

## Annual Report (August 2021- April 2022)

### *Music Archives and Listening Room*

The Year 2021-22 has been extremely enriching but at the same time challenging for the Music Archives and Listening Room (MALR) as despite the pandemic, it organized a host of events ranging from an online certificate course on Music Appreciation, comprising of five sessions spread over ten days, including lecture demonstrations by eminent artists and musicologists, documentary screenings, workshops on archiving and cataloguing and other routine activities, such as orientation, etc.

**Music Archives and Listening Room (MALR): Third Certificate Course on  
“Understanding Hindustani Music: Raga Exposition and Emotional Expression”  
(21-31 August 2021)**

Amidst the pandemic and the teaching learning process going online, the Music Archives and Listening Room (MALR), Indraprastha College for Women organized its third certificate course on the theme, '**Understanding Hindustani Music: Raga Exposition and Emotional Expression**' which were conducted through five sessions, each on a separate date between 21-31 August 2021. The inaugural session touched upon an extremely relevant topic, “The Potential of Indian Classical Music in Mental and Emotional Health During the Pandemic”. This session was followed by other very informative and insightful sessions, conducted by eminent resource persons on various significant topics, revealing not only the aesthetic and cultural aspects but also the therapeutic aspects of *raga*-based Hindustani classical music. The five-sessions course, stretching over ten days, was successfully conducted under the constant guidance and support of the honorable Principal and the chairperson of MALR, Prof. Babli Moitra Saraf, and respected coordinators of MALR, Dr. Pragati Mohapatra and Ms. Anita Banerji.

All the sessions of the course were held online, via Google Meet. Eminent resource persons such as renowned Hindustani Music exponents, performing artists, musicologists and academicians were invited to conduct the sessions to enlighten the participants, with their knowledge and expertise on the subject. The sessions helped to, not only explore the essence and nature of Hindustani music but also experience its magical impact on one's mind and soul. The course was conducted at an inter-college level, making it open for all. More than sixty participants registered for the course, all of whom participated enthusiastically in all the sessions, making the course a huge success.

The day-wise report of the sessions of the course is as follows:



### Poster for the Certificate Course

**Day 1: 21 August 2021**

**Topic: Potential of Indian Classical Music in Mental & Emotional Health During the Pandemic**

**Speaker: Ms. Nithya Rajendran**

**Online Venue: Google Meet**

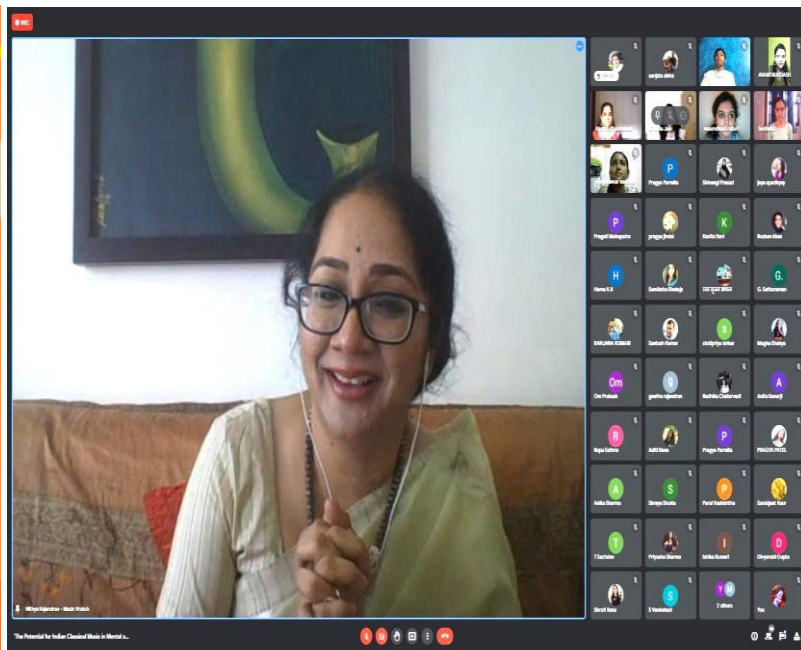
**Time: 3:30 PM onwards**

The inaugural session of the certificate course commenced with the melodious voice of Ms. Nithya Rajendran, a renowned practitioner of Indian Classical Music, an All India Radio Accredited Artist and the Founder of Music Vruksh. She sang four popular semi-classical songs from popular cinema based on four different *ragas* namely, *Vrindavani Sarang*, *Lalit*, *Yaman* and *Shudha Bilawal*, enabling the participants, most of whom were from backgrounds other than classical music, to experience and identify the emotions, while listening to the different melodious tunes. As the participants expressed that they could experience four powerful emotions of happiness, pathos, joy and love, Ms. Rajendran explained how emotions are like food for the mind, which, if not consumed and processed appropriately, may lead to issues like stress, anxiety, etc. Music fulfils this requirement of appropriately processing the emotions because when one's own emotions resonate with the emotions portrayed in the *raga*, it gets appropriately processed, resulting in a release of boxed emotions making one feel calm and peaceful. Listening to music is just like communicating and sharing one's feelings to a companion. Music thus helps release emotions of anguish, stress, depression, especially at a time, when pandemic has caused emotional and psychological dislocations, resulting in loneliness, leading to health issues for some. Listening to classical music has the potential to pull them out of an emotional distress and help achieve wellness.

The session was conducted more in a workshop format and, therefore, remained highly interactive, giving an opportunity to the audience to register their individual experiences after each activity. Providing empirical evidence of the impact of music on wellness, Ms. Rajendran cited some of the anecdotes from her personal experience as to how some of her acquaintances got cured gradually of not only emotional but even physiological ailments, like migraine, just by listening to, and reciting, Indian Classical Music. She also elaborated how listening to music functions like an effective communication with a close companion. One of the reasons of classical music being so therapeutic, in her opinion, was because of it being an organic process by which classical music has emerged as well as due to its deep connection with the mother nature in terms of various seasons and creations. Therefore, as one feels joyful and rejuvenated, just by being with the mother nature, similar benefits are gained by listening to classical music also. Music is intrinsically beautiful just like the five elements of nature, such as, soil, metal, water, air and fire and because it has a direct connection to mother nature, it comes to everyone naturally. Ms. Rajendran further stated that in order to relish the beauty of classical music, it's not necessary to go through a formal training in it. She suggested easy and simple ways of accessing and understanding classical music.

At the end, she engaged the participants in three different activities to, practically, experience how rudimentary practices of musical notes like '*shadaj riyaaz*' affects the emotional and physiological state of every person. She demonstrated how music has power to lower down the heart rate and even increase it in a healthy manner, helping achieve overall wellness. Through the entire session, as well as during the question answer session, the participants demonstrated enthusiastic response.

The session successfully concluded with a vote of thanks.



*Event Poster; Ms. Rajendran delivering the talk.*

**Day 2 : 24 August 2021**

**Topic : The Songs of Rainy Season**

**Speaker: Dr. Sarita Pathak Yajurvedi Online**

**Venue: Google Meet**

**Time: 3:30 PM onwards**



*Event Poster; Dr. Yajurvedi performing during the session*

The second session with the title ‘The Songs of Rainy Season’ was conducted by an eminent resource person, Dr. Sarita Pathak Yajurvedi. Dr. Sarita Pathak Yajurvedi is an established vocalist of Hindustani classical music of the “Rampur Sadarang Parampara” (Rampur *Gharana*). Dr Yajurvedi started learning classical music at a very young age from Pt. Shanker Nath Patil, an

eminent musician from Karnataka and continued her training under renowned classical vocalist, Vidushi Sulochana Brahaspati, under the *Guru-Shishya Parampara*. She has contributed significantly as spokesperson in seminars and conferences, both national and international and has performed in numerous cultural festivals, AIR and television channels. She has an album to her credit titled “Yeh Naina” and three DVDs called “Teach Yourself” and has authored the book, “*Uttarakhand Sangeet evam Sanskriti*”. At present, she is the Head of Department in the Department of Music, Bharti College, University of Delhi.

Dr. Yajurvedi ensured a smooth session despite network glitches at her end by way of sharing a pre-recorded performance part of her lecture demonstration. She was accompanied by her troupe, Mr. Umesh Kumar and Mr. Kuldip Kumar on harmonium and Tabla and supporting vocals. The session aimed at highlighting the intricate relationship between mother nature and Hindustani music, centered on the rainy season.

