

THE MUMBAI EFFECT: CATALYSING INDIA'S AUDIO EDUCATION GROWTH

India's audio education sector has undergone a remarkable transformation over the past two decades. What was once a field dominated by informal apprenticeships and "learning on the job" has evolved into a structured ecosystem of institutions offering comprehensive training in sound engineering, music production, and audio technology.

At the heart of this evolution stands Mumbai—India's entertainment capital—whose pioneering institutions and industry proximity have catalysed the growth of audio education nationwide. From the government-backed film institutes to private academies founded by seasoned veterans, the ripple effect has been profound. Today, India boasts a diverse range of educational pathways for aspiring sound engineers and musicians.

This article examines the state of audio education in India, while profiling institutes across the country that are shaping the next generation of sound engineers and music producers. It explores each institution's founding vision, course offerings, and approaches to preparing students for industry careers.

For decades, India's sound engineering and music production sector relied on informal apprenticeships. Aspiring engineers started as assistants, learning the craft gradually through hands-on experience—a model that produced many of today's industry experts and educators, but one that demanded years of patience, financial stability to work for minimal pay, and access to willing mentors. This made breaking into the field extremely difficult, especially for talented individuals in smaller cities.

THE FORMALIZATION OF AUDIO EDUCATION

The establishment of formal audio education institutions has systematically addressed these gaps, creating structured pathways that combine theoretical knowledge with practical experience while making professional training accessible to a broader population in a compressed timeframe. These institutions train dozens or hundreds of students simultaneously through programs ranging from six months to four years, producing job-ready professionals far more efficiently than the traditional model.

The past decade has witnessed a dramatic transformation in India's audio education landscape. Students now access professional-grade training domestically, learning from industry veterans and gaining exposure to professional workflows while still in school. Most significantly, recent years have seen a decisive shift from unaccredited private diplomas to AICTE and UGC-recognized degree programmes—marking the sector's most significant structural change.

MEETING MARKET DEMAND

This expansion responds to genuine market demand. India's media and entertainment sector is projected to reach USD 48 billion by 2030, growing at 9.8% CAGR, with the OTT segment leading the charge—over 3,000 hours of content produced in FY24 alone, with revenues growing at 14.9% CAGR.

Industry reports project over 50,000 audio-related jobs by end of 2026. While exact graduate figures aren't publicly available, India's audio education sector—spanning government institutions, university programmes, and private academies—likely produces several thousand graduates annually. The critical question, as industry professionals note, isn't quantity but quality: how many are genuinely job-ready with the craft, critical listening skills, and professional discipline the industry demands.

MUMBAI AND THE WESTERN CORRIDOR: INDIA'S AUDIO EDUCATION CAPITAL

This western corridor's dominance in the sector is no accident—it represents a strategic convergence of industry infrastructure and professional talent that creates an unparalleled opportunity. Mumbai's status as home to Bollywood, India's largest recording studios, post-production facilities, and major music labels creates an inherent advantage for audio education institutions across the region.

Students benefit from immediate proximity to working professionals, active recording sessions, film dubbing studios, and live sound venues.



In 1973, Daman Sood established Western Outdoor in Mumbai, transforming it into far more than a commercial studio facility. A gold medalist from FTII Pune, Sood brought technical excellence and a commitment to nurturing talent that would define an era. Over his career, he recorded and mixed innumerable film soundtracks, albums, and commercials. But his influence extended beyond the mixing console. Western Outdoor became a sought-after training ground where young engineers like Avinash Oak and many others assisted on sessions. Under Sood's exacting standards, apprentices absorbed advanced recording techniques in real-world conditions, with many becoming leading technical consultants and award-winning sound designers in Bollywood. Sood also drafted syllabi for sound engineering institutions including FTII, Whistling Woods Academy, and Digital Academy, where he also served as Head of Audio Faculty. His legacy lies in the generations of professionals he mentored who continue shaping India's audio landscape.

Pioneers like Daman Sood, active studios, and industry opportunities explains why Mumbai and its surrounding region—including Pune and Karjat—have emerged as the country's preeminent hub for audio education. The Mumbai-Pune-Karjat corridor now hosts India's highest concentration of premier audio engineering and music production institutes, each offering distinct specializations that allow aspiring professionals to choose programs aligned with their career goals.



While Pune adds academic credibility with the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Karjat offers immersive campus environments with proximity to Mumbai's industry ecosystem, enabling institutes to facilitate regular industry interactions, guest lectures from practicing engineers, and internship opportunities difficult to replicate elsewhere.

Prominent institutes across this region have been instrumental in shaping the industry's talent pipeline, with a few notable examples below.

ABBEEY ROAD INSTITUTE, MUMBAI

In September 2025, Abbey Road Institute opened its first Asian campus at Bay Owl Studios in Mumbai, bringing Abbey Road Studios' educational methodology to India under Varun Parikh's leadership.

