CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Music is a fine art, because it awakens aesthetic consciousness in the depth of man’s mind. This research which is a comparative study is an effort to get deeper into this consciousness. A proverb says comparison makes a man perfect in his knowledge and experience. While the comparison is a comprehensive part of any calibration the study here is intended to bring to the fore the history, musical aspects among others. Music exists in all human societies of the world. It may be in the most primitive stage of development or in an Ultra Modern stage.\(^1\) Music has its own essential functions in all societies. This work has a function to explore the differences and similarities in the music of Veena and Violin. The comparative aspect has to be a tool to understand and improve the knowledge of Carnatic music as a whole. The subject matter is not only a new one but has not been

\(^1\) Carl Engel, Musical Instruments
written much about. We know from the study of history that the
greatest of musicians have worked diligently although obscurely in
the above said areas. The aspiration here is to revisit these areas
of work. These include understanding the performing practices as
well as the research parts of these exercises which is the core of
carnatic classical music of today, particularly the stage music or
the performing music.

The important aspect in this thesis being the said two
Instruments namely the Veena and the Violin. One can understand
the depth of scope of introduction to this world, to which the next
many parts are dedicated.

What is a musical instrument? At the very early stages
“music” defies definition.2 Ss also thereby are in the form —non
musical. Fire making devices, hunting bow, pots and pans are the
origins of many musical instruments we see today. These were not
intended to produce music. According to Back Diva classification
of indianmusical instruments is incomplete. Widely the fourfold one
is in use today. The Ghana,avanaddha,sushira and tata adopted
by Bharata.The role of Harp in shaping the mela system is

2 B.C. Deva. Musical instruments of India, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd
discussed time and again. Yet they disappeared. Why this did happen and when did the fingerboard Veenas appear and when were they fretted. The answers to these questions hold the merits of musical instruments of current day and their various statues. The vast nature of this subject is evident by the fact that to this day musicians are looking to better the structure although in most instances unnecessary. To conclude the argument about the importance of sruti, gram and the origins I can again cite a sentence from B.C.deva’s epic “To me at least that the whole theory of sruti, gram murchana originates , is sustained by and ends(?) with harps; the theory of mela is a specific contribution of fingerboard instruments.” This research is an attempt to understand the “VEENA” in context to performance with the help of the learned observations made by these great authors.

1.2. History and Origin of Violin

The eartly settlers of south east asia were the Negritos. Traces of characteristics can be seen in south india. The bow according to some scholars is said to be the invention of these Negritos. They are also possibly the originators of the bow-shaped chordophones, examples of which are to this day found amongst the tribes of Africa. The bow-shaped instruments are extant in
southern parts of the country, the Villadivadyam and villu kottu are
two examples. The musical content of the current day concerts of
carnatic music are the result of Dravidian culture and thought. The
earliest known system of music and the literature belong to the
Tamils (2nd century AD).

Yazh is often described as the predecessor of the veena. The
changes that were made on this from a non-fretted one to the
fretted is the path in which the music evolved. The Raga system
and the concurrent improvisational aspects are all the result of
such thought processes which made the evolution of Yazhin to
Veena, musical notes into ragas, Ragasin to compositions,
Compositions into manodharama snageetha and as a result of all
these concert pattern took form.

Music is an art which is an activity which has deep cultural
and historical Connotations. This is more true to our system of
music appreciation. In our cultural scenes music is an exercise and
the centre of this is the thought of BHAKTI. This is very evident on
examining the compositional contents of classical music,
particularly in south Indian rendering of the same. The musical
rendering starting from the Vedic hymns to the current day’s
classical concerts we can see the importance of music in our lives.
All the countries of the world also have some or the other form of music in their lives. In India it is somewhat divine. This is because of the rich heritage of songs or the systems of music left behind for us to enjoy by our great forefathers of the Arts. Salvation through music is the theme and end of the classical musical form, particularly in the south where the Carnatic music practiced for centuries. Music is an integral part of India’s culture. It is the one salient art which is present in all the strata of society

Figure 1.1 : Yazh instrument
Figure 1.2: The Anglo-Saxon harp; The instrument which may be considered as a transition of the lyre into the harp.

In the similar fashion studies about music also became a part of musical culture. The present trend of understanding musical and other related aspects through research is catching on. There have been a spurt in this area. Comparative study is the new mantra here. The instrumental music and its details are studied
now more than ever before. Very little is written about this subject until recently. The mystical Ramayana or other texts gave a very scanty description of musical instruments. It is impossible to understand them by just a mention of a name. But there have been a number of important studies in this area and the rich heritage is recorded by these studies for the future generations to learn and appreciate our heritage.

The concert music, particularly the carnatic classical music concerts, form a rich living heritage of day to day lives of a cultured society, particularly in the south. Temples and other activities related to religion have been the roots of the classical music in our country. Musical forms have been attaining changes and improvements from time to time.

