Preface

This work is a humble token of my adoration of the great traditions of music evolved by the violin maestro T. Chowdaiah and his immense contribution to Karnataka Classical music.

The work is in the nature of a chronicle on the contribution of T. Chowdaiah and belongs to the 20th century. But it is not an isolated study of a single concept, musician or composer, but a study of the legend Mysore T. Chowdaiah’s invention, his versatile personality, the maestro’s life and his musical vision, contemporary and later seven-stringed violinists and a detailed analysis of his compositions. Tracing the history of the instrument and its cousins has since become inevitable. The subject matter is a wide canvas dealing with historical, practical and theoretical aspects of music. To explain the contribution of Mysore T. Chowdaiah to the field of Karnataka music, it is necessary to present an integral picture of the necessity of his invention and the backdrop of the instrument in later and recent years and hence the little available literature on the subject had been consulted. No detailed study in this regard has taken place so far.

In the process of investigation it was heartening to find that the compositions of T. Chowdaiahare a treasure house where both Lakshya and Lakshana are being taken care of. The fact that Lakshya and Lakshana are always interlinked has been proved in the process of this research study. With respect to the historical account of the life and biography of T. Chowdaiah, the style has had to be descriptive and narrative.

India is known for its rich cultural heritage. A magnificent system of music is developed in India.

Chapter 1 traces the origin of music, the history of Indian classical music and analyses the historical facts of music.
Chapter 2 describes the musical instruments played in Karnataka classical music as stated in our Lakshana Granthas.

As Mysore T. Chowdaiah was an embodiment of music, and had created a special and unique niche in the instrumental music, and as he was innovative too in evolving his instrument, it is indispensable to discuss some matters on the development of musical String Instruments in particular with some contextual references to such instruments in the international arena.

Chapter 3 describes in detail the string instruments of both western and eastern parts and also discusses the musical string instruments that are being played in The Hindustani classical music and Karnataka classical music. This is done with pictures of instruments taken from various museums, art galleries, temples and sculptures. The historical facts about violin, its origin, structure and use in India and in Karnataka music are discussed in detail in this chapter.

The violin heritage in Karnataka has always been identified as representing one of the finest and authentic of the classical traditions of South Indian music. The musical potentiality of Karnataka is well known.

Chapter 4, deals with the place of violin in Karnataka is discussed and the violin heritage in Karnataka is traced.

The life and biography of great men serve as a model to many in forming their own life.

Chapter 5 describes in detail, the life and biography of T. Chowdaiah. Starting from his birth, T. Chowdaiah’s upbringing, Ganavisharada Sri Bidaram Krishnappa’s disciplined system of music training in the Gurukula System, Chowdaiah’s method of music practice, his family life, the troubles he encountered in the path of his achievements, his unparalleled Gurubhakti, his total dedication to the art, the music schools he established in Mysore and Bangalore, his way of teaching, the disciples nurtured under
his training and his peerless contribution to Karnataka Classical music is dealt upon elaborately. Chowdaiah’s musical vision is also analysed in detail here. Interesting anecdotes mirroring Chowdaiah’s musical vision are illustrated with photographs. The role of Chowdaiah as a true disciple, as an accompanist, as an ideal solo player, as an experimentalist, as an organizer, as a pioneer of music, as an asthanavidwan and as a great teacher are detailed. His speciality as a player of violin and his style of playing are described. His pupil heritage and their contribution to music are also adverted.

Chapter 6 deals with a detailed description of the seven-stringed violin invented by T. Chowdaiah. A comparative study of a traditional four-stringed violin and the seven-stringed violin is done in detail. The form, structure, construction, playing techniques, bowing techniques, etc of the seven-stringed violin are analysed.

Chapter 7 gives a description of the contemporary seven-stringed violinists of Chowdaiah’s Period. The contemporary seven-stringed violinists of Chowdaiah’s period and in the later years that followed are detailed.

Chapter 8 deals with a detailed analysis of Mysore T. Chowdaiah’s compositions. This chapter analyses the entire compositions of T. Chowdaiah. Compositions of Chowdaiah from the point of view of Sangeeta and Sahitya are analyzed.

Chapter 9 deals with the multifaceted personality of Chowdaiah with special reference to his film ‘Vani’. A critical analysis of the film ‘Vani’ is done in detail from the literary and artistic views. Chowdaiah’s contribution to fields other than music are described.

Chapter 10 gives the conclusions drawn from the previous discussions. This chapter deals with the findings and the summary of the thesis.

The appendixes contain rare photographs of sculptures and paintings of violin and other musical instruments of Karnataka music available in
Karnataka, photographs of The Chowdaiah Memorial Hall, Bangalore, photographs of the birth place of Chowdaiah, his house, his music concerts—both as an accompanist and as a solo artist, other pictures pertaining to his life and music and a list of Honours and awards bestowed on Chowdaiah.

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