Parikh's motivation stemmed from a recurring pattern during his 15+ years in audio engineering and seven years running Bay Owl Studios. "Candidates arrived with unrealistic expectations yet lacked basic technical fundamentals. We'd train hires from scratch, despite them having completed programmes in this field," Parikh explains. Bay Owl became an unintended training ground, with hires building client bases and moving on within two to three years.

After eighteen months of due diligence, Parikh secured Asia's first Abbey Road Institute campus rather than launching "another fish in the sea of vocational courses." In under a year, the institute enrolled its third intake, crossing 30 students. The Advanced Diploma programme builds technically proficient engineers and producers, covering Pro Tools, Logic Pro, Ableton Live, recording, mixing, acoustics, music production, and business fundamentals. Programme fees range from ₹5.95 lakh to ₹6.99 lakh plus taxes.

On placements, Parikh is candid: "I don't think a responsible institution should promise that completing a diploma automatically results in a job. Our responsibility is to make students technically capable, creatively confident, professionally reliable, and connected enough to seize opportunities."



Detailed advertorial on page 49

FTII (FILM AND TELEVISION INSTITUTE OF INDIA), PUNE

Long before private audio schools emerged, FTII recognized that India's growing film and television industry needed professionally trained sound engineers. Six decades ago, FTII created the blueprint for audio education in India.

FTII was founded in 1960 under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. After World War II and India's independence, the government constituted an inquiry committee to study the state of the film industry and the committee recommended creating an institute to train the entire ecosystem of professionals who would elevate cinema as an art form.

FTII's flagship Sound Recording and Sound Design programme has evolved from a diploma course into a comprehensive three-year Master of Fine Arts in Cinema. This specialized program equips students with advanced technical competencies and artistic principles essential for producing high-quality sound across film, television, and digital media. The curriculum encompasses location sound recording, sound mixing, post-production sound design, and integration of sound with visual narratives. "Practical training is a very important part of our curriculum. The exercises are specifically designed to expose students to situations they may encounter in the industry," explains Madhu Apsara, Adjunct faculty at FTII. "FTII maintains studios equipped with state-of-the-art technology and professional-grade equipment and continuously updates its infrastructure. This ensures graduates possess skills highly relevant to current industry requirements, making them industry-ready from day one," he adds.

FTII also offers targeted short courses in digital music production. By combining theoretical knowledge with intensive hands-on experience. A legacy that continues to shape the sound of Indian cinema.

WHISTLING WOODS INTERNATIONAL, MUMBAI

Founded by veteran filmmaker Subhash Ghai, Whistling Woods International (WWI) represents one of India's most comprehensive film education institutions. The institute's approach to audio education is deeply integrated with its broader filmmaking curriculum.

The Sound Recording & Design department, headed by Rakesh Ranjan, trains students in both technical and creative aspects of film sound. The curriculum covers acoustics fundamentals, analog and digital recording technologies, location sound recording, dialogue editing, sound effects creation, Foley artistry, ADR, sound mixing for various formats, and post-production workflows used in professional film production.



What distinguishes Whistling Woods is the integration of sound education with other filmmaking disciplines. Students collaborate with other departments on actual film projects. The School of Music Production and Composition, led by Laili Dutta, offers degree programs like the BFA that combine musicianship with narrative storytelling, digital audio workstations, and collaborative media projects. For professionals seeking shorter commitments, Whistling Woods offers certificate programmes including the Virtual Academy Sound Design course, allowing working professionals to upskill without extended career breaks.

Detailed advertorial on page 47

WHISTLING WOODS INTERNATIONAL

Among India's institutions shaping the next generation of audio professionals, **Whistling Woods International (WWI)** stands apart for treating sound not as a standalone technical discipline, but as an essential storytelling tool that exists in constant dialogue with every aspect of filmmaking.

For aspiring sound professionals looking to build careers in film, OTT, television and digital content, WWI offers an education that combines creative immersion, technical excellence and direct industry exposure.

Founded by acclaimed filmmaker **Subhash Ghai**, WWI celebrates its **20th anniversary in 2026**, having established itself as one of India's leading institutions for Media & Entertainment education. At the core of its **Sound Recording & Design** pedagogy lies a distinctive philosophy: sound is not taught as an isolated technical function, but as an integral component of storytelling.

This approach is woven throughout WWI's Bachelor's and Master's Programmes in Filmmaking, where students gain insight into how sound interacts with cinematography, direction, editing and production to shape audience experience. Classroom learning is complemented by practical training through productions, shoots, live assignments and collaborative projects, enabling students to develop both technical proficiency and creative fluency.

Shaped By Professional Practice

A key differentiator of the WWI experience is its strong industry orientation. The curriculum is designed to reflect contemporary production environments, ensuring students graduate with skills that remain relevant in an evolving media landscape. Masterclasses led by accomplished practitioners, internships, live projects and on-campus productions expose students to professional workflows long before they enter the workforce.

The institute's academic framework continues to evolve alongside industry requirements, with strategic technology partnerships providing access to industry-standard tools and workflows. Its academic association with the **Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS)** further enhances the depth and credibility of the learning experience.