The Vedic times have been the origin of music. The history of Indian music has been constructed with the help\(^3\) of diverse sources. It contains written works in various Indian languages, their commentaries, reference to music found in the secular works, the sculpture and paintings, musical coins, works of foreign travellers so on and so forth. We find valuable information

\(^3\) Prof P. Sambamurthy., Carnatic Music Book -3
pertaining to music also in the British time gazetteers like that of pudukottai which furnishes valuable material on musical history. The concerts of music have been facts of our rich cultural heritage. This is evident by the treatises written about the arts as early as 4 Century. E.g. Bharata Muni’s Natya shastra. Many more works and commentaries written about the same are available to us. The concerts have been heard in our country without a break in history since the Veda’s. This is very evident as we see the progression of musical forms as also the concert practices evolved to today’s practical and delightful facts. The concert format of the present day has been changing dynamically to form a fixed pattern. The current day’s concert typically will be a combination of vocal music, a violin as a pakkavadya and in the percussion team mridanga, ghata, khanjira and morsing. Typically a vocal concert will have these accompaniments as a regular practice. In Carnatic concert platforms there are ample concerts of vadya’s as solo as well. Flute, Veena, Gottuvadya, Nadaswara, Violin and rarely a jalatarang can also be seen on a concert platform. Of course we have some of the newer instruments also being inducted into this elite group. The Saxophone, Guitar, Mandolin, Clarinet etc are some of the newer entries.
The factors of the evolution of the katcheri pattern of current day practices took the path starting at the Bharata’s period upto the late 18th century. The pattern itself during this long period of history is actually a mystery. One can only muse and conclude studying the available material. Mainly these will be the treatises like the Sangitha Ratnakara ,and the like and the paintings and sculptures in temples in the geographical locations where the musical tradition is practiced and there is the evidence of these passed on from generation to generation. The ample traditions of songs rendered at a particular ritual, the special functions of particular priests or musicians, special materials used to perform puja etc can all be the source of the facts to understand the current successful and popular practices.

The concert pattern is the ever evolving factor. All of the musicians and any one associated to Carnatic music are privy to the fact that we want it be fresh and accessible. By this I mean the content can be ancient. E.g. padas of Kshetrajna upto may be the modern composers like Ambujam Krishna but the presentation should be in the tradition of carnatic music and the raga ,tala and the other factors should be as they are accepted by the fraternity. A true lover of classical arts is usually that who will not be attracted
to too much experimentation be it the music, content, or the alterations made on musical Instrument. This fact is very significant to the study as the violin is the centre fold of Carnatic music today. This is an instrument which is also as unchanged as the Saraswathi Veena which is revered by true connoisseur.

Interesting and noteworthy here is that music by itself has undergone no change whatsoever. Here the reference is to the concert music or the rendering of the raga alapanana and compositions. Also we can understand that the later additions in the newer composers also are included. The subject study involves only the last 60 or 70 years of concert music. Many practices of presentation like the “Neraval”, “Svaraprastara” and some newer experiments with the rendering pallavis in combination of raga’s or tala’s are also part of this practice. The various instruments all employ the Carnatic music commonly.viz the concert system has been unchanged for at least the last 50 years. The music instruments mainly the one’s in use in the carnatic classical music which are of the older variety are primitive by the standards considered by the westerners. But the music by itself is inarguably the most sophisticated of all in the world.
Instrumental music has played a prominent part in the evolution of music both in the orient and the occident. Man became early conscious of the fundamental principles of musical science, through musical instruments. The homophonous voice was not of much help to him in practically working out and understanding the various laws and phenomena. India is perhaps the earliest country in the history of world culture to realise the value of absolute music. Instrumental music was an indispensable accompaniment to recitals of vocal music.\(^4\) We can see by the path the Instrumental has traversed in the history of concert music in India the importance of such Music. To understand the roles of Veena the classification of the musical Instruments has to be addressed.

Indian musical Instruments have along history. There are a number of musical instruments which have been in this region of the world for more than 6000 years. Some of them are still in use in the same form. Example Tamatte.Samaveda has detailed description of music and skill of music making. The three noted singing and thereafter the scales development are very ancient. The profession of being a musician is perhaps oldest found in the

\(^4\) Prof. S.K.R. Gayana Samaja Conference Presentation
world which is India. The Mesopotamians and Greeks have all been inspired through the trade routes and other exchanges resulting in having many common instruments and music. In all these arguments of the ancientness of music and India being a seat of music scholars make some very important observations. That the Veena which is mentioned time and again is a name given to almost all Instruments. This work revolves mainly around two Instruments of the concert platform of the current day concerts and hence this fact needs to be addresses a little more deeply in the coming chapters. Just like a skilled medical professional takes a detailed medical history of a patient before identifying the disease and treatment idea is arrived at, the study of the history and origin of “Veena” and “Violin” is very important.

Most of us in the Southern parts of the country are privy to the fact that young children particularly girls were encouraged to learn an art form. Most of the girls were adept as a result in Dance, Music and other forms of art, which is a result of the study the people put into this. Many of the households invest their time, effort and money in this endeavour even today. The areas of learning and performing is getting wider and wider today as never before. The inquisitiveness with which the younger generation has
taken to the art form has given rise to many more inventions which are may be good or not so good to the world of art. This is particularly true when music is the art that is being subjected to such "Innovations". This fact covers a wide area. The changes occur not only in the performing styles and the alterations made to this but also sometimes altering the structure of an Instrument.

