



NATS India Chapter presents
Strength in Diversity: Singing for All
14th and 15th October 2023 | 18:00 - 21:00 IST
via Zoom link in your email

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

14th OCTOBER 2023		
Time	Item	Name, Affiliation, Title and Abstract
18:00 IST	Welcome	Sandra Oberoi , <i>NATS India President, Harmony-The Music School</i>
18:05 IST	Keynote	Dr. Diana Allan , <i>National President of NATS, Missouri South State University</i>
18:30 to 19:40 IST	Roundtable I	<p>Alisha Mathew Thayil, <i>Independent research, voice teacher</i></p> <p>Singing as a therapy for neurological conditions</p> <p>More than a leisure activity, singing touches not only the listener's heart but also radiates positivity in oneself with the release of endorphin hormones, relieves stress by decreasing levels of cortisol, boosts the immune system with an increase in 'immunoglobulin A' antibodies, increases lung capacity, and enhances well-being with the release of oxytocin (Stanborough, 2020). Interestingly, singing has also shown improved speaking ability in people with neurological conditions such as autism, Parkinson's disease, aphasia, and stuttering (Stanborough, 2020). The speech and oral impairments in them lead to breathy phonation, hoarseness, decreased loudness, imprecise articulation, and lowered prosody (Di Benedetto et al., 2009, p. 13). However, it has been noticed that patients with neurological conditions seem to respond more while singing. The fact that speaking and singing share behavioural traits and that both directly activate the muscles involved in breathing, phonation, articulation, and resonance is thought to be the cause of this (Wan, Rüber, Hohmann, & Schlaug, 2010, p. 1 & 2). Additionally, musical sounds generally help to activate auditory, cognitive, and motor activities across cortical and subcortical brain regions and can aid in the treatment of neurological diseases like stroke and Alzheimer's disease (Sarkamo, 2018, p. 414). Di Benedetto's research indicates that choral singing with piano accompaniment improves auditory rhythmic stimulation and encourages social inclusion. For instance, after 13 singing sessions, Parkinson's disease patients displayed improvements in vowel phonation and reading (Wan, Rüber, Hohmann, & Schlaug, 2010, p. 4). The aim of this research is to delve deeper into the evidence of the therapeutic effects of singing on neurological conditions and study the current strategies and significant projects that are running to rehabilitate the same.</p>



<p>Roundtable II</p>	<p>Annaika Marie Fernandes, <i>Student, Harmony-The Music School, India</i> The effect of singing on social flow and emotional regulation In our world of diverse cultures and identities, music- especially vocal music- has been a constant and major influencer in shaping our identities and social values. The purpose of this study is to explore why music is able to have such a decisive impact regardless of differences across cultures. Guiding questions focused on the biological, sociocultural and psychological connection between singing and emotions, self-identity and relationships. This included qualitative research using secondary data including psychological research justifying these claims and findings from neuroimaging technology. Analysis revealed emerging similar effects across studies including: stress and anxiety management, and increases in social flow with vocal music. The above helped craft an interview for Kevin Wilson, founder of TALA Music India, which is a programme with a large reach to Indian students across backgrounds. This will help further inform this exploratory study with primary data. These critical aspects of music are often overlooked within academic coursework. With future focused research showcasing scientific relationships between music and human development, there is scope to integrate music into academic studies, especially in the STEM world.</p>
<p>Roundtable III</p>	<p>Tanisha Herbert, <i>Voice teacher, Viovoi Music Academy, India</i> Singing as a tool to enhance overall physical and mental well-being This paper aims to outline the physiological benefits from the singing activity as seen in the respiratory, cardiac, neurological, endocrine, and immune systems and a broad overview of the psychological benefits on the well-being of the human body. This literature review is meant for anyone looking to substantiate the phrase, 'Singing is good for you' with credible findings from published research. Findings presented are through a qualitative study of data collected from secondary sources such as research journals, internationally published Phd thesis papers, website scholarly articles and offline publications. The limitations of the scope of this paper are as follows: 1) The specificity of the singing activity required to be the determining factor is a challenge as a lot more studies are found to be done on music in general and its effects on well-being. 2) Most studies published are found to be conducted on small scale with a limited population, undefined demographic and skewed male-female ratios with a no age bracket specifications. 3) Extrapolating theories regarding psychological well-being to apply it to all singers across multiple races and cultures in may not be fully reliable. The data in this paper attempts to show biological intersystem coordination improving due to singing, hopefully creating more interest in using singing as an easily accessible tool with an emphasis of including singing in music education for children to keep mentally and physically fit.</p>



