



Stage Management in Carnatic Music Concert.

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Abstract

In Ancient times Music Concerts were performed with Nature. Without the help of modern technology, Musicians performed in open space relying solely on their vocal strength, Physical efforts and Natural Musical Instruments. Because of this, their performance could be enjoyed only by audiences who were within a short distance. However, in the modern era due to technological development, Music Concerts, Orchestra concerts, Dance Performance and Drama conduct performances for long duration and across long distances with the support of sound and lighting systems. As a result a connection and coordination between musicians and the audience can be seen from the beginning to the end of the Music concert. For a successful Music concert to take place, proper coordination among artists is essential. Such as the Violinist, Mridangam Player in advance about the theme, selection of various Kritis of the concert. The sound engineer must be instructed to provide appropriate sound arrangements according to the songs selected. Songs should be chosen in the Language understood by the audience of the venue, decisions must also be made regarding the dress code of Performers, stage decoration suitable for the venue, proper Microphone arrangement for musicians and instruments and balanced sound settings. All these activities are fundamental elements of Music performance Management. Therefore if stage management is properly organized, the music concert will be successful. Thus, Management is essential in Performing arts. The objective of this research is Music concerts involve collective efforts, cooperation, planning among many artists. This collective effort itself constitutes management. Concerts conducted with good management receive better appreciation and success among audiences. The research problem of this study is when artists lack proper coordination, communication, Planning and Management skills, the music performances they conduct may not receive good response or satisfaction from the audience. Scope of the research is observations from directly attending the Music concerts & live concert recordings. Field visits, sociological research & Analytical research methods will be used in this study. Primary sources are Live Music concerts and direct observations and secondary sources are research articles & Magazines.

Key words: Thematic Concerts, stage management, Event management, recording studio, artists' communications.

Introduction

Music concerts have been conducted continuously from the sangam period to the present day. These concerts include vocal performances, Instrumental recitals, Folk music programs and dance performances. Among these, Carnatic Music concerts have developed a well-defined structure and follow traditional performance practices that have evolved over many centuries.

In ancient times, Carnatic concerts were performed in temples & Palaces. Devaradiyars performed music & dance in front of Lord Siva in Chola's period. It's a major duty. They stayed in the temple and did their duties. In earlier times, Music performances were often conducted in natural environments such as: temple courtyards or open spaces, where only audiences within a limited area could enjoy the performance. However, with the development of modern technology and sound systems, music concerts today can reach larger audiences across wider geographical regions. Carnatic music concerts, especially vocal concerts, follow a systematic structure in terms of performance order, stage arrangement & coordination among artists. An important element that ensures the success of such concerts is effective stage management.

Structure of Carnatic Vocal Music Concert

In a Carnatic vocal concert, the main performer is the Vocalist. The violinist generally sits on the left side of the vocalist, while the Mridangam Player sits on the right side. Additional percussion instruments such as: the Kanjira may be placed near the Mridangam player, while the Thanbura artist usually sits behind the vocalist to provide the drone accompaniment. The accompanists (a person who provides a musical accompaniment to another musician or to a singer) support the main performer and contribute to the full Music concert or Music presentation. Their role is not only supportive but also creative, as they display their individual musical skills during the concert.

Carnatic Music concerts follow a traditional sequence of Musical forms.

- ◆ Varnams : Adi thala Varanam/ Ada thala Varanam.
- ◆ Pillaiyar Kriti
- ◆ Sub composition
- ◆ Main Composition with Improvisation (Manodharma elements such as : Alapana, Thanam, Niraval & Kalpanaswaras)
- ◆ Lighter pieces or Thukads or Padam or Kavadisindhu or bhajan or Avank.
- ◆ Thillana or Thiruppugazh
- ◆ Mangalam

This sequence helps maintain musical balance and provides a gradual development of Musical intensity throughout the concert.

Stage Management in Music Concert.

Stage Management plays a vital role in ensuring the smooth conduct of a musical performance. It involves planning, organizing, and coordinating various aspects of the concert to achieve a successful presentation. Several factors influence stage management, including the concert venue, the theme of the program, the physical and mental condition of the artists, the expectations of the audience and cultural or linguistic considerations.

Important aspects of stage management include:

- ◆ Prior discussion between the main performer and accompanists regarding the selection of compositions.
- ◆ Familiarity with the concert venue and stage arrangement.

- ◆ Proper sound system setup and microphone placement.
- ◆ Suitable lighting and stage decoration.
- ◆ Understanding the Audience's cultural and linguistic background.
- ◆ Awareness of the purpose and theme of the concert.
- ◆ Effective time Management.
- ◆ Coordination among Performers, Organizers, Announcers and technical staff.

When these aspects are properly organized, the performance becomes more effective and receives positive appreciation from the audience. (Interview: *Chandra. R, age- 55, Assistant Professor*)

Coordination among Performing Artists.

