



**MAESTROS' MEET...** Pt. Shivkumar Sharma (right) addresses the gathering at a meet organised by the All India Musicians' Group (AIMG) at the NCPA to address challenges facing Indian classical music, on Friday. Also seen in the picture (from left) are: Ustad Zakir Hussain, Sudha Raghunathan and NCPA chairman Khushroo N. Suntook.

— AZAD SHRIVASTAV



# — music —

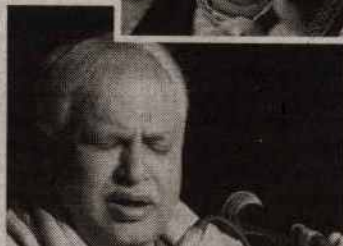
## CLASSICALLY SPEAKING

● "We are not here to make classical music compete with pop, or any other form of music for that matter. Even within classical, there are so many different types, like Hindustani, Carnatic, *ghazals*, *qawwalis*, *thumri* etc. that do not compete with each other. So why should we try and prove that we're 'better' than anyone else?"  
— Pt. Shivkumar Sharma

● Zakir Hussain and Sudha Raghunathan in conversation:  
**SR:** I think the iPod has encouraged people with diverse musical tastes to listen to everything that they like, including classical music, on the go.  
**ZH:** Do you have an iPod?  
**SR:** I have two!

● "Prasar Bharti has increased its funding for classical music initiatives to Rs 60 crore, up from Rs 40 crore. We have also spoken to an FM channel, which I can't name, that is considering the idea of starting a channel dedicated solely to classical music."

We've also spoken about tax benefits to corporates that support classical music."  
— Zakir Hussain



(From top) Pt. Shivkumar Sharma; "Mandolin" Srinivas; Ravikiran Chitravina; Pt. Arvind Parikh; Pt. Ajoy Chakraborty; Sudha Raghunathan; Pt. Sajan Mishra

## 'ENTERTAINMENT FOR THE SOUL'

AGE CORRESPONDENT

That's how renowned Carnatic vocalist Sudha Raghunathan describes Indian classical music. It's also the reason, she says, its appeal is timeless. But she and other Hindustani and Carnatic exponents are indeed concerned that a generation of Indians is failing to carry its legacy forward.

Speaking at a meeting of the All India Musicians Group (AIMG) and the National Centre for Performing Arts (NCPA) in Mumbai, santoor maestro Pt. Shivkumar Sharma said solemnly, "We

are here to create awareness and put pressure as catalysts for bringing about a change in the perception of Indian classical music." The arguments he put forward are simple — if interest in Indian classical music is waning, concrete measures need to be taken to spark it. Without getting into the debate about its relevance to young music enthusiasts, Pt. Sharma said greater funds from the government, better sponsorship from corporate houses and more media coverage must be the three key drivers.

Each member of the panel — also including Ustad Zakir Hussain, Carnatic composer Ravikiran Chitravina, mandolin maestro U. Srinivas, Hindustani vocalist Pt. Ajoy Chakraborty, khyal singer Pt. Sajan Mishra and sitar master Pt. Arvind Parikh — put forward individual ideas.

But tellingly, the one point

The leading lights of Indian classical music say much needs to be done in order to save it from cultural oblivion

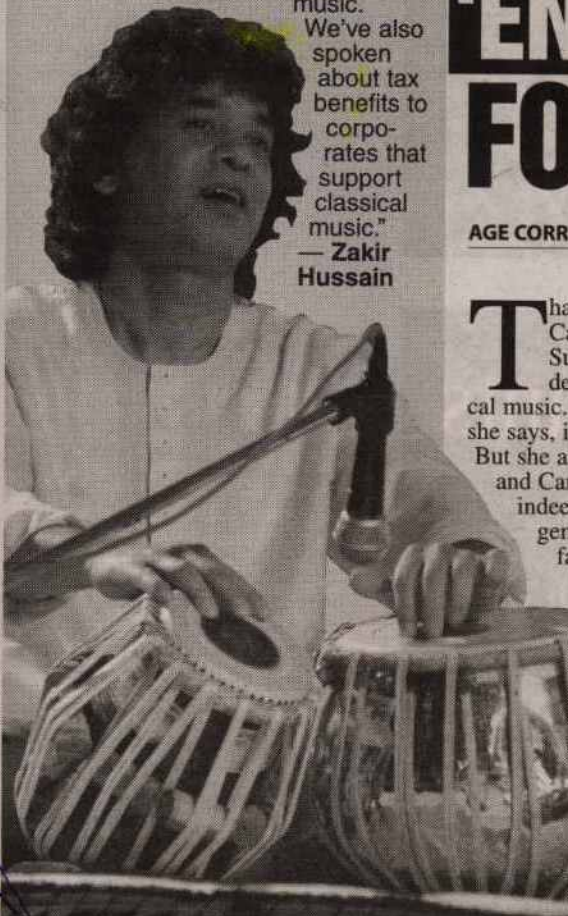
they all reiterated was the need for solidarity "in times like these".