	Roundtable IV	<p>Jewel Lasrado, <i>Student, Harmony-The Music School, India</i> Exploring the therapeutic potential of group singing for adolescents: A review of mood regulation and mental well-being</p> <p>Singing is not as commonly used in therapy or medication-based treatments. This literature review aims to explore the implications of group singing in fostering mental health and well-being in adolescents by examining the use of group singing as an agent of musical recovery in adolescents. One experiment was administered to 8 adolescents, all active music makers and listeners from whom data were collected using a questionnaire to assess the musical situation, the affective experience or pleasure, and their reflections on the experience was with results indicating that music could be used as a tool for mood regulation. The participants had a main goal i.e. mood control, pleasure, which paved the way for regulatory strategies like entertainment, solace, etc., in order to satisfy it, further influenced by external factors. When they performed musical activities like singing, performing etc., they were able to satisfy these urges and experience a regulated mood state. This indicates that singing can be an effective tool for adolescents to regulate their mental health needs. This however doesn't specify the role of group singing. The second experiment compared the effects of group singing and group listening among children and adolescents with mental disorders. Data were collected through an observational pilot study of two groups. It was found that the participants of the group singing intervention had a significant decrease in cortisol levels as compared to the group listening intervention. In conclusion, group singing has a positive impact on the mental well-being and mood regulation of adolescents and must to be explored more in the scientific and therapeutic field.</p>
19:40 IST to 19:50 IST - Break + Networking		
19:50 IST	Individual presentation	<p>Rivka Ramji, <i>Student, Harmony-The Music School, India</i> The importance and impact of music on the wellness of athletes</p> <p>This presentation examines how important singing and music is to an athlete, how it impacts an athlete and how an athlete's functions can entirely depend on music. The impact that music usually has on a person ranges from comfort, increasing excitement levels, creating harmony, and reducing the feeling of tiredness. Music is sometimes likened to drug use, as it essentially improves or enhances an athlete's performance. The article may be aimed at individual athletes, sporting teams and sporting associations. This presentation is based on secondary research collection from numerous articles that address health management and music in athletes and highlights the benefits of music and the basic mechanisms of music's impact on sportspeople, to determine the effect of arousing music on anaerobic performance and the emotional and motivational uses of music. Culture research implication rely on minimal research exploring practical approaches to maximising the benefits of using music in sports.</p> <p>An expected outcome from my research is a better understanding of exactly why music may affect an athlete's focus, motivation and emotional state; to see if the warm-up of an athlete has an effect on the aerobic system of the body and finally, to understand music as a pre-event activation for an athlete.</p>



