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MADAN PISHARODY

PROFESSIONAL GEOSHRED PLAYER, IPAD MUSIC PRODUCER, MUSIC EDUCATOR AND MUSIC HEALER, AND FOUNDER OF SWAR LAYA MUSIC.

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MADAN PISHARODY

From Adversity to Innovation: Journey Through Music and Technology

For Madan Pisharody, music has never been merely about playing an instrument.

It has been a lifelong pursuit of expression, exploration and innovation. A professional GeoShred player, iPad music producer, music educator and founder of Swar Laya Music, Madan has carved a distinctive path in the world of digital music by bringing the expressive nuances of Indian classical music into a contemporary technological environment.

His journey, however, has been anything but conventional. From childhood health challenges and hearing impairment to professional setbacks and a chronic inflammatory condition.

Connect with Madan on Instagram



This Article reveals :
"How a lifelong passion for music, personal challenges and the discovery of GeoShred helped Madan Pisharody redefine his musical journey and explore new possibilities at the intersection of Indian classical music and technology.

Madan has repeatedly faced circumstances that could have brought his musical aspirations to a halt. Instead, each challenge became an opportunity to discover a different way forward.

"Today, through GeoShred, he is demonstrating how technology can expand the boundaries of musical expression while making music education accessible to a wider community of learners."

A Childhood Shaped by Music :

Madan's relationship with music began at the remarkably young age of four. Recognising his natural inclination towards music, his mother encouraged him to pursue it seriously from an early age.

However, his childhood took an unexpected turn when he developed chronic malaria. Following the treatment, he lost hearing in his right ear and has since relied entirely on his left ear for hearing.
Despite this challenge, his passion for music remained undiminished.



Madan started juggling with Musical Instruments in early Childhood

Growing up without access to a dedicated music school, Madan found his earliest learning opportunities through his school's music department.

He began learning the keyboard and soon became an integral part of the school band, performing at festivals, annual functions and various competitions.

As his interest grew, he expanded his musical horizons by learning the guitar and exploring different musical genres. At the age of 14, he began studying both Hindustani and Carnatic classical music, developing a deeper appreciation of melody, musical expression and India's rich musical heritage.

These early experiences laid the foundation for a journey that would eventually bring together traditional music and modern technology.

Inspired by A. R. Rahman:

Where Music Meets Technology

A defining influence on Madan's musical aspirations was the legendary composer A. R. Rahman. Particularly fascinated by Rahman's ability to blend Indian classical and folk traditions with contemporary technology and sound engineering, Madan began envisioning a career at the intersection of music and technology.

After completing his tenth standard, he decided to pursue sound engineering and moved towards professional studio work. He began working as an assistant sound engineer in studios in Mumbai.

However, this ambition encountered a significant obstacle. His hearing impairment made it difficult to accurately judge stereo imaging and certain other aspects of sound, which are essential in professional audio engineering.
Eventually, he had to step away from the sound engineering path he had envisioned.

Although this was a difficult professional setback, it did not diminish his commitment to music. Instead, it encouraged him to explore alternative ways of building a sustainable career in the field he loved.



Madan with Navneeth Sundar



Madan with with Mahesh Raghvan





Invited to Speak at a TEDx event recently

Building Swar Laya Music from the Ground Up

In 2008, at just 18 years of age, Madan founded Swar Laya Music, beginning with guitar and keyboard lessons.

While he had already developed considerable practical musical knowledge, he recognised the importance of formal education and continuous professional development.

He enrolled in music education programmes through Trinity and Rockschool, working towards advanced qualifications while simultaneously teaching students at his academy.

Interestingly, the income generated through his teaching helped finance his own musical education. This allowed him to continue developing his expertise while building an independent professional career.

He eventually completed Grade 8 certifications, strengthening his understanding of music, performance and teaching.

Alongside his educational activities, Madan established a small music production setup within the academy. Gradually, Swar Laya Music evolved into a platform that brought together music education, performance and production.

Just when his professional journey appeared to be progressing steadily, another unexpected challenge emerged.

When Health Challenges Changed the Course of His Music

After years of playing the guitar and keyboard, Madan began experiencing persistent wrist and joint pain. Medical evaluation eventually revealed that he had ankylosing spondylitis, a chronic inflammatory condition that can affect the spine and other joints.

