

[One Man's Dream Come True](#)

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One Man's Dream Come True

For Dr. Pranabesh N. Joadder the dawn of 1986 brought the near-full bloom of a dream to spread Indian music and culture world-wide.

Dr. Joadder and his wife, Suchitra, founded Bhatkande University in 1979. This school of Indian music started humbly in Union City, northern California, as personal instruction for one student in a private home and became what it is today, a network of nine home centers in the U.S.A. with plans for an additional 16 by the end of 1990. At present there are also four centers outside the USA. In all, more than 3,000 students are enrolled.

"The main purpose of Bhatkande University," says Dr. Joadder, "is to teach and spread Indian music and culture in a well-organized manner throughout the world."

Named after the widely respected scholar musician-philosopher, Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkande (famed for his propagation of Indian classical music throughout India), this university has established a style of training in the North American tradition with three divisions of study: vocal, instrumental and dance. According to Dr. Joadder, all teachers on the faculty must have a degree in music from an accredited institution and must follow a strict schedule of instruction designed by the university.

"The Bhatkande University is the only registered University in the United States that offers degrees in Indian music and deals with Indian music only," says Dr. Joadder.

Dr. Joadder explains that if the student does well in his or her studies and qualifies

every step along the way, according to all of the restrictions, he or she can receive an "intermediate" degree in three years, a "Bachelor of Music" degree in five years, a "Master of Music" degree in seven years and finally with a grand total of 10 or 11 years of successful study, a "Doctor of Music" degree.

Yet, there is more than music here. There are religious teachings as well. Dr. Joadder stresses the importance of the meaning of the ragas, talas, songs and bhajans. And this meaning, he says is of a religious nature. Therefore, a religious study is part of the training.

As Dr. Joadder puts it, "If [for example] we do not fully describe Lord Shiva, then the student will not understand the wording of a song about Lord Shiva. So, as a part of the training we must paint a picture in the student's mind. And in playing an instrument, the student must be taught everything about the raga: its tone, its meaning, its god or goddess. And the dancer who portrays Lord Shiva must know when Shiva is creating, when he is protecting and when he is destroying. Each mudra has a special meaning. And these things must be taught."

Dr. Joadder describes the system of teaching as "institutional" in nature, and unlike the "gurukulam" system of training where the student learns whatever the guru is prepared to or decides to teach over a long period of time in a monastery-like environment. The "institutional" system, according to Dr. Joadder, provides the student the opportunity to choose exactly what he wants to learn. Thus, he need only attend school "part-time" for this specific training and is free to pursue other studies as well.

Dr. Joadder is a Nuclear Engineer cum mathematician by profession with Ph.D.s in music and applied mathematics. Mrs. Joadder is an accomplished singer with a Master's degree in Philosophy and Vedic Religion.

Among the high points each year for the school system is the All USA and Canada Music Conference and Competition, which was held in 1983 and 1985, organized in conjunction with the Academy of Eastern Performing Arts. In the 1985 meet, 189 participants contested in 21 different categories of north and south Indian classical music and dance forms. At least 43 contestants were of non-Indian origin.

Bhatkande University seems well on its way toward the achievement of Dr. Joadder's goal but there is much yet left to be done. Dr. Joadder extends an invitation and a request to anyone who is interested to "get involved with the University's effort in whatever capacity they feel comfortable."

For further details, contact Mr. Robert L. Smith, Registrar, Bhatkande University, 35001 Lilac Loop, Union City, California 94587. Phone: 415/487-2625

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