WWI's greatest strength, however, may be its faculty. The Sound Recording & Design department draws upon more than a century of combined motion-picture experience, giving students the opportunity to learn directly from professionals who have worked extensively across film, television and media production. This blend of academic instruction and practical mentorship provides valuable insight into the realities of professional sound practice.

Training on Professional Tools

To support this learning environment, WWI has invested in infrastructure aligned with industry standards. Students train on platforms including **Avid Pro Tools Intro, Studio and Ultimate**, alongside **Krotos**, gaining familiarity with the software widely used across professional audio production. Three dedicated audio labs facilitate hands-on training in **Music Production, Film and OTT Mixing, ADR, Foley Creation**, track laying and dialogue restoration.

Location sound forms an equally important component of the curriculum. Students work with professional wireless microphone systems and field recorders commonly used on contemporary productions, building practical experience in recording environments beyond the studio. The result is a comprehensive education that prepares students for the increasingly diverse demands of today's audio industry.

The institute continues to attract strong interest from aspiring



creatives across the country. Programmes in **Filmmaking, Media & Communication, Visual Communication Design, and Music Production & Composition** remain particularly sought after, reflecting the sustained growth of India's media and entertainment sector. Approximately **220 students** are admitted annually into WWI's filmmaking programmes through a rigorous selection process designed to identify aptitude, commitment and creative potential.

Success Beyond The Classroom

The success of WWI's educational model is perhaps best illustrated by the achievements of its alumni. Since 2006, graduates have established careers across film, television, streaming and international productions, supported by a robust alumni network that frequently returns to recruit emerging talent from the institute.

Among them is **Sohel Sanwari**, whose credits include *Humpty Sharma Ki Dulhania*, *Four More Shots Please!*, *Call Me Bae*, *Madgaon Express*, *Good Newwz* and *Badrinath Ki Dulhania*. Award-winning Sound Designer and Foley specialist **Suraj Bardia** has worked across Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, Gujarati and international cinema, earning the State Award for Best Sound Design for *GujjuBhai: Most Wanted* and serving as Foley Editor on *EQ*, the Polish feature nominated for Best International Feature Film at the 95th Academy Awards.

Other notable alumni include **Dhruv Parekh**, whose credits include *CTRL*, *Happy Patel* and *Tu Meri Main Tera*, and whose work on *Jubilee* earned a Filmfare Award for Sound Designing and Mixing. **Kunal Lolsure**, known for projects such as *Gehraiyaan*, *Bandish Bandits*, *Sacred Games* and *Jabariya Jodi*, has also received both State and Filmfare honours for *Shyam Chi Aai*.

Two decades after its founding, WWI continues to reinforce its reputation as a destination where technical rigour, creative collaboration and industry engagement converge, producing graduates equipped to shape the future of sound in screen storytelling.

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MUMBAI MUSIC INSTITUTE, MUMBAI

Director and Founder Arvind Vishwakarma established Mumbai Music Institute with a straightforward mission: nurturing passion for music while giving back to students. The institute has built a vibrant community for musicians and sound engineers, helping young people convert their passion into sustainable careers.

MMI offers three diploma courses tailored to specific career paths: Live Sound Engineering (6 months) focuses on PA system setup, mixing for live performances, stage monitoring, and troubleshooting in real-time environments. Music Production (1 year and 9 months) provides comprehensive training from composition and arrangement through recording, editing, mixing, and mastering. Studio Sound Engineering (6 months) delivers intensive, focused training in controlled recording environments.

The institute's 200-capacity performance venue provides students with real-world experience to handle live sound for actual audiences. This hands-on approach, combined with Vishwakarma's 25 years of industry connections, facilitates meaningful placements and internships with many students working with renowned composers.

SOUND IDEAZ ACADEMY, MUMBAI

SoundIdeaz Academy was founded by Dr. Pramod Chandorkar, who learned through apprenticeship under Professor Surendra Kolkar, whose studio became his training ground.

The institute's genesis is rooted in "Guru Dakshina"—honouring his mentor. Over eight to ten years, Dr. Chandorkar trained twelve students, documenting his methods. Their success—many now leading engineers—sparked a realization: why not train a hundred? Those documented notes evolved into formalized curriculum, and in 2010, SoundIdeaz Academy was established. To date, Dr. Chandorkar has trained between 900 and 1,000 students.

For years, audio engineering faced parental scepticism and was perceived as a hobby only. From a business perspective, sustainability required practical solutions, so SoundIdeaz developed a one-year diploma that continues till date. Current offerings include Diplomas in Sound Engineering, Music Production and Audio Post-Production and Live Sound Pro Certificate.

SoundIdeaz's infrastructure includes professional recording studios and mixing facilities with emphasis on hands-on learning. "Another key aspect is our teaching methodology. Every faculty member focuses on the weakest student rather than the strongest. We've followed this principle since our first batch. Today, SoundIdeaz is running its 90th batch, and this approach has been instrumental in building successful careers," he adds.