The condition made playing conventional musical instruments increasingly difficult at times.

For someone whose professional identity and personal aspirations were so deeply connected to music, the possibility of losing the physical ability to perform as before was particularly challenging.

"Yet, giving up music was never an option he was willing to consider.

During this difficult phase, Madan discovered GeoShred through YouTube videos featuring renowned keyboardist Jordan Rudess and Indian musicians and GeoShred pioneers Mahesh Raghvan and Navneeth Sundar."

Their performances introduced him to an entirely new dimension of musical expression.

Intrigued by the possibilities, Madan reached out to Navneeth Sundar, who guided him in selecting an iPad to begin exploring the instrument.

Purchasing his first iPad was a considerable financial commitment. He acquired it through instalments and had to arrange additional funds to make the purchase possible. He also enrolled in lessons with Navneeth to understand the instrument and its expressive capabilities.

What initially appeared to be an alternative way to continue making music would eventually become the defining turning point of his professional journey.

Discovering a New Musical Language Through GeoShred

GeoShred is a touch-based digital musical instrument that allows performers to create expressive melodies using finger movements such as slides, bends and vibrato.

Its unique playing interface and extensive range of instrument sounds make it particularly interesting for musicians exploring the intricacies of Indian classical music.

What fascinated Madan most was the possibility of recreating musical expressions traditionally associated with instruments such as the violin, sarangi and flute through a digital interface.

As he became increasingly proficient with GeoShred, some of his existing guitar and keyboard students expressed interest in learning the instrument.

Recognising an emerging opportunity, he began developing structured lesson plans and teaching students, gradually establishing his own approach to GeoShred education.

What began as a personal experiment soon developed into a specialised teaching practice.

Over the past six years, Madan has taught more than 200 students worldwide, helping them explore GeoShred and develop their musical expression through digital technology.

GeoShred: A New Approach to Musical Expression

Madan's expertise led to his appointment as a GeoShred Representative in India, where he has contributed to workshops, demonstrations and initiatives promoting the digital instrument. His musical engagements have involved Indian musicians Navneeth Sundar and Mahesh Raghvan, as well as projects involving Jordan Rudess.

For Madan, GeoShred is more than an alternative to conventional instruments. It offers a new approach to musicianship, particularly for individuals who experience physical challenges with traditional playing techniques.

A Dream Come True: Recognition from A. R. Rahman

A defining milestone came on May 29, 2022, when Madan performed Periyone, a Malayalam composition by A. R. Rahman, using GeoShred on his iPad.

In an unforgettable moment, A. R. Rahman shared his performance on Twitter with the words: "iPad Magic by Madan." For someone inspired by Rahman since childhood, this recognition was especially meaningful.

It also brought Madan's work to a wider audience and created opportunities to conduct workshops at music institutes, introducing aspiring musicians to GeoShred.

Making Music More Accessible Through Technology :

Having experienced the physical challenges of playing conventional instruments, Madan is passionate about making music accessible to people with diverse abilities.

He believes touch-based digital instruments can offer alternative learning opportunities to individuals who find traditional instruments physically demanding.

His work combines the expressive richness of Indian classical music, including ragas, meend and gamakas, with modern digital technology. His vision is to preserve the artistic depth of traditional music while making it accessible to a new generation.

He also sees the widespread use of smartphones and touchscreen devices as an opportunity to introduce more people to music. With appropriate guidance, even beginners can use familiar digital interfaces as a starting point for exploring melodies and developing musical skills.

Looking Ahead:

Future of Music and Technology

Through Swar Laya Music and GeoShred, Madan continues to bridge the worlds of music education, Indian classical traditions and digital innovation. Having also shared his journey through a TEDx talk, he remains committed to making music more accessible through technology.

His journey is a reminder that limitations need not define possibilities, and setbacks can sometimes lead to extraordinary discoveries.

Because sometimes, when life takes away the instrument we know, it introduces us to an entirely new way of creating music. And for Madan Pisharody, the music never stopped—it simply found a new voice.

Scan the QR to Connect & visit Swar Laya Music website