Dr. Yajurvedi began the session by appreciating the efforts taken by MALR to organize the course on the valuable themes related to Hindustani Music. In her lecture-demonstration, Dr. Yajurvedi explained how the close relationship between nature and Hindustani music is reflected in the 'ragas' especially those depicting the rainy season, which are widely sung during this season. The lecture-demonstration consisted of three sections, categorising songs of rainy season in three genre, i.e., classical, semi-classical and folk songs, elaborating upon the differences as well as connections in these three categories by beautifully singing a variety of these songs in her melodious voice. Firstly, under the category of classical *raagas*, a variety of *raagas* related to the rainy season, normally known as 'Malhars' were elaborated upon, highlighting its popularity in Hindustani music, because of its aesthetic and emotional appeal. The textual, historical and musical contexts and formulations of different varieties of 'Malhars' such as *Miyan ki Malhar*, *Megh Malhar* and *Gaud Malhar* were beautifully explained in terms of their 'aaroah-avroh' (ascending and descending signature notes), 'raga chalan' (raga-specific combinations of notes.), 'bandishes' (compositions) along with the creators of these *ragas*, citing examples of legends like Miya Tansen.

She also explained how some compositions are based on the famous classical Sanskrit texts like '*Meghaduta*' (written by Kalidasa, one of the greatest Sanskrit poets) and carries the emotions of the character, Yaksha, and his beloved wife, as portrayed in the famous text, against the backdrop of rainy season. It was also explained through examples how, just because of different combinations of specific notes, each of the different varieties of 'Malhars' can create entirely opposite emotions of 'milan' leading to happiness, and 'virah' leading to sadness. In the second section of her lecture, Dr. Yajurvedi elaborated upon how songs of rain are inherent in the semi classical forms also such as, 'Thumri', 'Dadra', 'Kajri', 'Chaiti', etc. 'Kajri' is one style in which lyrics describe about rainy season, and is very popular in North India. In these forms, the 'bandishes' (lyrics) and melodious patterns contain a variety emotions like 'shrangaar rasa', 'viraha' or 'sanyog'.

Lastly, she also explained the third category of folk songs, which are closely associated with not only the rainy season but also the traditions such as that of 'jhoola', during 'Hariyaali Teej' as well as mythological tradition of 'Krishna-leela'. The participants rejoiced listening to the folk songs, sung by her, during the session, and experienced the different moods of rainy season.

During the question-answer session, further clarity was attained by the participants while listening



to her explanation to their specific queries. The session remained highly productive and enlightening as well as entertaining, revealing many aspects of music, emotion and the season. Dr. Yajurvedi explained these complex concepts by relating them to examples from everyday life, which made them very easy to understand.

**Day 3: 27 August, 2021**

**Topic: Many Histories of Khayal**

**Speaker: Prof. Partho Datta**

**Online Venue: Google Meet**

**Time: 3:30 PM onwards**

A step further in the journey of demystifying Hindustani Music as well as towards unboxing its treasurable gift to life, the third session of the course titled as '**Many Histories of Khayal**' remained dedicated to the origins and evolution of 'Khayal'. It was an enlightening session, conducted by the distinguished resource person, Dr. Partho Datta, Professor of Music Studies at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University. Professor Datta is well recognized as an acamedician, educationist and research analyst. He has contributed significantly to the area of research and knowledge in the given field.



*Event Poster; Prof. Datta delivering his lecture.*

He has DFAIT faculty research fellowship from Queen's university, School of Urban and Regional Planning, Kingston, Canada to his credit and is also a fellow to other institutes of high repute. Dr. Datta's research papers in the field of social science have been published in India and abroad. His areas of interest include music history, classical traditions in North Indian music, recorded music and archives, urban planning, architecture and design. His enthusiasm for Hindustani classical music is truly inspirational.

Prof. Datta initiated the session with an interesting discussion on how knowledge of the history of *Khayal* as one particular genre of Hindustani music is crucial to the understanding of true nature of *Khayal* tradition of singing. Additionally, it was emphasised that knowing its history also reveals the nature of transformation in the growth of *Khayal* as it has been constantly changing and has acquired many shapes and forms in its journey. It was discussed as to how, interestingly, the genre of *khayal* is quite hybrid, instead of being homogeneous, because of the imaginative inputs by musicians at different points of time. Dr. Datta discussed two sources of the history of *khayal*, in terms of oral history and textual history and to what extent these are reliable, authentic and valuable.

