

A monthly rendezvous with music for special need children and caregivers at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan

For 15 years, V-Excel Educational Trust has been hosting a monthly programme for those with special needs and their caregivers; it is free and open to all

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Tarang, the monthly cultural initiative for persons with special needs, their caregivers and family members started by V-Excel Educational Trust, has turned 15.

The seeds of this initiative were sown in 2011 by Sumanasa Trust and V-Excel Educational Trust under the name “Sushravya” to bring music closer to children with special needs and their families.

THE HINDU

As part of this initiative, renowned musicians were invited every month to V-Excel Educational Trust's Mandaveli campus. As it gained popularity, the monthly programmes moved to Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and it was renamed Tarang.

Tarang was kickstarted with musician Bombay Jayasree's support. S. Sowmya came on board later as a supporter. Other personalities from the world of performing arts including vocalists, instrumentalists, dancers and harikatha artistes also started backing this initiative.

Since June 2018, Usha Suresh has been leading Tarang which offers a platform for both eminent personalities and upcoming talent in the field of music and dance.

With a good mix of contemporary music, light music, Carnatic music, bhajans, harikathas and dance recitals, Usha has brought variety and vibrancy to the concerts. Performers such as Unnikrishnan, Sai Vignesh, R. P. Shravan and Sikkil Gurucharan have enriched Tarang through performances.

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Fifteen instrument players were the highlight of the 15th year celebration. One might ask how children who are known to be sensitive to sound deal with concerts. In fact many of our performers were left spellbound by the interactions they had with children and how the children and adults in the audience were able to match taalams and sing known songs with the performers.

In the last couple of years, Tarang has provided special needs children and trainees with an opportunity to listen to instruments such as nagaswaram, flute, sarangi and ghatam.

Children with sound sensitivity learnt to accept echoing sounds and melodious music, those who are restless learnt to sit in a place for an hour at a stretch, those who were shy, came out of their shell to present on the stage with the performers. Some in deep musical trance would even run on to the stage and dance to the music being played. Some learnt to request songs and some learnt to recognise songs in the same raagam.

THE HINDU

During the pandemic, programmed videos were uploaded on youtube premier, and many times artistes gave live concerts.

What started with a small set of children of V-Excel Educational Trust enjoying music has gathered momentum. Today, Tarang goes full house. We continue to invite students from two other special schools for our events.

Tarang is open to everyone who wishes to be part of its journey. What started as a tiny seed of goodwill to the society has been able to transform a few lives and give motivation to some for brighter and calmer space in this world.

Links to the concerts are available at V-Excel Educational Trust's YouTube channel.

Tarang is organised every 3rd Thursday of the month at Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, Mylapore and is open to all. For more details, call 9360087484

(Nitya Venkatesh is special educator with V-Excel Educational Trust that has centres in Adyar and Mylapore)

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