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Music

Real Time, Online Music Lessons--as Good as Being There

Professor Sanjoy Bandopadhyay, renowned sitarist and pundit of Indian classical music, is also a much beloved music guru with a big heart dedicated to nurturing Indian music worldwide. In his global performance travels, many told him they yearned to learn Indian music, but they had no teachers. In 2000 he started teaching online, using peer-to-peer technologies like Skype. The program is a big success. Markus Wieninger in Brazil writes: "Initially I was hesitant about learning the sitar in real time mode over the Internet. I was concerned about latency, Internet reliability, time zone differences, etc. However, after taking the two free lessons, I realized these were minor issues, especially when compared to the expertise offered by Professor Sanjoy."

In 2003 Sanjoy started www.IndianMusicLessons.com with the help of his student Gary Pro in Seattle, who says that "Sanjoy is revolutionizing the art of teaching." Eight teachers on his Kolkata-based team now offer lessons for sitar, bansuri (flute), Hindustani vocal, sarod, tabla and pakhawaj (double-headed barrel drum).

The remote training has proved to be as effective as in-person classes, with added benefits, including not having to commute for lessons, which might take hours, which means fewer missed lessons and more time to practice. Students who get "music lesson anxiety" when going to a studio say that learning is facilitated by the private, relaxed, at-home atmosphere. Camera close-ups can show precise finger positioning. And students in far-away nations get to train with gifted professionals in India.

Mariette Galea Ebejer says: "In Malta there are only a few who play sitar, and they are not proper sitarists but fret the way they do with a guitar. I am the only female to study the sitar in my country. With the kind help and guidance of Professor Sanjoy, I shall be able to make a difference!"

Reference

A Rich and Authentic Hindu Compendium

In 2003 we reviewed the site, "A Tribute to Hinduism," an encyclopedic resource by Mrs. Sushama Londhe. Started in the Internet's early days, in 1996, her site, now called www.hinduwisdom.info has evolved into one of the most comprehensive and authentic resources on Hinduism in the digital info sphere. The site's simple organization under Quotes, Basics, Science, History, Social and Other categories belies the breadth and depth behind the links. With a focus on Hindu pride in the face of Western ideological imperialism, Sushama organizes subjects with outlines to draw together hundreds of authoritative quotes, book excerpts and links to external web sites into a powerful educational framework. Noteworthy are the abundance of quotes by Westerners in support of Sanatana Dharma. Tackling misinformation about Hinduism "head on," the pages on conversion fearlessly expose the fallacies behind Western Christian and Islamic assertions of exclusivity. The page on the caste system is one of the best resources on the subject we have ever seen. And for a real thriller, don't miss the page "India on Pacific Waves" with citations of all the evidence that indigenous Americans, Incan and Mayan cultures came from India. Featured is Sushama's book, A Tribute to Hinduism.