The lecture was divided into two sections. The first section focused on the social, musical and cultural roots of *khayal*, elaborating upon how, musically, *khayal* grew on '*Dhrupad*', the ancient form of singing, and how socially specific communities generated and sang *khayal*. It was also discussed as to how the nature of *khayal* was determined by the patronizers belonging to different social backgrounds. The second section focused on the prominent texts or works of some important scholars on the history of *khayal*. Dr. Datta beautifully explained as to how the genre of *Khayal* gradually became the dominant form of classical music. The scenario of the *Khayal*, in late nineties, was also discussed, when it came to be identified with various forms and came to be constantly involved with other genres of music. He explained further that in addition to the musical factors, some non-musical factors, too, such as recording technology, also contributed in creating musical evidences of *khayal gayaki*, as records of star singers became available. Some important markers of *khayal*, in its present form, were also elaborated upon, namely the composition, sung in bipartite, i.e., '*sthai*' and '*antara*', rapporteur of compositions, *taan*, rhythmic patterns, *gharanas* etc.

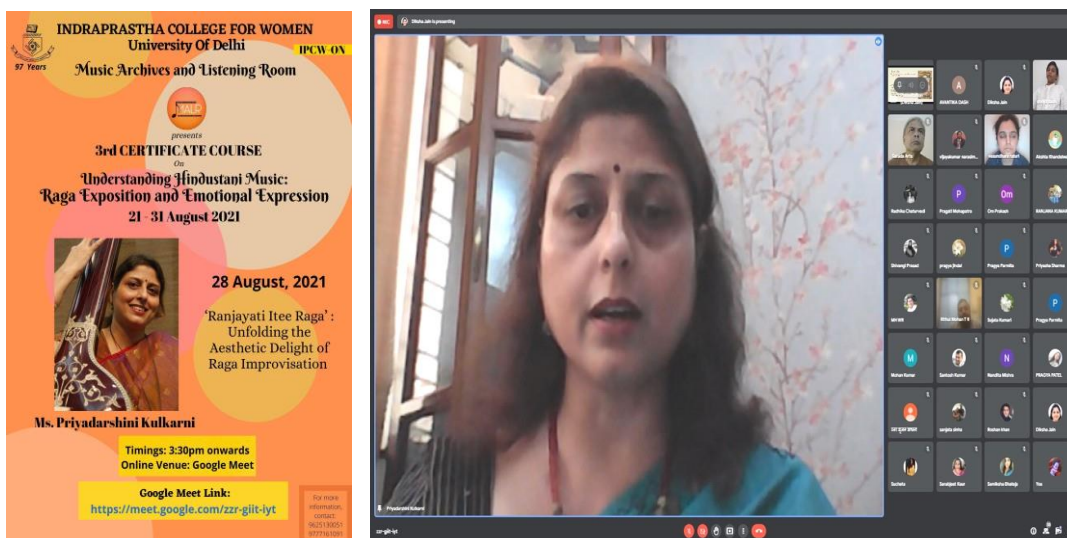
It was an enriching as well as a nostalgic session, as Dr. Datta also played from his personal collection of music, some of the extremely valuable, and rare compositions of the legendary stalwarts of *Khayal* tradition, namely, Zohrabai Agrewali, Gauharjan Abdul Karim Khan, Faiyaz Khan, Ramakrishna Vazeeb, Omkarnath Thakur, Kesarbai Kerkar, Begum Akhtar, D V Palsukar, et al, for better exposure and understanding of the concepts discussed throughout the session.

The lecture was followed by a question-answer round through which participants gained more clarity on the subject. With an encouraging and enthusiastic participation of more than thirty participants, the session concluded with the recording of their attendance and a vote of thanks.