20:12 IST	Lecture presentation	<p>Dr Uma Kumar, Jain University, Dept of Performing Arts, India Impact of music on individual and health management</p> <p>In the scientific world as well as in the spiritual world Music has always been considered a tool to maintain the mental health of an individual. It improves mood, lessens the agony and anxiety and it's a medium to ventilate the emotional expressions of human mind. The saying goes "A healthy mind in a healthy body". This shows the aim of being bodily healthy is to finally become healthy in mind. According to the WHO standards, mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. In every esteemed universities across the world, researchers have delved deeply into this aspect of music and concluded the benefits of listening to music. The puzzle here lies in how much of these sounds of music have benefitted the performer ? Do the artists truly reap the merits of performing and listening to their own music ? In the current case study, titled "Impact of Music on individual and Health management" a two dimensional view of how music impacts both the listener and most importantly the performer is contemplated on. Though, some of the views may be debatable, yet, the present article, attempts to give a self introspective view of how a performer perceives the art and its rendering and in turn how a listener receives it. In the entire process, what are the experiences and its impact on the individuals both as performers and listeners is the proposition of this case study.</p>
20:40	Workshop-lecture presentation	<p>Sandra Oberoi, NATS India Chapter President; Founder, Harmony-The Music school Vocal cross-training: Unlocking the full potential of a singer</p> <p>This practical session unpacks the concept of vocal cross training (VCT), while exploring a dynamic approach to vocal development that goes beyond traditional singing exercises. It aims to empower singers and voice teachers to unlock their full potential, ensuring they are well-prepared to excel in diverse musical genres and settings. Key elements will be discussed offering a greater understanding of VCT which includes, and is not limited to, breath control exercises, pitch accuracy training, vocal range expansion, resonance and placement drills, ear training exercises. This can broaden a singer's skill set, helping them develop greater vocal flexibility, strength, and adaptability. Benefits of vocal cross training will be discussed to understand how it leads to improved vocal control, expanded vocal range, enhanced resonance and tone quality, and increased breath support and stamina. VCT also minimizes the risk of vocal strain and injury, fosters confidence and stage presence, and equips singers with tools to thrive in their performing careers.</p>



15th October 2023

Time	Item	Name, Affiliation, Title and Abstract
18:00 IST	Welcome	Sandra Oberoi , <i>NATS India President; Founder, Harmony-The Music School</i>
18:05 IST	Keynote	Dr. Sarah Holman , <i>NATS International Region Governor, Professor of Voice, Wheaton College Conservatory</i>
18:30 IST	Individual presentation	Emily DenBleyker , <i>Graduate Student, Voice Study Centre, UK</i> Lessons from group singing research: a three-pronged approach for creating a supportive learning environment for adult beginning singers in the private voice studio Adult beginning singers (ABS) are a subset of amateur singers becoming increasingly common in the private voice studio: adult students with a lifetime love of singing but little to no formal training or experience. ABS often have no desire to perform publicly (aside from the occasional karaoke night or family sing-along), but still want to feel confident in their voice and not feel embarrassed when a musical occasion does arise. There is very little in the literature about ABS in the private studio, and the research that does exist is outdated, limited to choosing appropriate repertoire, or only discusses technical issues; none discuss how to create a supportive learning environment for the ABS. The literature that does relate comes mainly from group singing research. This paper examines this group singing research and reframes their findings in a new light, proposing a three-pronged approach for creating a supportive learning environment for ABS in the private studio: promoting self-efficacy and agency, focusing on participation instead of presentation, and balancing risk and safety. With this approach, teachers are empowered to better meet the needs of singers of all levels and create a learning environment that is welcoming to all students.



18:55 IST

Individual
Paper

Samyukta Ranganathan, *Graduate Student, Voice Study Centre, University of Wales Trinity St David and Independent voice teacher, NATS India Chapter Treasurer*

Empowering voices: Integrating science, tradition and pedagogy into an Indian Classical Music toolkit

