incorporated in some other form. It is like nature where everybody and everything has a place to live. Although it is difficult to imagine a carnatic music concert without the accompaniment of a violin.

Individual merit of any given Carnatic recital is in the content of the concert. The ragas chosen by an artist, the compositions, the chosen compositions within a concert to present the neraval, the variety in the composers chosen, the variety of talas, the contrast ragas and the compositions chosen, the tukdas presented, the pace of the concert, acoustics of the chosen concert hall, ambience of the hall, the number of audiences, the
quality of the level of understanding the presentation of the audience, the understanding between the pakkavadya artists, the sound electronics are all the factors in determining a successful concert. The vocalist is at a somewhat more distinct advantage over the other artists here. This is because a vocalist who is popular for example need not be bothered about most of the above factors because most is already in his or her control. The instrumentalist is at a lesser advantageous position for the same and opposite reasons.

I will take the first instance to discuss the above said disadvantage.

8.1. Veena

A Veena player at the outset of planning a concert will be figuring out the logistics more than anything else. If the concert involves a travel then this problem becomes the main thing in the planning stage. The Veena as it is a bulky instrument the transport is a nightmare even for a short distance. When an artist of the Veena arrives at a venue the first thing on his or her mind will be to place the instrument in a safe position. Many times this will pose the utmost difficulty. Many factors are at play here. Most hosts don not understand the delicate nature of this beautiful Instrument.
Some well-meaning hosts insist on handling the Veena. Sometimes this good gesture can become the most uncomfortable negotiation for an artist who is not in the habit of allowing others to carry his or her Veena. The other aspect in such other instances like this is the artist’s concentration towards the impeding concert is somewhat disturbed.

Next comes the stage setup. The Veena occupies a lot of space for a comfortable handling. An artist will need roughly a space 3ft by 6 ft entirely to themselves on a stage. Some of the smaller stages become cramped and this also can disturb a Veena player. The problems of space however are true to any of the performing artists be it vocal or otherwise. But in case of the Veena because of the shape and the space it occupies on stage it becomes that much more cumbersome. Next the sound support. The sound system in today’s concerts is here to stay. Just like any other artist on stage, a Veena player also depends on the sound man. His role is vital especially in case of the Veena. The reasons that a Veena player depends more on the amplification and other such electronic help is that the concert is wholly dependent on the sound audibility. Not only this quality and the modulations a Veena is producing in the various sections in a concert may be distorted
or wholly lost if the sound is not manipulated according to the concert hall’s specifications. A vocalist on such platforms neither need nor constantly adjust the sound production for this same reason. A Veena on the other hand needs constant adjustments in shruthi. Apart from this there are the parts where the volume is to be modulated. For example when a raga alapana is presented and the areas in which depending upon the mood of the artist the meetu may become very soft, in such a scenario if the modulations occurring is not captured the whole sound of the Veena will be a wasted effort. The Veena is also a very environmentally reactive Instrument. Most other Instruments are also the same. Like said earlier, the nature of the sound of the Veena is like a child’s whisper. It has all the qualities of the subject in such a whisper wherein a closer listening is the only way to capture the essence. For example if a Tavil is being played in a concert in which a Veena also is involved the above mentioned theory can be understood better. Even a violin or a flute in such scenes is exempt from the adjustments. The many reasons for this is very evident in these arguments to which the flute and the ease of tuning may be added. As we all know the flute is a Fixed shruthi instrument. There is little or no adjustment required during a flute concert. This same is true for a violin.
Violin on the whole is a well adjusted and even better understood instrument nowadays. There are many Violin makers in our country now than before. The manufacture although is limited in southern parts of our country we have a ample number of instruments available to us. The Korean violin, the Calcutta variety and many other are readily available in the market. When we compare the sound system and its application on a violin as compared to the Veena the violin is a senior in this department. The western concept of amplification is the reason for this. Then concert halls and other such exhibitionist nature of the western art has set a precedence to this factor. In Germany a violin maker holds an equal sway on the art of performing as that of the violinist. A violin maker is well respected. The maker will also be a musician in his own right. The aids required in the amplification also find its origins in the west doubtlessly. We Indians have taken to this area quite reluctantly. Till about 30 years ago the use of a contact mike or a transducer was frowned upon. In Karnataka the ace Veena player Padmabhushana Dr. Doreswamy Iyengar never used such aids. His son who accompanied him on many occasions also did not use it during his father’s time. The amplification is a process which helps a musicians expression. All the ancient texts regarding the Instruments starting from the Sangitha Ratnakara of
Sarangadeva (13th Century) to Venkatamaki’s Chaturdandiprakashiks (17th century) have all invented newer features to improve the music. All the experiments improvisations of the yes to the fretted Veena are all the innovations which gave the world the rich raga system. The thinkers of that time with the means they possessed did work on their imaginations and used the talents to arrive at the modern avatars of any given instrument. Similarly the availability of technology is the platform from which some of the scholars find expression. This major area of the performing music requires more attention by the experts. This is not just need of one stray event or one aspiration of any one single artist but a giant necessity. I have been a stage artist as well as an AIR artist. I have witnessed the shortcomings in this area. Even in the studios of the All India radio some artists explore this possibility and make a certain impact on a listener. A lay listener of these concerts is generally unaware of the enhancement of the sound achieved by these means. If an artist is not provided by this support much of his or her music will lose its lustre. This factor is one which can be corrected by an active involvement of all the entities related to the art.
The making of an instrument or the other supportive aspects such as the Amplification, setting up a stage to attain maximum result, theatres and art institution's active involvement of all the other said aspects will result in more opportunities to the Veena as a solo concert instrument. The obscurity which is set in can easily result in the disappearance of an impactful concert presentation. There is an urgent need to rectify this.

All the great musicians of current day should therefore compare notes and take into consideration all the factors involved and use a collective approach. The universalities and other institutions dedicated to the field of art should also facilitate these agencies to thrive by supporting them and taking them into the centrefold of events. Music departments of universities should without delay start curriculum based on the sound recording and sound providing facilities for a concert, in their institutions. Also the Mela fixing on the Veena and the polish applied in case of the Violin or any such areas are to be addresses in an academic manner before it is lost forever.

The greatest musical heritage is that of India's. The whole world looks at us for inspiration in music. Music is not mere entertainment but a path to salvation. All of our great composers
have composed with a feeling of humility. The all encompassing view of god through music is the hallmark of these greatest of composers. Music as it should be should be the goal of all musicians,

Saint Tyagaraja sang

SANGEETHA MARGAMU, BHAKTI VINA SANMARGAMU-

Let us take this path and let music encompass us and fill us with peace