CHAPTER II

MEDIA AND MUSIC

Man is a social animal, he cannot live in isolation. He lives in a society. He depends on his fellow beings for his day to day needs and requirements. He has to communicate. Being a social being, he also needs to constantly share his experiences with others.

Along with other ministries, we have in India, a Ministry for Communication in charge of all means of communication such as telephone, telegraph, microwave links, satellites, facsimile, telex etc. Communication helps to convey one’s thoughts, emotions, feelings, ideas etc. to others. In simple terms, communication conveys and establishes a common platform of understanding. This can be established through verbal, written, or visual means.

A ‘channel’ or a medium is very essential for communication. It is a vehicle that takes our message to others and brings their response to us. In face to face communication, the oldest and the most effective channel, words are the vehicle. Even in the present electronic age, much of the communication is done with the help of spoken words. Next to spoken words, comes the written ones and this may take the form of posters, charts, black-boards, leaflets, writings on the walls, formats, magazines, newspapers etc. Another mode of communication is through pictures. A picture symbolises a real object. Thus the ‘channel’ is very important in communication process.
Like any other Art, music too survives and flourishes with the help of popular appeal and effective media. Along with the changing phases of music, over a period of time, its mediums of conveyance also have undergone various transformations, which have not only helped the growth and preservation of the art, but also paved the way for outstanding developments. The sources of one’s knowledge of Indian music and their history are manuscripts, epigraphs, coins, architecture, sculptures, paintings, musical pillars, stones, inscriptions etc. They are the initial stages of the media.

The media are classified into Print and Electronic. Sculpture is almost as old as mankind and it may be treated as visual documents representing the different aspects of life during the periods to which they belong. Clay was the earliest medium with which man began to mould. Painting is one of the most delicate flowers of human thoughts and feelings, expressed in lines and colures. *Ragamala* paintings appear to stand at a crossroad of Indian music. These pictorial diagrams, depicting the spirit and character of each melody were prepared for the use and guidance of our musicians. The subject of numismatics begins with Emperor Samudraguptha, who had depicted himself playing a stringed instrument (Harp) on a coin. Epigraphical and inscriptional records are sources of highest value in research of music. The earliest known historical scripts in India are ‘Khorasthi’ and ‘Brahmi’. These stone records are the static representations of the dynamic art and contain valuable information regarding the visual demonstration of music, dance, and drama. Palmyra leaves, wooden
slabs or plates, stones, metal etc were used for writing letters. These paved way for the development of print media such as newspapers, books, journals, dictionaries, telex, facsimile, email or internet. Print media began very early.

“In 1539 Juan Pablo set up a press in Mexico City. Gutenburg’s invention touched off a veritable revolution in the Western World. The spread of printing encouraged the development in science, philosophy, and religion. The book printing was expensive and time consuming. Gradually, new developments in the realm of printing were attempted. The number of literates went on increasing; hence demand for books also went up. Increasing demand of books and man’s desire to know more and more around him gave birth to the printing of Newspapers. Even this medium could not quench the human thirst for getting more and more to know. This led to newer scientific and technical advancement”\(^2\).

Rapid growth in this direction helped man to hasten the means as well as the modes of communication and they play a great role in the propagation of Carnatic music.

Electronic media is a great boon for music. It is a marvel which reaches millions of people all over the world and has helped enhance their sensibility and sensitivity towards music. Areas in which electronic media is used in music can broadly be divided into two categories: 1) audio and 2) audio visual. Audio can be subdivided into a) radio and b) pre-recorded music. Audio visual media are also of two types: 1) direct telecast and 2) video cassettes.

“Gramophone, the first machine that could record and reproduce the human voice, was invented by Thomas Alva Edison, in 1877. It was originally called Tin-foil ‘phonograph’, because a needle was actuated to draw the vibration curve of the voice on a sheet of tin-foil covering a rotating drum. To produce the sound, another needle was made to move over this vibration curve. As a result the vibration was communicated to the membrane attached to the drum, and the sound was reproduced. In 1887, Berliner started using a flat disc for recording the sound; after this change the instrument came to be known as Gramophone. An amazing fact of recording history in India is that this exciting new medium was launched by Gauhar Jan, the daughter of Malka Jan of Banaras.”

“Microphone was an extremely important invention to reach a wider audience. The word ‘Microphone’ was first coined by Sir Charles Wheatstone in 1827. Microphones convert sound waves into electrical voltage, which is then re-converted to sound waves by speakers. The carbon microphone, the ancestor of microphones used today, was invented in 1878 by David Edward Hughes. Until 1927 microphone amplification was not known in South India and full throated voice projection techniques were used by musicians. However, today’s to groom their voices to be a more controlled one for the microphone.”