The research project represents the culmination of extensive research efforts to address critical aspects of Indian Classical Music (ICM). This comprehensive investigation delves into the realms of ICM vocal range, acoustics, agility, and the dynamics of compassion within the student-teacher relationship, all of which have traditionally received limited scholarly attention. The need for more research in these critical areas prompted questions regarding the pertinence of voice-related research for ICM practitioners. Accordingly, a toolkit comprising four modules of specialised exercises was created using the Design-Based Research (DBR) methodology. DBR allowed collaborative testing with stakeholders who would influence or be impacted by this toolkit to assess its effectiveness and adaptability within typical ICM classrooms. Furthermore, by incorporating the Indigenous Research Paradigm, the project aimed to respect and elevate the indigenous knowledge inherent in ICM, enhancing the toolkit's relevance to the community. The toolkit was tested with Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs), students, and teachers from the community using semi-structured interviews, lessons, questionnaires and observations. Participants acknowledged the toolkit's benefits, particularly its technical elements such as acoustics and motor-learning components like biofeedback, which proved instrumental in skill development. Additionally, participants underscored the significance of prioritising student well-being through improved student-teacher relationships, thereby enhancing classroom integration and the overall learning experience. However, several challenges were identified during the evaluation. Firstly, the specialised knowledge base of ICM practitioners posed a hindrance to customising the toolkit—a critical aspect of its application—without ongoing professional development. Secondly, the lineage-based system's emphasis on stylistic preservation led to differing views on the toolkit's stylistic authenticity, creating hurdles in achieving full community assimilation. Lastly, the toolkit's compassion-based module faced complexities in implementation, as it seemingly ran counter to the traditional obedience-authority dynamic inherent in the oral tradition. In conclusion, this pilot DBR project highlights the toolkit's potential benefits and offers valuable insights into avenues for future research. These pathways aim to enhance the toolkit's assimilation and applicability within the cultural fabric of Indian Classical Music.



19:18 IST

Individual
presentation

Ashwati Parameshwar, *Voice Teacher, The British School, New Delhi, India*

Effects of choral singing on students at TBS

Adolescents in the 12-15 age group demonstrate documented issues including poor posture, self-consciousness, and low confidence to perform. Few singers in this group at The British School (TBS) had received vocal training, leading to tense jaws, squeezed throats, shouted attempts at belting above A4-Bb4, poor pitch control, and minimal understanding of the vocal instrument. My lesson plans for the rudiments of singing in class groups of 20-25 included lessons in posture, breathing, and making eye contact with the audience. I started the Middle Years and Senior Choirs at TBS in the fall of 2022. Previously, the school had small choirs put together expressly for specific events, but no structured program. Apart from the documented benefits of choral singing, it was also the most efficient way to impart vocal training across age groups. Choral singing allowed students to use vocal techniques that they automatically link to 'classical' or 'operatic' singing, a style considered axiomatically unpleasant to the ear. We also have a large number of students whose first language is Korean, a mother tongue with several neutral shaped vowels. This heavily influences the mouth shape of their vowels in English and leads to difficulty in blending pitches on many long vowels. During choir students practiced breathing into an expanded ribcage; tongue flexibility exercises; yawning; speech and placement in the upper register; vowel shapes etc. After a year of choral singing, students demonstrated improved breath control, confidence in accessing their head voice, and some smoother transitions when their voices start to break. Parents also reported higher levels of engagement in other musical activities such as learning an instrument, or wanting to form small ensembles with their peers. In 2022, the Middle Years choir took the ABRSM Initial Grade Choral Examination and achieved an A grade. This year's challenge is to go for the Intermediate Choral Examination, while the Senior Choir attempt the Advanced Level.



