

All are invited to a seminar on

The banis of dhrupad as musico-aesthetic experience

Pandit Falguni Mitra and Sumitra Ranganathan

Date & time: **3 pm - 4:20 pm, October 3, 2016**

Venue: Conference Room, Girish Gaitonde building,
Dept. of Elect. Engg., IIT Bombay

Abstract

This two-part seminar presents contemporary research on dhrupad, the oldest genre of north Indian classical music performance. Drawing on the performance practice and repertoire of one of India's most historic dhrupad traditions, the Bettiah gharana, we present an in-depth analysis of the dhrupad banis, an esoteric aesthetic concept ill understood even amongst musical experts and connoisseurs.

In his lec-dem, Pandit Falguni Mitra presents a performance-based analysis of the banis. We will briefly review contemporary understandings of the concept of dhrupad bani before focusing on traditions associated with the erstwhile Princely court of Bettiah. Drawing on his extensive repertoire and performance knowledge of the banis, Pandit Mitra will communicate the principal features of each of the four banis through demonstration and analysis, to clearly delineate their distinctions as well as overlapping characteristics.

In the second part of the seminar, Sumitra Ranganathan presents a conceptual analysis of the banis using approaches from music cognition and the anthropology of the senses. Identifying the different types of schemata that encode formal knowledge of bani and demonstrating how such schemata function in sensing and interpreting the potentialities of musical structure, she shows that banis are large-scale interactive effects that function as "fuzzy" categories with overlapping characteristics. She will demonstrate how musicians internalize this complex categorical knowledge through musical, metaphoric, and sensory means. She concludes by asking how conceptual analysis may be complemented by more empirically driven methods such as visualization, signal processing and waveform analysis, to enable deeper understanding of an endangered form of aesthetic knowledge.

About the speakers

An outstanding exponent of Hindustani classical music, Sangeet Ratna Falguni Mitra specializes in alap, dhrupad and dhamar. Trained by father Sangeetacharya Shibkumar Mitra, disciple of Pandit Bholanath Pathak of the Bettiah tradition and Ustad Nasiruddin Khan of the Dagar tradition, Falguni Mitra's music is distinguished by profound raga development, expert layakari and exquisite compositions, representing all four banis of dhrupad. A veteran performer in India and abroad, and a top-grade artiste of AIR and Doordarshan, Pandit Mitra's lecture demonstrations and scholarly articles reflect his deep erudition. Until recently a Guru with ITC Sangeet Research Academy, Kolkata, Falguni Mitra serves on expert panels for national bodies and universities.

Sumitra Ranganathan received her PhD in music from University of California, Berkeley in 2015. Advised by Professor Bonnie Wade, her dissertation investigates the complex genealogy of categorical knowledge and musical judgment in dhrupad, a genre of North Indian classical music. A Howard Mayer Brown Fellow of the American Musicological Society and a Fulbright Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad fellow, Sumitra has learnt Dhrupad from Pandit Falguni Mitra since 1989, and learnt Dhrupad compositions from Pandit Indra Kishore Mishra in the course of her research. She also holds Masters of Science degrees in both physics and information science, and transitioned to the Humanities from a career as an e-commerce specialist in International Trade and Logistics.