Having made the above point it becomes relevant to point out that innovations and newer thoughts have made Carnatic music what is today. Hence the part of the concert music which adapted the "Violin" the western instrument into its fold which was a very tight one has many connotations. The subject study is a result of this and other interesting developments. As said earlier it may or may not be good for the musical applications and intelligence. When we talk about the Veena being the mother of the raga system always all the time the reference will be to the Murchana system as also the Bharata’s shruthi experiment and the use of dhruva, and the Chala Veenas in them.

Broadly Musical Instruments have been classified in 4 groups. These are

- Tata Vadyas (chordophones)
- Sushira Vadyas(Aerophones)
- Avanaddha vadyas (membranophones)
- Ghana Vadyas (idiophones)

Figure 1.3: Tata vadya (chordophones)

Figure 1.4: Sushira Vadya (Aerophones)
Figure 1.5 : Avanaddha vadya (Membranophones)

Figure 1.6 : Ghana Vadya (idiophones)

The classification of the instruments helps to make informed judgements regarding the usefulness of each of these as used in current day concerts. Veena falls into the category of the ‘Tata’ vadya or the chordophones and so does the Violin. It is almost impossible to discuss a Veena concert without studying the ancient practices. The various aspects of a Veena recital of recent times have their roots in the past. The practice of the Veena rendering is at least as old as the Veda’s as there is ample mentions in the natyashastra and all the commentaries of the treatise. We can assume the all important place the Queen of the instruments held by the frequent mentions about it. Any strings instrument was
called a Veena. It is sometimes misunderstood today as the statement refers exclusively to the Veena which is in vogue today. Unimaginable is the quantum of modifications and advancements which have occurred for the Veena to reach a structure which it stands today as. Classical music has undergone so many changes over a period of time. The branching out of Classical music into two great systems of the world itself speaks for itself. Both the Hindustani and the Carnatic styles have Veena as a major part of their heritage.

As discussed elsewhere the raga evolution is not an exclusive part of Carnatic music alone. The two great systems have their basis on Raga system alone. This is a separate study. Only a cursory mention is made here to facilitate the argument and research may invariably come back to the various stringed instruments employed in both the systems. The music system is too vast and varied to fathom in a short description of these. The Orchestra or the group rendering is a case in point. The orchestras like all other things related to classical music in our country have existed from ancient times. There is mention of these even in the Natya Shastra. The name of the orchestra in India is Kutapa. The
orchestra was more popular than individual rendering in times of the king Sherfoji 's time. (1798 to 1832).*book3 279.

The kutapas were the accompaniment s for other performers. There were orchestras comprising of stringed instruments ,percussion and voices. The Veena is repeatedly mentioned in many ancient texts. It is evident that the Veena held sway in these setups. A glance towards the Carnatic music scene will reveal that the status of the “VEENA” as a concert instrument is somewhat limited. As a student and a rasika of carnatic classical music I learnt this fact early on. But just the facts that there is less number of Veena recitals do not in any way lessen the importance of the instrument.

In concert music, the participating musician’s role can be primarily classified into that of a main artist or a supporting. This classification is a bench mark of the carnatic concert system which is largely unchanged for many decades but for minor changes. Further there is the classification of a main artist and support in case of an instrumentalist being in the main role. Then comes the percussion ensemble. The leading percussionist doubtlessly is always a mridangist and all the other upa pakkavadya’s follow. Here is the case of “number of concerts” played.
The Violin outdoes any other instruments for two reasons. It can be played as a supporting instrument for vocal and other instruments and also as a solo instrument. As is evident the Vocal concerts are in greater number compared to all the other kinds of rendering. It is the violin which is the main supporting instrument for this. When an account of the number of time s a violin is employed all one has to do is take into account the number of vocal concerts as against all the others. While instrumental music is still held in high regard the number of instrumental concerts is
very few. In case of “Veena” it may be a “Veena” solo or “Veena ensemble” and in case of other instruments like flute or other newer entries like “Saxophone”, “mandolin” it is the same liked a solo recital or a group rendering. It can also be a duet in many instances with a pair of the said instruments or a combination of these and other instruments. Of course this is to establish the frequency of these instruments heard. When we start the combinations or groups of same instruments it gets into the category of orchestra. The vocal ensemble is also in vogue but very rarely heard. It is the instances like the “Tyagaraja Aradhana” and other types of special instances wherein musicians, particularly vocalists sing together. By and large the vocal concert is a solo.

According to the books like that of Naatya sastra, ragavibodha, and sangeetha sampradaya Pradarshini the Veena in ancient times was used during the chanting of a vedic ritual, or any other religious activity, even during the last rites. This is proof enough to categorise it as a pakkavadya to other kinds of main rendering. The Raga system as we know came in to being many centuries later. When we look at concerts today it is the violin that plays the role of Veena as in Vedic or other earlier times. This is as
clear as daylight. Carnatic classical music is a dynamic force and not an obsolete thinking. Owing to this attitude of our ancients the music has only grown richer and palpable. The reasons are also the easy access nowadays available to a lay listener.