SoundIdeaz Academy's approach to career outcomes diverges from placement-centric models. Dr. Chandorkar's philosophy: invest sufficiently in developing employable skills, and placement becomes secondary. The institute deliberately avoids competitive placement and salary advertising, believing proper training makes placement happen naturally.

"Students are often hired before courses end on their own merit. Because of the goodwill and credibility SoundIdeaz has built over more than a decade, employers often approach us directly when they have openings," he says. This approach reflects that the goal isn't getting students their first job but preparing them for a twenty-year career.

Recognizing that formal credentials are increasingly valued, SoundIdeaz expanded its offerings three years ago and B.Tech and B.A. degree programs were introduced through partnership with Universal AI University.



**DR. PRAMOD CHANDORKAR,
SOUNDIDEAZ ACADEMY**

Being an excellent engineer and being an excellent teacher are two very different skills.



**VARUN PARIKH,
ABBEY ROAD INSTITUTE**

Knowing where a compressor is in a DAW and understanding why you would use one are very different things.

TAG INSTITUTE (THE AUDIO GUYS), MUMBAI

TAG Institute was founded in 2020 by Jayakrishnan Nalinkumar (JK), Omkar Tamhan, and Anupam Sathe. Despite being one of the newer entrants, TAG has quickly established itself as a leading institute for audio education.

The institute modern facilities include professional recording studios, mixing suites, and live sound training spaces.

As per the institute's website they offer a 3-year Bachelor's degrees in partnership with HSNL University, including a B.Sc. in Sound Engineering and a B.A. in Music Production. For those seeking shorter commitments, TAG provides 15-month Advanced Diplomas in Sound Engineering and Music Production (including a mandatory one-month industry internship) and 12-month foundational diploma certificates in audio engineering tracks.

THE MEDIA TRIBE - MUMBAI

The Media Tribe is founded by Ashish Manchanda—IRAA award winner, GRAMMY-nominated producer, and Full Sail University Hall of Fame inductee. "When we started, India had one of the world's largest film industries, yet serious professional audio education remained accessible to remarkably few students," Manchanda explains. "The talent pipeline simply wasn't keeping pace."

Having experienced world-class education firsthand, Manchanda sought to replicate that opportunity in India. The flagship one-year program in Sound Engineering, Music Production, and Songwriting combines technical training with mentorship, professional projects, visiting international faculty, and direct industry immersion. Shorter three- and six-month specialist tracks accommodate working professionals or those with specific skill gaps.

"A placement secures a first job. A professional network sustains the next twenty years," Manchanda notes. Students build relationships with producers, engineers, and artists while studying. By graduation, they understand the industry—and it knows them. Students gain exposure to real professional environments—MTV Unplugged, Coke Studio, Bollywood films, and major live productions—while still in training.

Principal Faculty Aman Moroney exemplifies this trajectory. Developed within this ecosystem, he now operates internationally from Los Angeles. "Students become professionals. Professionals become international collaborators. And those professionals return as mentors," Manchanda says, himself continuing to bring current experience into the classroom.

UNIVERSAL AI UNIVERSITY, KARJAT

SoundIdeaz Academy has partnered with Universal AI University, Karjat to deliver India's first UGC-approved four-year B.Tech in Sound Engineering—blending core engineering, acoustics, audio technology, and artificial intelligence.

Students explore all four specializations—Music Technology, Music Production, Audiography, and Live Sound—during the first two years before choosing their focus by the fourth semester. A three-year BA pathway offers broader access, as PCM requirements for B.Tech aren't essential for sound engineering. Both curricula align with NEP 2020, emphasizing modern music creation, mixing, mastering, and digital audio workstations.



ABBAY ROAD
INSTITUTE
MUMBAI

Abbey Road Institute Mumbai

Training India's Next Generation of Music Producers, Engineers, Creators & Music Business Professionals

India's audio industry has never been more accessible or more interconnected. Streaming, digital content and cross-media collaborations have opened new opportunities for creators, while advances in technology have placed world-class production tools within reach of almost anyone. Yet accessibility alone does not create expertise. As the industry evolves, the challenge for professional audio education is not simply teaching people how to use the tools, but helping them develop the critical listening, collaboration and problem-solving skills that underpin long-term success.

Knowing how to use a DAW is only the starting point. The real value lies in understanding the *Why* behind creative and technical decisions. A producer or engineer's most important tool is not the software, but their ears: the ability to listen critically and make informed choices. Add to that the collaborative skills, real-world experience and problem-solving confidence that come from working in professional environments, and it becomes clear why industry-focused education matters. This is precisely the gap **Abbey Road Institute Mumbai** set out to bridge when it opened its doors in 2025, establishing the first Abbey Road Institute

tion clearly: "Our programmes train students to be at the forefront of the industry, to shape and become part of the direction and evolution of music and professional recording."

