

Vidushi Ruchira Panda, from Kolkata, India, is the current torch-bearer of the Kotali Gharana which was founded by the legendary vocal maestro Sangeetacharya Tarapada Chakraborty from Kotalipara in undivided Bengal. Ruchira trained under the tutelage of Pandit Manas Chakraborty ( the son of Tarapada Chakraborty ) for 25 years. Accuracy of the Raga, slow and methodical Raga-rendition, high melodic content, fresh improvisations and complex fast taans characterize her style of singing, augmented by a voice that has a deep timbre and extreme power.

She is an exponent of Khayal, Thumri, Tappa, Tap-Khayal, Nirguni Bhajan and other semi classical forms including Jhoola, Birha, Chaiti, Kajri, Patjhar, Jaad ke Geet, Pasar ke Geet etc. Ruchira sings her own compositions, the compositions of her Guru, and also some traditional Bandishes.

As a composer and Guru, Ruchira keeps creating new lyrics and tunes, sometimes just before or even during a concert. That, naturally, adds to the freshness and magic of the core Indian Classical tradition centered around live music settings.

She has toured widely in India and abroad, performing at various Indian Classical conferences, including Baba Harivallabh Sangeet Sammelan in Jalandhar, The Dover Lane Music Conference in Kolkata, Saptak in Ahmedabad, Ustad Amir Khan Festival in Indore, Tansen Samaroh in Gwalior, LearnQuest Annual Conference in Boston, RagMala in Toronto, Ali Akbar College of Music in San Rafael, Nehru Center in London, SIFAS in Singapore, Dhaka Museum in Bangladesh to name a few. She represented India in the UNESCO International Music Festival "Sharq Taronalari" in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

Ruchira is an Established Empaneled Artist of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), SPICMACAY, Fellow of The Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India and an "A" grade artist of All India Radio.

In the current state of vocal music where words are bereft of literary merit and tunes are leaning towards gimmicks, she sticks to her *Gharana* roots and the purity of the *Raga* in a quintessential free-improvisational style that is nuanced and aesthetically robust.

Ruchira is also a philanthropist, and is the founder-secretary of Paramparik, a 17-year old non-profit based in Kolkata that has helped more than 8000 poor students become doctors and engineers. She, through Paramparik, also organizes one of the most authentic Indian Classical conferences in Kolkata every year. In 2019 alone, Paramparik is paying tuition and lodging fees for medical, engineering and graduate studies of 246 students from rural Bengal.