Taking the hypothesis further one can see the role reversal of the Veena. But the queen of Instruments has never left the arena. The Veena has always been the centre of music itself and will continue to be for many more centuries. The Veena is the mother of the raga system. Carnatic music is the virtuous but dynamic by nature. The composition oriented music systems can employ all kinds of a musician or a musical instrument in itself and justify the roles played because of the ample opportunity on stage to display the merits of the performer. Having understood the above statement or the intentions we can now see if there are any shortcomings here. The case study of the “Veena” And the “violin” is but a platform to further the concept of adaptability. As we all know the carnatic vocal concert cannot be imagined without the support of “Violin”. The violin by the virtue of its structure and that of the playing techniques is completely interwoven into Carnatic music. The players who developed into the fine performers may have passé through many hurdles before coming to the
comfortable place in the system. Later in the relevant chapters like the structure and the fingering techniques this will be researched in detail.

However the Veena concerts of the current day platforms are although small in numbers are but greater in stature as the Veena is a difficult Instrument to master and the listeners are few. Mostly a Veena concert is attended by listeners who have an affinity for the sound of this great Vadya. Also the expectations of the rasikas are for the Veena to follow in the footsteps of a vocal rendering. In most schools of thought this kind of rendering is not possible. The Baanis or the schools of thought are indeed a separate subject study. Violin in the space it occupies today has the flexibility to produce most of the graces independently or while following the main performer. But as is common knowledge the Veena can produce all the gamakas as well as the singer. In fact the Veena is the instrument used to demonstrate the same. This difference in the main sound production of these two instrument forms the basis of this study. There appears to be certain misgivings regarding the finer aspects of performances of Veena among the connoisseurs. The Veena concert which is well planned and executed is a treat just like any other good concert. The
problems faced in achieving has many sides to it. The subject merits more elaboration which is done in other parts of the study.

Before arriving at the origin or the antiquity of the said two instruments we can dwell a little more in the folk area. This study in the folk area is also a window to the subject namely the carnatic concerts. The music of the tribes of ancient India is cited time and again when the Ragas are discusses. The “Yadukulakamhoji Raga” can be a good example here. This Raga is said to have been the raga in which a boat man sang his songs. Now the classical aspect of the said raga is one which is held at a higher load among the ragas. Yadukulakambhoji is doubtlessly a raga of the scholars. Yet the origin is the simple boat song or the fisherman’s music. But we the practitioners of any level of carnatic music know that it is anything but simple. To a listener a well rendered Yadukula kambhoji may be the easy melody on the ears. But the musician knows the effort in understanding this great raga is anything but simple. This point is made to direct the reader of this study towards the employment of the said two instruments in current day musical concerts. The path of practice is not the rosy garden path but
That of constant study and dedicated practice or the sadhana. Case in point—There is a theory that the Chinese emperor Khatosu (581-585 AD)\(^5\) was so impressed by Indian music that he tried in vain to proscribe it by an imperial decree. Related to this period are the facts that the travelling Bhikus took musical Instruments like Mridanga, Sanai, Tanpura, Veena etc to the orient. During this time the raga bhairo was born. Some are of the opinion that created By Bharata of Natyashastra. Now here are the vagaries of the theory of ragas. Do we have a description of the nature of this raga, or facts like the notes and the varieties of them in the raga which was practiced in those times. Much as this story glorifies the past greatness of India and its musical heritage, the point made here is that the dynamics of music and musical Instruments are an ever changing philosophy. So the way we practice this great art has many facets which should be understood in relation to the times in which the music is applied. Every now and then a time comes when there will arise a doubt or wonder accompanied by fruitful inquisition of a party to the music. Now is the time when much research is done by many learned people to explore these and other aspects. It is a welcome change from

\(^{5}\) Swami Prajnanada, Music of the Nations A Comparative Study
telling people how exclusive music a system is and thereby pushing audiences away.

When deciding the status of any musical concert and the components in them the instruments are the most easiest to put in the chronological order. The modern day concerts are of many forms. The standard applications of the supporting vadyas are applied to most concerts. However there are instances when more experimentation happens. The result is the type of concert formulated attracts only that audiences to whom the presentation appeals. One can make a detailed study of any given instruments under various heads. The list is practically endless. Sample this Category-wind or string or other Construction- materials used in manufacture weather the instrument is provided with sruthi coupling like Veena. The above said and many other questions asked and answered pave the way of understanding the music no doubt. We hear some experts say that the Veena is difficult instrument to master. The observations are the result of understanding all the above mentioned and many other aspects relating to the Instrument and also the music being presented on this. This knowledge comes after much effort in researching and listening to solid music rendered by great Artists. The present day
musician owes a lot to this breed of experts and connoisseurs of arts. Especially in today’s context of travelling musician and “Frequently heard” musician just to give two of the many functions a musician has to perform these days.

Music is an art which is an activity which has deep cultural and cultural connotations. This is more true to our country as Music is not mere entertainment but it is an ancient practice advocated by thinkers as a road to salvation.\(^6\) To our ancients music and related arts were nothing but BHAKTI. This is very evident on examining the compositional contents of classical music, particularly in south Indian rendering of the same. The musical rendering

Starting from the Vedic hymns to the current day’s classical concerts we can see the importance of music in our lives. All the countries of the world also have some or the other form of music in their lives. In India it is somewhat divine. This is because of the rich heritage of songs or the systems of music left behind for us to enjoy by our great forefathers of the Arts. Salvation through music is the theme and end of the classical musical form, particularly in

the south where the Carnatic music practiced for centuries. Music is an integral part of India’s culture. It is the one salient art which is present in all strata of society.

