



**DAY'S DIARY**

**Phonograph patent**

It was on this day back in 1878 that Thomas Alva Edison was granted the patent for the phonograph aka gramophone

**THEN CAME A THIRD**

The phonograph was developed as a result of Edison's experiments with two other successful inventions of his time — the telegraph and the telephone



**NO COMPETITOR**

There has been mention of only one other invention in history that resembled the phonograph — an unnamed one by French scientist Charles Cross in 1877, which remained a theory with no working model



**HIS BABY**

Edison loved the phonograph so much that he called it his 'baby'. He improved it over and over for the next fifty years, adding modifications and new features

Our columnist claps for Jo's slap in 'Naachiyaar'

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## The ragas you didn't know about

Vidya Bhavani Suresh's book is about the not-so-popular ragas in Carnatic music

• **Thushara Ann Mathew**

She can sing her *ragams* in the right *shruti* and match her movements to the right *thalam*. A Bharatanatyam exponent, musicologist, researcher, orator and an author, Vidya Bhavani Suresh is truly a master of all her trades. "If I had to define myself, I would like to call myself as a person who is trying to take art and culture to the general reader," she says.

Raised by a mother who was passionate about dance, Vidya says that she was forced to go for dance classes, although she preferred music. "It was never as smooth a journey as dance," says the mother of three, who is all set to publish her latest book *50 Rare Ragas of Carnatic Music*. "Sometimes I feel I am living my mother's dream — she wanted me to become a dancer. I did go for music classes also but only for a short period. Nevertheless, how many classes can a child attend at the same time?"

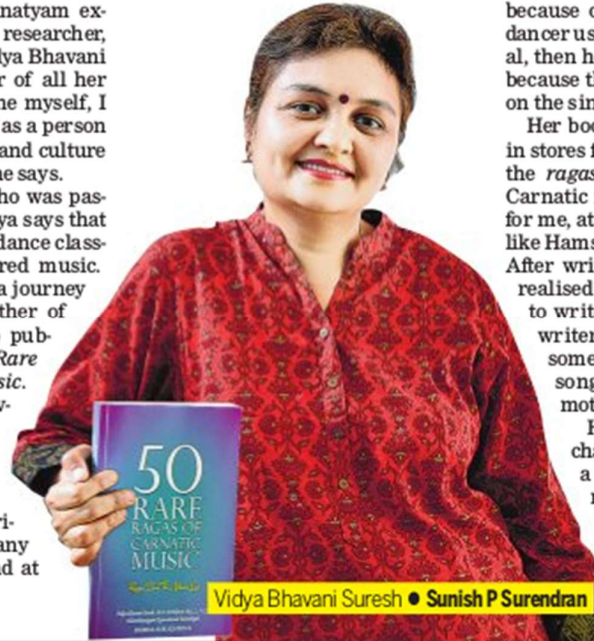
Vidya did her *arangetram* when she was 16, and has since performed actively on several stages. Like most dancers who study the nuances of music, Vidya too agrees that it is

a good idea, but asserts that after a point, music becomes a very demanding discipline in its own right. "Some songs sound so melodious on stage. For example, songs with *ragas* like Rudrapriya is a tongue twister because of its difficult lyrics. If a dancer uses such a song to do a recital, then he/she is making a mistake because the audience will be fixated on the singer only," she explains.

Her book, which will be available in stores from this week, talks about the *ragas* that are not popular in Carnatic music. "It was challenging for me, at first, to write about *ragas* like Hamsadeepakam, Alankari, etc. After writing the first two pieces, I realised that there wasn't much to write about and suffered from writer's block. There were also some *ragas* that had only one song for reference," avers the mother of three.

However, she overcame this challenge when she attached a personal memory or experience with each raga and began relating to them.

"It is the most 'un-text-book-ish book' I have written," she smiles.



Vidya Bhavani Suresh • Sunish P Surendran