19:35 IST

Individual
Presentation

Anupa Paul, NATS India Chapter Secretary, Voice and Performance Coach

Helping adolescent singers with Music Performance Anxiety in the teaching studio

Singing teachers are usually the first point of contact where the singer prefers to seek help for their MPA rather than looking up a therapist for this purpose (Lamont, 2017). This presents singing teachers with the necessity to be aware of the latest research on MPA and evidence-based strategies which can be used in the teaching studio in tandem with singing lessons. MPA has been seen to be widespread among adult as well as child and adolescent singers (Patston and Osborne, 2015). Studies have shown that MPA usually has its origins in childhood and adolescence (Kenny, 2011). Due to the rapid development of the brain, adolescence appears to be an opportune time to instill healthy behaviors in singing students as they are more likely to remember these coping strategies due to the release of dopamine (Gebhardt, 2016). In this context, one of the strategies gaining popularity in the coaching settings is the Acceptance and Commitment Coaching (ACC) framework, a newer third wave intervention derived from Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) (Juncos and de Paiva e Pona, 2018; Hill and Oliver, 2019). Experiential avoidance or the individual's attempts and efforts to avoid, suppress or alter negatively-perceived body sensations, thoughts, worries and memories is considered to be at the core of all anxiety disorders (Eifert and Forsyth, 2005). ACC principles aim to allow the individual to overcome rigid and inflexible patterns of experiential avoidance and encourage them to become more psychologically flexible (Juncos et al, 2017; Shaw et al, 2020) It has also been suggested that optimal functioning of a singer cannot be attained solely by the absence of MPA but by the two-pronged approach of encouraging flow states while reducing MPA at the same time (Cohen and Bodner, 2019). Using ACC, the adolescent's engagement and meaning in singing while focusing on their strengths and values serves not only to increase their satisfaction and well-being but also improve their chances of experiencing flow states, which further serves to keep them engaged in the activity of singing through puberty (Norrish & Vella-Brodrick, 2009; McQuaid et al, 2018; Owens & Waters, 2020; Patston & Waters, 2015).

Goals of the presentation:

- Overview of symptoms, origins and development of MPA specific to singers
- Overview of adolescent MPA
- Practical takeaways – Evidence-based strategies which can be used in the teaching setting to encourage psychological flexibility and flow states in singers.

19:56 to 20:06 IST - Break + Networking



20:06 IST

Lecture
presentation

Dr Caroline Schiller, *Professor of Voice, School of Opera, Memorial University of Newfoundland*

Contemporary repertoire for the voice studio

In the twenty-first century, the wealth of vocal repertoire available presents an increasing opportunity for diversification in teaching materials. The degree of accessibility to music of all countries, periods and styles has provided teachers with the ability to utilize ever more distinctive and challenging works in performance and study. While as studio teachers we are tireless in providing our students with a comprehensive overview of repertoire for study that reflects a broad base of language, style and historic period there is still a question as to how to best use repertoire that is our contemporary and a tendency to limit its application in studio teaching. We are the only century of singers who don't learn their craft routinely incorporating current repertoire. Although this is changing, the tendency is still to look to other times for inspiration. As we train the singers of the twenty-first century, what constitutes contemporary repertoire suitable for the developing musician and what is the true value of including repertoire composed after 1970 in their training? If we as vocal pedagogues believe that repertoire of this century is essential and relevant to the musical language of young singers then we as teachers must acquire a fundamental knowledge of creative repertoire that reflects the aesthetic of this time while supporting and facilitating the building of fundamental technical vocal skills. This paper will provide an introduction to vocal repertoire of the late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century with a particular focus on lesser known North American and British composers. Works have been chosen to represent a broad base of composers and compositions that would be engaging and relevant to the teaching of the young singer. Particular attention has been given to ensuring corresponding representation of women composers. Musical examples will be provided and discussion of technical challenges and potential technical benefits will be included. The goal being to provide ideas to stimulate the teacher's imagination with regard to repertoire selection for studio teaching. By exploring practical applications for contemporary repertoire, this presentation will facilitate the further discovery of song literature and heighten awareness of the vocal music of this time.



