



## Classical flow

*Bharatanatyam exponent and musicologist Vidya Bhavani Suresh's book FAQs on Carnatic Music addresses questions on the traditional art form*

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**By Express News Service**

KOCHI: When Bharatanatyam exponent and musicologist Vidya Bhavani Suresh was hardly seven years old, she started accompanying her mother to Bharatanatyam recitals and Carnatic concerts. “One stark difference, besides the type of art form that took the centrestage, was how before every Bharatanatyam performance, the name of the song, composer’s name, talam and ragam is usually announced, making the viewer aware of its nuances, unlike a kutcheri, where artists perform one song after the other without providing a vista for the viewer about the technicalities of the performance. This, in many ways, took the art form (Carnatic music) away from a larger population,” says the author.

It was out of this need to bridge the gap between the audience and the performance that the author began presenting talks and writing books on the multi-layered approaches to art and culture, especially Carnatic music, and emphasising the need for sensible announcing. “The idea was to make it more understandable, edible and accessible for all. I wanted to create a new generation of informed viewers,” she details.

In her ongoing attempt to achieve this Himalayan task, Vidya recently launched her latest offering – FAQs on Carnatic Music, a handbook addressing several basic yet much-needed questions on the traditional art form. The 170-odd page book, part of Skanda Publication’s Demystifying Fine Arts series, hopes to further the process of making the Carnatic music circuit more open and welcoming.

Through the book, Vidya addresses the layers that encompass concerts, compositions and the process of creating music. “The most memorable part of putting this book together was my collaboration with my 18-year-old daughter Harshitha Suresh. Apart from the 25 questions that the book answers, the book features ‘Harshi’s Carnatic Nook’, a set of four essays on specific aspects of the art form. When this idea to weave in Harshitha’s insights popped up, I was quite excited as a mother. However, after reading the essays, I was impressed as a teacher. The perspectives were refreshing and it enabled me to look at Carnatic music from a different perspective,” she details.

“If we get rid of this communication gap between the viewer and the performer, the halls will draw more people. more,” she shares. The book is priced at 999 and is available at [www.skanda.com](http://www.skanda.com)