Day 4: 28 August, 2021

**Title: Ranjayati Itee Raga: Unfolding the Aesthetic Delight of Raga Improvisation Speaker: Ms. Priyadarshini Kulkarni**

**Online Venue: Google Meet Time: 3:30 PM onwards**



*Event Poster; Ms. Kulkarni speaking during the session.*

Fourth session of the certificate course was conducted by the eminent Hindustani classical vocalist, Mrs. Priyadarshini Kulkarni. Mrs. Kulkarni is an established name as a performing artist in classical music, having numerous performances in prominent concerts in India to her credit. She has been trained in the Guru-Shishya Parampara by stalwarts of the Hindustani Classical “*Khayal*” tradition. She received an intense training for about a decade from Pandit Rajshekhar Mansur as well as formal training under Pandit Nathra, and guidance from eminent exponents like Pandit Neralkar, Pandit Rajshekhar Mansur, Pandit Madhusudan Kanetkar and Dr. Sucheta Bidkar. She is the founder of a charitable trust, New Age Foundation, which is working all over India. Ms. Kulkarni is also an All India Radio accredited artist.

The lecture demonstration by her on the topic, '**Ranjayati Itee Raga: Unfolding the Aesthetic Delight of Raga Improvisation**', acquainted the participants with the concept of *raga*, which was explained in a lucid manner with the help of a well organized power point slides, designed to address participants from disciplines other than classical music. The lecture was made further interesting and informative, as Mrs. Kulkarni, in order to explain the various aspects of the topic, recited various *ragas*, briefly, in her melodious voice.

The session provided valuable insight into how, in Hindustani Music, a *Raga* is the beautiful harmony of vocal and instrumental sounds, which express, explore and evoke a specific state of mind and makes the listener experience the various colours of life. The techniques and impact of *Raga Improvisation* was also explained.

Through an interactive session with the participations, she analysed what *raga* improvisation means. The lecture-demonstration was conducted in two parts. In the first part titled 'The *Raga* ', a brief overview of the principle of creating aesthetic through *raga* was explained.

Additionally, the various definitions of the *raga* by the ancient musicologists and other interesting facts were also analysed. In the second part titled '*Raga Vistar*', Mrs. Kulkarni elaborated upon the unfolding of *Raga* through *Khayal*, as a form. The Sanskrit phrase '*Ranjayati Itee Raga*' was explained through examples.

She also explained the concept of '*swara*' and '*varna*' as the mode of singing and their types for understanding the improvisation of *raga* by citing examples of those very notes in her melodious voice. She shed some light on the improvisation of *raga* in present times and explained the '*raga samya chakra*' (the cyclical times theory of *raga*). At the end, she described the general features of *Raga*, *Taal*, *Laya* and *Khayal*.



*Slide from Mrs.Kulkarni's presentation*

Lastly, the vote of thanks was presented, following which the session successfully came to an end. The attendance of the participants was recorded to be around 30. The session concluded with the attendees expressing their gratitude to the resource person and MALR.

**Day 5: 31 August, 2021**

**Title: Sharan Rani: Breaking the Centuries Old Glass Ceiling**

**Speaker: Mrs. Radhika Backliwal Narain**

**Online Venue: Google Meet**

**Time: 3:30 PM onwards**

The fifth and final session titled '**Sharan Rani: Breaking the Centuries Old Glass Ceiling**', based on the highly inspirational life story of the late Padma Bhushan Smt. Sharan Rani, the legendary Sarod maestro, was held on 31 August, 2021. The session was conducted by the eminent resource person, Mrs. Radhika Backliwal Narain, none other than herself the daughter of Smt. Sharan Raniji.