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The Vedic times have been the origin of music. The history of Indian music has been constructed with the help of diverse sources. It contains written works in various Indian languages, their commentaries, reference to music found in the secular works, the sculpture and paintings, musical coins, works of foreign travellers so on and so forth. We find valuable information pertaining to music also in the British time gazetteers like that of pudukottai which furnishes valuable material on musical history. The concerts of music have been facts of our rich cultural heritage. This is evident by the treatises written about the arts as early as 4 Century. E.g.Bharata Muni’s Natya shastra. Many more works and commentaries written about the same are available to us. All these
treatises help us in the progression of music and the attendant minute facets of history.

Music concerts have been heard in our country without a break in history since the Veda’s. This is very evident as we see the progression of musical forms as also the concert practices evolved to today’s practical and delightful facts. The concert format of the present day has been changing dynamically to form a fixed pattern. The current day’s concert typically will be a combination of vocal music, a violin as a pakkavadya and in the percussion team mridanga, ghata, khanjira and morsing. Typically a vocal concert will have these accompaniments as a regular practice. In Carnatic concert platforms there are ample concerts of vadya’s as solo as well. Flute, Veena, Gottuvadya, Nadaswara, Violin and rarely a jalatarang can also be seen on a concert platform. Of course we have some of the newer instruments also being inducted into this elite group. The Saxophone, Guitar, Mandolin, Clarinet etc are some of the newer entries.

Interesting and noteworthy here is that music by itself has undergone no change whatsoever. Here the reference is to the concert music or the rendering of the raga alapanana and compositions. The chosen area of research being the comparative
study involving the Veena and the violin it is in its place to record some of the history of both these instruments.

The subject study involves only the last 60 or 70 years of concert music. Many practices of presentation like the “Neraval”, “Svaraprastara” and some newer experiments with the rendering pallavis in combination of raga’s or tala’s are also part of this practice. The various instruments all employ the Carnatic music commonly. viz a viz the concert system has been unchanged for at least the last 50 years. The main instruments used in carnatic concerts in this period has been both unchanged in case of the instruments of indigenous origin as well as the ever emerging newer instruments of foreign origins.

There are numerous facets to the arguments put forth by experts about these. All the aspects are delightfully dealt herein to make the case of popularity of the two instruments namely the Veena and the violin. However one likes to “study” the various aspects of performing music of south India one aspect remains unchanged. That is the Music itself. Carnatic classical music by itself is arguably the most sophisticated system of music in the world. To be added in the introduction. It is an established fact that India was on the route of ancient human migration and trade. King
Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 BC) had teak brought from India in his palace.

The musical instruments of India- two of which are the study matter in this thesis is to be studied with this background as the basis. The beginnings, evolution, contributions of other cultural groups all have to be studied with this background of the history of this land. The observation made by sri B.C.deva that there is oneness at least in music is worth a mention in current day’s interpretation of many things Indian.

Instrumental music has played a prominent part in the evolution of music both in the orient and the occident. Man became early conscious of the fundamental principles of musical science, through musical instruments. The homophonous voice was not of much help to him in practically working out and understanding the various laws and phenomena.

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\textsuperscript{7} B.C Deva, Musical Instruments of India
non musical. Fire making devices, hunting bow, pots and pans are the origins of many musical instruments we see today. These were not intended to produce music. According to Back Diva classification of Indian musical instruments is incomplete. Widely the fourfold one is in use today. The Ghana, avanaddha, sushira and tata adopted by Bharata. The role of Harp in shaping the mela system is discussed time and again. Yet they disappeared. Why this did happen and when did the fingerboard Veenas appear and when were they fretted? The answers to these questions hold the merits of musical instruments of current day and their various statuses. The vast nature of this subject is evident by the fact that to this day musicians are looking to better the structure although in most instances unnecessary. To conclude the argument about the importance of sruti, grama and the origins I can again cite a sentence from B.C.deva’s epic “To me at least that the whole theory of sruti, grama murchana originates , is sustained by and ends(?) with harps; the theory of mela is a specific contribution of fingerboard instruments.” This research is an attempt to understand the “VEENA” in context to performance with the help of the learned observations made by these great authors.
The early settlers of south East Asia were the Negritos. Traces of characteristics can be seen in south India. The bow according to some scholars is said to be the invention of these Negritos. They are also possibly the originators of the bow-shaped chordophones, examples of which are to this day found amongst the tribes of Africa. The bow-shaped instruments are extant in southern parts of the country, the Villadivadyam and villu kottu are two examples.

The musical content of the current day concerts of carnatic music are the result of Dravidian culture and thought. The earliest known system of music and the literature belong to the Tamils (2nd century AD). Yazh is the predecessor of the veena is one of the Vadyas mentioned in the texts. Time and again we want to establish origins, varieties, uses etc of musical Instruments using the sculptures as the ultimate proof of all the above said. But according to many scholars these paintings and sculptures are symbolic to a large degree. A four headed god as Brahma is depicted in many sculptures are an example. Most certainly it is not easy to believe of such an existence. The shilabaliikes in the sculptures in Beluru and halebeedu can also be cited as example
here. There cannot be a human figure in the form that the shilabalike is depicted in these sculptures.

