

Lalitha Kala Tarangini

Premier Quarterly Music Magazine from
Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira

Volume 2020, Issue 4

December 2020



H Puttachar (1898-1981)

Facebook Live Event

SRLKM Presents

G Vedantha Iyengar Memorial Award – 2020

(Educationist, Public Service Medalist and Visionary Founder of Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira)

"Sangeetha Vedantha Dhureena - 2020"

(with a cash award of One Lakh Rupees, a Silver Medal and a citation)

To

Vidwan AV Anand

By His Holiness Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar
Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Mutt, Melukote

4:15 pm onwards

On Sunday, 6th December 2020 at

Bangalore Gayana Samaja, KR Road, Bangalore-560004

and

"Raga Laya Prabha Award - 2020"

(with a cash purse of Twenty five thousand rupees)

will be given to

Vidushi Anjali Sriram - Vocal

Vidushi Dr. SV Sahana - Veena

Vidwan Heramb and Vidwan Hemanth - Flute

Vidushi Apoorva Krishna - Violin

Vidwan A Radhesh - Mridanga

and

"Pallavi Sammela Award"

I Prize - Vidwan Eeshwar Aiyer (Rs. 25,000)

II Prize - Vidwan Abhirama G Bode & Vidushi R Lakshmi Priya (Rs. 15,000)

Judges choice special prize - Vidushi Madhuri Kaushik

Sangeetha Kala Rathna Dr. TS Satyavathi will present the Awards.

Please Note:

The above programme will be Streamed Live by 'Shaale' and entrance is restricted to only awardees and their family

(Without mask, entrance is prohibited)

The programme will be followed by a grand Veena concert by

Dr. SV Sahana – Veena

A Radhesh – Mridanga

Anoor Sunaad – Khanjari

December 2020

We regret missing the September edition due to Covid-19 challenges. Hopefully, the pandemic will be behind us soon and we look forward to a better time in 2021.

Shivarapatna Vasudev Rao Narayanaswamy Rao (SVN Rao) at the age of 14 yrs conceptualised 'Sree Rama Seva Mandali' in Chamarajpet and shaped it into an iconic music institution and today it is one of the topmost organisation servicing the cause of music in the whole country. Rasikas of music and musicians are indebted to his services that spanned over six decades. It was a pride of place for any reputed musician to perform at the "Sree Rama Seva Mandali" Chamarajpet right from its inception. Legends of Karnatic music have all performed at the sabha for their entire career with MS Amma performing for 36 years, Veena Veena Doreswamy lyengar performing for 46 years, KJ Yesudas performing for 48 years, etc.

Rasikas always considered it added a couple of years more to one's life by just being part of the Ramanavami Celebrations and attending the evening concerts at the 'Sree Rama Seva Mandali'. KJ Yesudas Paying tribute to SVN Rao has said 'only those who have the grace of Sree Rama will get an opportunity to sing at the Sree Rama Seva Mandali'. N Murali, President, The Madras Music Academy has said that the Ramanavami Concerts conducted by Shri. SVN Rao is as great as the December Music concerts in Chennai and particularly The Music Academy. Shri. Krishna Prasad, Honorary Secretary SRLKM considers SVN Rao a pioneer and responsible for the state of the Karnatic music we have in Karnataka today.

The Article spans his life, times, and his contributions and takes us back to the golden era of Karnatic music.

Having published a special edition on Pazhani Shri. M Subramania Pillai in June 2020, We believe our efforts are not complete without covering Ramanathapuram CS Murugaboopathy who along

with Pazhani and Shri. Palghat Mani Iyer formed the Trinity of Karnatic Mridangam. His journey is a must-read for all mridangists.

Very little is covered about the doyen Mridangist H Puttachar who is considered the Mridanga Pitamaha of Karnataka. He was a contemporary of Maestros Palghat Mani Iyer, Pazhani Subramania Pillai and the current day Mridangists are indebted to him for his service especially teaching, guiding and mentoring them. The current edition of Lalitha Kala Tarangini covers compilations from his students L Bheemachar, M Vasudeva Rao and B Druvaraj. This article is bound to bring back memories of the old days for some of our practicing Mridangists.

