

“IRAA’s Long Arc to Achieve Royalty for Music Mastering is my Motivation” : Anil Chopra



Anil Chopra, Founder & Chairman, Indian **Recording Arts Academy (IRAA) Awards**, is a true-blue visionary, a champion for the technical genius that goes into making a hit song in India. Since the inception of IRAA in 2006, Mr. Chopra has upheld the mission and vision of applauding the love and labor of the sound engineers, recording, mixing, mastering engineers, and music production and post production professionals working tirelessly to imbibe life into a song. In a conversation with **PALM Expo Magazine**, Mr. Chopra sheds light on IRAA’s journey so far, the gameplan with IRAA, and the idea of enveloping the acclaimed Awards with a sparkle of glitz and glamour in the near future.

17 years! What has IRAA achieved? What has IRAA not achieved?

IRAA’s long arc to achieve royalty for music mastering is my motivation. Very critical achievement yet remains unfulfilled. Institutionalizing IRAA is one such objective. Membership is the key to enabling IRAA as an institution. India’s burgeoning content production makes growing IRAA with membership extremely important. There are other objectives which definitely need to be achieved. Such as increasing the number of nominations to 2000, then 5000, and at the earliest to 10000. I am speaking of paid nominations. This will strengthen IRAA.

I think we should start membership immediately which in turn, will contribute to increasing nominations.

In terms of what we have already achieved, I would like to emphasize, IRAA has achieved credibility. It has achieved recognition. It has achieved sponsorship. It shall soon achieve a red-carpet formal award ceremony attended by the intelligentsia of sound engineering and music recording, mixing, and mastering.

IRAA, you say, has achieved recognition, but it still lacks the glitz, glamour, and star power despite sound engineering being a core Bollywood movie production factor.

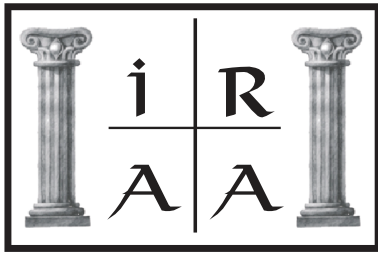
I do agree and it is rather dissatisfying in that sound engineers aren’t yet given their due along with composers and lyricists and singers when there is a groundbreaking hit that is selling and streaming in the tens of millions. My view is that the sound engineer who does the mastering is as much if not the most contributive factor, artistically in creating such a groundbreaking hit music track.

Once this happens, there will be attraction to IRAA from star power and the glamour and glitz will be achieved.

So, what is the gameplan with IRAA?

We have to generate far more interest in IRAA by deciding on more music awards. Last year, we announced Song of the Year Award for Srivalli track from Pushpa. Sid Sriram was the singer and A. Uday Kumar was the sound engineer and recordist. IRAA has again announced the choice for Song of the Year for

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2022. We would like to add a few more categories for music in 2023. Also to receive nominations from Indian music globally. I feel that in a few years, IRAA choice for Song of the Year in various categories will become the de facto winners that will be accepted by Bollywood and the rest of the music industry.

How much involved is the music industry in IRAA?

Frankly, at this point, the music labels aren't realizing their fault in not working closely with IRAA. I am surprised. We have reached out to music labels. We



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are aware that IRAA nominations should also come from music labels. I think most of the music labels, other than T-Series, are woolly-headed. T-Series did get in touch to make nominations, but the other labels have an attitude. But I am confident this will resolve itself soon in favor of IRAA. IRAA is willing to work closely with IPRS, PPL, and IMI. We are selecting winners through a process with 12 Jury members and an Award Director. We appoint a new Award Director every year or two. As I said earlier, IRAA has achieved a high level of credibility and music labels should respect the IRAA Awards and contribute substantially with paid nominations of all their new releases.

Why is IRAA Awards not being streamed?

Well, it is being streamed on Youtube. I think you meant OTT or television. IRAA has decided to tie up with some OTT channel. This year, we will have a good video production of the entire award ceremony. The award ceremony is a formal affair. It will be attended by many of the top sound recording engineers as well from the music industry.

IRAA's 17th edition is being sponsored by Genelec. Is IRAA well-funded?

We are extremely glad for Genelec's generous sponsorship to IRAA. We must thank **Arun Kumar** from Genelec and **Devasis Bartaki** from Alphatec. Both have contributed much to this edition of IRAA with their tremendous experience. I am sure that IRAA will benefit with their involvement. Both of them shared very strongly, the objectives of IRAA and are fully absorbed with the aims and goals of IRAA. I hope the partnership continues in the future.