20:35 IST	Mini-Lecture recital	Dr. Jessica Rosas Posada , <i>Assistant Professor of Voice, Eastern New Mexico University</i> Canciones de Manuel M. Ponce: An introduction to the Mexican art song canon This mini-lecture recital, based on my dissertation, features the works of Manuel María Ponce (1882-1948). Ponce is Mexico's treasured composer of the art song Estrellita and a founder of Mexican musical nationalism. He borrowed traditional folk melodies that served as inspiration for new, original works. Ponce was the first Mexican composer of lyrical vocal music with piano accompaniment, and his legacy is comparable, on a smaller scale, to that of the greatest German composers such as Brahms and Schubert. Ponce retains an important role in Mexican music, his vocal output contains over 150 songs. However, his repertoire remained dormant after his death because it lacked support from music aristocrats in Mexico toward music that embraced vernacular attributes. The publication of few copies during Ponce's time made them difficult to find. The need in the singing community for repertoire of this kind has raised many questions not only about its existence and availability, but also about its origins and authenticity as art music. From its inception, Mexican Art Song has lacked the necessary representation and diffusion to earn a place in the academic curriculum and recital halls. This presentation aims to promote the dissemination of this severely underrepresented repertoire and will include performances of art songs written by Manuel M. Ponce. Additionally, this session will offer insight regarding stylistic elements of his canciones with a historical context. English translations of the text and diction strategies will be used to offer information for singers and collaborators interested in performance practice.
20:55 IST	Closing Remarks	Sandra Oberoi, <i>NATS India Chapter President</i>

Presenter Biographies:

Alisha Mathew Thayil is a passionate vocal coach, music educator, and choir director with expertise in Indian and Western Classical singing. She holds a Master's in Music Performance from the University of Chichester, UK, specialising in Western Classical singing, and a voice graduate degree from the London College of Music, UK, majoring in voice, movement studies, and physiology. Currently, Alisha is the Western Voice Faculty at KM Music Conservatory, Chennai. She also serves as the curriculum director at Jingle Bells Music Education, creating music curricula based on Kodaly pedagogy for primary schools in Kerala, and recently, the choir conductor for Leap Choir, Chennai. A vocal health enthusiast, Alisha is one of the few vocal coaches in India who has been certified as a Vocal Health First Aider by Vocal Health Education, UK. Apart from NATS, she is also part of ISME dedicated to staying updated on voice and music education research.

Annaika Marie Fernandes is an after-school student at Harmony The Music School Bangalore and a high school student at Bangalore International School. She has been singing since she was a five-year-old and particularly enjoys singing Musical Theater and Jazz. A distinction student in her Classical Singing exams upto Grade 5 ABRSM, and in Grade 7 LCM Musical Theatre, she was recognised as an India topper (Summer Session '21). Second place winner in the NATS International Region Auditions in Musical Theatre, she also enjoys biology- and hopes to integrate her two loves as she dives into the world of researching.



Anupa Paul Anupa Paul is a voice coach, singing performance coach and choral trainer. She completed her M.A. Voice Pedagogy with a distinction from the University of Wales Trinity St David and Voice Study Center in 2022. As a passionate researcher and teacher, her fields of interest include using Acceptance and Commitment Coaching (ACC) in the teaching studio and performance enhancement and mindset coaching for singers. Anupa is a Soprano and has performed as a soloist and with choirs in Europe, United Kingdom and India. She has also been a part of the St. Georges Cathedral choir, The Octet Cantabile and the Madras Musical Association choir in her hometown Chennai. Anupa offers private performance coaching sessions and voice coaching sessions online and conducts choral workshops in South India.

Ashwati Parameshwar is a trained soprano who performs a variety of show tunes, popular music, and opera. She is a vocal coach specialising in foundation singing techniques, performance skills, sight reading, and the basics of music history for solo singers and choirs. She is also IB trained and a passionate music educator who is presently teaching voice and training the secondary school choir at The British School, New Delhi.

Dr. Caroline Schiller is a versatile artist having performed extensively in opera and musical theater with L'Orchestre symphonique de Montréal and The Boston Symphony Chamber Players, and in the role of Christine in the original Toronto cast of Phantom of the Opera. She has collaborated with Ottawa International Chamber Music Festival and The Banff Centre to create and perform modern opera, theater, and concert pieces. Her discography features a notable recording of 18th-century cantatas with Hungary's Capella Savaria, and she's commissioned new vocal works, including chamber operas for young audiences. Presently Professor of Voice and Director of Opera Studies at Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada she is founder and director of Opera RoadShow/Opéra en tournée that provides performance opportunities to young singers. Caroline's doctoral treatise, "A Performer's Guide to Works for Soprano Voice by Canadian Women Composers," remains a guidebook for singers. She is District Governor of the Canadian Atlantic Provinces Chapter of NATS and its former Chapter President.

