

Monash Asia Institute with Indian Council for Cultural Relations
presents Dr Aneesh Pradhan
ICCR Public Lecture on India

Courtesans and Hereditary Musicians in a Colonial Setting: Practitioners of Hindustani Music in Bombay

Before the nineteenth century, Hindustani music was performed and practised almost exclusively by hereditary musicians, who were tied to, and patronised by, aristocratic courts and religious institutions. The consequences of coloniality, the arrival of modernity and the assertion of Hindu nationalism spelt the beginning of the end for this centuries-old social organisation of music. New sources of patronage from mercantile and industrial classes in colonial centres, such as Bombay (now Mumbai), fundamentally and rapidly changed the ways in which Hindustani music was socially organised, performed and taught.

This lecture will focus attention on the living and working conditions of hereditary musicians and courtesans in colonial Bombay and the resilience they displayed in the most trying of circumstances. Discussion will connect contemporary developments in Hindustani music with these profound historical issues and will include Dr Aneesh Pradhan's personal reflections as a performer and researcher.



Dr Aneesh Pradhan

Monash University is honoured to welcome Dr Aneesh Pradhan as Chair in Indian Studies from Indian Council for Cultural Relations (<http://www.iccr.gov.in>) at the Sir Zelman Cowen School of Music.

Dr Pradhan is one of India's leading *tabla* players. He is a disciple of Pandit Nikhil Ghosh from whom he inherited a considerable repertoire of traditional *tabla* solo compositions from the Delhi, Ajrada, Lucknow, Farrukhabad and Punjab *gharanas*. A doctorate from the University of Mumbai, he is a keen researcher of trends in performance, music education and patronage that unfolded in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, a period that continues to fascinate him. Dr Pradhan has authored a children's book on *tabla*, part of a forthcoming twelve book series entitled *Baajaa Gaajaa: Musical Instruments of India* and *Tabla: A Performer's Perspective*. He has been awarded a medal by the Asiatic Society of Mumbai for his book *Hindustani Music in Colonial Bombay*. His latest ebook, *Hindustani Music: Ways of Listening*, is a collection of articles from Scroll.in, a digital publication. He has directed and produced a short film entitled *Pratidhvani: Reverberations of the Nanasaheb Panshe Pakhawaj Tradition*. Dr Pradhan is Director of Underscore Records Pvt. Ltd, an independent online record label (<http://underscorerecords.com/>). He also co-curates with vocalist Shubha Mudgal, an international music festival called *Baajaa Gaajaa: Music from 21st Century India*. Based in Mumbai, India, Aneesh Pradhan lives a life that affords him the chance to be in turns, performer, composer, student, teacher, researcher, and author.

Dr Pradhan's books will be available at the event courtesy *Elthambookshop*

Date Saturday 27th August
Time 3 – 5pm
Location Consulate General of India in Melbourne
344, St Kilda Road, Melbourne
Register <http://www.cvent.com/d/bvqmkq>
Light refreshments will be provided



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