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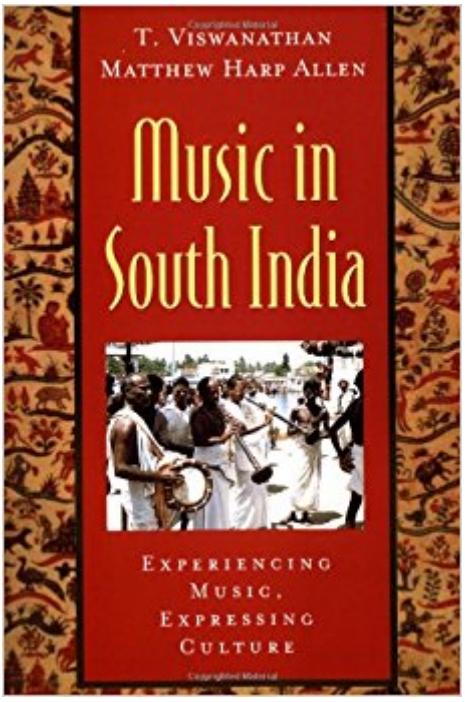
Music In South India: The Karnatak Concert Tradition And Beyond: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture (Global Music Series)



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Synopsis

Music in South India is one of several case-study volumes that can be used along with Thinking Musically, the core book in the Global Music Series. Thinking Musically incorporates music from many diverse cultures and establishes the framework for exploring the practice of music around the world. It sets the stage for an array of case-study volumes, each of which focuses on a single area of the world. Each case study uses the contemporary musical situation as a point of departure, covering historical information and traditions as they relate to the present. Visit www.oup.com/us/globalmusic for a list of case studies in the Global Music Series. The website also includes instructional materials to accompany each study. Music in South India provides a vivid and focused introduction to the musical landscape of South India, discussing historical and contemporary performance, cultural history and geography, and the social organization of performance traditions. The book centers on Karnatak concert music, a unique performance practice that juxtaposes gorgeous musical compositions with many different types of improvisation. T. Viswanathan and Matthew Harp Allen first compare two types of song--bhajan, a structurally simple devotional genre, and kriti, the primary concert genre--and also analyze raga and tala, the basic elements underlying Karnatak music. They go on to examine the evolution of Karnatak music during the twentieth century, paying special attention to gender and caste and illuminating these issues through case studies and historical recordings (on the accompanying CD) of a small group of enormously influential musicians. In the final chapter, the authors move beyond Karnatak music to address other aspects of South India's rich musical environment, such as its thriving popular music scene (based on cinema music); regional traditions ranging from the sacred to the secular, many of which integrate elements from dance and drama; and contemporary composition. Featuring numerous listening activities, Music in South India is packaged with an 80-minute CD containing examples of the music discussed. The CD includes a full, uncut concert recording of a kriti performance, which shows how Karnatak musicians weave together composed and improvised elements to create extended performances.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is a short introduction to the musical traditions of South India. The authors are exceptionally well-suited for writing such a volume. Viswanathan was a highly accomplished classical musician in the Carnatic tradition of South India, who taught Western music students in Wesleyan University. Allen is also a well-known Carnatic musician and educator who teaches at Wheaton College. Together, they have written a book that explains the basics of Carnatic music theory and music culture in terms that Western students can understand.The five chapters of the book cover many types of music found in South India. The first chapter introduces the concept of song in South Indian music, with in-depth explanations of bhajans and kritis. The second chapter discusses the key elements of Carnatic theory, the raga and the tala. The third chapter explains the elements and sequencing of a Carnatic concert. The fourth chapter covers various sociological topics related to music in South India, including the differing traditional roles of women and men, recent changes in musical traditions, and musical families. The fifth chapter includes information about a variety of other topics, special features of Keralite music, cinema music, and cross-cultural collaborations. The book closes with a 5-page glossary, a selection or resources grouped by type (reading, listening, viewing, etc.), and an index. The book is amply illustrated with high quality black and white photographs of performers, instruments, and common sights of India.A very valuable part of the book is the music CD attached to the back cover. Readers who have limited familiarity with the music can listen to samples of the items being discussed rather than simply read about them.

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