

article on the *Sangeeta Sampradaya Pradarsini* as well as for other well-researched articles. She is a good writer and diligent researcher and she is a gift to the readers of *Sruti*.

S.P. Sundaram
Bangalore

Mani Not Musiri

In his excellent review of Sriram V.'s book *Carnatic Summer*, Ramaswamy R. Iyer has stated that Madurai Mani Iyer's niraval in the kriti *Tiruvadi saranam* used to be powerful and spellbinding. The rendering of this kriti was Musiri's forte, not MMI's. Musiri's rendering of this song used to keep the audience spellbound and in pin-drop silence, and I have seen many in the audience with tears welling in their eyes. *Kapali*, of course, was a hit with Madurai Mani Iyer, no doubt.

S.V. Narayanan
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Use Real Tanpura

Martin Spaink's plea for using 'real tanpura' has not come a day too soon.

One of the rather distressing trends in the music scene is the replacement of the tanpura in most of the concerts; this was quite evident during the recent season also. This has many implications with reference to the quality, values and dignity of the classical music tradition, particularly in the vocal stream. While electronic gadgets have their own convenience as aids for practise and for travel and outstation concerts, dispensing with the tanpura even for local concerts is not justified. Practical problems like availability of suitable instruments and players will not arise in the case of the established sabha-s with their own infrastructure and facilities for training in vocal music. On the other hand, inclusion of a second percussion even for short duration vocal concerts has become widespread, developing a formula in the pattern of the package and the presentation.

The sruti consciousness of the Hindustani vocalists is such that they often use two tanpura-s; in many cases, the vocalists themselves strum one of the tanpura-s or a swaramandal. This creates its own ambience. (Also it may be better if tanpura 'playing' is referred to as 'meettudal' in Tamil, instead of

the commonly used term 'podudal' that can convey 'throwing'!).

We often lament about problems like declining standards, dwindling audience, etc. Opinions are generally one-sided. Discussions should cover all aspects involving all the concerned parties, namely, artists, sabha organisers, patrons/sponsors, audience and the media.

The Music Academy should take the lead in preserving a precious element in our music tradition.

Manna Srinivasan
New Delhi

Music Festivals

Hearty Congratulations on your write-ups of the Music Season in the March issue (*Sruti* 246). The articles were well written by scholars, including one from Sarvalaghu! Sarvalaghu seems to be a Master of English literature. It was exhilarating to read his quotations from Macbeth, such as "Infirm of purpose" and "Cloak and dagger environment"! On the whole the analysis of the music festival was sumptuous.

● In one of the articles, it was mentioned that the Chennai December Music Festival is a unique one in this world! It must be so for those who have witnessed and participated only in the Chennai festival! But there are about a dozen music festivals held all over the world every year in places like Edinburgh, Berlin, Tokyo, Sydney and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia). I had the golden opportunity of attending the festival in Malaysia some years ago. In fact many of these festivals are known as Golden Music Festivals! (But they are not held around jewellery shops clustered, Usman Road like, areas!).

The world music festivals are generally organised by the radio and television channels in those countries with the help of music loving contributors. The proceedings are broadcast / telecast 'live'. These festivals are held only at night and the venues are well protected and maintained amphitheatres of historical importance in a far corner of the metro cities! The seats for these festivals have to be booked months in advance and they are always full during the festivals! For the Tokyo festival, I understand that the seats are booked a year in advance! Such is the planning and