

SPRING NECTAR ACADEMY

AN ACADEMY TO PROMOTE CARNATIC MUSIC



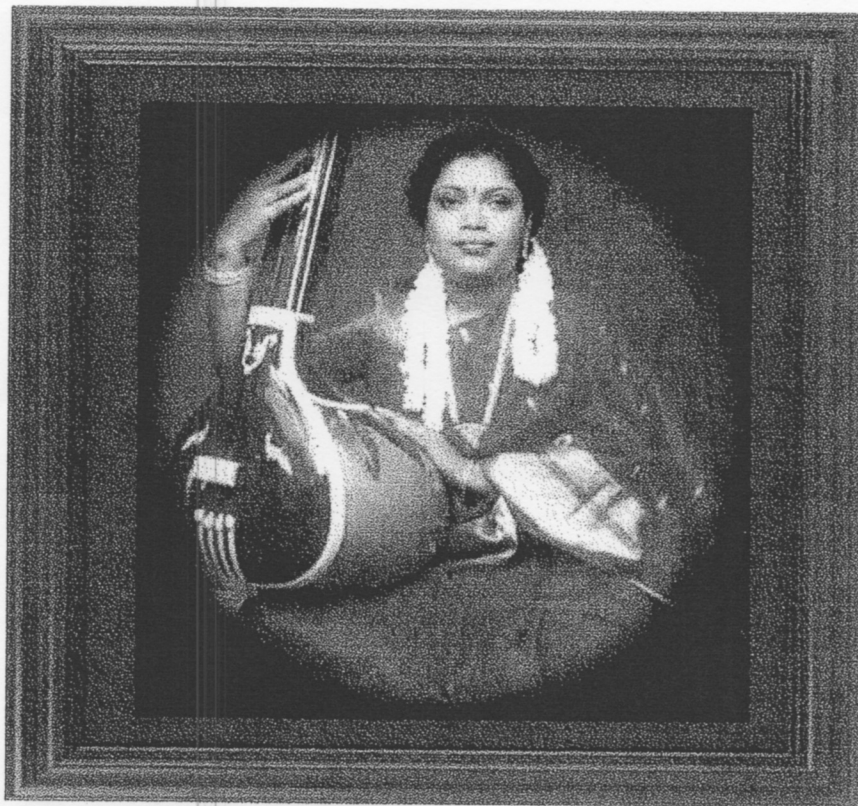
BEGINNERS GUIDE TO CARNATIC MUSIC

ABHYASA GANAM SERIES

SPRING NECTAR ACADEMY

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EASY TO LEARN BOOK : ABHYASA GANAM SERIES



Instructor: Rose Muralikrishnan - Vocal

To learn more about your instructor and classes

Please visit <http://www.rosemuralikrishnan.com>

SPRING NECTAR'S

SPECIAL EDITION - 1

(Abhyasa Ganam Series)

A complete premier learning guide for learning fundamental rudiments of South Indian Carnatic Music

EASY TO LEARN BOOK - VARISAI

FIRST LESSON- SARALI VARISAI

SECOND LESSON- JANTAI VARISAI

THIRD LESSON- MEL STHAYI VARISAI

FOURHT LESSON- DHATTU VARISAI

FIFTH LESSON- SAPTA TALA ALANKARAM

Voice Culture & Vocal Exercises for Carnatic Vocal Students

1 - What is SARALI VARISAI?

SARALI VARISAI are the fundamental exercises which help the student to understand the basic swaras (notes) of Carnatic Music. The SARALI VARISAI allow the students to find the placements of the basic Carnatic notes and get a feel for the correct melody and the rhythm. The sequences of SARALI VARISAI follow a very logical order, mostly to get a good vocal practice in ascending and descending orders of the progressions of the seven Notes. The students should first try to vocalize the three main swaras 'SA' 'PA' and high 'SA' which are the constant notes, with perfect alignment with their Tambura or a Sruthi box. Once they familiarize those tones ('SA' 'PA' 'SA') the teacher/guru may introduce the Sapta Swaras (Seven Notes) SA, RI, GA, MA, PA, DHA, NI in Ragas like Mayamalavagowli, (15th Mela) or Shankarabharanam (29th Mela) for the basic vocal exercises. The first lesson taught in one of these ragas is called SARALI VARISAI. Once the students get a good command over one of the selected ragas, these SARALI VARISAI exercises may be repeated in different Melakartha Ragas from the 72 Melakartha scheme as well.

About TALA

3 - What is TALA?

TALA means rhythm. TALA helps one to be on the correct track of beat and tempo while they sing or play any instrument. One must always use the right hand on the right lap to perform any TALA. The Sarali varisais are sung in ADI TALA.

4 - What is ADI TALA?

ADI TALA is a fundamental rhythmic cycle which helps one to sing Sarali varisai with correct rhythm. The following hand gestures are to be followed to perform Adi Tala.

|| 1 || 2 || 3 || 4 || 5 || 6 || 7 || 8 ||
 || Clap || Pinky || Ring || Middle || Clap || Turn || Clap || Turn ||

Students must learn to perform the first Sarali Varisai with Adi Tala as follows:

|| SA || RI || GA || MA || PA || DHA || NI || SA ||
 || SA || NI || DHA || PA || MA || GA || RI || SA ||

Usage of A Sruthi box / Tambura

Tambura or a Sruthi box, is an essential instrument in order to begin one's Carnatic vocal music education. The Tambura/ sruthi box will provide the basic pitch or note "SA" called Adhara Shadjam, and PA the fifth note, from SA and the high SA the fourth note from PA.