Dr. Diana Allan, an voice educator with almost four decades of university-level teaching, is the National President of NATS. Her rich career includes an immensely successful opera performance career on world stages and a 26-year tenure on the voice faculty at The University of Texas at San Antonio, where she recently retired. Dr. Allan now serves as the Head of the Voice Area in the Department of Performing Arts at Missouri Southern State University. Her legacy is evident through the success of her students, who have achieved remarkable feats earning prestigious awards, been finalists in national competitions, and gained admission to renowned summer programs and opera studios. Dr. Allan is also a published author, with works like "The Mindful Musician" and "The Relaxed Musician" to her credit. Her website, Peak Performance for Musicians, boasts a global readership, spanning 151 countries.

Emily DenBleyker is an American singer, actor, voice teacher, vocal coach, and graduate student based in Lisbon, Portugal. With a lifelong love for singing and over 20 years of performance experience, Emily is passionate about music education and making singing accessible to all people, especially those who "can't sing." She holds a BA (magna cum laude) in music and communication arts from Gordon College in Massachusetts and is a current MA candidate in voice pedagogy with the Voice Study Centre/University of Wales Trinity Saint David. When not singing or thinking about singing or writing about singing, Emily enjoys knitting, watching baseball, and petting every dog and cat that she can.

Dr. Jessica Rosas Posada, is an accomplished Mexican soprano, voice pedagogue, and expert in Mexican art songs. With a decade of teaching experience, she currently serves as Assistant Professor of Voice, Eastern New Mexico University having been visiting professor and director of voice



studies at Whitman College and adjunct professor at Grayson College. Her research centers on Mexican art songs, particularly the vocal works of Manuel M. Ponce. Notably, in 2020, she conducted a session on "Voice Acoustics: Vowel Modification" at the Texas Music Educators Association. In 2021, she was invited to present her lecture recital research at the 12th Hispanic Heritage Festival at Palm Beach Atlantic University. Jessica holds a doctorate in vocal performance and vocal pedagogy from the University of North Texas, a master's degree in vocal performance from Texas Tech University, and a bachelor's degree in music education from the University of Texas at Brownsville.

Jewel Lasrado is an aspiring singer-songwriter who released five singles, one of which, Six-foot Under, earned her a semi-finalist spot at the International songwriting Competition '23 and Best Artist and song (under 18) at the Clef Music awards '23. Her love for music began in the church choir and evolved through formal voice training at Harmony-The Music School, Bangalore, India. Jewel placed second in the NATS International Region Student Auditions in the Commercial Music Category. She was actively involved in her day-school choir and participated in intercollegiate music competitions representing the Christ Junior College. She earned distinctions in her international music exams and is presently preparing to study Commercial Music outside India. She hopes to reach out to young audiences through many of her songs that focuses on using deep lyrics and musical themes to bringing out different emotions.

Rivka Ramji is a high school student living in Bangalore, India. She has been studying music at the Harmony - The Music School since the age of three training in Western Classical music, Musical Theatre and the Violin. She sang with the award-winning choir, The Harmony Chorus, directed by Sandra Oberoi, for over 10 years and travelled with them on tours in India and internationally. Rivka is also a professional, national-level football/soccer player and participate all-year round in various national-level club and state tournaments. She aims to study Sports Psychology in her higher education and since she remains a 'forever student' of music, hopes to incorporate music into her research studies at a university outside India.