The explanation of origin becomes a critical aspect of any study relating to the music and musical Instruments. The current study owing to the nature of comparing the concert practices and particularly the hypothesis of the importance of both instruments is more relevant. Even a very young child attempts to beat any object that interests it to produce sound. When man was still living in the caves and fire wasn’t yet put to use for his convenience music must have existed. As is evident by the similarities today’s music instruments hold to the practice aspects of a cave man’s living. The bow, water pot, flat drum or tammtte can be cites as examples. The list could be endless. India is perhaps the earliest country in the history of world culture to realise the value of absolute music. Instrumental music was an indispensable accompaniment to recitals of vocal music.

We can see by the path the Instrumental has traversed in the history of concert music in India the importance of such Music. To understand the roles of Veena the classification of the musical Instruments has to be addressed.
Before attempting to classify any aspect of carnatic classical performing music in any context the cultural connotations has to be given a once over. There are myriad faces to these areas such as origins of a particular area of performance, the usage of techniques, musical instruments, repertoire, teaching practices, performing practices, rules regarding the use of the above said aspects among other thing relevant. Here the facts pertaining to the origins of say for example the musical instruments lead us to the enormity of the skill involved in the practice of this art. Be it a performer, researcher or an organiser all of these will face the why and what at least occasionally. There is a charming possibility that everyone involved here on any plane will look back in time for inspiration and information. Curiosity towards the history is a big factor in the positive evolvement of many areas. But for exercises such as the Bharata’s experiment of the shruti’s using the dhruva and chala Veena a casual practitioner of Veena would never understand the science of swara production. Each one of the musician or researcher can draw one’s own conclusion by understanding this theory of sage Bharata. It is enormously useful for the art of music by these experimenting and re-experimenting. A teacher’s tool kitty gets richer and and richer by these approaches and experiments.
A study of the instruments itself can be of interest to everybody in this field. As one dwells deeper into these aspects a study of the history becomes inevitable. The exchange of ideas between cultures, put very simply can lead to great innovations. The study of music with a backdrop of ethnicity is not new concept. Broadly Musical Instruments have been classified in 4 groups. These are

- Tata Vadyas (chordophones)
- Sushira Vadyas(Aerophones)
- Avanaddha vadyas (membranophones)
- Ghana Vadyas(idiophones)

The classification of the instruments helps to make informed judgements regarding the usefulness of each of these as used in current day concerts. Veena falls into the category of the ‘Tata” vadya or the chordophones and so does the Violin.

The origins of Chordophones are difficult to trace. There are many theories which have been mulled over by many experts. The example of a bow string being the beginning is just one of them. The “Villadi Vadyam” which in use in Tamil Nadu is a case in point. The name itself is indicative of the Bow. Villu is the bow.
The Tamils had in use the other Bow related Vadya the Vil Yazh. Time and again the Yazh or the harp typed instrument is discussed by many historians. Careful imagination of these harp typed instruments with a series of strings gives a very good prototype of many of modern day Musical instruments. Yet the sophistication of a Saraswathi Veena cannot be related to these Harp or the lyres. The parenthood of Veena cannot be connected logically to these instruments. But many scholars put forward the idea of a bow being the originator of all the stringed instruments.
A “Bamboo Zither” or “tube Zither” has missed the attention of many organologists according to Sri B.C. Deva. The structure of this instrument is very supportive of the idea that this could be one amongst the many instruments which gave rise to the more sophisticated Veena or Gettuvadyam etc. This instrument is found in the Hills of Andhra and used by the tribe Hill Reddis. The manner in which some of these instruments were played gave rise to the bowing. Many of the techniques involved stroking with a stick, rubbing. These actions were modified into many ways of playing an instrument. This argument is a very convincing one when a study is made of these instruments and when the opinions of many scholars are examined.

It is almost impossible to discuss a Veena concert without studying the ancient practices. The various aspects of a Veena recital of recent times have their roots in the past. The practice of the Veena rendering is at least as old as the Veda’s as there is ample mentions in the natyashastra and all the commentaries of the treatise. We can assume the all important place the Queen of the instruments held by the frequent mentions about it. Any strings instrument was called a Veena. It is sometimes misunderstood today as the statement refers exclusively to the Veena which is in
vogue today. Unimaginable is the quantum of modifications and advancements which have occurred for the Veena to reach a structure which it stands today as. Classical music has undergone so many changes over a period of time. The branching out of Classical music into two great systems of the world speaks for itself. Both the Hindustani and the Carnatic styles have Veena as a major part of their heritage. As discussed elsewhere the raga evolution is not an exclusive part of Carnatic music alone. The two great systems have their basis on Raga system alone. This is a separate study. Only a cursory mention is made here to facilitate the argument and research may invariably come back to the various stringed instruments employed in both the systems. The music system is too vast and varied to fathom in a short description of these. The Orchestra or the group rendering is a case in point. The orchestras like all other things related to classical music in our country have existed from ancient times. There is mention of these even in the Natya Shastra. The name of the orchestra in India is Kutapa. The orchestra was more popular than individual rendering in times of the king Sherfoji ‘s time. (1798 to 1832).*book3 279.
Figure 1.9: Pancha veena concert

The kutapas were the accompaniments for other performers. There were orchestras comprising of stringed instruments, percussion and voices. The Veena is repeatedly mentioned in many ancient texts. It is evident that the Veena held sway in these setups.