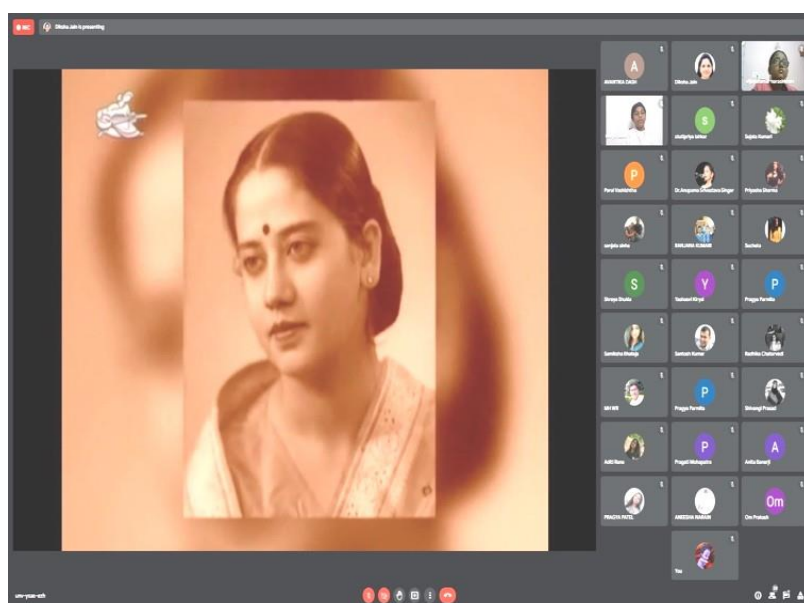
Mrs. Radhika Backliwal Narain is the Honorary Director of Sharan Rani Foundation as well as the managing Partner of Indian Arts Palace and Chairperson of YFLO (FICCI), while at the same time also serving as the vice chairperson in the governing body of Indraprastha College for Women. She is also a noted filmmaker. In 2008, she scripted, directed and produced the acclaimed documentary '*Sharan Rani: The divine sarod player*', which was premiered in the J.D. National Documentary Film Festival.

Mrs. Radhika Backliwal Narain began the session by revisiting the musical journey of the profound Indian classical instrumentalist, the sarod maestro and her mother, Mrs. Sharan Raniji, who broke the shackles of societal norms to pursue her passion for music and made her mark in the then male-dominated field of sarod players.

Sharing anecdotes from her life, Mrs. Narain narrated how Sharan Raniji's sheer hard work,



dedication, passion and love for music, sarod in particular, brought to her the highest honour in the field, and became a source of inspiration for generations to come, specially for women. Despite the obstacles that life had, in store, for her, challenging every odd that came her way, her journey of becoming 'Sarod Rani' from Sharan Rani is no less than a true inspiration. The session also included the screening of the documentary made by Mrs. Narain on the life of Smt. Sharan Rani and her journey of music since early childhood. The film portrayed her struggle to become a musician, her musical education and her achievements as well as many anecdotes as shared by both herself and the people who knew Sharan Rani, including the former Prime Minister, Shri I. K. Gujral, Pt. Ravi Shankar and other distinguished personalities. After the documentary screening, Mrs. Radhika Backliwal Narain shared many more insights and anecdotes while answering questions from an enthusiastic audience. Mrs. Radhika Backliwal Narain dedicated the session to the memory of her mother and expressed the hope to preserve the legacy of Sharan Rani ji. She shared the emotional story behind the creation of the documentary of the day dedicated to her mother, who was diagnosed with terminal cancer. Despite the challenges, the inspirational documentary was completed to make its mark in the treasure of classical music.



*Event Poster; A scene from the documentary 'Sharan Rani: The Divine Sarod Player'*

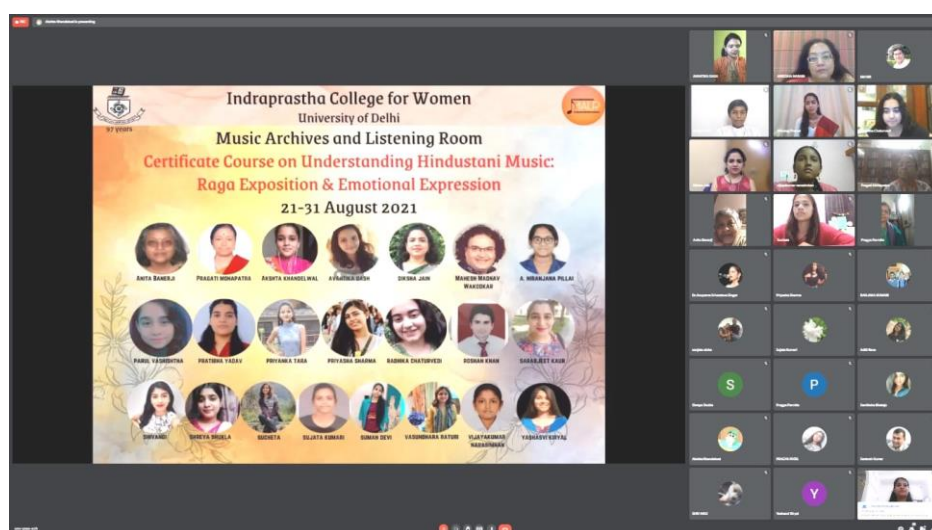
A picture collage of the participants of the five-day certificate course was presented by MALR student core committee. The session was successfully concluded with a vote of thanks by the advisors, MALR (Baithak), Dr. Pragya Parmita and Ms. Diksha Jain. Attendance of the participants was noted to be around 30. The session concluded with the attendees expressing their gratitude for the organisation of the certificate course. Participants as per the eligibility criteria, received the e-certificate on the completion of the course.



