



SUSHMA SOMA

SUSHMA SOMA (b. 1987) is one of Singapore's leading Carnatic practitioners. She strongly believes in retaining classicism in her traditional performances, while engaging in cross-cultural collaborations as a reflection of her background and heritage in a multicultural society. Sushma aims to raise awareness of her art form, explore more ways to make it inclusive and to inspire others through her contributions to music and society.

A Chartered Accountant by education and certification, she gave up her employment at one of the top accounting firms after her graduation to chase her dream of becoming a musician. Being an alumna of the Singapore Indian Fine Arts Society (SIFAS), Sushma is currently honing her practice under the guidance of respected musician and mentor, RK Shriramkumar.

Her first album, *Sa*, released in March 2020, features artists from around the world including Soumik Datta, the British Sarod exponent and BBC presenter. Her global artistic collaborations include Emmy-nominated English composer David Norland, multi-disciplinarian Dr. Gowri Ramnarayan, and American Bharatanatyam virtuoso Mythili Prakash. Sushma co-created a production at the Esplanade which was among the first to feature an all-women global Carnatic ensemble.

In 2017, Sushma led a project, *Digital Archive of Singapore Tamil Music*, for the National Library Board (NLB) on a voluntary basis, which was the first archival project of an entire community's musical works in Singapore. Her work with the National Archives of Singapore (NAS), *Oral History Project*, was given special mention by Minister S. Iswaran in Parliament (March 2019), for its valuable insights into the Indian classical music scene in the 1980s.

She was invited to be a part-time lecturer at the National Institute of Education, in Nanyang Technological University (NTU), to teach Indian Classical music practice to student teachers. Having taught for three years now, she carries with humility, a self-directed responsibility to impact the way the next generation of students can perceive and understand Indian music in Singapore.

Sushma was the first Singaporean to win the All India Radio vocal competition in 2006 and the Outstanding Vocalist Award – Junior in 2017 from Madras Music Academy, a renowned fine arts institution in India. She has performed at prestigious venues across Asia, Europe and the United States.



Performing at Sushma's debut EP, *Sa* (2020), launch concert at Offbeat Music Ventures in Chennai, India. Photo courtesy of Konica