Varun Parikh, Director of Abbey Road Institute Mumbai and founder of **Bay Owl Studios**, adds: "We wanted to create an environment where students could learn not just in a classroom, but in the very environment where some of their role models come to record. The practical nature of the Advanced Diploma, paired with access to the industry-standard facilities and gear at Bay Owl Studios, supported by regular mentorship from working industry professionals, is what truly sets Abbey Road Institute apart. The aim is to teach students how to make informed decisions with a solid understanding of fundamentals, not blindly learn a DAW or plugins. From day one we help them develop their ears, build confidence and improve collaboration skills, empowering them to build sustainable careers in the industry."

This, perhaps, is the most important distinction. **Audio is a vocational discipline.**

You can study microphone polar patterns on a screen, but understanding microphone placement comes from putting microphones in front of instruments, hearing them in the room, moving them around and seeing what changes. Day-to-day tools such as compression and equalisation become extremely meaningful when you understand that it starts with the source, room and the type and placement of the microphone, long before that captured signal reaches the DAW or a plugin. The software is just a user interface, it is imperative to understand the principle.

Being a producer or engineer is about far more than knowing the software or claiming the title online in your bio. It's about managing



Hands-on studio sessions immerse students in the realities of professional recording, building technical skills, critical listening and collaborative workflows in a real-world production environment

campus in Asia.

Their flagship **Advanced Diploma in Music Production & Sound Engineering** is an intensive one-year programme built around three interconnected areas: **Music Production, Sound Engineering and Music Business**. Rather than treating them as separate disciplines, students encounter them as they would in professional life. The curriculum uses Abbey Road Institute's Progressive Continuous Learning approach, repeatedly connecting theory with practical application throughout the programme.

Luca Barassi, Abbey Road Institute Global CEO, describes the ambi-



With daily access to dedicated workstations, students can continue developing projects and refining their skills outside scheduled sessions

sessions, working with artists, solving problems in real time and keeping a project moving when everyone in the room is looking to you for answers.

That is why Abbey Road Institute Mumbai places such an emphasis on hands-on learning. Based at Bay Owl Studios, students are immersed in a professional studio environment from day one, learning the craft in the same setting where it is actually practised.

Every student has an individual workstation, with daily access to continue producing, editing and mixing outside scheduled teaching. In addition to practical studio work within the curriculum, every student receives 80+ hours of guaranteed individual commercial studio time at Bay Owl Studios, with access to most Institute facilities Monday to Saturday.

Access to equipment means very little without access to time. Students need hours to experiment, make mistakes, listen critically and develop their own judgement. Traditionally one would make many of these mistakes on the job over years. While learning is a never-ending process, the intensity and practical nature of the programme allows students to make them without the fear of client liability.

Alumni & Student Feedback

That difference is already being felt by the students themselves. **Ashish Raj**, a Grade 8 Trinity pianist and self-taught producer who relocated from Bangalore, says: "Coming from being a self-taught producer, I've learned what's actually right and how to do things properly. With constant workshops, access to great gear, and collaboration with batchmates, it's been a huge boost to my skills."

For 18-year-old **Nitya Arora**, who relocated from Delhi and chose to take a gap year to pursue her passion for music production, that value also lies in mentorship. A runner-up and recipient of **Bay Owl Studios' Women in Music Scholarship**, she says: "Having access to mentorship from experienced women in the industry makes me feel seen, supported, and guided as I take the next steps in my journey."



Sylvia Massy works directly with Abbey Road Institute Mumbai students during an exclusive three-day studio session, building a song from scratch through hands-on recording, production and experimentation

"Behind that experience is a close-knit core team invested in each student's development throughout the year. Institute Director **Varun Parikh** brings extensive studio and industry experience while continuing to lead and grow Bay Owl Studios. Head Lecturer **Puneet Samtani** brings over two decades of engineering and production experience, alongside ongoing professional work with **Netflix**. **Anushka Lewis**, Academic Facilitator, is a singer-songwriter, educator and one of India's few contemporary harpists. **Ritika Khakhra** leads marketing and student outreach, while **Ganesh Murthi**, Lead Technician, also teaches **Ableton** and other technical modules. Together with the wider faculty, the core team provides continuity, mentorship and support throughout each



Weekly workshops and masterclasses place students alongside leading artists and audio professionals, offering industry perspectives and hands-on learning that extend beyond classrooms



Celebrating the next generation of audio professionals at Abbey Road Institute's Global Graduation Week in London. From 2027, students from Mumbai will join graduates from the Institute's international network from London, Paris, Amsterdam, Johannesburg, Sydney, Miami and Los Angeles

student's journey at Abbey Road Institute," notes Team Abbey Road Institute Mumbai.

The people students encounter are equally important. Perspective from fellow professionals, those that have been there and done that, is invaluable.