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3 Dr. P T Celladurai, The splendour of South Indian music, Vaigarai Publishers, Dindigul, Tamil Nadu, South India, Page 302
4 Dr. T V Gopalakrishnan, Your voice- Its history use & training in Indian music, Published by Vision Musica, 29 Rajagopalan 2nd street, Valmiki Nagar, Chennai 600041, 2007, page 116.
Talking of audio media, radio has been a very powerful instrument in creating and sustaining people’s interest in music. Radio can reach millions of people. It is for personal use as well for mass communication. Radio broadcast started in India in 1927. In 1936, the broadcasting service was named All India Radio (A I R). From 1957, it is known as Akashavani and now it is the biggest media organization in India. It serves as an effective media, not only to inform and educate people, but also to provide healthy entertainment. Radio is flexible. It is always at its best in the totally immediate ‘live’ situation. Latest technological developments in different fields together have made the world, a “Global Village”. Radio waves travel at the speed of light. Radio has conquered time and space. It is quite easy to handle. Process of production of radio programmes is simple and not expensive. Compared with other media, both capital cost and running expenses of it are less. Relatively low cost has placed this media and the instrument, radio, within the reach of one and all, the rich and the poor, the literate and the illiterate. Radio brings music, voice and all kinds of sounds which give the listeners a feeling of being in touch with other human beings. Music catches the attention quickly when heard, than read.

In the history of broadcasting, the year 1920 was a mile stone. The first broadcasting stations started functioning in Petersburg (U.S.A) and Chelmsford (U. K) in 1920. In British India, broadcasting started in Bombay, (now Mumbai), in 1923. In 1926 the British government issued licence for regular broadcasting and the first
station commenced operation in Bombay on July 23, 1927 and another one in Calcutta the same year on August 26th. Both the stations were using medium wave for transmission. Delhi station was inaugurated on January 1, 1936. National programme of music started on July 20, 1950. The first Radio Sangeeth Sammelan was broadcast on October 23, 1954. The first Radio concert of light music was on May 26, 1957. The Vividh Bharathi station was launched on October 3, 1957. The Yuvavani programme was introduced on a separate channel from Delhi station on July 21, 1969.

Television is an effective means of communication. With the help of this, people can hear, see and enjoy various music programmes from national and regional stations and also events from all over the world on a small screen within the four walls of their living room. Television was invented by John. L. Baird in 1926. On experimental basis, Delhi Doordarshan started telecast on September 15, 1959.

Another device widely used to facilitate learning is Cassette Tape Recorder. Students of music commonly use this as a learning aid. The first magnetic recording of sound was done by a Danish inventor Wald mar Paulsen in 1898. He used a reel of steel wire instead of a tape. The advantage of a tape recorder is that the tape can be erased and reused. Today tape recorders have become very small and compact in size with built-in microphones; some even have stereophonic sound system.
Gramophone records were replaced by audio cassettes. Now audio cassettes are being replaced by Compact Disc known by the short name CD. Playable and recordable CDs and DVDs are ideally suited for recording music. They are also an excellent storage medium for large volumes required for high resolution sound and imagery, of data like digital image and MP3 music files and offer possibility for interactive multimedia applications. The CD audio discs, first introduced in the 1980s, provided musicians and music lovers with a truly magical technology. The real advantage in the DVD-Video format is its ability to deliver professional quality digital video and audio. Looking beyond movies and video applications, DVD-Video provides a format for musicians to produce surround sound digital audio with significantly higher resolution than CD-Audio.

The CD-Rom was a bonanza for education of music, enabling one to mix computer and digital audio media to create never-before-heard interactive music. MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) is based on data structures that represent music performance data or machine coded instructions for playing music. Computers are already in use to print notations. Facsimile and E-Mail or Internet are recent electronic inventions which involve digital transmission of coded information over telephone lines. In the use of Facsimile, the written or typed message at the senders end is scanned, digitally coded and transmitted to the receiving end where it is digitally decoded and printed. Though fast electronic printers have replaced slow mechanical ones, the time taken to send a message depends on the
speed of the printer. The advantage that e-mail and internet have over the fax is that computers are hooked to the telephone lines so that the message sent is immediately received and flashed on the computer monitor. Contents of a fifteen minute telephonic talk may take five minutes by fax and less than a minute by E-Mail for transmission to the other end. The e-Mail, in a more sophisticated form is known as internet and is available to users worldwide.

The thrill of listening to music or speech along with seeing live pictures on the silver screen, recorded on films, was realized for the first time in the year 1925. It is another means which can be used for spreading good music and making people understand and appreciate the beauty of classical music in songs. The name and fame of an artist spread more quickly through this media. In the early decades of Tamil cinema, musicians acted in movies and their list include Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyyer, Musiri Subrahmanya Iyyer, M K Tyagaraja Bhagavathar, G N Balasubrahmanian, V V Sadagopan, M M Dandapani Desigar, Kalakkad Ramanarayana Iyyer, Madirimangalam Natesha Iyyer, T N Rajarathnam Pillai, M S Subbulakshmi, N C Vasanthakokilam, K B Sundarambal, T N Seshagopalan, Dr. M Balamuralikrishna etc.

Modern technological developments provided new techniques which helped to popularize classical music all over the world. The process of production, propagation and preservation of this enchanted art form became very simple. The new generation devices are quite simple to handle. The Audio Visual systems made music sweeter to
our senses and accessible to anyone anywhere in this world. The development of Classical Music is not achieved on its own merit alone, but with the help of many other supplementary factors too.