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Making studies as pleasant as music

N.J. Nair



ON A MISSION: Ludwig Pesch and Emanuel Wuethrich holding a class for differently abled children.

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Two musicologists of international repute are on an innovative mission to educate music lovers across the world about the intrinsic value of Carnatic music as a potential tool for education and blending cultures.

The Indo-Swiss research project, titled "Sam, reflection, gathering together," is being executed jointly by Emanuel Wuethrich and Ludwig Pesch, in association with Natana Kairali at Irinjalakuda.

Mr. Wuethrich, a Professor of music theory at the University of Arts in Berne, and Mr. Pesch, based in Switzerland, have conducted path-breaking studies in Carnatic music. Mr. Pesch is

also known for his e-learning course on Carnatic music. They were in the capital as part of their study tours.

"The project is not a ``jugal bandhi" or a combination of Carnatic music with any other stream of music or culture. The sound `Sa' figures in all languages and it can be interpreted as `samathwa' or equality. Cogent reflections of different cultures are being wedded through Carnatic music. The project is a scientific endeavour to explore the strength of Carnatic music for academic purposes. Despite its vast potential, Indian music has not yet figured prominently in the education system of the country. Every region has its own ethnic music, but many are still unaware of the strength of Indian music, which is a fusion of diverse streams," Mr. Pesch says.

"Though the primary aim of the project is to explore the educational possibilities of music, especially Carnatic music, we also intend to demystify the concept that Kerala is a place where people thrive on BPO assignments. Kerala has a rich music tradition, which is a mosaic of the conservative and modern streams. Its adaptable nature has the capacity to lure young learners in different parts of the world. Its scalability as well as the scope for innovations make it more attractive to novices by using their voices and hands with `bhava' (feel)," Mr. Pesch says.

Both Prof. Wuethrich and Mr. Pesch say that the traditional art forms of Kerala, from which music, dance and drama have been derived, evolved through oral training and not through formal training or textbooks. So far, only a fraction of music has been harnessed in the performing arts. Many aspects of ragas and thaala, other than the theories, still remain unexplored. They are trying to use Carnatic music to enhance the concentration power of students and also develop a sense of mutual cooperation, self-confidence and self-reliance. Their experiments to use Carnatic music for educating students with varying capabilities across the world have yielded remarkable results too.

They conducted joint programmes in different parts of the State to share their teaching and learning experiences.

They say that there is ample scope for introducing some of the Carnatic music lessons in classrooms, adult education and also rehabilitation programmes for the physically and mentally challenged.

They will be presenting the results of their studies at Natana Kairali later this month.

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