**Sarangi**

Sarangi, a part of the stringed instruments family, is loved by musicians across India and also has some regional variations. But it is particularly important in the Hindustani music of North India. Interestingly, the sarangi is the only instrument that comes in closest proximity to the human voice. It is present in many forms in different regions of our country, but ironically, its place and time of origin are difficult to trace. References indicate that the sarangi has been used in classical music from the seventeenth century onwards. In the 19th century, it was also commonly used to accompany dance performances.

A sarangi is carved out of a single wooden block. It typically has three main strings and sometimes a fourth string is added as a drone. Usually the whole length of the sarangi varies between 2ft to 2.25 ft, width 6 inch, height 4.2 inch. It weighs approximately 2 kg. Like a violin, the sarangi is played with a bow, but it is held vertically with the sound chamber below.

The sarangi is the only instrument which can produce almost all the nuances of vocal music of any style with exact embellishments and intonations. That is why it has always remained closely associated with vocal folk music. Some of the most famous vocalists were initially trained in playing sarangi and later on took to vocal music. For example, Abdul Karim Khan, Bade Ghulam Ali Khan and Amir Khan, all distinguished vocalists, originally belonged to the group of sarangi players. Some renowned sarangi players like Abdul Latif Khan, Aruna Narayan, Ashique Ali Khan, Bharat Bhushan Goswami have played a major role in its revival.

It is one of the very few versatile instruments than can complement an exceptionally large variety of musical modes. But the sarangi and the sarangi players slowly became an endangered species due to the newly-available simpler replacements. Although, some efforts are being made by sarangi stalwarts to help sarangi regain its position now by encouraging artists to perform solo. Sarangi's warm, rich and sometimes mysterious tone lingers on and leaves its listeners in a calm state of mind.