

# More than an instrument: A musician's God friday

Amjad Ali Raged At Losing His Sarod; Ravikiran muses on Chitravina's role

Chitravina Ravikiran

Nearly all those in my near orbit have come to — willingly or otherwise — accept that the most endearing reality of my life is music and the most precious personal equation I share is with my instrument, the chitravina. From my earliest days, I have been fascinated by its tremendous tone, challenged by its demands and awed by the scope it offers to produce “microtonal shadings reminiscent of the human voice” as a very astute critic observed once in *The New York Times*.

Any artist of worth takes exceptional care of his or her instrument. A few develop deep emotional bonds with it, which manifests itself in various dimensions. Coming from a family where our chosen instrument is venerated like God, I had from my childhood found it fascinating to observe or learn about the special equations iconic artists had with their instruments.

My father and guru Chitravina Narasimhan (who travelled with me everywhere till I was 18) would offer to sleep on the floor of the train so the chitravina could get a berth, which I could of course never let happen in 99 out of 100 cases. These days, on the rare occasions that I take the train, I squeeze myself alongside my instrument in the same AC berth, more to its discomfort.

Pandit Ravi Shankar was a model in instrument care — it was not beyond him to book an extra first class airline ticket for his sitar. If this was not possible, he would have an instrument maker-repairer tour with him even internationally for months. Great mridangists like Palghat Mani Iyer and Pazhani Subramaniam Pillai used to host mridangam makers in their house for weeks on

## WORTHY OF WORSHIP

Most musicians form deep bonds with their instruments and take exceptional care of them

### Close to human voice

► The chitravina is a 20 or 21-string fretless instrument

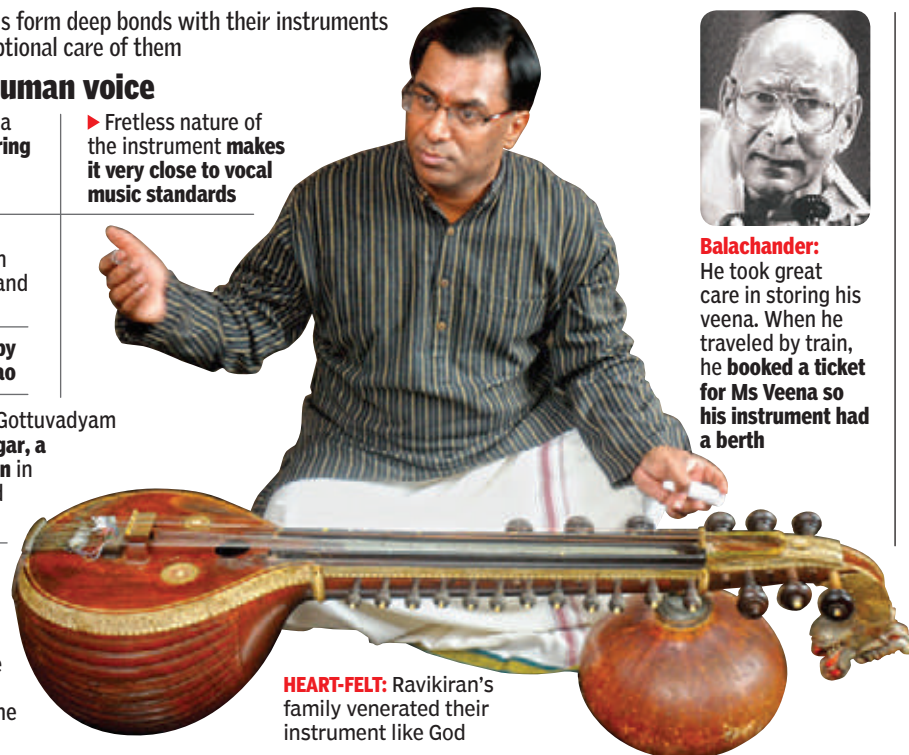
► Known as gottuvadyam in the late 1800s and early 1900s

► Popularized by Sakha Rama Rao

► Taken up by Gottuvadyam Narayana Iyengar, a palace musician in Travancore and Mysore

► His progeny Chitravina Narasimhan and Chitravina N Ravikiran are well known exponents of the instrument

► Fretless nature of the instrument makes it very close to vocal music standards



HEART-FELT: Ravikiran's family venerated their instrument like God

occasions to set their instruments.

Legendary vocalist-composer Harikeshanallur Muttiah Bhagavathar had twin-tanpuras in his house (named Rama & Lakshmana) that would be so well tuned that one would resonate if the other was strummed.

There are counter inspirations too. A well-known artist had carelessly kept a veena out in the car while taking a lunch break in the US en-route to a concert, only to come back and discover that all the frets were in disarray as the holding wax had melted away.

