

Birth of a Vegan *Tabla*

Dr K Varadarangan's second percussion instrument sans leather and wood

After developing the vegan *mridangam* (see article in *Compassionate Friend* Monsoon 2017 issue) Dr K Varadarangan has gone a step further by researching and developing a *tabla* that contains no leather.

It is the second synthetic percussion instrument that has been launched by Karunya Musicals, Bengaluru, founded by the vegan scientist and musician Dr Varadarangan.

The SRI (Synthetic Rhythm Indian) *Tabla's* drum-heads are made of polyester films



The *dayan* (right) produces perfect harmonic overtones, while the *bayan* (left) produces low pitched bass sounds, both making up a *tabla* that uses replaceable drum heads that are maintenance free and highly durable.



Dr Varadarangan created the vegan *mridangam* because for him music is on par with spirituality and he did not like to use an instrument made from skins of animals as an accompaniment to his vocal music.

and synthetic rubber. The shells are made of fibreglass. The drum-heads are constructed by bonding synthetic rubber to the polyester film without the use of adhesives, using a chemical process. The result is that the *syahi*, which in this case is made of rubber, is permanently bonded to the main vibrating membrane and hence does not erode, fall off or wither away. Not only is the synthetic *tabla* as good as the traditional one, but its maintenance is easy because it comes with a nut and bolt system for tuning. The fibreglass shell is lighter and the pitch remains constant with variations in temperature and humidity, unlike wood which is very sensitive to humidity and temperature.

To test the *tabla's* pitch stability and durability it was subjected to 35 lakh beats. In addition temperature and humidity effects were tested extensively.

BWC congratulates Dr Varadarangan, a highly acclaimed Carnatic vocalist, for researching, developing and producing two percussion instruments without animal skin and wood.

BWC is proud that Dr Varadarangan is our member.

For further information

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