

From The Editor's Desk

A Small But Significant Change

From its founding, *Sruti* has been known, in words of our own choice, as INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC AND DANCE MAGAZINE.

Beginning with this issue, we would like it to be known only as INDIAN MUSIC AND DANCE MAGAZINE.

What's the difference?

Simply, the qualifying adjective 'classical' has been dropped from the sub-title of the magazine.

One reason for this is that, although we initially opted to use the word 'classical', both in the title and in the text, because it is in vogue, we have never been quite comfortable with it. What is "classical"? What is "classicism"? Such questions have eluded precise answers.

Another reason is our view, which has gained strength over time, that the so-called classical arts will likely wither if their links with the folk, devotional and popular varieties are ignored.

Yet we decided to drop the word 'classical' from the sub-

title— and to eschew its use in text in future as far as possible— only when we came across the views of scholar Ashok D. Ranade (of the National Centre for Performing Arts, Bombay) on the subject of the classification of music. He has identified five broad categories of music: Primitive; Folk; Devotional; Art; and Popular. He has, at the same time, emphasised that this classification is not watertight and that the different categories overlap each other to varying degrees.

The classification is based more on the intent of the performer and the context of the performance than on the contents of the performance. Thus, to quote a terse summary given by Ranade: "In the field of primitive music, the performer is engaged in playing a role; the folk musician entertains or participates in a collective duty-filled task; the performer in the area of popular music caters to the mass need; the art musician seeks to establish himself as an artist according to his own understanding of aesthetic norms or criteria." The

intent of *bhakti* or devotional music may be said to be to assist, the common people especially, in honouring, adoring or worshipping the Divine; in present times, it is described as a musical response to an essentially religio-cultural situation.

We find the classification useful— and applicable to dance as well. By dropping the word 'classical' from our vocabulary, we wish to signify our preference for the word *Art*.

At the same time, by *not* using the word *Art* in the sub-title of the magazine, we wish to emphasize our view that we should not view art music and dance in isolation from the other categories.

We will be carrying articles on the rationale and other aspects of this classification in future issues of *Sruti*.

Meanwhile, we would like to inform our readers that, while *Sruti* will continue to focus on art music and dance, it will also give space to music and dance of the folk and devotional types and respect the distinct purposes and identities of these types

as far as possible. Occasionally at least, we expect to carry articles on primitive and popular (e.g., cinema) music.

We may add in this context that a reader suggested some time ago that it would be appropriate to replace the word 'magazine' in the sub-title of *Sruti* with 'journal'. He argued that this was warranted because *Sruti* carries research-based features and learned articles. We take the suggestion as a compliment; yet we prefer to be called a magazine. The relevant dictionary meaning of the word 'journal' is : "any periodical or magazine, as one published for a learned society or profession." *Sruti* is primarily intended for lay enthusiasts of music and dance. While we are proud that scholars and professionals value and welcome what we offer, we do not wish to imply, even indirectly, that *Sruti* is intended only for them. In fact, we hope we can help to bridge the gap between lay and learned persons.

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