There have been artists who have earned a reputation of having mastered an instrument. I have always been hesitant to use or even think this term, as I have seen instances

of some artists taking it very literally and ending up treating the instrument like an employee. There is a very fine line between a feeling of control one may have at certain points of life versus a complacency of self-presumed mastery.

My grandfather Gottuvadyam Narayana Iyengar, revered by all for his sublime

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brilliance, used to lament often that he had not even mastered the seven basic notes. He was also very possessive of his instrument, not even letting his own children near it. He would carry it himself for miles for concerts in small (though culturally rich) villages, if no transport was available. I never got to see my grandfather but my father instilled in me the only ritual I have followed from age two, till date — prostrating before the instrument at least twice first thing every morning.

This extreme reverence may not be displayed obviously by artists handling smaller instruments like the violin or flute — especially the latter that can be carried in the pockets of musicians.

But I have seen that many

## Sacred care & concern



**Balachander:** He took great care in storing his veena. When he traveled by train, he booked a ticket for Ms Veena so his instrument had a berth



**Palghat Mani Iyer:** Would host mridangam makers for weeks at his house so they could set the instrument



**Pt Ravi Shankar:** Booked first class airline tickets for his sitar so it could travel in comfort

who play these instruments are quite attached to their instruments. They apply sandalwood paste or vermilion on them.

Despite the heavy emotional investment and all possible professional care, instruments are prone to setbacks, especially travel-related. Though these would occur in only one of say 200 trips, I used to get extremely upset with airlines for their lackadaisical approach to handling sensitive instruments (despite fragile stickers pasted on every possible side of the case). I can therefore understand and sympathize with Amjad Ali Khan who tweeted his anger after an airline lost his sarod.

(Email us your feedback to southpole.toi@timesgroup.com)

## ‘SC ruling must lead to a Muslim personal law code’

Bader Sayeed

The Supreme Court has once again come as a saviour to give a voice to the Muslim woman of our country. Though it has no objection to the continuance of shariat courts, the Supreme Court has ruled that their decisions will have no legal force. The Supreme Court has not touched upon Muslim personal law. But the court has ruled that fatwas that are often issued by shariat courts are not decrees and cannot be enforced. The court has also said that the fatwas are not sanctioned in our constitutional scheme.

Muslim women including in Tamil Nadu have been hit hard by the conservative, inhuman, cruel fatwas that are given on every aspect of their lives and that restrict their freedom and liberties. The Supreme Court has held that a fatwa has no legal validity.

However the jamaaths and the khazis who derive their power from ill-defined sources continue to precipitate a situation where economically marginalised Muslim women are pressured into following their diktats. The women don't realize that the jamaaths and khazis are not the final court of appeal. Instead these fatwas are used by the khazis and the jamaaths to increment their hold on Muslim civil society without legal sanction.

I must state here that the jamaaths are elected bodies under the supervision of the state Wakf boards and exert a significant influence on Muslim civil society. This is a situation which needs correction. The jamaaths take their toll on the individual insisting that their decision be obeyed and if this does not happen they hold the threat of excommunication and social boycott which is patently inhuman.

Excommunication and social boycott has the effect of denying freedom of speech and movements, access to livelihood, freedom to bury their dead in the local graveyards and preventing those that have been excommunicated



## Little clarity

► For family and religious matters, Muslims follow two primary sources — Quran and Sunnath (teachings of the prophet)

► Islamic sharia is the compilation of rules based on these two sources. It also includes decisions of jurists and analogous deductions

► Muslim personal law in India is a British legacy

► There is considerable difference in the interpretation of these rules

► Barring two piecemeal attempts, Muslim personal law has not been codified comprehensively unlike Hindu personal law

from participating in matrimonial functions of the family. Yet, despite court judgments that such social estrangement is not valid and against constitutional rights they continue to be practised.

In Islam the “khazi” is considered as the keeper of the faith and the law since most khazis are highly educated and are scholars of Muslim law. This can hardly be held true in our country though there are exceptions.

The khazis can conduct and register a marriage. But they are not legally authorised to finalise a divorce or perform judicial functions. Yet the reality is that the khazis validate and issue fatwas regarding divorces with total impunity towards the rights of Muslim women. But the final decree of divorce should carry the judicial stamp which will decide over all other allied issues that arise

out of a divorce.

The function of arbitration carried out by the sharia courts has not been inhibited by the Supreme Court. But the court makes it very clear that what emanates from the shariat courts has no legal binding. Yet due to patriarchal attitudes, societal pressures and lack of access to civil courts Muslim women are caught in the web of the khazis, jamaaths and the shariat courts to seek redress which they never achieve.

This judgement should precipitate rapid codification of Muslim personal law, which is the need of the hour. We owe it to our Muslim sisters that this happens. Silence on this subject will be catastrophic for Muslim society.