And this is not an occasional guest lecture. Workshops, masterclasses and specialist industry sessions happen every week. Students have learned directly from or interacted with **Sylvia Massy, Ehsaan Noorani, Dhruv Ghanekar, Karan Kanchan, Gulraj Singh, Sanjay Divecha, Shantanu Hudlikar, Vasundhara Vee, Shazneen Arethna, Karan Pandav, Karun Kannampilly, Kamakshi Khanna, Jiten Solanki, Japji Singh Valecha, Chandana Bala Kalyan, Alokanda Dasgupta, Hashbass, Mujeeb Dadarkar, Ashyar Balsara, Richard Francis, Raghav Meattle, KJ Singh, Vinayak Netke and Vijay Basrur**, alongside sessions with **Dolby India, TuneCore, Sennheiser/Neumann, PRS for Music and Universal Audio**.

One engineer may record a drum kit one way and another may do something completely different. A composer working in film approaches a project differently from an independent electronic producer. A musician, mix engineer, producer and music-business professional each sees the same industry through a different lens. That variety helps students understand that professional practice is about informed choices rather than a collection of fixed rules.

In July 2026, Abbey Road Institute Mumbai expanded that access further with a five-day Song Production Masterclass headlined by Grammy-winning American producer, mixer and engineer **Sylvia Massy**. The students also received their own exclusive three full days of studio sessions with Sylvia, building a song from scratch.

"The knowledge you gain at Abbey Road Institute can transform your own recordings instantly and prepare you for bigger opportunities in the industry. Learning the craft the right way, from working professionals, is incredibly important – and with patience and persistence, you can build a lasting career." – Sylvia Massy

Veteran engineer **Shantanu Hudlikar** described the environment itself: "Kudos to Abbey Road Institute Mumbai and Bay Owl Studios for creating such a welcoming and inspiring space."

For an emerging producer or engineer, these networks can be as important as technical ability. Music has always been collaborative, and professional opportunities frequently emerge from relationships built while creating and recording together.

Some students have already collaborated with visiting professionals. In one instance, a student asked Sanjay Divecha to play guitar on a project, and he agreed. Experiences like these reflect the kind of community Abbey Road Institute Mumbai is striving to build: one that goes beyond introducing students to industry professionals and encourages the confidence and relationships needed to work alongside them.

For Abbey Road Institute Mumbai, the objective is simple. The Institute views its relationship with students as a long-term commitment rather than a one-time transaction. The success of the institute remains tied to the long term success of the students.

The Institute is building a community of producers, engineers, creators and music business professionals, while integrating them into the wider global Abbey Road Institute network. Advanced Diploma students can attend the annual Global Graduation activities in London, meet peers from other institutes across London, Paris, Amsterdam, Sydney, Johannesburg, Miami & Los Angeles, and take part in a student-exclusive workshop at Abbey Road Studios.

The Institute's involvement does not end at graduation either. Through Abbey Road Institute Mumbai's Graduates' Support Programme, eligible graduates receive additional commercial studio time at Bay Owl Studios, support towards attending the London graduation activities, a choice of professional DAW, a guaranteed internship and continued one-to-one mentoring from core faculty.

India already has the most important ingredient: extraordinary musical and creative talent.

The vision for Abbey Road Institute Mumbai is clear: continue building the professional ecosystem to empower this talent. Students learning the right way will eventually pay it forward with better studios, stronger training for their juniors, greater industry mentorship, less gatekeeping and more collaboration.

As India's music ecosystem continues to expand, the people behind the console (or its modern-day counterpart) will play an increasingly important role in determining how that music reaches the world. Preparing them properly will prove just as important as the technology they end up choosing to use.

Contact: Abbey Road Institute Mumbai

Flagship Programme: Advanced Diploma in Music Production & Sound Engineering

Short courses & specialisations: Coming January 2027

Website: abbeyroadinstitute.in/mumbai

Contact: mumbai@abbeyroadinstitute.com | +91 98929 37097

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The university's sprawling campus houses a professional studio facility matching international standards—an expanded replica of SoundIdeaz Academy's Mumbai center, but significantly larger in scale. The objective: provide comparable education within India at a fraction of international costs. "The first batch enrolled seven students, the second grew to twenty, and the third also has over twenty," says Dr. Pramod Chandorkar.

VIJAYBHOOMI UNIVERSITY - TRUE SCHOOL OF MUSIC, KARJAT

Vijaybhoomi University offers specialized audio and sound programs through The True School of Music, founded by Ashutosh Pathak with Prof. Gilles Denizot Sitbon serving as Dean.

According to the university's website, students can pursue comprehensive 4-year undergraduate programs including a B.Tech in Sound Engineering (covering Sound Recording & Engineering, Audio System Design & Engineering, Mixing Multitrack Sound, Live Sound Engineering, Sound for Visuals, and Acoustics & Studio Design), BPA in Hindustani/Western Music, BFA (Music) in Music Production, and BPA (Music) in Contemporary Performance.

SOUTH INDIA: A GROWING AUDIO EDUCATION HUB

South India has emerged as another significant center for audio education, with a substantial number of institutes offering specialized training in sound engineering and music production. The region's audio education landscape is shaped by several key institutions that have established themselves as important contributors to India's sound engineering talent pool.