Dr. HS Anasuya Kulkarni is a multi-faceted personality who has achieved a unique distinction of excelling and collecting very rare instruments from across the globe. She has mastered Anghklung, an Indonesian bamboo instrument, and is the only person to have specially designed and adopted this instrument for Indian Karnatic music. She has given Lec-Dem in places where Karnatic music matters like The Madras Music Academy and also won prizes. We carry a very interesting essay on her exciting journey in this edition.

Lalitha Kala Tarangini wishes its readers a Very Happy New Year 2021.

regards,
Anand S

Contributors - BN Ramesh, B Druvaraj, TK Balasubramanian, TR Vaitheeswaran, C Ramakrishnan, Suresh Jagennathan, Rajani Arjun Shankar, Bombay Balaji, CP Chikkanna, Anagha Yoganand, L Bheemachar, Rajashree Yogananda, Dr. Gururaja Karjagi, M Vasudeva Rao

Photo Courtesy - Front cover photo - Druvaraj Personal collection, M Vasudeva Rao personal collection, Sree Rama Seva Mandali, Chamarajpet, Personal collection of Latha Ramachar, Personal collection of Mudhra Bhaskar, Personal collection of Anasuya Kulkarni, Personal collection of Srinivasa Raja Rao

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SV Narayanaswamy Rao with Kannada Matinee idol Dr. Rajkumar at the Chamarajpet Sree Rama Seva Mandali

Contents

- 07 Sangeetha Sahitya Vidwan Shri Mayuram Viswanatha Sastry
- 10 Ramanathapuram CS Murugaboopathy
- 15 KS Kalidas on Ramanathapuram CS Murugaboopathy

- 16 TN Seshagopalan on Ramanathapuram CS Murugaboopathy
- 18 Sri Mahavaidyanatha Sivan's Melaraga-malika
- 21 Book Review - Purandaradasa
- 22 HP Ramachar the Kanjari maestro
- 26 Kaliyugada Ramadhoota Shri. SVN Rao
- 32 Mudhra Veena Festival
- 34 Twelve years in the divine proximity of my revered guru
- 36 Dr. HS Anasuya Kulkarni
- 40 Vidwan H Puttachar's rigour kept me afloat in Carnatic music
- 42 Reminiscences of my guru Mahavidwan H Puttachar
- 44 Musical Musings
- 45 Acharya PS Narayanaswamy passes away
- 46 Enrico Caruso

Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira (SRLKM) founded by Shri G Vedanta Iyengar in the year 1955 is rendering yeomen service in the field of music. In addition to music classes, music concerts are held all through the year. The significant festivals are Sankranti and Spring music festivals. Mandira also takes pride in conducting music awareness program, music workshops, Lecture demonstrations etc. Entry to all program conducted by the Mandira is free as the aim of the institution is to enable everyone to listen to the best of the music and to propagate Karnatic Classical Music.

"Lalitha Kala Tarangini" publication is fostered by Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira, disseminates knowledge in the area of Karnatak Classical Music and bring to light talent and excellence in this area. We believe this is just another step towards preserving and promoting this great Indian fine art.

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Magazine Committee

Editor - Anand S

Senior Associates: Neela Ramgopal, KS Kalidas, Dr. Mysore M Manjunath, Rajashree Yogananda, and Dr. Rama V Bennur.

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Lalitha Kala Tarangini

Inbox

Dear Shri. Krishna Prasad,
Your Dec 19 issue contains valuable insight into the life and art of Veena Dhanammal about whom not much is documented in the public domain. Those who lived in her times and had the privilege of listening to her style of playing are no longer with us today. She did not play in public but she restricted her divine art only for a handful of her admirers and vidwans of her time like Tiger Varadachariar, Shanmuga Vadivu, Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Musiri Subramania Iyer to name a few. Dhanammal school of music was truly carried forward by her granddaughters Brinda and Muktha whose rendering of Padams and Javalis were unique for its vilamba kaala and raaga bhava. Old timers say brevity was Dhanammal's forte. Her Alapana did not exceed five minutes. She normally avoided swaraprasthara and as Tiger once remarked, 'those who heard Dhanammal play would feel what was there beyond what the Saraswati incarnate had not played'? Kudos to the authors for a well researched article on an artist of extraordinary caliber.