Hussain is adamant that financial backing lies at the root of the problem Indian classical music is faced with today. He mentioned some of the proposals put forward not just by this committee, but by many classical musicians at a micro level across the country. These include creating platforms for young artistes, providing medical and life insurance for existing artistes, and introducing classical music in primary schools to increase awareness.

Some future plans likely to get the go ahead are increased airtime devoted to classical music on Doordarshan, All India Radio and Prasar Bharti.

Among the many suggestions is that classical music needs to be made more relevant to changing tastes. But with regards to change, how much is too much? The role of fusion has been much debated, especially with regards to the question of whether it's aiding or hampering the appreciation of classical music among youth. Pt. Shivkumar Sharma said it was a positive trend, and that fusion has always existed in some form. He also categorically stated that there is no point in Indian classical music trying to compete with any other genre.

Perhaps most pertinently, these leading lights all agree that the best India's classical community can do, is help itself. As Pt. Chakraborty said, "All music needs to change and evolve in order to survive. But it must also retain its intrinsic essence."







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**DIFFERENT MELODIES:** Under the aegis of the All India Musicians' Group (AIMG) some of the biggest musicians of both Hindustani and Carnatic music came together at an event organised at NCPA recently.

# The raag and the iPod

## HT Correspondents

■ vidya.belachander@hindustantimes.com

**MUMBAI:** Indian classical music is not dormant and it's certainly not dead. But it needs more support from the government, the corporate world and the media.

This was the dominant message at a conference convened jointly by the All India Music Group – a collective of prominent Hindustani and Carnatic musicians – and the NCPA on Friday.

The speakers at the Jamshed Bhabha Theatre included eminent Hindustani and Carnatic musicians such as Ustad Zakir Hussain, Pandit Shivkumar Sharma, vocalist Sudha

Raghunathan, mandolin maestro U. Shrinivas and chitravina specialist, Ravikiran.

The NCPA also presented the musicians of the group with honorary life memberships.

The need to create more awareness about classical music featured prominently on the musicians' agenda.

"Indian classical music is part of our tradition and creating awareness about it is our responsibility," said 71-year-old santoor maestro, Pandit Shivkumar Sharma. While stressing the media's role in achieving this, he rued the fact that culture has become synonymous with Page 3. "Culture is being replaced by parties," he said.

Ustad Zakir Hussain added that media houses should broadcast traditional arts more frequently.

The group, a collective of classical musicians formed in 2007, also plans to petition the government to introduce classical music in the primary school curriculum. "Indian classical

## MUSICAL TRIBUTE

■ A musical tribute to Ustad Ali Akbar Khan will be held at Shanmukhananda auditorium, King's Circle, from 7.30 pm to 11 pm on Saturday.

music should be a compulsory subject in schools for at least three to four years," said Sharma. "The music children learn at that impressionable age will stay with them for life."

The group hopes to work with corporate houses to promote upcoming musicians and provide medical aid and life insurance to needy artists.

Can classical music keep in step with the iPod generation? Surprisingly, the speakers said that the digital format has only expanded the vistas of classical music. "When I sing a new raag, I download renditions of it by gurus and listen on my iPod," said Sudha Raghunathan. "The iPod is a great gift for lovers of classical music."

**Indian classical music should be a compulsory subject in schools for at least three to four years**

PANDIT SHIVKUMAR SHARMA



■ (From left) Poet Ashok Vajpayi Tabla maestro Zakir Hussain, Carnatic vocalist Sudha Raghunathan, NCPA chairman KN Suntook, Pt Shivkumar Sharma and chitraveena player Ravi Kiran at the NCPA on Friday.

HEMANT PADALKAR / HT PHOTO



# ‘शास्त्रीय संगीताला आर्थिक पाठबळ आवश्यक’

एनसीपीए आणि एआयएमजीच्या चर्चासत्रात एकमुखी सूर



मुंबई, दि. १० (प्रतिनिधी) - शालेय स्तरावरील विद्यार्थ्यांना भारतीय शास्त्रीय संगीताचे शिक्षण देत संगीत क्षेत्राला सक्रिय प्रोत्साहनाची गरज असून, त्यासाठी अर्थ मंत्रालय आणि सांस्कृतिक विभागाकडून पाठबळ मिळणे गरजेचे असल्याचा एकमुखी सूर हिंदुस्थानी आणि कर्नाटक शास्त्रीय संगीतातील कलाकारांच्या चर्चासत्रात उमटला.

