

Youth and Indian Classical Music

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Introduction:

Indian classical music is an ocean and a small dip into it offers divine pleasure to the listener. Indian music encompasses some of the richest, most remarkable musical traditions of the world. India's musical history begins in the second millennium BC with the advent of the Vedic period. The ¹Samaveda, one of the sacred four Vedas ("four books of knowledge"), comprises the world's oldest notated melodies. These compositions have been passed down through oral tradition since that early period.

However, in today's modern world what is the role of music in our lives. Music plays an important role in developing one's personality and understanding the role of music in enriching our life is one of the responsibilities of our youth. I believe that every young person should have the opportunity to experience the magic of music. Music has the power to build academic and social skills; unleash creativity; and develop self²-confidence and self-esteem.

Importance of understanding music:

Understanding music is a great art which gives us peace and is a relaxation for the mind as well as the brain. It is necessary for the listener to have basic knowledge of all the forms of music i.e. dance, vocal and instrumental music. It is important to help children to appreciate and understand music in its true sense and to provide a solid foundation for appreciation of Indian classical music. We should create a generation that has knowledge about the richness and power of Indian classical music.

As the proverb says "Catch them Young", it is necessary to cultivate the musical minds of the youth, from a very early age. Today's young generation is living in an extremely competitive world, which has resulted in stress and mounting tensions. Creating an awareness is needed which aims to enable children to listen to Indian classical music with knowledge and understanding which will help them in developing their overall personality. It is observed that Indian classical music, when heard with a proper understanding, offers the following benefits to children:

- 1) Relieving stress and depression
- 2) Enhancing concentration

¹ <http://musicparadise.com> 1st paragraph, line 5.

- 3) Generating creative ideas
- 4) Increasing the purity of one's mind.
- 5) Developing team spirit.
- 6) Exposure to the world of music.

Influence of Music on Youth

It is necessary to analyze the influence of music on youth culture as music is central to youth culture. At an adolescent party, the key question is not what you do but what music you listen to. How many hours do teenagers listen to music, a day? Including all music devices? A very interesting question indeed! Our youth spend a lot of time focusing on cell phones, video games, and TV - but certainly listening to music continues to be one of teens' favorite digital activities. Music has been central to young people's lives for generations. For the last generation, dancing to music blaring from the record player was a great enjoyment. Now, young people can exchange music from iphone to iphone, stream it online, and watch their favorite music videos alongside the tunes.

A keen observation reveals that music is young people's second favorite media activity (after watching TV). The average 8 to 18 years old spends 2 to 19 hours a day listening to tunes. It is important to note that the amount of time listening to music increases dramatically as children get older.

Pop Music

Listening to Pop music has been very controversial at least since the 1950s, but even Plato complained about the influence of music on youth. Today, the controversy is greater, can we argue that art can be only uplifting but not the reverse. In several studies, researchers have found that music videos laced with violent images made the youth more prone to violence in themselves and others.

For most teens, music is an amazing outlet for personal identity development and expression. Music can help youth relax and manage their moods and provide ways to connect with peers. Most of the youth are found plugging into an iPod all day long. It is not only the rhythm but sometimes the lyrics of jarring music are detrimental. By listening to such music, we also prevent quiet moments that allow us to think clearly and listen to the inner silence. Given the central importance of music in young people's lives, it can be hard to pry their ear buds from their heads. However, soothing and relaxing background music may not hinder students' study skills. This means that music with loud lyrics, abrupt changes in volume, or other distracting elements can lure our child's attention away from homework and study. Encourage our youth to focus on one task at a time and only listen to a quiet piece of music before study hours, however their interest in music could be further developed by teaching them to sing or to play an instrument.

For enhancing the strength of our youth we need to teach that "music has a profound effect on your mind, spirit and behavior". Music can enrich your life in so many ways. It can be used to educate, edify, inspire and unite. However, it can also be dangerous, music can by its tempo, beat, intensity, and lyrics dull your spiritual sensitivity. You cannot fill your minds with unworthy music.

Choice of music heard and its effects

Your choice of music can also affect your ability to accomplish tasks or to learn.³Two researchers explored this relationship by studying the effects of music and rhythm on the nervous system of mice. For eight weeks, one group of mice constantly listened to Strauss waltzes (highly organized and orderly music), while a second group heard disharmonious sounds in the form of continuous drumbeats. A third group was raised in silence. After eight weeks, the mice were placed in a maze to find their food. The mice in the first group were very efficient in finding their food. The mice in the second group wandered off with no sense of direction, a clear indication that they were having trouble learning and took much longer to find the food. The mice exposed to discordant sounds not only developed difficulties in learning and memory, but they also incurred structural changes in their brain cells. While the third group was slow and not motivated to move. Thus, the researcher's diagnosis is very interesting, throwing light upon the choice of music heard and its effects.