*Mrs. Backliwal speaking during the session*

## Conclusion

Each session of the certificate course remained highly enlightening and received enthusiastic response and appreciation with all the participants constantly and actively interacting within and outside the session through the course-specific group created for the purpose, specifically for updates, queries, feedback and event details.



*Picture Collage of some participants*

Each session on all the five days opened with a warm welcome address note by Ms. Avantika Dash, General Secretary, MALR, Baithak, and was concluded with a vote of thanks by Ms. Sucheta Yadav, President, MALR (Baithak). On the conclusive day of the course, vote of thanks and sincere gratitude was extended by Dr. Pragya Parmita and Ms. Diksha Jain, Advisors, MALR, (Baithak) to Prof. Babli Moitra Saraf, Principal and Chairperson, MALR, and to Dr. Pragati Mohapatra and Ms. Anita Banerji, Coordinators, MALR for their constant guidance and support throughout the course without which the course could not have

seen the light of the day. Sincere gratitude and thanks was extended towards all the distinguished resource persons for taking out time from their busy schedule and conduct highly enriching sessions. The students' body of MALR (Baithak), especially the office-bearers and the core committee members, namely, Ms. Avantika Dash, Ms. Sucheta Yadav, Ms. Pratibha Yadav, Ms. Shivangi Prasad, Ms. Akshta Khandelwal, were thanked and hugely appreciated for their efforts and inputs, at every step towards the successful organization of the event. Gratitude was expressed towards the teaching and non-teaching colleagues especially the huge support of Mr. Kandpal in facilitating the process of online registration and transfer of honorarium. The advisors also extended their thanks to Ms. Nikita for sparing her time in the processing of the certificates given to the participants. Last, but not the least, gratitude was expressed towards the members of the previous core committee for their valuable inputs towards all events, including this certificate course. The course came to its successful completion on a pleasant note from the participants expressing their pleasure on having attended the sessions and also the desire to attend such courses in future also. A group photograph was taken through screenshot and was presented to the resource persons and participants for a pleasant memory of the event.

### **Orientation 2021-22**

#### **'Baithak'**

#### **Music Archives and Listening Room**

Date: 18 January 2022

Time: 4 PM- 5 PM

Vennue: Online platform : Google Meet

Music Archives and Listening Room (*Baithak*) organized the orientation for the session 2021-22 on 18 January 2022. The orientation was held online via Google Meet where the students of the first year were introduced to *Baithak*. Forty students attended the orientation.

The Power point presentation was made by the office bearers and the core team, Baithak, which made a lucid PPT presentation in order to orient the new students towards all the aspects of Baithak ranging from its inception, composition, major activities, events, certificate courses etc.

An audio- visual clip of the present as well as previous Baithak members sharing their enriching and pleasant memories with Baithak along with the glimpse of their participation in various events was also shared during the second half of the orientation programme. This facilitated the new students' acquaintance with Baithak.

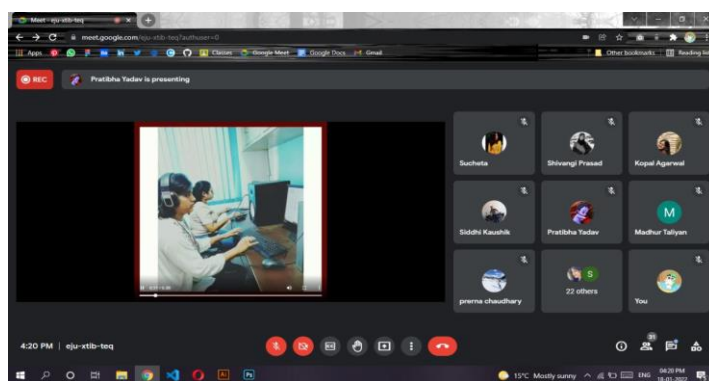
Later, the existing Baithak members and the new students also engaged in an interactive exercise whereby the queries of the new members were entertained by the office bearers as well as the faculty advisors. New students expressed their love for music and also their interest in exploring more about Hindustani Music. A surge of responses and queries was received in the chatbox.