नॅशनल सेंटर फॉर द परफॉर्मिंग आर्ट्स आणि ऑल इंडिया म्युझिशियन्स ग्रुपच्या वतीने नरिंमन पॉइंट येथील एनसीपीएमध्ये ‘भारतीय संगीतापुढील आव्हाने’ या विषयावरील संयुक्त चर्चासत्र आयोजित करण्यात आले होते. यावेळी भारतीय संगीत क्षेत्रातील अजय चक्रवर्ती, साजन मिश्रा, अरविंद पारिख, शिवकुमार शर्मा, यू श्रीनिवास, अशोक वाजपेयी आदी (पान २...)

## ‘शास्त्रीय संगीताला आर्थिक पाठबळ आवश्यक’

उपस्थित होते. यावेळी एनसीपीएने सर्व एआयएमजी सदस्य आणि आश्रयदात्यांना भारतीय संगीताचा वारसा अबाधितपणे जपून ठेवल्याबद्दल मानद आजीवन सदस्यत्व बहाल केले.

यावेळी एनसीपीएचे अध्यक्ष के.एन. संतुक् म्हणाले की, भारतीय संगीत क्षेत्रातील आयकॉन एनसीपीए कुटुंबाचा एकात्मिक भाग बनून आज येथे उपस्थित आहेत. याचा आम्हाला अभिमान वाटतो. गुणवान भारतीय संगीतकरांना एक व्यासपीठ मिळवून देण्याच्या आमच्या उद्दिष्टाला या सहकार्यामुळे मदत होईल आणि विस्तृत स्वरूपात चळवळीला पाठबळ देणे शक्य होईल.

या चर्चासत्रात सहभागी झालेल्या सर्वच कलाकारांनी शालेय स्तरावर विद्यार्थ्यांना संगीताचे शिक्षण देत भारतीय शास्त्रीय संगीत क्षेत्राला सक्रिय प्रोत्साहन देण्याची गरज असून, अर्थ मंत्रालय आणि सांस्कृतिक विभागाकडून पाठबळ मिळणे गरजेचे असल्याच्या मुद्द्यावर भर दिला.

एआयएमजीचे निमंत्रक अरविंद पारिख म्हणाले की, ऑल इंडिया म्युझिक ग्रुप ही भारतीय संगीत क्षेत्रातील प्रातिनिधिक संस्था असून, यामध्ये शास्त्रीय व कर्नाटक संगीत या दोन्ही ख्यातनाम कलाकारांचा समावेश आहे. भारतीय शास्त्रीय संगीत ज्या दिशेने जात आहे त्यात थोडे बदल करणे, सर्व संबंधितांना संवादामध्ये सहभागी करून घेणे आणि संगीत अस्सल व कलातीत ध्येयावर खरे उतरेल हे पाहणे एआयएमजीचे उद्दिष्ट आहे.

# शाळेतच घडावेत कानसेन!

» म. टा. प्रतिनिधी

'अभिजात शास्त्रीय संगीत क्लिष्ट आहे, ते सर्वसामान्यांना समजू शकत नाही असं बोललं जातं, प्रत्यक्षात ते आत्म्याचं संगीत आहे. संगीत हे केवळ ऐकण्याची गोष्ट नसून ती एक अनुभूती आहे, एक आनंद आहे जो अनुभवायचा असतो'... सुप्रसिद्ध संतूरवादक पं. शिवकुमार शर्मा एकेक मुद्दा स्पष्ट करत होते. निमित्त होते, शास्त्रीय संगीतापुढील मुख्य आव्हानांवरील चर्चेचे! केवळ गायक-वादक घडवून चालणार नाहीत तर, चांगले कानसेनही घडायला हवेत म्हणूनच संगीत हा विषय शाळांमध्ये हवाच, अशी अपेक्षा चर्चेत व्यक्त झाली.