NS Krishnamurthy,
Retired Station Director, AIR

Dear Shri. Krishna Prasad,
Lalitha Kala Tarangini Mar 2020 commemorating the 90th birth anniversary of Violin Virtuoso Lalgudi Sri G Jayaraman is undoubtedly a collector's item. The contribution of Lalgudi to Carnatic music is immeasurable.

Sri T R Subramaniam, a contemporary of Lalgudi and an accomplished musician himself, once mentioned that "If at all there is a debate on the Role of Violin in Carnatic Music, it should be divided into two broad heads viz, Before Lalgudi's entry and after he entered." TRS also mentioned that Lalgudi was the first solo Violinist to perform intricate and complex Pallavis in concert. Before that, performers used to borrow Pallavis from those performed earlier. He named Lalgudi as "An innovative Pallavist".

I vividly remember Lalgudi's Lec-Dem on "Technique of Violin playing" in Bangalore Gayana Samaja when he presided over the annual conference. He considered Violin as an "Emperor amongst instruments - Sarva Vyapi", since it has entered all forms of music viz. Cinema, Bhajan-s, Harikatha and even Hindustani music. Lalgudi highlighted that an accompanist should

have the following qualities viz, Pleasant Temperament, Suswara, Sruti and Laya, Co-operative Team spirit, Time Conscious, Supportive role and Good but Silent Interaction with the co-artists and the audience. Like wise a solo artiste should have Mastery over the instrument, Creativity, Rich Repertoire and Lyric Conscious. He opined that Technique and Melody are two faces of the same coin.

During 1980's there was a day-long debate in Madras (Now Chennai) about "The Carnatic Music of the Future and the Future of Carnatic Music". Many leading artists and connoisseurs of music voiced their opinion and in the end Lalgudi sir was invited to give the concluding remarks. Lalgudi took the mike, paused for a while and said "First of all, I don't think there is necessity for this debate because the Future of Carnatic music is bright and Carnatic music has a very bright future". The organisers were not happy with his single line opinion and requested him to speak further.

The very fact that he wants to be a "Violinist in all his future births" speaks volumes about his devotion and dedication to the art and the instrument. I consider myself fortunate to have attended many of his concerts, which includes the inaugural concert at Chowdaiah Memorial Hall and many others. Lalgudi took Karnatic Music in general and Violin in Particular to newer heights and will remain in the hearts of scores of his fans spread all around the globe.

S Shashidhar, Violinist, Bangalore

To the Editor,

The effort and hardworking you have put to bring out the Lalitha Kala Tarangini of July to the highest standard is just enormous. Forgotten heroine Vallabam Kalyanasundaram and her achievements and her struggle towards life we ourselves have seen. It is nice she is remembered and the celebration on her every year by her students are praiseworthy. What a string of articles on pazhani! some of the concerts in the photos I myself have attended and it gives me nostalgic feeling profusely for which I should thank you. Lalitha Kala Tarangini has reached the international standards. The content of every article and every issue is guiding light to the younger generation.

Sangita Kala Acharya Neela Ramgopal, Bangalore

To the Editor,

The Commemorative book on Pazhani Sri Subramania Pillai is exemplary. The photos and articles are comprehensive. Present generation who have not witnessed his prowess would be able to get an inherent picture about the genius. I cannot help sharing precious moments with this Maha Vidwan.

This happened when I was in Papa Shri Venkatarama Iyer's residence, when I met Shri Pillai there. He invited me to his home and also said that he wanted to listen me playing the Mridangam. The very next day, I visited his home and Palakkad Shri Raghu was with me for that visit. This is a memorable incident of my life.

Several concerts have been staged with Shri Pillaivaal on the Kanjira and my father on the Mridangam, which would have been a generous treat for the listeners. I have been an audience to few such concerts. I convey this with much gratification.

When my father used to be the Secretary of the Thiruvaiyaru Thyaga Brahma Sabha, in 1950s, Pazhani Subramania Pillai and Appa played the Mridangam together for the Pancharatna Kritis. I am fortunate and blessed to have witnessed their performance that day.

