Music beyond boundaries

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

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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 “sock-commercial venture.” She has a team of over 40 teachers taking Carnatic, light classical vocal, flute, veena, violin, mrdangam 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 online 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...