

In addition to the workshops, participant also went for a nature walk, did yoga and had an introspective time at the Study Centre. There were also talks by guest speakers like M.S Sathyu, Shashi Deshpande and Arundhati Nag in the morning. Afternoons had special folk performances namely, Dollu Kunita and Beesu Kamsale from Karnataka. On one day, the visual arts participant visited National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA). Evenings were devoted to classical music both Hindustani and Carnatic. The artists were, Sri Fayaz Khan, Mrs. Sukanya R and her group, Prof. Unnikrishnan, Prakash Sontakke, Pt. M Venkatesh Kumar and Smt. Bharati Balakrishnan. The last of the convention witnessed an exhibition of works done by the visual art participants and presentations by the performing arts participants.



Guru

When one thinks deeply about the purpose of music and its impacts it certainly throws open myriad thoughts – what is music, what is it supposed to do, why different people react to different music in different ways and so on. Last but not the least is how one learns music and how one expresses it. Is it through continuous learning, the techniques, the rigorous practice (Sadhakam) or a combination of all?

Surely learning and practice of techniques are very important but it will lead you only up to a certain point. There is something more required in this quest – a realization of truth, about yourself – who/what you are – for music is not just about external beauty but also inner realization and beauty. Very few achieve this on their own; for most there is needed an external guide. This is where I feel the role of a **Guru** comes in and I wish to use the word **Guru** as a leading light/guide or an authority who is a sounding board.

I would like to share my experience as a student studying under a Guru and how it helped me to understand music. I don't remember having specified classes or timings but I used to spend several hours with him each day. The sessions were not just about music but about philosophy, spirituality, religion and so on. The learning came not from classes but from the general experience of listening to him talk, hearing him sing with utter devotion and observation. He never used to impose ideas, though he had his own views of things; he would start a thread (in singing or discussions) and we students use to take it from there; he would silently be listening and nodding his head where he agreed.

Learning was, in classes, a minimum – it used to be more watching him teach other students, or travelling from one place to another, in his concerts or in his discussion with other artistes/scholars who used to visit him at home. He used to encourage us to go and listen to his peers and other musicians as he believed there are good things you can take from any musician (be it a maestro or an

upcoming musician or a student). I have never heard him speak condescendingly/critically about any other musician, which is an important lesson he taught us. We were asked to sing in ways that was natural to us and our voice ("Be what you are"). **We were asked to enjoy our music.** He used to say if you need to enjoy your own music "remove your ego and submit to music", which in a certain sense is true – if one is clouded with thoughts and "I", the TRUTH gets hidden. My realization/experience about quite a few things what he taught came later with age and maturity, but he set the platform for this experience and maturity to lead to self realization on music.

A **teacher** teaches music – the curriculum, the techniques, the methods and so on but a **Guru** teaches how to approach music – how to understand it, how to internalize it and how to enjoy it. The guru also makes one understand how it is an extension of who you are and your personality. Music is a lifelong pursuit and its emotions start sinking into you with more internal growth of the self for which the Guru is an enabler. At a certain phase in this pursuit, you become your own Guru.

R.Vasudevan

Some Thoughts on Art in Our Everyday Lives

Why did the cave man draw on rocks? Why do we do what we do? Man is unique in his gift to create. We have this ability to use our hands and minds to create with or without a purpose. All creatures create for a purpose; but man's gift to create takes him beyond the utilitarian. We play with our shadows as babies, make bubbles with soap, we build sand castles, as we grow older we start styling our hair, colour our faces, and creatively clothe ourselves. Could it be that we do all this (apart from all the psychological reasons of vanity and courtship) as an outlet for our creativity, our body being our first and immediate medium.

We all know artists draw, and we often look at drawing as that pencil sketch which is the end result. But to draw really means to draw from; to draw the essence (a lot like drawing water from a well) of what is in front of you, to make it a part of you and then to express it back in another medium. This completes the full circle. This is why each sketch is different; because each person draws differently, internalises differently and expresses differently.

Weaving, painting, building, body art, grooming, cooking, dancing and singing are all part of their regular life. In the urban world we have outsourced most of these activities, and have increased our consumption through books, television, internet etc. Maybe this creates an imbalance or lacuna in the social fabric. When we start using our

body and mind together we start sensing a resonance with the world around us. If we have woven a basket we may think twice before removing a bird's nest from our balcony. If we have attempted to make perfect round chapatis, we won't bargain with the potter over the cost of a diya. If we have tended a garden we will look at a huge rain tree in awe. If we have sketched the bark of a tree we may begin to appreciate the lines on our face. The crow may teach us a note. We may sense a rhythm in the flow of the traffic and the blare of the horns in the rush hour traffic. By letting our hands do what they were meant to do we may help our eyes see things differently and our mind think differently.

Shwetal Bhatt

"Dance, when you're broken open.

Dance, if you've torn the bandage off.

Dance in the middle of the fighting.

Dance in your blood.

Dance when you're perfectly free."

- Rumi