A glance towards the Carnatic music scene will reveal that the status of the “VEENA” as a concert instrument is somewhat limited. As a student and a rasika of carnatic classical music I learnt this fact early on. But just the facts that there is less number of Veena recitals do not in any way lessen the importance of the instrument.
Figure 1.10: Orchestra invitation 1

Figure 1.11: Orchestra invitation 2
Figure 1.12: Orchestra invitation 3

In concert music, the participating musician’s role can be primarily classified into that of a main artist or a supporting. This classification is a bench mark of the carnatic concert system which is largely unchanged for many decades but for minor changes. Further there is the classification of a main artist and support in case of an instrumentalist being in the main role. Then comes the percussion ensemble. The leading percussionist doubtlessly is always a mridangist and all the other upa pakkavadya’s follow. Here is the case of “number of concerts” played. The Villon outdoes any other instruments for two reasons. It can be a solo performance of violin or the supporting instrument. As is evident
the Vocal concerts are in greater number compared to all the other kinds of rendering. It may be an instrument recital like a “Veena” solo or “Veena ensemble” and other instruments like flute or other newer entries like “Saxophone”, “mandolin”, “Clarinet” and a number of other varieties.

According to the books like that of Naatya sastra, ragavibodha, and sangeetha sampradaya Pradarshini the Veena in ancient times was used during the chanting of a vedic ritual, or any other religious activity, even during the last rites. This is proof enough to categorise it as a pakkavadya to other kinds of main rendering. The Raga system as we know came in to being many centuries later. When we look at concerts today it is the violin that plays the role of Veena as in Vedic or other earlier times. This is as clear as daylight. Carnatic classical music is a dynamic force and not an obsolete thinking. Owing to this attitude of our ancients the music\(^8\) has only grown richer and palpable. The reasons are also the easy access nowadays available to a lay listener.

Taking the hypothesis further one can see the role reversal of the Veena. But the queen of Instruments has never left the

\(^8\) Swamy Prajnanananda, Music of the Nations- A Comparative Study, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi
arena. The Veena has always been the centre of music itself and will continue to be for many more centuries. The Veena is the mother of the raga system. Carnatic music is the virtuous but dynamic by nature. The composition oriented music systems can employ all kinds of a musician or a musical instrument in itself and justify the roles played because of the ample opportunity on stage to display the merits of the performer. Having understood the above statement or the intentions we can now see if there are any shortcomings here. The case study of the “Veena” And the “violin” is but a platform to further the concept of adaptability. As we all know the carnatic vocal concert cannot be imagined without the support of “Violin”. The violin by the virtue of its structure and that of the playing techniques is completely interwoven into Carnatic music. The players who developed into the fine performers may have passed through many hurdles before coming to the comfortable place in the system. Later in the relevant chapters like the structure and the fingering techniques this will be researched in detail.

However the Veena concerts of the current day platforms are although small in numbers are but greater in stature as the Veena is a difficult instrument to master and the listeners are
few. Mostly a Veena concert is attended by listeners who have an affinity for the sound of this great Vadya. Also the expectations of the rasikas are for the Veena to follow in the footsteps of a vocal rendering. In most schools of thought this kind of rendering is not possible. The Baanis or the schools of thought are indeed a separate subject study. Violin in the space it occupies today has the flexibility to produce most of the graces independently or while following the main performer. But as is common knowledge the Veena can produce all the gamakas as well as the singer. In fact the Veena is the instrument used to demonstrate the same. This difference in the main sound production of these two instrument forms the basis of this study. There appears to be certain misgivings regarding the finer aspects of performances of Veena among the connoisseurs. The Veena concert which is well planned and executed is a treat just like any other good concert. The problems faced in achieving has many sides to it. The subject merits more elaboration which is done in other parts of the study. The title of this study “comparative study of the status.......” was conceived originally wondering that the Veena cannot hold a deserving place in current day concert platforms. During the course of the study however there have been numerous additions
to the said hypothesis and the opposite facts to that originally conceived.

While the subject of my research took me to various levels of understanding one or two things read and heard made a somewhat different impact than the others. While browsing through some writings I came across the following information. The poet sage of our country Rabindranath Tagore wrote an essay titled Sangit after listening to 4000 participants singing and playing at a time in 1912 Handel music festival. A passage reads thus “while westerners are looking for variety India is concentrating on “one”. The performance of an Indian “Raag” on the other hand is the execution of phenomenology and aesthetics mainly one person whose aim is to concentrate on melodious play over the “Raag”: The Indian classical music is as it were the music of one.

This passage makes the point that I want to convey or rather the changes that were brought about by researching that the music scene and the culture of performing music apart from being a dynamic system is also a spiritual one in our country.

