

Propensity and utility of Sitar sound in the field of applied music in Sri Lanka: A case study among undergraduate students, Sri Lanka

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Sitar is considered a leading musical instrument in the North Indian classical music among the musical traditions in the world and it is an excellent plucked stringed instrument with its own playing techniques. Currently, many modern virtual sound producing techniques are easily available in the world to generate Sitar sounds. Thus, the present survey was conducted to observe the propensity and utility of Sitar sound in the field of applied music among younger generation in Sri Lanka. The sample was selected from undergraduate students (n=78), Faculty of Music, University of the Visual and Performing Arts, Sri Lanka. Semi-structured interviews were carried out among undergraduates representing all musical styles in Sri Lanka using a pre-tested questionnaire. Focus-group discussions were also conducted. Data were analyzed descriptively and presented with appropriate descriptive tools. The survey revealed that more than 73% of respondents liked Sitar as the North Indian classical music instrument and all the respondents (100%) have already listened to the natural sound of Sitar. The results showed those respondents among five grade scales, 76.5% mostly liked natural Sitar sounds following 20.6% were like, 2.9% were neutral and no respondents indicated dislike. 85.3% of the respondents have a clear idea about alternative virtual Sitar sound producing techniques and are aware about Sitar sound can produce using software (50%), North Indian classical music (50%) and keyboard (44%) respectively. The respondents have used Sitar sound of keyboard (35%) and software (35%) than the Electric Sitar (9%) for their music life as the alternative sitar sound. When considering the choices of respondents for future use of their music field, all the respondents (100%) liked the natural Sitar's instrument sound for their music while secondly liked the Electric Sitar (70.6%), Keyboard (67.6%), Software (52.9%) and other methods (5.9%) respectively. However, the survey revealed that difficulty of transport (62%), difficulties in learning (50%), no money for afford Sitar (50%) and scarcity of Sitar players (38%) have kept away from the Sitar in their current music activities. The survey concluded that the natural Sitar instrument sound is the best expression sound for composing music or for an event.

Keywords: electric sitar, keyboard, North Indian classical music, Sitar, software