



ABK – AOTS DOSOKAI
Tamilnadu Centre (Regd)



ACTIVITIES FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2019

ASIAN CLASSICAL CROSSROADS - INDIA JOINS JAPAN IN MUSIC, SONG & DRAMA

WORKSHOP on 4 SEPTEMBER 2019 in 'COFFEE MEET' for TEACHING STAFF

Fantastic interactive presentation by T M Hoffman on Japanese language and music, and Japanese instruments *koto* and *shakuhachi*. Performance of raga on koto along with our Aarthi Sensei's singing of Karnatic *geetham* was a smooth combination mesmerizing all! Both Indian and Japanese Coffee Meet members were excited at these new perspectives. Thanks Tim san!!

CONCERT on 5 SEPTEMBER 2019 at BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN, MYLAPORE

As part of yearlong activities, ABK-AOTS DOSOKAI, Tamilnadu Centre organized the concert **Asian Classical Crossroads : India joins Japan in Music, Song & Drama** at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan between 6 and 9 pm. The Programme was inaugurated by H E Mr. Kenjiro Mori, Acting Consul-General, Consulate of Japan in Chennai .

The following were the performance items of the day :

Raga & more on instruments of Japan & India

Japanese songs performed by Indian singer

Hindustani vocal accompanied by koto

Masked dance-drama "Konkichi"

World folk music medley

The concert was directed by Mr. T M Hoffman, artist & ethnomusicologist born in USA with 40 years in Asia. He performs shakuhachi, koto and vocal in Indian, Japanese and Asian crossover music in concerts, broadcasts, festivals throughout Asia and USA. Hoffman is also Director of NPO Indo-Japanese Music Exchange Association www.ijmea.com. Tabla and kanjira support was by Mr. Chandrajith Durairaj, son of late music director K Durairaj. He has accompanied top artists like Shahid Parvez, Kadri Gopalnath, Shashank, Bombay Jayashree etc. Ms. Megha Bhargavi, Semi-Finalist in 2017 *Nodojiman* held in Japan, performed Japanese songs along with shakuhachi. She is a Japanese language student of ABK-AOTS DOSOKAI. Chennai artist Mr. G K Ramphrasadh sang Hindustani *khyal* along with koto and tabla. Asst Director: Aruloli

The Japanese masked drama 'Konkichi', translated/adapted for stage by T M Hoffman, was enacted by three students of our centre, along with koto, tabla and kanjira. The play features a fox who becomes human to surprising ends!

WORKSHOP on 8 September 2019 in 'WAKU WAKU CLUB'

How to tune and play koto in Indian music style, and a thrilling item with Karnatic vocal by *Nodojiman* winner Ms Neerajakshi, and by Megha san with shakuhachi! Thank you Tim san!!

CHENNAI THE HINDU METROPLUS
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2019

Dance to the beat

Indian raga was played on Japanese instruments at this musical concert held by ABK-AOTS Dosokai



A fusion of tunes
Chandrajith and Hoffman at the concert • R RAGU

SWETA AKUNDI

What does a Hindustani *thumri*, set to the strains of Brindavani Raga, played on a shakuhachi – a Japanese flute, meant for Buddhist temple prayers and meditation – and accompanied by the tabla, sound like? Over the weekend, at the Asian Classical Crossroads concert, organised by ABK-AOTS Dosokai, musical duo Chandrajith Durairaj and TM Hoffman demonstrated that to the audience in Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Myslapore.

The latter, an artiste and ethnomusicologist from the US, has spent the past 40 years in Asia, performing Indian, Japanese and Asian crossover music in concerts and festivals. He had studied in Lucknow, under Pandit Ganesh Prasad Mishra of the Benaras *gharana*. "I consider myself to be of three-nationalities: USA, Japan and India," Hoffman remarked, before holding the shakuhachi up to his eyes in reverence. To emphasise the difference, he first played a Japanese melody with its high notes, before switching to the Indian Hindustani style.

The five-holed vertical flute, unlike the Indian bansuri, is not completely open on both ends. Hoffman pulled a cloth out of the flute to show the obstruction at one end that produces tonal varieties. "We will be using these instruments to go on a musical journey across the year, around the globe," he says, adding that the song list would include two Japanese processional songs

performed during the season of Hinna Matsuri in the spring of Japan, one autumn song, and another Christmas song from France.

From time to time, Hoffman would rhythmically slap the back of the flute to give a cue to Chandrajith on the tabla, who would pick the beat indicative of their chemistry, despite them meeting for the first time that morning. The latter, son of music director late K Durairaj, has accompanied artistes such as sitarist Shahid Parvez, Shankar Mahadevan, Bombay Jayashri and more.

With Durairaj's tabla for company, Hoffman recited a Japanese poem on the seven-talas. Later on, he was joined by Meghaa Bhargavi on Japanese vocals. A student of the ABK-AOTS Dosokai, she has been a semi-finalist in the 2017 Nodojiman, a Japanese singing competition that sees participants from across the world.

The second instrument Hoffman unveiled is the 13-stringed koto. "This is one of the most versatile instruments there is. You can find mention of it in records from 1200 BC in China," he said, demonstrating how the koto can be played as a violin, or a santoor, or swarmandal, using different spoons and fiddles. "You can get various microtones that make it ideal for Persian or Arabic music too," he said.

Hoffman has donated this particular koto to the ABK-AOTS Dosokai centre for young Indian players to modify and discover new techniques of playing it.



Article in The HINDU about the gala India-Japan Music Concert by T M Hoffman & Friends at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan !



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Thanks to **AIR INDIA** for travel support & to **ABK-AOTS** partners and friends!