TR Rajamani, Palakkadu
Son of Legendary Palakkadu Shri. Mani Iyer

Dear Krishna Prasad,

'Whenever Pazhani Shri M Subramania Pillai played in a concert the stage used to attain 'gowravam' reminisces Lalgudi Jayaraman (Lalgudi on Pazhani Shri M Subramania Pillai. Silver jubilee edition, LK Tarangini).

The same would be the impression his innumerable admirers would carry after listening to Sri Lalgudi sir's concerts spanning over Seven decades. As an accompanist he observed 'Pakkavadhya Dharma' to the core with his uncanny ability of anticipating and absorbing even the most intricate sangati-s the main artist sang and quickly reproduced just on the spur of the moment. But the embellishments he provided would spur the main artist to give his best and the concert would invariably be lifted to dizzy heights. With his illustrious sister Srimathi Brahmanandam and later on with his son and daughter and with stalwarts like Palakkadu Mani Iyer or Pazhani Shri M Subramania Pillai or Umayalpuram Sivaraman on the mridangam the art of playing the violin solo assumed new dimension.

Lalitha Kala Tarangini has done yeomen service to the rasikas of Karnatak music by bringing out a special commemorative issue on the musical genius Shri Lalgudi

di Jayaraman who was very dearly and appropriately described by Ramnad Krishnan as 'Jalgudi LAYArman'!

Some rare photographs of the multifaceted musical genius make the issue a collector's proud possession.

NS Krishnamurthy,
Retired Station Director, AIR

Dear Sri Krishna Prasad,

Received Lalitha Kala Tarangini of June special issue on Palani Subramanya Pillai the great Mridangam vidwan. Very nice detailed articles about him by many Vidwans. I was fortunate to hear his mridangam during my younger days at Gayana Samaja. His playing particularly Sarva Laghu patterns still reverberates in my mind. Both Palghat Mani Iyer & Palani Subramanya Pillai set new trend in mridangam technique & brought prestige & status for the instrument. Great artists indeed.

BN Ramesh, Bangalore
Brother of BN Suresh (Flautist)

Dear and respected Sri Krishna Prasad Sir, Anand Sir and all responsible for LKT,

What an issue you all have given to us. Yes, the July 2020 issue of LKT. It is a jewel in the crown of issues. Pazhani's special issue has wealth of information unheard of so far. Yes, about vidwans Manpoondia Pillai, Dakshinamurthy Pillai, the avatar of Kanjira, Lantern boy incidents etc., gave the readers special cherished moments. Various articles about Pazhani by different stalwarts giving vivid pictures, glorify the magazine as an unique one.

The main vidwan behind this, is of course, Sri KS Kalidas Sir, who is able to provide us the feast about Pazhani Ji. All of them who have contributed to this edition... what can we give them back... only deep reverential respects, regards and of course humble pranams.

I cannot keep down the magazine since it is so much interesting and enthralling to read again and again with the backdrop of Pazhani ji's Mridangam playing in my mind (Especially the 'Gumkis').

With these few words, I humbly pray all of you to be our respectful fosters of the one and only Karnatic Music.

Please Take care of you, Sirs.

With deep and affectionate regards,
K Sankar, I.T.O. (Rtd.)

Dear Editor,

'Lalitha Kala Tarangini' is a priceless gift to the world of Karnatic Music from 'Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira', one of the most prestigious institutions in the country.

I have been a very keen reader of this magazine ever since the beginning. It is no eulogy to say that it is a wholesome, sumptuous treat to the hungry connoisseur of music. It is impressive each time from the coverage to the last meticulously designed with noble intentions as it is, the magazine carries precious articles and fabulous pictures with dignity and grace.

The present edition is no doubt a feather in the cap! The awe-inspiring coverage of every detail about the great mridangam wizard 'Pazhani Sri M Subramania Pillai' is worth the tireless efforts of the board of editors. Deserves to be preserved and read over and over in high esteem and admiration.

Kudos to the team! My sincere pranams to the most revered Shri. Krishna Prasad for his relentless service to the field.

With best regards,
TS Satyavathi, Bangalore

Dear Sri Anand

Thank you very much for sending me the special issue on Pazhani Subramania Pillai. I read it from cover to cover with great delight.