The importance of our Indian Classical Music:

It is now that we can understand the importance of our Indian classical music. In the opinion of⁴ Rabindranath, a musician is the dreamer of dreams, the designer of a paradise. It is a spiritual journey which is endless. The aesthetic freedom in creating melodic beauty out of the phenomenon of sound which is all pervasive can never come to an end. In its voyage the musician creates a new musical horizon glittering with endless combination of notes as demanded by the given raga structure together with ones spiritual vision. If music is all grammar without any human touches it may be nothing but noise. A musician is born not made, music is created not imitated. As the universe is not merely a cluster of electrons and protons so is music not a conglomeration of notes it is a miracle open to only a spiritual vision of the self adjusting interrelationship of different notes which works as a foundation of the musical creation and is impossible to analyze.⁵Swami Vivekananda has considered Indian music as essentially the spiritual factor in human beings. He believes that man is potentially divine. One of these potentialities is called music. Music is the most abstract of all art forms. It is created now and this goes on indefinitely, resulting in a totality of sound pattern. The musician takes the listeners into this Indian classical music sparks the imagination and lifts the soul. *Music...it's something you can feel. Music touches the mind, the heart. Something you can taste, see, hear, love, and experience. You can almost call it magic instead of music.* Music is the magnet which attracts youth to a safe place to learn and grow, away from the culture of drugs, gangs and violence. Throughout history Indian classical music has uplifted, engaged, engendered joy and united people of diverse backgrounds. It changes lives. Our youth challenge themselves to pick up an instrument, or to sing. Perhaps most importantly they become part of a creative team. They motivate one another.

³ Media.idscdn.org/pdf/magazines/liahona/september13

Booklet-for the strength of youth by Rosemary.m.Wixom.

⁴ The Origin and Evolution of violin as a Musical Instrument, published by Ramkrishna Vedanta Math, Kolkata, 2010,p.12

⁵ The Origin and Evolution of violin as a Musical Instrument, published by Ramkrishna Vedanta Math, Kolkata, 2010,p.12

A need to create awareness about the richness of Indian Classical Music

Indian classical music has an age old oral tradition in the form of guru- *shishya parampara*. The shishyas have the responsibility of innovating new pattern of musical forms on the basis of the training achieved from their respective gurus. The role of musical tradition in maintaining the supreme cause of music is to see that music flows spontaneously for generations after generations to open new horizons of the vast ineffable universe of music. Society is undergoing a subtle, but powerful, change. It is becoming more and more permissive in what it will accept in its entertainment. As a result, much of the music being performed by popular entertainers today seems to be more intended to agitate than to pacify, more to excite than to calm.

However, the internet medium is a technically fast and more precise medium for promotion of Indian classical music. Especially after 2000, the pop up of thousands of websites, blogs on music made it popular worldwide and easily accessible. There is a huge amount of information on the internet about our classical music. There are blogs by musicians and connoisseurs discussing about music. On the e-groups, people discuss about their opinions on music. Many recording companies sell their products of CDs, DVDs online. Now, there are many *e-Gurukuls* or web portals for learning classical music. Hence, print media, audio-visual media and most recent of all, the web or internet media has contributed a lot for the promotion of Indian classical music in the modern world.

Besides, there are institutions like ⁶Spicmacay which seeks to conserve and promote an awareness of our rich cultural musical history amongst the youth through focus on the classical arts, and to facilitate an appreciation for the deeper and subtler values of our classical music. It fosters a solid value-based education, which involves the absorption of aesthetics and spirituality in an increasingly technical, mundane and competitive world. Thus its work is educational in spirit and character and locates itself in educational institutions only.

Conclusion:

In essence, our Indian classical music has the power to mould an individual into a sensitive, kind and gentle human being who is inspired and in turn inspires. Music whether western or Indian, has a common point, namely the discovery of the frequency of sound which makes the sound musical.

Using the medium of classical music, folk forms, crafts, yoga, meditation, films, theater and talks; and through direct interaction with the doyens of art, it is our responsibility to initiate and nurture a healthy thought process in the youth of today. Indian classical music is a priceless cultural heritage which belongs to everyone; it should be enjoyed by everyone. Music is God's message to a blessed few who can realize what God has whispered into their ears. ⁷Pandit Jasraj says, "Indian music gives peace, calmness. It doesn't excite. It comes from the heart. It's not human, it's God's music. This art has lasted thousands of years. Like God, nobody can destroy it".

⁶ Spicmacay- wikipedia the free encyclopedia

⁷ <http://Culture Wave; Global Youth Movement Spic-Macay In Love With India's Classical Arts and Customs>.

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