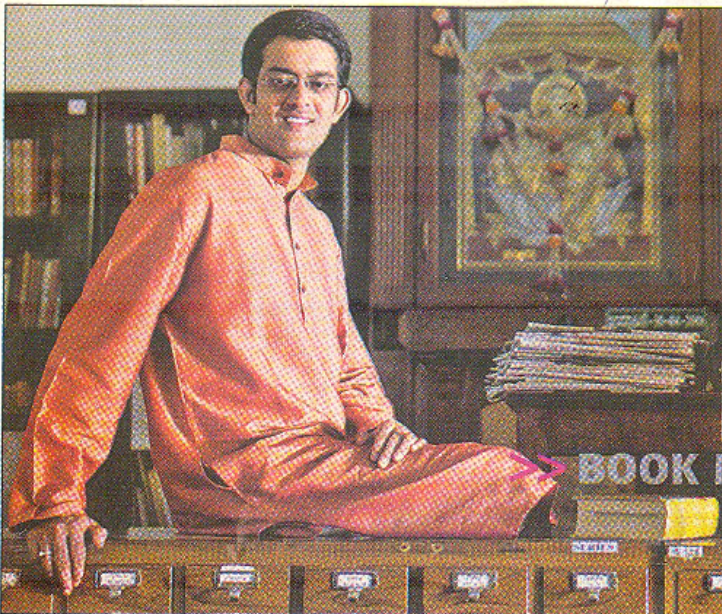


My Name is Gauhar Jaan, echoes the high-pitched flirtatious announcement on the record...a voice so distinctive and spirited, that one could write a book on it. And that's just what Vikram Sampath did. . .



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decided to delve deeper into the life of this fascinating Hindustani Classical vocalist, who happens to be the first musician to record on the gramophone. It soon became an obsession and I was traveling across the country to look for fragments of her life and piece them together." It took about three years of extensive research to write the book. "Gauhar Jaan was more than just the first woman musician in the country - she had a resurgent spirit. And I've tried to capture that in this book," he adds. Vikram's "obsession" also stems from his love for history and music. "History, particularly music, is very poorly documented in the country and the information available is mostly anecdotal," says Vikram.

An Electronics Engineer who went on to do his Masters in Mathematics and an MBA, Vikram Sampath is currently working with Hewlett Packard (HP), in Bangalore. But writing has always been at the back of his mind. "I was always interested in writing. Even in school, my essays would be read out in front of the class," says the young writer.

A musician and a free spirit

What is it like to listen to fragments of the earliest recordings of Indian classical music, the voice of the first woman Hindustani vocalist in the country, in this case, crackling through a gramophone? A voice that set new milestones, changed the style, structure and presentation of Hindustani music forever...the voice of Gauhar Jaan, an Armenian Christian who converted to Islam in Calcutta of the early 1900s. My

Name is Gauhar Jaan: The Life and Times of a Musician, a book by Bangalore-based writer Vikram Sampath, narrates the story of this eminent musician - her rise to fame and her tragic fall.

Vikram discovered Gauhar Jaan while he was working on his first book, Splendours of Royal Mysore: The Untold Story of the Wodeyars. Vikram says, "In the course of my research, I hit upon the name Gauhar Jaan. I was intrigued and

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