Pazhani was a gentle giant and a legend. He was not only a percussion wizard but a great human being too. I have listened to many concerts of great masters in which he played mridangam/kanjira. That in spite of being a left hander (in those days), he came up and became a front rank artist speaks volumes about his innate gift and hard work. He helped many musicians to come up in their career. He was humility personified.

That he was a good vocalist too and had composed many Pallavis in difficult talas must be news to lay listeners.

Apart from extracts from articles on him in Sruti and from Lalitha Ram's Dhruva Natchathiram, the issue contains first-hand information on him from his contemporary musicians - Mudicondan, Chembai, et al. I would particularly like to mention Sri KS Kalidas's inputs which have greatly enriched the issue.

I warmly compliment you in bringing out this compilation, which I consider a collector's item.

Regards,
S Sankaranarayanan, Mridangist, Chennai



Our Upcoming Programmes (SRLKM Facebook Live)

21 Nov '20 04.30 pm Saturday	R Raghuram - Disciple of RA Ramamani (Vocal), TS Krishnamurthy (Violin), Anoor Anantha Krishna Sharma (Mridanga), Karthik S Mani (Ghatam)
12 Dec '20 04.30 pm Saturday	SR Vinay Sharva (Vocal), BK Raghu (Violin), Bangalore Praveen (Mridanga)
19 Dec '20 04.30 pm Saturday	Vighnaraja S Sampagodu (Vocal), HM Smitha (Violin), Anirudh Bhat (Mridanga), ASN Swamy (Kanjari)
03 Jan '21 04.30 pm Sunday	MS Sheela (Vocal), Charulatha Rammanujam (Violin), Tumkur B Ravi Shankar (Mridanga), Sukanya Ramgopal (Ghatam)
17 Jan '21 04.30 pm Sunday	BK Anantha Ram (Flute), Jyotsna Manjunath (Violin), GS Nagaraj (Mridanga), Chidananda (Morcing)
07 Feb '21 04.30 pm Sunday	Dr. K Vageesh (Vocal), H.K. Narasimha Murthy (Violin), Prof. GS Ramanujan (Mridanga), VS Ramesh (Morcing)
14 Feb '21 04.30 pm Sunday	Archana & Samanvi (Vocal), BK Raghu (Violin), Nikshith (Mridanga), Sharath Koushik (Ghata)
14 Mar '21 04.30 pm Sunday	HM Smitha & Sindhu Suchetan (Violin Duet), BS Prashanth (Mridanga), Anil Parashara (Khanjira)
28 Mar '21 04.30 pm Sunday	RA Ramamani (Vocal), Mathur R Srinidhi (Violin), Anoor Anantha Krishna Sharma (Mridanga), Karthik Mani (Ghatam)

Dear Sri. Anand,

At the outset I wish to congratulate and profusely thank Sri. GV Krishna Prasad for the great service he is rendering for the promotion of Karnatak Classical music in various ways through Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira founded by his father. Apart from the different activities, publication of the quarterly magazine, "Lalitha Kala Tarangini" which gives so much of information about the art of music, the great artistes of yesteryears, their life, their musical journey, their specialities, contributions to the art, achievements etc. is highly commendable.

I read through the July 2020 edition of the magazine which has been dedicated entirely to Sri. Pazhani Subramania Pillai, the all time great mridangam legend who is second to none. All the articles, by eminent Vidwans and connoisseurs, on various aspects of his playing, both as an accompaniment and as a solo player, the greatness of his deftness in handling the right and left (Thoppi) of the instrument are very nice.

I am really fortunate to have had a number of opportunities to listen to his playing for concerts by eminent Vidwans of yesteryears, sitting in front of the Dias in close proximity. These concerts were being regularly arranged by Sri Ramaseva Mandali of Chamaraajpet and Sheshadripuram Rama Seva Mandali during Ramnavami celebrations every year.

From 1947, when I was 11 years, till almost the last concert he played in Bangalore around 1960, I did not miss even one concert in which both Sri Pazhani Sir and another great legend Palghat Sri Mani Iyer accompanied.