Towards the end, a registration form (Google form) was circulated among the students enabling them to fulfil the requirement of becoming a member of the Baithak family. The opening of registration was advertised via Baithak group messages also.

In the end, the vote of thanks was given by Ms. Pratibha, the joint secretary, Baithak. She expressed gratitude to the Principal, Prof. Babli Moitra Saraf for her constant support and guidance. She also thanked the MALR Coordinators, Ms. Anita Banerji and Dr. Pragati Mohapatra and the Faculty Advisors for guiding at every step.



*Event Poster of MALR Orientation 2021-22*



*Photograph of MALR Orientation via Google Meet on 18 January 2022*

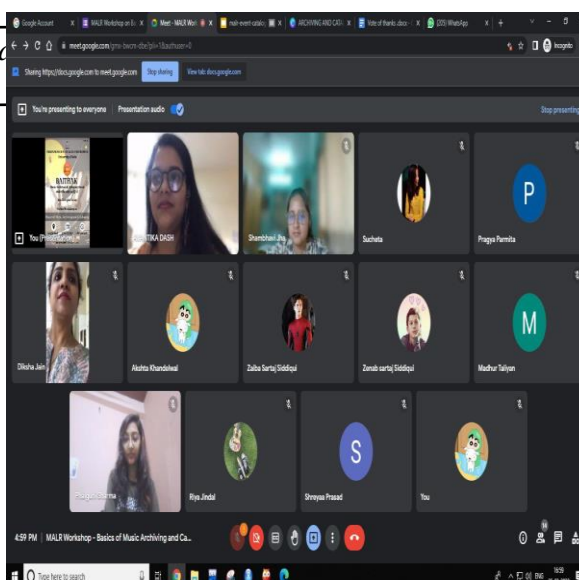
### **Workshop on Basics of Music Archiving and Cataloging**

**Date: 25 March 2022,**

**Time: 4 PM onwards,**

**Venue: Google Meet**

Archiving and cataloging rare pieces of Hindustani Classical Music is one of the prime objectives of Music Archives and Listening Room (MALR) aka Baithak. Towards this objective, 'Baithak' organised an online workshop on 'Basics of Music Archiving and Cataloging' on 25 March 2022 at 4 p.m. via Google Meet.



The event was conducted by Ms. Shambhavi Jha, an alumna of Indraprastha College for Women. Given her background in music and also the knowledge and experience in the skill of archiving and cataloguing as former President of Baithak, all the aspects of archiving and cataloguing were well

explained by her to the new members through practical demonstration on share screen mode. followed by an exercise given to the students in order to gain the practical idea of the work.

The workshop began with a discussion about the importance of archiving and cataloguing. Ms. Shambhavi apprised the audience about various music collections available in MALR such as the Najeewan Khosla Collection, Deepak Raja Collection, Samar Mavin Kurve collection, to name a few. This was followed by an elaborate explanation of the format of archiving, which included eleven distinct aspects such as *raga*, audio/visual, *gharana*, duration, composition or *bandish*, and so on. Ms. Shambhavi engaged the audience by taking up a few examples of cataloging. She also explained how to create calling names for each music file to be catalogued. This was followed by an exercise given to the students in order to gain the practical idea of the work

The participants resolved their doubts and queries during the question and answer session.

During the workshop, the need for archiving and cataloguing was elucidated to understand how it helps in preserving the rich cultural heritage of Indian classical music. The workshop ended with a vote of thanks expressing gratitude towards the honorable Principal, Prof. Babli Moitra Saraf, and the speaker of the day, Ms. Shambhavi. The MALR coordinators, Ms. Anita Banerji and Dr. Pragati Mohapatra, were also thanked for their continued support and guidance. The workshop was attended by 15 students. It is hoped that students will benefit from this workshop and will be able to carry forward the task of archiving and cataloguing successfully.

Submitted by:  
Dr. Pragya Parmita  
Ms. Diksha Jain  
(Advisors, MALR, Baithak)

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