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(Article) Apprenticeship Program Master Artist: Chitravina N. Ravikran

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For Chitravina N. Ravikiran (Born 1967), music is not just a vocation; it is intrinsically tied to his family history. Ravikiran's father was a master musician himself, and in his son recognized remarkable musical gifts. As a two year old, he shocked the Indian music community by identifying and rendering 325 *ragas* (melodic scales) and 175 *talas* (rhythmic cycles). He was so young at the time that they would coax out his answers by offering him cookies. This sensational event made Ravikiran into an instant musical phenomenon, a success he would build upon in his early childhood.

Under the continued mentorship of his father, Ravikiran developed an interest and expertise in Carnatic (<http://www.carnaticindia.com/>) vocal music, a form of South Indian classical music characterized by a focus on singing and composition. He made his debut performance at the age of five, displaying a rare mastery that wowed music aficionados and fans alike. Within the context of Carnatic music, Ravikiran then branched out into other areas of music: namely, as a virtuoso instrumentalist, composer, and educator. It is in this third role as educator that Ravikiran comes to the Texas Folklife Apprenticeship program.

Ravikiran is mentoring Seetha Chandrashekhar (<http://texasfolklife.org/article/carnatic-music-apprenticeship>) in three different areas of the Carnatic vocal tradition. The first, *Javalis*, are fast paced rhythmic pieces with romantic lyrical themes. The second area of training is *Padams*, which are slow paced pieces that require extreme control in slow tempos as well as excellent breath control. Finally, Ravikiran and Chandrashekhar are studying *Raga Alapana*, melodic improvisation within Indian ragas or modes. Ravikiran's unique pedagogy, which he refers to as "flipped classroom model," ensures that students inherit Carnatic music and traditions in an undiluted form. After the apprenticeship is complete, Chandrashekhar will give a final performance on Friday August 15, 2014 (<http://texasfolklife.org/event/apprenticeship-program-carnatic-music-vocal-concert-on-padams-and-javalis-by-seetha-0>), displaying the techniques she has learned from Ravikiran.

Ravikiran's unusual combination of teaching acumen and virtuosic skill is a testament to his commitment to his heritage. He has been instrumental in bringing Carnatic music to the United States and, more specifically, Texas, the state he now calls home. We are thrilled to participate in this apprenticeship with him and cannot wait to see the results.

Related web links: Chitravina N. Ravikiran Website (<http://www.ravikiranmusic.com/>) NPR Story about Ravikiran (<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4665064>)


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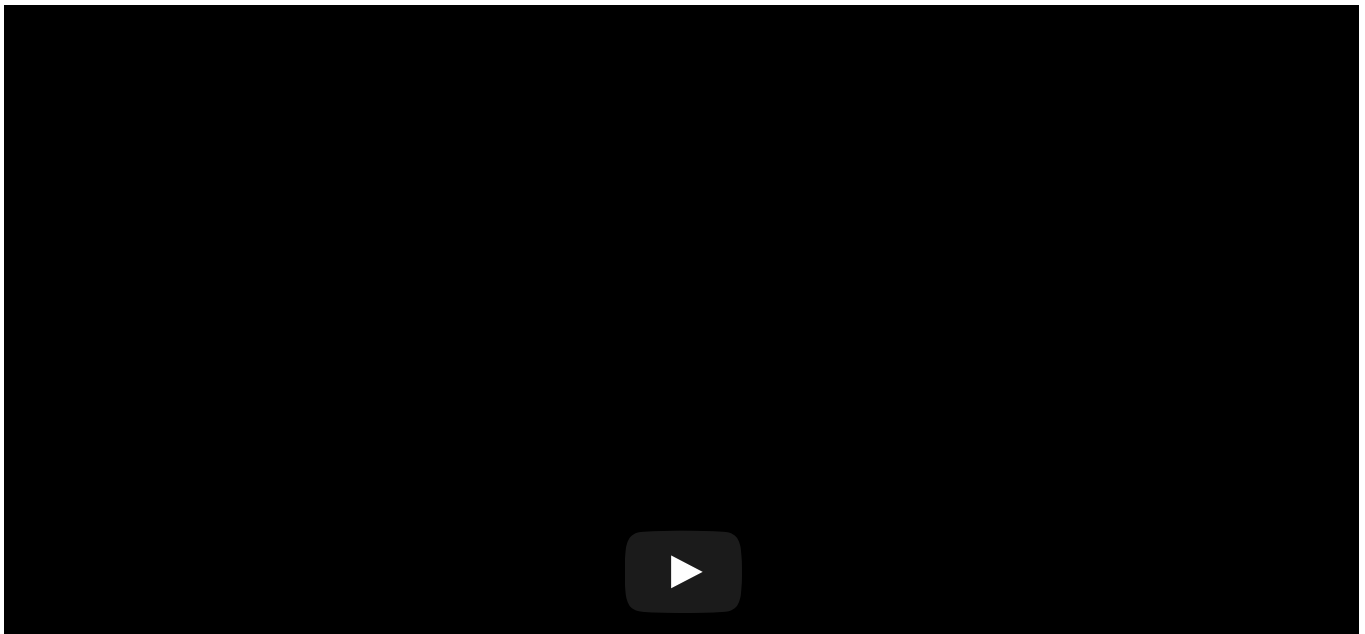