Pazhani Sir's playing impressed me very much and I became an ardent admirer and a fan of him. His fingering technique, meetu, chap, arechapu, clarity in playing sollukattus (Urutus as we call it) and theermanams (Mukthayams) are remarkable. His deft technique of using the Thoppi to play Gumkis and their resonance and combination of these varieties of gumkis with nadai played on the right were simply grand, soothing, very aesthetic perfectly maintaining the bhava of the Kriti being rendered by the main artist. It used to embellish, enrich the vocal rendition, whether it is kriti or kalpana swaras. This way of playing has no parallel. I became such an ardent admirer of his playing style and technique that I have emulated some of these qualities in my own humble way and trying to promote the Pazhani Sir's method by teaching my students to follow this. This is my humble dedication to the great maestro.

Shri. Pazhani has imbibed his techniques from legendary Shri. Pudukkottai Dakshinamurthy Pillai, that is

excellently brought out in the article 'Mridanga, Kanjira Maha Vidwan Sri Dakshinamoorthy Pillai', Excerpts from AIR Trichy programme 'Isai Ninaivugal' which is based on a speech delivered by Pazhani Shri M Subramania Pillai on April 1, 1953.

At times I have sought the help of my revered Guru Vidwan Bangalore Ghatam Manjunath to understand some of the intricate teermanams and Mukthayams Pazhani used to adopt in his playing and he was always pleased to decipher them for me.

About the maintenance of his instrument, his instrument manufacturer and repairer Sri. Parlandu's contribution can not be ignored. He used to come with Sri. Pazhani Sir, and sit behind him on the stage. He used to take the instrument from Pazhani Sir, at the end of each kriti to a room behind the Dias, and tune the right and left (Toppi) to the level required by Pazhani Sir and bring it and give it back to Sri Pazhani Sir, who never used to check the accuracy of tuning till the start of the next kriti. Such was his confidence in Parlandu's capacity. I have actually seen this. The concept of tuning the Toppi like the right side was unheard of earlier. I can go on writing about him because I am eye witness of all these great, inimitable qualities of playing. I conclude with my Anantha pranams to that unparalleled, all time great legendary mridangist Sri. Pazhani Subramania Pillai

Vidwan AV Anand, Bangalore

We regret omissions of Pazhani's disciples photos from the June 2020 edition. The following additions make it complete;

Editor - LKT

Srikakulam (Bhaskarabatl) Krishnamurthy



He was a disciple of Pazhani anna during his later years. He serviced the Cuddapah AIR as a staff artist.

Coimbatore S Gopal



Born into a well-to-do family, he is well known for handling the Mridangam very well. His son and disciple Tiruppur Sridar Kumar is a very good Mridangam, Kanjira and Konnakol Vidwan and runs a laya school.

Sangeetha Sahitya Vidwan Shri Mayuram Viswanatha Sastry

Compiled by Shri.TK Balasubramanian, nephew of Shri Sasthriar, from the write-up of his father Shri R Kuppuswamy and uncle Shri TR Vaitheeswaran



Shri Mayuram Viswanatha Sastry (1893-1958) was born to a Ganapadigal (a title of recognition in Vedic Chanting) practicing religious duties in a small village, called Therizhandur, the birth place of Kambar, near Mayavaram (now Mayiladuthurai) in Tamil Nadu and a musically inclined mother. This laid the foundation to the author's mastery in Sanskrit language and music in his later years. He had his early education at the famous Kalyan Mahal Sanskrit College of Thiruvaiyaru for 3 years in a Gurukula system of learning. Later, he studied English in which he was very interested and completed his Matricu-

lation in 1912 from the Municipal High School, Mayuram.

At that time, Mayavaram was a place for a galaxy of musicians like Sembanarkoil Ramaswami Pillai, Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Ayyar, Ramaswami Bhagavathar, Veenai Vaidyanatha Iyer, Flute Nagaraja Rao, and Fiddle Subbaier etc. Young Viswanathan's high-pitched voice and singing with lakshya gnana caught the attention of Fiddle Subbaier, who arranged for his first performance in the local Viswanatha Temple, also supported him in the fiddle. He got the post of a teacher at Trichy and continued his pursuit of music. He learnt to play Harmonium and soon became a proficient player and got acquainted with well-known musicians like Alathur Venkatesa Iyer, Muthaiah Bhagavathar and Panchapakesa Bhagavathar. Considering his capabilities, he was suggested to take up Harikatha which appealed to him also and soon became quite popular in that field. He wanted to further his skills and approached Namakkal Narasimha Iyengar for a Vidya-guru and had music training under Dasavadhyam Venkatarama Iyengar of Devakotta and Simizhi Sundaram Iyer. With such a background, when he moved over to Madras in 1921, he established himself as a professional musician. He also wrote dramas and directed the same, giving Harmonium support to the songs.