Samyukta Ranganathan is an acclaimed Indian Classical Music (ICM) singer based in New York City. She is pursuing an MA in Voice Pedagogy at the Voice Study Centre, University of Wales Trinity St David. Her research comprises ICM registers, vocal ornamentation, and integrating compassion into ICM classrooms to bridge the gap between voice science and the oral tradition. She presented her research on ICM acoustics at the Pan-European Voice Conference in Estonia (August 2022) and presented her work on transformative methodologies at VASTA's 2023 conference in Mexico. Additionally, she holds a Voice Teacher Training certification from New York Vocal Coaching.

Sandra Oberoi, a versatile singer, music educator, voice teacher and researcher founded Harmony - The Music School, in Bangalore India in 2008. Artistic Director of The Harmony Chorus, she has led the group nationally and internationally as cultural ambassadors. Her students have won prestigious competitions, earned scholarships to top conservatories and summer programs, and performed at venues like Carnegie Hall and Musikverein. Presently serving as President of NATS India Chapter, she is also Executive Board Member and Chair of the Advocacy Committee at ISME. Sandra has performed and taught around the world on building vocal versatility and sustainability, culturally responsive pedagogy, supporting adolescent voices, vocal pedagogy, and offers private, group coaching and masterclasses in various singing styles. She mentors young artists and singing teachers besides curating annual professional development programs. Having completed her masters at Northwestern University, USA she is presently a research scholar at the Institute of Education, University College London.



Dr. Sarah Holman, mezzo-soprano, is the International Region Governor for NATS. Professor of Voice at Wheaton College Conservatory she most recently completed a recording of newly commissioned sacred art songs by Chicago composers and poets. Sarah has enjoyed performances with the Rockford Symphony, Lake Forest Symphony, Chicago Master Singers, Fox Valley Orchestra, Chicago Brass Band, DuPage Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, Opera Southwest, Lyric Opera Cleveland and DePaul Community Chorus. Recital performances have taken her to numerous venues throughout the United States and England. She gave frequent performances and master classes with the Southern Young Artist Opera Project, the Asian Opera Festival, and Bel Canto Opera Workshop in China and Taiwan. A recipient of a Goldovsky Opera Directing Internship with Harrower Opera in Atlanta, Dr. Holman was previously director of opera at Wheaton College Conservatory and has been a featured presenter at several NATS events in the international region.

Tanisha Rozario is a voice teacher and mezzo-soprano in Bangalore, India. In 2023, she received the Woman of Excellence Award from Women's Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Neuro-Vocal Method Certification in 2021, and The Godrej Talent of India Award, hosted by the Neemrana Music Foundation in 2018. Tanisha achieved distinctions in the DipLCM (2010-2011) and LLCM (2011-2012) diplomas in Western Classical vocal performance. Her passion for music is complemented by academic achievements, including an MBA with a specialisation in Human Resources and a Bachelors in Hotel Management, where she secured the 4th rank at Bangalore University (2004-2008). She has received lessons under mentors like Mario Solimene, Alan Cernore, Benjamin Appl, Patricia Rozario, Maria Forsstrom and Prof. Darryl Edwards.

Dr. Uma Kumar is an accomplished Karnatak Classical Musician from Bengaluru, India. Trained under SNA awardee and member Guru Dr. Mysore Nagamani Srinath for the past 20+ years, she is a graded artist of All India Radio under the Karnatak Classical Music genre. She has a post graduate in Karnatak Music and a Doctorate in Ethnomusicology - topic "Study of Major Music Systems of the World" - from Bangalore University where she also taught post graduate students from 2019 to 2022. Presently a visiting faculty member at Jain University, Dept of Performing Arts, Bengaluru, she has published many research articles in esteemed journals. Formally trained in Suguma Sangeetha and a scholarship holder from both State and Central Government in both Classical and Light music, she also studies Western Classical music with Tanisha Herbert. Uma is the founder of Mahati Cultural Academy, training students of different levels in Karnatak Classical Music.

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