

CHAPTER 6

ARTISTS AND THE LIVING TRADITION

The Vichitra Veena tradition has survived through the dedication of a very small number of exceptional artists.

Some carried the instrument forward through performance, scholarship and teaching. Others continue to preserve, develop and present it today.

This chapter introduces five important Vichitra Veena artists.

PT. LALMANI MISRA

Pt. Lalmani Misra was one of the most important Vichitra Veena maestros, scholars and music educators of the twentieth century.

He worked deeply on the technique and presentation of the instrument and played an important role in bringing renewed recognition to the Vichitra Veena.

His performances demonstrated the depth, expressiveness and dignity of the instrument. His contribution to Indian music education and scholarship also gave the Vichitra Veena an important place in modern musical study.

Pt. Lalmani Misra remains an essential name in the modern history of the Vichitra Veena.

PT. GOPAL SHANKAR MISRA

Pt. Gopal Shankar Misra carried forward the musical legacy of his father and guru, Pt. Lalmani Misra.

He became widely known for his expressive Vichitra Veena playing and helped introduce the instrument to audiences beyond India.

His music was admired for its fluidity, Gayaki Ang and command over the slide-based language of the instrument. Through performance and teaching, he made an important contribution to the continuation of the tradition.

PT. GOPAL KRISHNA SHARMA

Pt. Gopal Krishna Sharma was one of the foremost Vichitra Veena exponents of his time.

His performances demonstrated the power, sweetness and expressive range of the instrument and helped preserve its place as a serious Hindustani classical concert instrument.

At a time when very few musicians were performing the Vichitra Veena, his contribution became an important part of its modern legacy.

THE GREAT MASTERS

Pt. Lalmani Misra, Pt. Gopal Shankar Misra and Pt. Gopal Krishna Sharma are no longer with us, but their artistry and contribution remain central to the history of the Vichitra Veena.

PT. KRISHNA CHANDRA GUPTA

Pt. Krishna Chandra Gupta is among the very few present-day artists associated with the Vichitra Veena tradition.

His continued performance and practice represent an important link in the living continuity of this rare instrument.

At a time when the number of active Vichitra Veena artists is extremely small, every dedicated practitioner carries an important responsibility towards its preservation and visibility.

DR. RADHIKA VEENASADHIKA

Dr. Radhika Veenasadhika is the World's First Woman Vichitra Veena Player.

Her work extends beyond performance and includes teaching, research, documentation, writing, instrument innovation, public awareness and institutional preservation.

She developed the Radhika Model Vichitra Veena, a compact and the smallest known model of the instrument, created to make it lighter, more practical and more accessible for learners and performers.

A CONTEMPORARY REVIVAL DIRECTION

Through Veena Venu Art Foundation, Veena Venu Legacy Gurukul and the International Vichitra Veena Council, Dr. Radhika Veenasadhika works to connect the Vichitra Veena with students, researchers, institutions and wider audiences.

Her work brings performance, education, innovation, documentation and preservation together in a contemporary revival direction.

A VERY RARE LIVING TRADITION

Today, the Vichitra Veena is sustained by only a very small number of artists. The passing of great maestros has created a serious gap in performance, teaching and transmission.

A tradition cannot remain alive through recordings and memories alone. It requires living artists, serious students, regular teaching, performances, documentation, research, instrument makers, public awareness and institutional support.

The future of the Vichitra Veena depends on the transmission of its knowledge to the next generation.

Honouring the great artists of the Vichitra Veena also means ensuring that the instrument continues to be played, taught, heard and understood.

QUICK LEARNING CHECK

1. Which artist was an important Vichitra Veena maestro, scholar and music educator?
 - A. Pt. Lalmani Misra
 - B. A percussion accompanist
 - C. A Western conductor
2. Who carried forward the legacy of Pt. Lalmani Misra?
 - A. Pt. Gopal Shankar Misra
 - B. A tabla maker
 - C. A dance critic
3. Who is the World's First Woman Vichitra Veena Player?
 - A. Dr. Radhika Veenasadhika
 - B. Pt. Gopal Krishna Sharma
 - C. Pt. Krishna Chandra Gupta
4. What is necessary for the tradition to remain alive?
 - A. Only old recordings
 - B. Living artists, students, teaching and public awareness
 - C. Keeping the instrument permanently unplayed

CHAPTER 6 SUMMARY

- Pt. Lalmani Misra
- Pt. Gopal Shankar Misra
- Pt. Gopal Krishna Sharma
- Pt. Krishna Chandra Gupta
- Dr. Radhika Veenasadhika
- The importance of living artists, students and transmission
- The urgent need for teaching, documentation and preservation

END OF CHAPTER 6