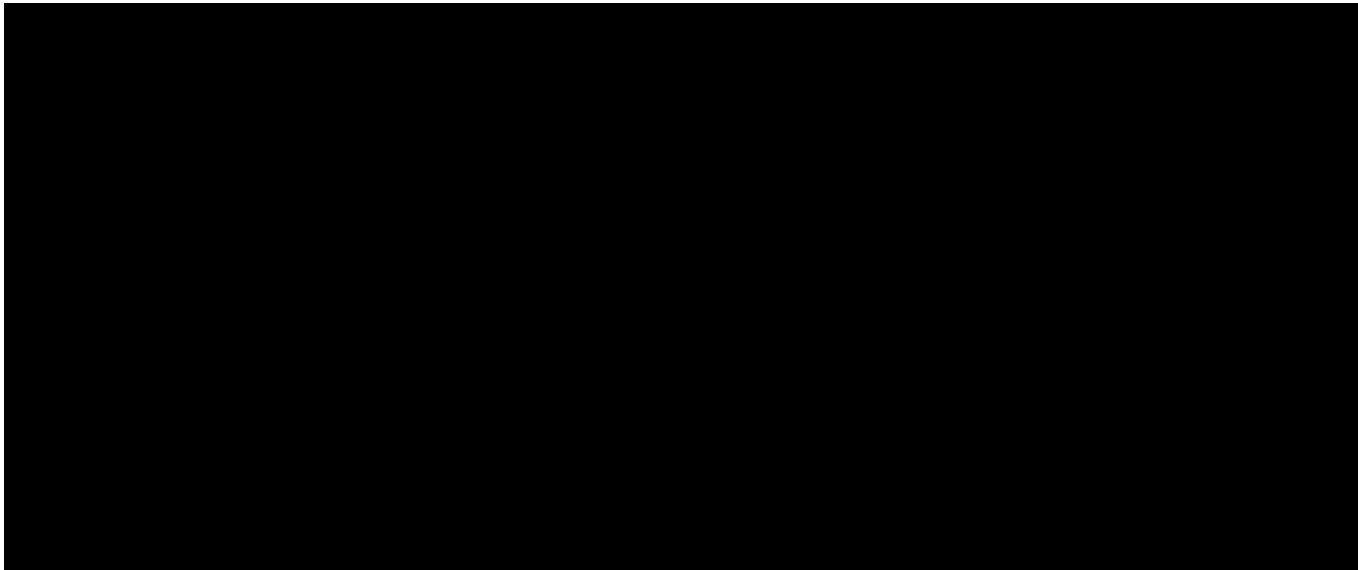
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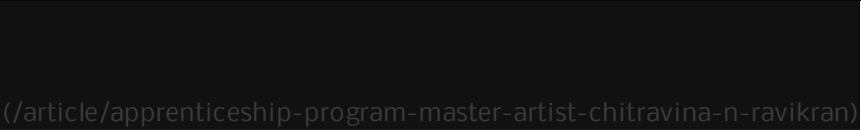


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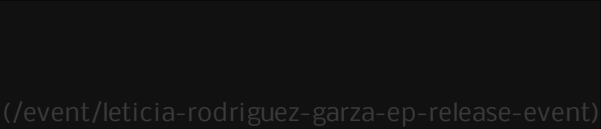
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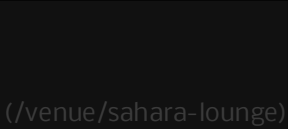
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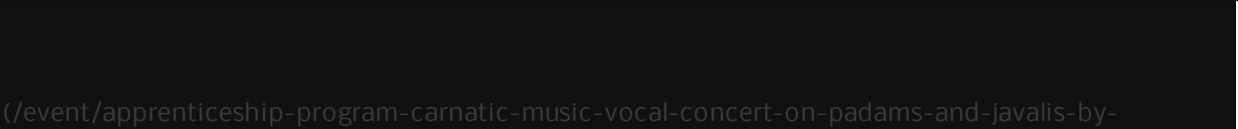
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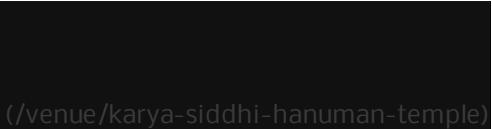
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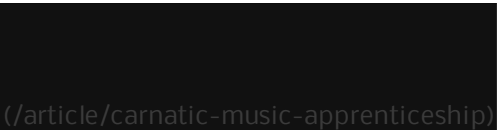
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