

Students from all over the world! By S V N

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Carnatic vocalist Vidya Subramanian is a Chartered Accountant by qualification and a gold medalist (Ranked 2 at the National level) in the CA exam. She also holds an MBA from Boston College, USA. Vidya has won several prestigious grants from Arts Councils and Cultural organizations in the USA. But now, Vidya is back in India with her husband to pursue her musical interests.

Vidya has performed concerts and conducted lec-dems at many major centers in the USA. She has also started an innovative podcast series called Raaga Rasika with Devesh Satyavolu. The podcasts, downloadable from www.raagarasika.com, aim to educate listeners on Carnatic music appreciation. "Many listeners actively participate in our discussions on www.raagarasika.com" says Vidya.

"My global Carnatic music learning academy offers a detailed and customized curriculum. My students are from literally all over the world – the Americas, Asia, Europe, Australia and New Zealand. A number of advanced level students have been performing concerts, and some have also flowered into highly sought after teachers" exclaims Vidya.

Q: Do you use Skype to train students?

I teach using online teaching tools and VoIP methodology. Teachers in my team teach via the internet. I also have pre-recorded lessons for students who would like to learn offline at their own pace. We are able to offer the flexibility of giving students the option to learn from home at a pace and time that works best for them.

Q: How did you get started?

"I casually started teaching a few students about 7 years ago. I soon realized that there was tremendous demand for skilled online teachers. My MBA certainly came in handy. I felt it was not sufficient to merely download Skype and sing in front of a computer. Online teaching is a completely different ball game from a face-to-face class. Many highly skilled musicians lacked the know-how when it came to successfully transitioning to the online environment. My work has focused on developing methods that will help the online student learn in an easy-to-follow, non-intimidating way! Understanding student goals and training teachers to adapt to the online mode have been a crucial part of my endeavor."

Q: How big is your teacher team now?

"My team presently consists of twenty teachers. I interact with them online and organize training modules. I look for enthusiastic and motivated teachers. Over 200 students are currently enrolled with us. Some students exhibit tremendous potential to be top notch performers. Others approach us with the goal of developing into good rasikas. Teaching students who lack prior exposure to Carnatic music can be quite challenging. But I find that students with keen interest and a will to put in effort learn really well in the online environment. It is very heartening to note that the numbers keep increasing each year!"