(The author is a former MLA, practising advocate at Madras high court and former chairperson of Wakf Board)

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Enabling and Piling Works (Bidding Document No.: ASI/A538-000-CE-TN-7201/1001)	From 14 Jul, 2014 to 05 Aug, 2014	22 Jul, 2014 BPCL, Kochi Refinery 11AM	Up to 1200 Hrs. (IST) on 05 Aug, 2014

The complete Bidding Document with contact details & detailed IFB along with Qualification Criteria can be viewed/downloaded from EIL website: <http://tenders.eil.co.in> or BPCL's website: [www.bharatpetroleum.in](http://www.bharatpetroleum.in) and on Central Public Procurement Portal (CPPP) website: <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>.

All amendments, time extension, clarifications, etc. will be uploaded in the websites only and will not be published in newspapers. Bidders should regularly visit the EIL & CPPP websites to keep themselves updated. CA/2014-201555 A.G.M. (C&P)

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The detailed Tender along with Bid evaluation criteria can be viewed on e-tender website of GAIL (<http://tender.gail.co.in>). Details of Bid Document are also available on GAIL Tender Site (<http://www.gailtenders.in>) and (<http://eprocure.gov.in>).

For any queries, bidders may contact Chief Manager / Sr. Manager (C&P), GAIL (India) Ltd., Sector-6, Vidyachar Nagar, Jaipur - 302 023 (Rajasthan), Phone: 0141-5141023, 2230545, 2230347/617/698 Extn. 1380/1381, e-mail: [rc02722@gail.co.in](mailto:rc02722@gail.co.in); [rmehrotra@gail.co.in](mailto:rmehrotra@gail.co.in)

Bidder who wishes to participate in the pre-bid meeting as scheduled above, shall have to deposit the requisite tender fee of ₹ 1,500/- before pre-bid meeting failing which they shall not be allowed in the pre-bid meeting. Corporate Identification No.: L40200DL1984G0101976

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Invitation for Bids (IFB) International Competitive Bidding (ICB)

1. For World Bank Funding (S. No. 1):- This invitation for bids follows the general procurement notice for Tuberulosis Care programme (TB-II) that appeared in United Nations Development Business (UNDB) Website on 22 December 2013. Government of India has received a Credit under retroactive financing (Project No: P148604) from the International Development Association (IDA) towards the cost of Revised National Tuberculosis Control Project (TB-II) and it is intended that part of the proceeds of this credit will be applied to eligible payments under this project for supply of Anti TB drugs. Bidding procedures as specified in the World Bank's Guidelines: Procurement of Goods, Works and Non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants to Bank Borrowers (January 2011).

2. For Domestic Funding (S.No.2):- Ministry of Health & Family Welfare Government of India intends to utilize part of its Domestic Budget for eligible payments under RNTCP for supply of Anti TB drugs. Bidding procedure as per the requirements under GFR 2005 of Ministry of Finance, GOI, as applicable.

3. RITES Ltd. (A Govt. of India Enterprise), acting as procurement agent on behalf of Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the Procurement of items mentioned in Table below for the quantities as per Schedule of Requirement to the consignees located at various locations in India.

S. No	IFB No.	Description	Date & Time of Pre bid Conference	Last Date & Time of Receipt of Bids	Date & Time of Opening of Bids
1	RITES/MSMEPW/RNTCP/01/2014/WB (World Bank Funding)	Supply of First Line Anti TB Drugs PC-1, 2, 4, 13, 14 & 16	23.07.2014 (14:00 Hrs)	22.08.2014 (14:00 Hrs)	02.09.2014 (14:15 Hrs)
2	RITES/MSMEPW/RNTCP/01/2014/IDOM (Domestic Funding)	Supply of First Line Anti TB Drugs PC-2 & 13	23.07.2014 (14:00 Hrs)	22.08.2014 (14:00 Hrs)	02.09.2014 (15:15 Hrs)

4. Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the respective funding guidelines. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from RITES Ltd. and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below from 10:00 to 16:00 hrs (IST) on all working days.

6. A complete set of bidding documents in English may be purchased from 14.07.2014 to 01.09.2014 by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Rs. 5000 or US \$ 110. The method of payment will be by Demand Draft/Pay Order in favour of RITES Ltd., Payable at Gurgaon, India. The document will be sent by courier on payment of an extra amount of Rs. 900 for domestic bidder and US \$ 20 for overseas bidder if requested by mail. Bidders can also download the bid document, without any fee from websites [www.rites.com](http://www.rites.com) or [www.eprocure.gov.in](http://www.eprocure.gov.in). The bidders who have downloaded the bid documents, shall be solely responsible for checking these websites for any addendum/amendment issued subsequently to the bid document and take into consideration the same while preparing and submitting the bids.

7. Bidders are expected to study the bid documents in detail, especially with respect to Pre-bid conference, bid security, bid opening.

**Group General Manager/MSM, RITES LTD.**

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