He had the gift of composing songs from childhood, and he started to compose songs in Tamil dedicated to Lord Muruga. Using his knowledge of Tamil, Sanskrit and Telugu, and the vast experience he had gathered by then, he brought out his first major composition 'Valli Parinaya Manipravala Sathakam', in 100 slokas, each sloka

varying between 2 to 5 lines. It is in the form of a conversation between the characters, in this case, the parents of Valli, praying to Lord Subramanya for a female child, the father and his men finding a baby girl under a bush, conversation between Sage Narada and grown-up Valli regarding her marriage, between Valli and Lord Muruga in disguise as a hunter, and ending in their marriage. A very absorbingly interesting piece of work capable of being taken up as a Ballet or Harikatha. The beauty of the Manipravalam is the seamless merging of the words of different languages, giving a flowing meaning, and fitting into the grammar of music. 100 slokas of this nature makes it a Masterpiece. This was published by the well known publisher Kadalangudi Natesa Sastri.

The competition by Music Academy of Madras announced in 1929 for composing Kritis in praise of Mother India with a fabulous prize of Rs 100, was just the right opportunity for him to bring to limelight his composing ability. A total of 9 competitors had submitted 20 songs. 2 out of his 3 compositions in Sanskrit were the only songs selected for the top spot. Further, as per the rules of the competition, the author has to sing the chosen krithi before the judges Vidwan Tiger Varadachariar, T.L. Venkatarama Aiyar, and Vidwan Jalatarangam Ramanayya Chettiar, to the accompaniment of a Tambura. This was duly complied with and the Judges submitted their decision that though both the Kritis were sufficiently of a high standard, they would award the top place to the Todi krithi beginning with “Kamite”. He was awarded the prize of Rs.100 with a Certificate by Dewan Bahadur Sir. CV Kumaraswamy Sastriar, at a public function at Gana Mandir, well attended by musicians and music lovers. With this recognition he became a well-known personality in the music circle of Madras.

In 1933, Swami Balananda Saraswathi of Kathirkamam, in Sri Lanka, highly impressed with the devotional character of his songs helped him to publish the book “Murugan Pugazhmalai” and gave him the title “Kantham” the catchword of the song “Kanthamam Kathikamamtannilor Vedanthamam”. It is said that

this song was written by him about Kathirkamam Murugan, without visiting the place in Sri Lanka, guided by a divine vision.

In 1935, he lost his wife after their only girl baby's death earlier. He was no more interested in public performance and devoted his time fully to composing songs. He was well taken care by the family of brothers and sister in the joint family system and all the family members used to enjoy his new creations. He taught the songs to his youngest brother Shri. T.R. Vaitheeswaran, who later became a Vaggeyakara (Ramarpana Kirthanaigal) in his own merits, and through him, the songs used to be learnt by the other members of the family. In 1940 he published the book ‘Murugan Madhura Kirthanai’ consisting of 64 songs with notation, and 7 songs without notation as annexure. The songs ‘Shanmugan Padam Silomboli Nadam’ in Shanmukapriya, ‘Kanda Kumara’ in Todi, and ‘Saravanabhava Guhane’ in Bhairavi are rich in Raga bhava and beauty of sahitya, ‘Sarasa Dala Nayana’, a swarajati in Todi with swarakshara prayogam, all brings out his full capability as a master Vaggeyakara. The book also contains six Padams for dance performance. In the Padam ‘Azhaithuvadi Mane’ the prasams and diction varied with changes in Tala nadai.

He has composed songs in rare ragas like Kunthala, Lalithamanohari, Sindugowri, Chayasindu, Kalyanakesari, Sarasanana, Dayaranjani, and Swarnaranjani.