राष्ट्रीय संगीत नाट्य केंद्र (एनसीपीए) आणि ऑल इंडिया म्युझिशियन गुप (एआयएमजी) या दोन संस्था भारतीय संगीताच्या प्रसार-प्रचार-संवर्धन आणि प्रोत्साहनासाठी एकत्र आल्या आहेत. शुक्रवारी 'एनसीपीए'तील चर्चेत अशोक वाजपेयी, झाकीर हुसैन, सुधा रघुनाथन, पं. शिवकुमार शर्मा, चित्रवीणा रवीकिरण, पं. अरविंद पारीख, साजन मिश्रा, पं. अजोय चक्रवर्ती असे दिग्गज सहभागी झाले होते.

विषय अनिवार्य द्यावा



राजेश जाधव

शास्त्रीय संगीतातील  
दिग्गजांना अपेक्षा

लहान वयात संगीताचे संस्कार झाले तर, ते पुढे आयुष्यभर टिकतात म्हणूनच किमान चार इयत्ता संगीत विषय अनिवार्य असावा असा प्रस्ताव या दोन्ही संस्था एकत्रितपणे सरकारपुढे मांडणार असल्याचे सूतोवाच करण्यात आले.

चोवीस तास गरळ ओकणाऱ्या टीव्ही वाहिन्या शास्त्रीय संगीतासाठी चोवीस मिनिटेही देत नाहीत, अशी खंत पं. शिवकुमार शर्मा यांनी व्यक्त केली. शास्त्रीय संगीताचा योग्य तो प्रसार करणे ही आम्हा कलाकारांची जबाबदारी असून त्याचसाठी आम्ही एकत्र आल्याचे पं. झाकीर हुसैन यांनी सांगितले. सरकारशी काही तात्त्विक मुद्द्यांवर चर्चा करणे, ज्येष्ठ कलाकारांसाठी अर्थसहाय्य योजना, नवोदित कलाकारांसाठी व्यासपीठ या मुद्द्यांवरही चर्चा झाली.



# Getting lyrical about classical

Namita Devidayal

Why is it that Indian classical music gets less than 24 minutes on 24-hour television? Why is it so difficult to find patronage for concerts? Where can talented young musicians find jobs? What is the government doing to support one of the richest traditions India has to offer—which is large ignored here, but lapped up by the West?

These are some of the questions that were raised at a very special meeting of senior classical musicians from both the north-Indian and Carnatic traditions at the National Centre for the Performing Arts on Friday evening. Shivkumar Sharma, Zakir Hussain, Hariprasad Chaurasia, Chitravina Ravikiran, Sudha Raghunathan and Arvind Parikh were among the musicians present, while cultural bureaucrat Ashok Vajpayi attended as one of the observers. These stalwarts are all part of the All India Musicians' Group (AIMG)



Prashant Nakhe

formed two years ago to counter the dwindling interest in Indian classical music in the country.

Khushroo Suntook, chairman of the NCPA, spoke movingly of the "challenges of convincing the government, large corporations and educational institutions of the importance of preserving this rich heritage and not relegating it to be of less priority than the human and infrastructural problems that face our country". He point-

ed out that other countries with great historical and cultural traditions have first ensured that the local population itself is educated and encouraged to understand and inculcate great pride and pleasure in their heritage. Thereafter they can even exploit the tourist business potential. He cited the examples of the Singapore, Italy, and Austria, which hosts the Salzburg Festival and has turned high culture into an enormous tourism business.

Austria, which hosts the Salzburg Festival, has turned high culture into an enormous tourism business. Indian classical music can be similarly cherished and promoted

« **PLAY IT AGAIN:** Veteran members of the All India Musicians' Group met at the NCPA on Friday and made a passionate plea for the preservation of India's rich musical traditions

Shivkumar Sharma summed up the crux of the problem: "Traditional art forms need to be funded because they are not commercially viable," he said. He suggested Indian classical music be made compulsory for a few years in school. Not only are the effects of music on the mind enormously calming and therapeutic, but this would also be a way of employing many more musicians, he said.

When they are not strum-

ming or singing, members of the AIMG have taken time out to lobby for greater coverage of classical music on All India Radio and Doordarshan, more funding from the government, greater media coverage, special medical insurance schemes for needy musicians and tax breaks for corporates who sponsor classical arts programmes. Responding to a question that the Indian classical arts only cater to an elite audience, Zakir Hussain said that even cricket was considered elitist at one time. "But now every one enjoys it and watches it."

The AIMG was founded by Arvind Parikh who wears two hats—that of sitar player and businessman. Bringing together all the important players was an idea that helped his transportation business, so why not the Indian classical music world, was his view. The core group was formed with Shivkumar Sharma, Jasraj, Zakir Hussain and Parikh. Since its first meeting in January 2007, the AIMG has met twice a year in four metro cities.