AUDIO ACADEMY, BANGALORE

Co-founded by Niranjana Shivaram and Vahuni Venugopal, Audio Academy has established itself as one of India's leading training grounds for aspiring audio professionals, with particular strength in live sound and studio production.

The founders' motivation was clear: address the lack of formally educated professionals in the live sound industry, which had stagnated due to the traditional "learn on the job" approach. The industry response has been strong, with Audio Academy building its reputation through word of mouth.

The institute offers a full-time, one-year diploma program for young professionals and professional certification courses of up to three months for experienced engineers looking to upskill. Course offerings mentioned on their website include Recording Arts & Live Sound, Electronic Music Production, System Design & Alignment, Art of Mixing with Pro Tools, Motion Picture Sound, and Making Music with Ableton. Faculty consists of active industry professionals who bring current standards into the classroom, while state-of-the-art equipment enables practical, real-world problem-solving.

A key strength is Audio Academy's extensive industry network, enabling students to engage in active professional work throughout their courses. Upon completion, the institute facilitates internships and placements nationwide, building an extensive alumni network across the industry.

AUDIOPHILE'S SCHOOL OF SOUND ENGINEERING (TASE), CHENNAI

Established in 2019 by Mervin T Thomas and Neeraj Kashyap, TASE has rapidly become a respected institution for Music Technology and Sound Engineering, bringing Hollywood standards to India's audio education landscape.

"I am self-made," says Thomas. "I wanted to create an institution providing aspiring professionals with structured, industry-focused training that wasn't available when I started out." After studying in Hollywood, Thomas brought those global standards to India.

The institute's mission is simple: Do, Analyse, Discuss! "At TASE, we throw you into the ocean and teach you how to swim. There's no hand-holding. Students learn by doing, analysing, and discussing—that gives us an edge," says Thomas.

TASE's faculty includes experienced industry professionals, including IRAA award winners and nominees, who teach daily. Programmes include a one-year full-time Diploma, self-paced Part-time Diploma, Six-month Course (around ₹3.2 lakh plus GST), and Studio Engineering Certificate Course (approximately ₹2 lakh plus GST).

Small batch sizes—capped at ten students—provide immersive learning with individual attention and substantial hands-on experience.

TASE operates as a fully functioning professional studio where students observe live sessions and workflows firsthand. This environment equips graduates with industry-specific experience from day one, supported by career counselling and an 75% placement success rate.

KADENCE ACADEMY OF AUDIO & LIGHTS (KAAL), BANGALORE

Siddharth Jhunjhunwala, Founder and CEO of Cresurge Private Limited, established KAAL to bridge the gap between India's creative talent and the practical skills demanded by live entertainment.

For years, professionals entered the industry without formal training, progressing from helper roles to engineer over 10 to 20 years. The industry can no longer rely solely on such lengthy, unstructured routes.

Kadence and ProSound have played an important role in shaping India's professional audio and live entertainment ecosystem. Building on his own experience with Kadence, Siddharth Jhunjhunwala recognized the need for a new generation of professionals who were not just trained, but truly industry-ready. That vision led to the creation of KAAL.

KAAL offers a nine-month Diploma in Live Sound Engineering and Light Designing for approximately ₹3 lakh each, covering Live Sound & Live Lighting through classroom instruction, hands-on training, and real-world production exposure. Plans include shorter certificate and specialized programmes across audio, lighting, and event-production technology.

KAAL's training combines creative judgment, technical capability, and professional execution. Students work with professional equipment, troubleshoot real problems, and learn from professionals who have delivered major concerts, festivals, and corporate events. Students participate in equipment setup, sound checks, lighting programming, and live-event execution, learning complete production workflows.



**ASHISH MANCHANDA,
THE MEDIA TRIBE**

The problem today isn't access to software. It is access to excellence.

KM MUSIC CONSERVATORY (KMMC), CHENNAI

KMMC is a premier higher education music institution founded in 2008 by the legendary Oscar-winning composer A.R. Rahman under the A.R. Rahman Foundation.

Headquartered in Chennai, Tamil Nadu with an expansion campus in Mumbai, Maharashtra the conservatory is dedicated to providing world-class education in both Indian and Western musical traditions, alongside cutting-edge music technology.

According to their website and social media KM Music Conservatory offers a wide range of programmes ranging from six-month part-time courses to a full-time, two-year Diploma course. Courses offered include Diploma in Music Production and Diploma in Film Scoring and Composition, Audio Engineering: Mixing & Mastering Online Program, certificate in composition.

LEWMINADIO TECHVERSITY, BANGALORE

Founded by Sudarshan Srinivasan and Annu Jamloki—the institute equips aspiring and working audio professionals with practical, industry-oriented skills through a tiered curriculum designed for different career stages.