The student's teacher or guru may determine the right pitch for the student depending on the student's voice structure which enables them to sing at least two octaves (from lower Panchamam (PA) to the higher Panchamam) comfortably over a period of time. There are manual and/or automatic electronic Tambura or sruthi boxes available in the market. Students may purchase the automatic electronic Tambura or sruthi box in the beginning of their music education, so that they do not have to care much about yet other learning process of how to tune the instrument which may need a great deal of tuning skill in the beginning to perfectly tune manual instruments.

It is eventually very essential that the students learn how to tune either of those instruments from their teacher after a while of their music education.

2 - What are the SAPTA SWARAS?

SAPTA SWARAS are the seven Notes of any particular Raga. The notes may be identified as SA, RI, GA, MA, PA, DHA, NI. And the descriptions of those notes are given below:

1. Shadjam - SA
2. Rishabam RI
3. Gandharam - GA
4. Madhyamam MA
5. Panchamam PA
6. Dhaivatham DHA
7. Nishadham - NI

Carnatic Students must focus on singing SA, RI, GA, MA, PA, DHA, NI and the high SA on selected raga, then add Tala in their initial Carnatic training period.

Before One begins to sing

Before the students begin their first Carnatic music lessons, they must prepare themselves physically as well as mentally to sing. They must go through all the applicable Carnatic music introductions in detail before they start. When one has a basic understanding of Carnatic music, they be a better vocalist in the later stage.

Dedication and Listening Skills:

1. **Dedication:** It is not enough if one just show up to the class once or twice a week. Practicing everyday and listening to good Carnatic music is the most vital part of initial Carnatic education. Even as little as half to an hour a day of practice is needed for those who wish to be a good vocalist. At least 5 to 7 days a week for about 3-5 hours a day of practice is a must if one who intend to be a performer.
2. **Listening skills:** One must follow the Guru's instructions in the class. Its also essential to listen Carnatic music performers in a live concerts or cds / tapes and other media. Listening to great recordings of (especially) past greats will help you learn music faster and easier. Attend live concerts as much as possible.

Practice sessions

Every day Practice sessions: Students must sit cross-legged on a mat or a sheet on the ground and keep their back in a comfortable but upright position. They must hold the neck backward but not sticking out too much in a relaxed manner. Hands must be rested loosely on the thighs or knees to start their practice sessions.

They should hold each note long enough by holding the breath and singing from abdomen and to a complete and slow ADI TALA cycle, and observe if they match with the sruthi box / Tambura. When the notes are sung they must try to get the notes smooth and even, without wavering. When all the 14 Sarali exercises are practiced with using these singing techniques in a given Raga well enough, the students may try the same in Akaaram, Ekaaram, Ukaaram and so forth. Then the same must be practiced in three or four speeds eventually.

Speeds may be practiced as below:

- 1 note = 1 beat = first speed,
- 2 notes = 1 beat = second speed,
- 4 notes = 1 beat = third speed,
- 8 notes = 1 beat = fourth speed

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EASY TO LEARN BOOK - VARISAIS

LESSON - 1

SWARĀVALĪ VARISAIGALĪ

[Māyā Mālava Gowā Rāgam]

[Mēlam 15 Ādhi Tālam]

1	Sa	Ri	Ga	Ma		Pa	Da		Ni	Śa	
	Śa	Ni	Da	Pa		Ma	Ga		Ri	Sa	
2.	S	R	S	R		S	R		G	M	
	S	R	G	M		P	D		N	Ś	
	Ś	N	Ś	N		Ś	N		D	P	
	Ś	N	D	P		M	G		R	S	
3.	S	R	G	S		R	G		S	R	
	S	R	G	M		P	D		N	Ś	
	Ś	N	D	Ś		N	D		Ś	N	
	Ś	N	D	P		M	G		R	S	
4.	S	R	G	M		S	R		G	M	
	S	R	G	M		P	D		N	Ś	
	Ś	N	D	P		Ś	N		D	P	
	Ś	N	D	P		M	G		R	S	

5. S R G M | P , | S R ||
S R G M | P D | N Š ||
Š N D P | M , | Š N ||
Š N D P | M G | R S ||
6. S R G M | P D | S R ||
S R G M | P D | N Š ||
Š N D P | M G | Š N ||
Š N D P | M G | R S ||
7. S R G M | P D | N , ||
S R G M | P D | N Š ||
Š N D P | M G | R , ||
Š N D P | M G | R S ||
8. S R G M | P M | G R ||
S R G M | P D | N Š ||
Š N D P | M P | D N ||
Š N D P | M G | R S ||
9. S R G M | P M | D P ||
S R G M | P D | N Š ||
Š N D P | M P | G M ||
Š N D P | M G | R S ||

10	S	R	G	M		P	,		G	M	
	P	,	,	,		P	,		,	,	
	G	M	P	D		N	D		P	M	
	G	M	P	G		M	G		R	S	
11	Š	,	N	D		N	,		D	P	
	D	,	P	M		P	,		P	,	
	G	M	P	D		N	D		P	M	
	G	M	P	G		M	G		R	S	
12.	Š	Š	N	D		N	N		D	P	
	D	D	P	M		P	,		P	,	
	G	M	P	D		N	D		P	M	
	G	M	P	G		M	G		R	S	
13.	S	R	G	R		G	,		G	M	
	P	M	P	,		D	P		D	,	
	M	P	D	P		D	N		D	P	
	M	P	D	P		M	G		R	S	
14.	S	R	G	M		P	,		P	,	
	D	D	P	,		M	M		P	,	
	D	N	Š	,		Š	N		D	P	
	Š	N	D	P		M	G		R	S	