



If you scan through a TV guide, you will have channels dedicated to every kind of an audience right from movie channels to a channel that airs flight schedules! But one subject remained ignored despite its dedicated fan following and that is Indian classical music. Why the oversight? Is it the lack of initiative and passion for the subject that kept channel executives away? Or simply the viability of 24-hour classical music channel? We find out speaking Rishabh Tagore, managing director of Insync. Being a musician himself, Tagore has a few fascinating insights on fitting the classical world in the contemporary era. Insync has already started their test signals and will be fully operational from June 2013.

#### What was the reason behind launching a channel dedicated to Indian classical music?

Being a violinist myself and coming from a family of musicians, I have performed at many classical and fusion concerts. So I have always been associated with music from the very beginning. I also have been working as an event manager organising classical concerts for the past 10 years. And this thought has always been at the back of my mind that why isn't there a channel yet on classical music? Being a company secretary, I started looking into the viability of the idea. In the process of gauging its viability and realising its potential and wondering why doesn't anyone grab this opportunity? Then my mind gave a suggestion "Why don't you do it?" Fortunately, I have got a lot of support for this idea.

# INSYNC WITH THE Tide

In the crowded world of satellite transmissions one wave comes as a ray of hope for Indian classical music fans. Insync is India's first dedicated classical music channel.



#### But why do you think no one has launched a channel on Indian classical music?

Because it's a project that needs to be executed with a lot of passion, as it's a niche market. Until now digitisation was not existent and due to its implementation niche channels like Insync will benefit now. In fact, some musicians approached the Indian government to intervene and come up with a solution for preservation and promotion of Indian music.

What would be ideal is launching a channel but not exactly in the mould of Doordarshan that has created a different image for classical music. We wanted a fresh approach. We had to create content for the channel because record labels have audio recordings and no visuals. It was almost like we were setting up a GEC (General Entertainment Channel). And what we understand is that the content we are creating has a long shelf life. For example, if I record Jayateerth Mevandi who very much can be the next Bhimsen Joshi in a few years and the value of these earlier recordings will be priceless, just as a 1970s recording of a jugalbandi



Insync Managing Director: Rishabh Tagore

between Ustad Alla Rakha and Ustad Zakir Hussain is a top selling album today or, if you consider, the jugalbandis of Pt Hariprasad Chaurasia and Pt Shiv Kumar Sharma, which are still very popular even today.

Our older generation has worked so hard to bring music to such a level and now



Recording in Insync: (L to R) Mukul Deygri (Drums), Parthasarathi (Tabla), Nishu Datta (Vocals), Viky Ghate (Tabla), Ravish Chaurasia (Fiddle), Nishu Sharma (Harmonium) and Rishabh Tagore (Violin)



it is our job to take things to the next level. For that we need a strong medium.

#### But a 24 hour channel on your own? There are way too many things to look into, such as content, infrastructure, marketing, distribution, etc. for managing a whole channel. How did you work that out?

I agree it is a task to keep a channel going. I started out with my strength—content generation, I know the biggest names of classical fraternity and will be able to produce content comfortably. So the biggest challenge of content generation is taken care of. As far as infrastructure is concerned, we are going to outsource that because it's a niche channel. I have also outsourced the sales distribution to established names. One other advantage I have is of having a seasoned in-house director for programmes, who happens

to my brother. He is an experienced director of television serials and is also a musician himself.

#### What about programming for the audience?

I have kept the responsibilities of programming with me because primarily I have to cater to two types of audiences. The first are the purists who will watch the channel just for what Insync is offering. The other type is the youth audience. I want to engage them in our channel by using innovative concepts based on classical music. For one programme we have tied up with actor and travel expert Milind Gunaji and come up with the concept of 'Classical Trekking' where he will take 50-odd students on a trek and will discuss music and ragas while trekking. We could also have musicians perform at the venue. Many programmes along these lines have been conceptualised simply to send out the message that Indian classical



music is not a dinosaur. It is relevant and imperative even in today's times and they (youth) stand only to benefit from it.

#### Any other approach to connect the youth to classical music?

We did have a few focus group sessions with college students. Their response was that if we air "Aaa-Uuu" (mocking the way of singing alap) then we won't care for it. A lot of them pointed that film music is based on classical music and if that is explained along with pointers on how to appreciate this kind of music, it would help generate interest. So we have decided to get into the infotainment format as well.

#### Do you intend to cover live concerts as well?

Live concerts will obviously get a new lease of life with this channel. Sponsors are always keen to be associated with Indian classical concerts because it represents the image of refinement and status as the music caters to a class audience. The only problem we face is the 'numbers' or the 'eyeballs' for such events. Airing these events on television will multiply the audience considerably and will benefit such events.

#### What has been the overall reaction to Insync from the artists?

(Smiles) They have started thinking of Insync as their very own channel.

#### TRIVIA

Insync Channel has noted musicians on the advisory board

- Santoor player Pt Shiv Kumar Sharma
- Vocalist Shanker Mahadevan
- Flautist Pt Hariprasad Chaurasia
- Vocalist Ustad Rashid Khan
- Sitar player Niladri Kumar
- Tabla player Pt Vijay Ghate
- Vocalists Pts Rajan-Sajan Mishra