At its core is Mastering the Foundations of Sound (MFS), a comprehensive one-year program building a strong foundation in professional audio and sound engineering. For working professionals seeking targeted skill development, the Audio Design & Deployment Program (ADPP) offers a 35-day intensive focused on practical, industry-relevant skills. The System Design & Optimization (SDO) masterclass condenses specialized training into four days, concentrating on professional system design and optimization techniques.

Highly specialized short-format training includes RiTA Training, a one-day program centered on audio measurement, analysis, and system optimization using RiTA software. These shorter programs have gained traction among working professionals due to their application-oriented approach and immediate practical value.

The institute prioritizes hands-on learning with professional equipment and software, emphasizing how audio systems function and applying that knowledge to practical challenges. Batches run periodically based on demand, with limited class sizes to ensure quality learning.

Since its establishment, the Techversity has trained over 368 professionals, including aspiring audio engineers, technicians, consultants, and live sound specialists.

SOUND ENGINEERING ACADEMY (SEA) - THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Established in 2004, the Sound Engineering Academy (SEA) in Thiruvananthapuram has been shaping India's audio talent for over two decades through an intensive one-year diploma in Sound Engineering & Sound Recording (two semesters) that balances rigorous curriculum with extensive hands-on studio experience. The director of the institute is Dr. Vishnu A R.

The academy is ISO 9001:2015 certified and the diploma covers comprehensive modules including Audio Fundamentals, Audio Electronics, Mixing, Recording Studio techniques, Postproduction, Live Sound Reinforcement, and more—providing students with a well-rounded foundation across multiple audio disciplines. The institute holds affiliation and accreditation with the Media & Entertainment Skills Council under Skill India, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, and the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC).

FROM ACCESS TO EXCELLENCE: EMERGING CHALLENGES

As formal audio education expands across India, industry professionals identify a new reality: the question is no longer whether audio education exists, but whether it delivers the quality and relevance the industry demands.

The first systemic issue is a severe shortage of qualified educators. As Pramod Chandorkar observes, "Being an excellent engineer and being an excellent teacher are two very different skills."

Equally concerning is how audio education risks becoming glorified software training. Ashish Manchanda captures this: "The problem today isn't access to software. It is access to excellence." Varun Parikh notes that "knowing where a compressor is in a DAW and understanding why you would use one are very different things." Students learn tools but not craft—critical listening, aesthetic judgment, and professional discipline remain underdeveloped.

Beyond these, the challenge isn't simply the number of institutes—it's quality and specialization. Demand spans film and television, OTT content, live sound, gaming audio, immersive audio (Dolby Atmos), broadcast engineering, advertising, and corporate AV. Each requires

distinct skills, yet a recurring trend observed across the broader landscape of audio education is the tendency of many programmes to offer a little of everything, touching on multiple areas without sufficient depth.

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM WITH OEM TRAININGS

Many live sound and lighting certification tracks / trainings are run by major pro-audio OEMs and distributors, delivered by industry specialists and/or global brand representatives.

These programmes cover a wide range of product-specific certifications and hands-on training across the pro-audio sector. Offerings include training for wireless microphone systems, digital mixing consoles, loudspeaker deployment and system design, lighting control systems, and digital audio workstation software. More comprehensive tracks focus on audio networking protocols at multiple proficiency levels, advanced system design workshops, and specialized equipment setup and configuration.

Training formats vary from intensive hands-on workshops and on-site certification sessions to large-scale programmes that have reached hundreds of thousands of participants globally. Many providers now combine traditional in-person instruction with flexible online learning platforms, featuring product launches, webinars, and expert-led recorded sessions accessible through dedicated training portals.

While these OEM programmes offer valuable brand-specific technical expertise, their scope usually remains inherently limited to a particular product ecosystem.

One industry veteran who has stepped into the education space with his own specialized training is Warren D'Souza—live sound engineer, audio director, and founder of SOUND.COM, who has shaped India's live event production landscape for decades. Through EvenTech Academy (ETA), he now channels that expertise into structured education, developing technical skills for the next generation of live production professionals. ETA delivers practical masterclasses and sessions on a wide range of live sound topics like venue synthesis and line array deployment, sound design and mixing workshops, rigging and trussing training, specialized summits in RF engineering and monitor mixing, to name a few. This approach offers more comprehensive, brand-agnostic training that provides real technical knowledge across all facets of live production, rather than focusing solely on specific manufacturer products.

India's audio education is improving—better infrastructure, growing industry support, and institutes building a stronger foundation. However, the challenge ahead: bridging technical training with critical thinking, adaptability, and real-world professional skills. With continued collaboration between educators and industry, India can build a robust pipeline of skilled audio professionals.

SHOWCASE YOUR AUDIO INSTITUTE

Training the next generation of audio professionals?

We invite educational institutions to feature their programs, facilities, and success stories in our magazine. Connect with aspiring engineers and industry professionals.

FEATURE YOUR STUDIO

Built a cutting-edge studio?

Showcase your facility, technology, and projects in our magazine. Share your story with the audio community and gain industry recognition.

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