



Transcending styles Vidya has a team of 40 teachers taking classes online • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

like a subject, one that can be taught to anyone," she says.

Also a Chartered Accountant, it was Vidya's stint in the US for nearly a decade that started it all. "People would call me, asking if I can take classes on the phone or on Skype," she remembers. She realised that there was great potential to this model, not just abroad, but in India as well. "The Internet is a great enabler."

Vidya feels that while we are "good at encouraging prodigies," we do not look at the others as kindly. "All of these students might not become great performers, but they will become good *rasikas*," she feels. "We see so many empty halls during concerts, waiting to be filled with such *rasikas*."

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Music beyond boundaries

Chennai-based Carnatic vocalist Vidya Subramanian has been named for the 2018 Kalaimamani Award

•• AKILA KANNADASAN

For over 13 years, Vidya Subramanian has been taking Carnatic music to various places across the world, through her computer at home. Vidya, who takes music and instrumental classes online, has been named for the 2018 Kalaimamani Award announced last week by the State Government. The award is in recognition of Vidya's contribution to the arts.

Vidya calls her work a "socio-commercial venture". She has a team of over 40 teachers taking Carnatic, light classical vocal, flute, veena, violin, mridangam and even Bharatanatyam classes online to over 750 students of various nationalities across the globe. "I work with musicians who are

not very famous despite being very talented," she says. By involving them in online teaching, she not only provides them a means of making a "good living", but also an opportunity to share their knowledge with those interested.

The trick is to make them adapt to the online format, which is the first thing Vidya does. The advantages of taking music classes online, according to Vidya, is that students who cannot travel due to constraints such as living in a big city, disability, or age, can get a shot at learning music. "We teach children with special needs, the differently-abled, and senior citizens," explains Vidya. "We have students aged five to 80 years." She adds that for a person aged, say over 60, learning on-

line will be more comfortable than sitting in a physical classroom along with much younger students.

"Also, they can fix classes according to their convenience; they can choose to attend classes even at 6 am or when they come back home from work," explains Vidya.

Her team customises lessons according to the student's capacity. "There is no level one, level two and so on," she says. "We move in the pace the student is comfortable with." If he/she takes longer to get something right, so be it. "We treat Carnatic music

