

When Space Limits Pedagogy: Spatial Conditions for Healthy Music Training at the Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan Faculty of Visual and Performing Arts, University of Jaffna

Arch. Aousten Aloysious

Independent Architect and Researcher, Jaffna, Sri Lanka
aaten84@gmail.com, 0779672473

Healthy music training depends partly on whether the physical environment supports listening, instrumental practice, floor-based learning and sustained occupation. This paper examines the facilities used by the Department of Music and the Department of Instrumental Music at the Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan Faculty of Visual and Performing Arts, University of Jaffna. A focused architectural case-study method was used. Evidence was collected through a site visit on 20 July 2026, measured drawing, room-use mapping, departmental enrolment records and guided key-informant interviews with the heads of the two departments. The material was organised under four analytical categories: teaching-group demand, functional overlap, environmental conditions and timetable consequences. The findings indicate that spatial demand is shaped less by total enrolment than by the number and type of teaching groups that must operate concurrently. In the Department of Instrumental Music, rooms used for violin, veena and mridangam teaching also serve as offices or storage, while a student community room is used for theory classes. The circular classrooms are acoustically inappropriate for music teaching. Instrumental testing was outside the scope of the study and is required to quantify, not establish, the acoustic problem. Unpaved access and rain-exposed thresholds are incompatible with teaching in which students and instruments are positioned at floor level. Limited room availability also contributes to timetable fragmentation and Saturday teaching. The paper interprets these conditions as functional compression and spatially produced time pressure. It concludes that healthy and sustainable training requires immediate improvements to access, drainage and room allocation, followed by targeted acoustic and thermal assessment. Longer-term planning should be based on concurrent pedagogical groups and instrument-specific activities rather than general classroom counts.

Keywords: *Music pedagogy; spatial adequacy; healthy training; functional compression*