

South Indian Carnatic Classical Music

course description

by Mrs. Shobana Raghavan

212-537-6258

shobragh5@yahoo.com

- **Basic concepts in Carnatic music:-** Importance of Shruthi (pitch) - Panchama shruthi(tonic and perfect fifth) and Madhyama shruthi(perfect fourth as tonic) and Laya(rhythm) with swara(solfege) concepts with historical meaning, octave classifications called sthayi, basic talas(rhythmic cycles) popularly used, and introduction of carnatic music notes and its varieties.
- **Voice range training and breathing methods:-** Use of full voice and head voice in solfege training and breath control-akaara,ikaara,ukaara and makaara saadhakam
- **How a Raga(Melodic scale) is formed:-** Combinations of swaras, melakartha(mother raga) scheme, janya raga(child raga) concept, varieties possible in janya ragas – varja(missing notes), upanga(belonging notes), bhashanga(alien notes) varieties.
- **More details on raga:-** Janya Ragas continued – vakra(zig-zag), sampurna(wholesome) ragas, Number system(katapayadhi sankhya) followed in the melakartha scheme and its identification mechanism,
- **Saptha Tala Scheme:-** Rhythm varieties, concept of graha with examples, tala angas(parts of a talam), aksharas(tala counts), kaarvai(extension of note), gathi bedhas(transfer from one tala pattern to another within a basic tala variety)
- **Solkattu training:-** Clusters of intricate rhythmic beats called “Solkattu” are orally recited to add interest to a musical composition.
- **Methods of writing Carnatic music:-** Musical notation, symbols used , using written music notation to sing.
- **Small important topics:-** Gamaka(note oscillations), anuswara, jaaru(slide in notes), spuritham or briga, sahitya(lyrics), swarakshara, sangathi, kala pramaana(speed employed in a song)
- **Structured Learning of Carnatic Music:-** Swaravali, Jantai, Tara sthayi and Dhaatu varisaigal (swara lessons for practical singing), Alankaras(use of saptha talas in singing), Geetham(use of sahitya in a song), Swarajathi(concept of sollukattu or rhythmic syllables, meaning of jathi

and its use in a song), Varnam and its varieties, Kriti, Keerthana, Viruththam or Shloka.

- **Composers in Carnatic music and scope for creativity:-** The Trinity, Shri Purandaradasar hailed as the father of carnatic music learning, traditional and modern composers at a glance, creative concepts in carnatic music - alapana, neraval, kalpanaswaras, tanam, pallavi, grahabedha or shruthibedha.
- **Instruments generally used for a concert and musical pattern followed:-** Musical structure of a typical Carnatic music concert including thani aavartanam(solo by drummer or mridangam artiste), thukkadas, folk number, bhajan, concept of tillana and mangalam(concluding musical piece).
- **Practice and performance:-** Guru-sishya parampara(direct learning from teacher), sadhagam(hours of practice), concert listening techniques, how to become a performing carnatic music professional.

Each lecture session will have students repeating and singing swaras and ragas with the use of talas.

Small assignments will be given for students to prepare, from topics covered in a particular session like

- writing swara passages
- creating a raga with a particular format
- elaborating a raga with different combinations of swaras
- recording a musical phrase and playing it during the session
- voice training and group singing
- playing different talas and notating it.
- composing musical pieces within the raga framework