9 Swami Prajnanada, Music of the Nations.
Figure 1.13: Veena Concert

I make this point humbly in relation to the thoughts of the great poet Rabindranath Tagore. I have a smaller but different window through which to actually peep into the statuses of various instruments. In this case particularly that of Veena and the violin villu as this is where the beginnings of the current study originated.

The quoted passage also gives us an idea to get the thought forward of understanding the concert pattern and the evolution of music within it as also the Musical instruments in them. All our great thinkers, musicians, philosophers, and organisations which support the cause of classical music among
many other factors have contributed to the growth of the dynamics that is the carnatic classical performing music.

Fifty years ago when the stalwarts of those days performed on the stage the scene was very different from today. The listeners of these concerts had limited access to these shows. The concerts which were held for duration of four hours and above got a full house. We have heard the greatest of the musicians travelling tirelessly in those days to give concerts in far off places across not only South India but also to the Northern parts of India. The perils of this travels perhaps were much more than that of today. We can understand the reasons for this when we can think of the day in which travel was not as easy as that of current day. Even fifteen years ago when computerisation was not as is today the travelling and the arrangements and preparation was extensive. Because of this lack of fastness in the way things were run the concert numbers were also lesser than that of today. Then there were more listeners in a live concert when you consider the ratio of performances as against the number of listening population. The concerts were received with much more gratitude and eagerness. Today there is a profusion in the frequency and the availability of music from other sources makes a listener that much more placid
and uninterested unless there are newer ways to attract them. The point of the above stated facts are that the music lovers tastes although remains the same the dishing out of the music itself has been thrown into almost a turmoil. There are numerous organisations in our cities which try to arrange the concerts in many places across the geography. There are many organisations running the same concurrently for various occasions. The ramanavami festivals in Bangalore as the music season of madras all try and do this. Sometimes this results in a dwindling number of rasikas as there are too many things happening at a time. The nuances that are part of the musical tradition are in danger of getting lost in this pace. The result is that there is a breed of listeners who can only be wooed by familiarity. The precious aspects for e.g. a well executed Veena concert is the causality in such a scenario. This fact is dwelt with reasonable doubt. There are always exceptions to the rule per-se. The concert arena is such that is directly proportionate to the listeners choices. Hence there may be pockets of rasikas only wanting to hear Veena programmes. The above argument that the Veena concerts are very few will take a beating if the latter case is considered. We have been privy to a lot of details towards the ways of Carnatic classical music as an art music form. The listeners of late have
been increasing in umbers as compared to just a few years ago. The same cannot be said about people getting into serious learning. There have been instances of performers giving up the art for reasons of livelihood or people leaving behind lucrative livelihoods to get into the performing arena. Either ways the point I am trying to make her is that undoubtedly the number of times a Veena is heard in any concert or performing platform is far from the number of a Violin. Many experts believe that the Veena is in the forefront of performing music. Some argument is in comparison with the north Indian tradition of music where a Sitar or sarod is diminishing in presence. But this argument is just a mere fact of comparing. The truth that a Veena concert is less and less heard is another fact which is evident by the example given in the form of compilation of concert invites.

We boast about many schools of Veena tradition like The Tanjavur School, Mysore School etc. Yet the techniques and other entities of the details remain either hidden behind the commonality or a confusion of styles. A famous musician once exclaimed that baanis no longer are relevant. And the reasons which he gave merit a thought. The communication of music and mixing up of styles are related deeply. A music concert is beamed directly from
one part of the world to another in an instant; there are too many exchanges of music and musicians across not only inside a country but also away. There will always be a chance of the essence being mixed in such close proximity.

This does not mean by any stretch of imagination that the music is diluted or less classical. It is simply an observation. We see this happening around us very frequently. Youngsters imitating the great musicians are one such result. No doubt this is only welcome as the tradition also gets to go forth. Perception is the core of art. By this I mean every human being has his or her own ways in which to understand the things going on around. Sound is at the origin energy. The waves hit our ear drums and sound is produced—all of us know this. This same sound in terms of swaras is where each one of us differs in deciphering. Musical tones are understood only by a minority of us. Just like a child which is told a burning candle is harmful and as it grows up will understand the different uses and dangers of fire so does a musically oriented person will understand the notes for their consonance or the dissonance. In Indian musical practices these subtle nuances have led to the musical forms and more importantly the concert pattern. The division of the music or in another sense expansion of Indian
music into the two streams that is the Hindustani and Carnatic is the proof of the musical sensibilities which flows in our system like a never ending river of aesthetic thought and principles. This kind of thought also perhaps resulted in the rules of the same to solidify. The concert which is widely accepted with the traditional pakkavadyas and traditional composition is the result which is both exemplary for the beauty of simplicity and effectiveness in expression of the music itself. From time to time factors which can enhance the experience are admitted into the fold of Classical Carnatic music. Introduction of Violin is one such example. At an earlier stage the Veena was there in the scene.

The study which I am going to in the next chapters is a very basic and humble fact finding mission. In no way is this exhaustive. The small thought that the Veena should be given more and more chances in the concerts is what led to this exercise. I wish to put all the best of my thoughts and ability to analyse facts which present themselves during this research to good and fruitful use, so that my music will get better.