Effective communication is essential for performing artists on a stage. The main Performer or Vocalist should discuss the concert compositions lists. For instance, if the violinist is informed about the ragas to be performed, the violin accompanist is more effective and supportive. Similarly, discussing the duration of Thaniavarithanam enables the Mridangam Player to prepare appropriate rhythmic patterns. Thus, coordination and mutual understanding among performers contribute significantly to the artistic quality of the concert. (Interview: *Arutselvi.T, age-57, Dean*)

Time Management in concert performance

Time Management is another important component of stage management. If a concert is scheduled for a fixed duration, such as one or two hours, the program must be carefully planned to fit within the available time.

An example of a one hour concert structure may include:

- ◆ Varnam – 10 minutes
- ◆ Pillaiyar Kriti – 5 minutes
- ◆ Sub Kriti -10 Minutes
- ◆ Main Kriti with Improvisation – 20 Minutes.
- ◆ Padam or Thukas – 5 minutes
- ◆ Tillana -5 Minutes
- ◆ Thiruppugazh – 5 Minutes

By following a structured plan and practicing accordingly, Artists can ensure that the concert is completed successfully within the scheduled time. (Interview: *Suhaniya. A, Age-50, Professor*)

Understanding the Performance Venue.

Artists should know about the concert venue before the performance. This includes understanding the seating capacity of the hall and the technical facilities available. Knowledge of stage size, sound system arrangement, and acoustics helps artists plan their performance effectively and deliver a better musical experience to the audience.

Sound and Lighting Arrangement

Today technology has improved a lot. As far as Performing Arts are concerned sound & lighting are part and parcel as well as Sound and lighting arrangement play an important role in modern music performance. Musicians must coordinate with the sound engineer to ensure proper microphone placement and balanced sound levels. Appropriate lighting also enhances the visual presentation of the concert and contributes to the overall atmosphere of the performance.

Understanding the Audience.

Although music is often considered a universal art form, understanding the audience's language and cultural background can strengthen the connection between performers and listeners.

For example:

- ♦ In regions where Tamil- Speaking audiences are dominant, Compositions of Tamil Isai Composers may be included.
- ♦ In an area with Hindi speaking audiences, devotional songs such as: Meera bhajans, Abangs.
- ♦ In Telugu- speaking regions: Compositions of Tyagaraja are often appreciated.
- ♦ In Kannada – Speaking areas: Compositions of Purandaradasa may be included.
- ♦ In Malayalam – speaking areas: Compositions of Swathi Thirunal Maharaja may be presented.

Selecting musical items based on the cultural background of the audience enhances audience engagement and appreciation. (Interview: *Priyadarshini. J, age-60, Senior Lecturer*)

Planning the Theme and Purpose of the Concert.

Determining the theme and purpose of the concert is another important aspect of stage management. Concerts may be organized by religious institutions, cultural organizations, educational institutions or social groups.

When musical selections are aligned with the purpose of the event, the performance becomes more meaningful and receives better appreciation.

For example, concerts conducted during religious festivals, temple celebrations, Cultural programs or commemorative events may include compositions relevant to the occasion.

Coordination among the organizing team.

Communication plays an important role in human life. If you have to plan any event or performance, communication is a good way to succeed. A good communicator is a good performer.

Effective communication among artists, organizers, and technical staff is essential for the successful execution of a concert. Prior meetings may be conducted either in person or through telephone or online communication. During these discussions:

- ♦ The vocalist describes musical items.
- ♦ Technical staff explain sound and lighting arrangements.
- ♦ Organizers discuss their expectations and objectives.

Such coordination helps avoid confusion and ensures the outstanding of the event.

In contemporary times, stage management has evolved into a specialized professional field known as even management.

There is a tradition that artists should always adjust or change their concert to suit the level of appreciation of their audiences. Maximum effect with minimum strain has always been the traditional motto. A concert should not be an endurance test for an audience. The items given should be characterized by variety in style and musical construction. (Sambamoorthy. P, 1998:222)

Conclusion

Management has played in every industry. There are so many managements such as: Even management, Digital Management, state management, Family Management, Finance Management etc. state management is based on good planning, Artist Coordination, Sound Balance,

Audience engagement, thematic concert & Balance audio quality. Stage management is a fundamental system of all performing arts. Even in ancient times, performances were conducted successfully through their well planning, discussion and cooperation among artists. With the advancement of modern technology, performance venues and stage arrangement have significantly improved. Artists perform very confidently now due to the sound systems, lighting arrangement and state management system.

Music Sabhas, cultural institutions, temples and music organizations now establish an effective stage management committee to coordinate with performers, sound engineers, announcers and organizers. Effective stage management creates a strong connection between performers and audiences, ensuring a meaningful and enjoyable musical experience. Therefore, proper stage Management plays a crucial role in the successful Concert of Carnatic Music. In the current era, state management & Event Management are a well-developed system as well as commercially healthy industry.

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