

# Basic Detail Report

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## Saraswati veena

### Date

1900-1920 ca.

### Description

This stringed instrument (veena or vina) is used in Carnatic music. In Hindu mythology, Saraswati, goddess of learning and music, is shown playing the veena. Consequently, this instrument traditionally features a depiction of Saraswati on the belly. Body carved from a single piece of jackwood, making it a highly valued ekavada veena, or sometimes called ekadandi vina. Seven strings (four for melody and three for rhythm) with twenty-four frets. Traditionally, camel bone is used for the inlay. The veena is played either as a solo instrument; in an ensemble with mridangam, tambura, and violin; or, as an accompaniment to the voice. The body (kayi, kudam) is hemispherical and hollowed from a single piece of jackwood. The heavy, hollow neck (dandi) features straight sides rounded at the back and tapering slightly towards the top. A second resonator (burra)—a calabash gourd—is screwed into a small metal cup attached to the back of the neck below the nut. The pegbox, open at the front, has bilateral pegs (two on the right, two on the left) and terminates in a dragon-head (yali) finial. Originally there was a cover for an accessories compartment; however, cover is missing (only the latch and part of a hinge remain). Resonator covered by a thin, round, flat wooden sound board. Neck covered by a thin board (dandipalaka). A raised ledge (maruvapalaka) along each side is covered with a cement made of wax and lamp-black to hold the 24 frets (metlu), which are straight, cylindrical, brass bars (about 5 mm thick). The bridge (gurram or kudirai: "horse"), in the center of the belly, features a wooden, bench-shaped trestle (about 6.5 cm wide and 3 cm deep) covered with a metal plate. A buttress-like metal arc extends from the side of the bridge down to the belly. The four main strings pass over the top of the bridge, while the three tala, or side strings, pass over the side arc.

### Dimensions

Length: 1120 mm Width of body: 300 mm Height of body: 270 mm Length of fret board: 570 mm Width of fret board: 580 - 620 mm Sounding length of melody string: 704 mm Sounding length of sympathetic strings: 1) 592 mm, 2) 530 mm, 3) 440 mm Height of bridge: 34 mm Diameter of gourd: ca. 200 mm Length of peg: 124 mm Width of peg: 51 mm