He composed five Sanskrit prayer songs for children titled Bala Pancharathnam. His devotion to Sadguru Thyagaraja is exemplified in his song ‘Yehi satguro’. His book ‘Sri Thyaga Brahma Vijayam’ is a deep research into the life and works of Sadguru Thyagaraja, along with the famous Pancharatna Kirtanas, with clear notations, word-for-word meanings and exhaustive comments.

He had composed on Shirdi Sai Baba 8 songs in Sanskrit and 11 songs in Tamil. However, this was not known till recently. Subsequently, a CD was brought out by Vidwan Shri Bangalore S Shankar titled ‘Viswa Sai’ in 2007. All the 8 Sanskrit songs were nicely presented by Shri Ban-

galore S Sankar and his group. This CD was released by the Late President of Sri Sai Spiritual Centre, Thyagarajanagar, Shri. R Seshadri at the Sai Baba Temple.

He brought out a booklet containing sixteen songs in Tamil on the occasion of the first Independence Day on Gandhiji, Flag salutation, importance of Khaddar, and on the evils of drinking etc. The book Bharata Bhajanam containing nine songs each on Bharatha matha and Gandhiji is well acclaimed. The well known songs *Jayathi Jayathi Bharata Matha*, *Santha Ahimsa Murhte* are from this booklet released in 1947.

His songs bear the ankitham 'Viswam'. In the earlier stage he also used 'Vedhapuri' the presiding deity at his village temple. He had composed 80 Sanskrit songs, 235 Tamil songs. This includes 3 varnams, a Thillana in Bilahari, a Dinaramalika in 16 ragas, a Dasavathara ragamalika in 11 ragas, and one on learning all arts in 6 ragas. The Dinaramalika piece is called a Mei Varga (alphabets) Ragamalika. The speciality is that in each stanza covered by a raga, most of the words are in the derivatives of a particular alphabet, and he has covered all the 18 alphabets of Tamil language. He has also composed a Telugu varnam in Raga Ritigowla..

He undertook the mammoth task of setting to music the Tamil epic Thirukkural in 289 songs, the songs containing 3 to 5 kurals. This was divided into 7 books 41 songs each. The first book was brought by Sastriar in 1958, and the second one in 1987 by his brother Shri Vaitheeswaran.

He also has to his credit few novels and plays, puranic and original, of which Bhaktha Jayadeva is well-known, a treatise on Natya Sasthra with hand - drawn sketches of the Mudhras, and a humorous Nalangu Paatu specially composed to be sung at a family wedding, in a mix of Tamil, Telugu, and English.

He was a Member of the Advisory Music Experts Committee of the Annamalai University for 2 years. He was honoured by music lovers and Associations at Mumbai, Poona, Calcutta, and Jamshedpur. At Jamshedpur, unexpectedly, on the last day of 1958, which was a Sashti, so dear to Lord Kumara, his Ishta Devata, he merged with his Music eternally. Yet he continues to live through his songs.

A Musical Feature entitled Vishwa Geetham, in 13 weekly episodes, on the life and works of Shri Sastriar was presented by Vidwan Shri S. Shankar in AIR Amrutha Varshini, a few years ago. Subsequently, there were repeated broadcast of the same. Vidwan Shri S. Shankar also took the lead to celebrate the 125th birth anniversary of Shri Sastry during 2018 along with his Guru Smt. Vallabham Kalyanasundaram's 25th Aaradhana. It was spread through the year, in a grand scale of 12 programmes at different venues at Bangalore the one on Independence Day at Bangalore Gayana Samaja. The programmes included releasing the Bharata Bhajanam book with a CD containing the well-known Sanskrit songs of Shri Sastriar on Mother India and on Gandhiji, a fitting tribute in the 150th year of Gandhiji's birth anniversary, Lecdem, group singing, an audio-visual of Shri Sastry's life etc. A well applauded Dance performance for some of Shri Sastry's songs, by the students of Guru B Bhanumathi brought out the Bhava of the songs beautifully.

As a fitting finale to the year- long celebration, Shri S. Shankar gave a performance in the AIR National programme of Music on Saturday the 29th December 2018, which was dedicated to Shri Sastry. What was limited to Bangalore through the year, was made available to the all India audience that night, a fitting tribute to the memory of Shri. Sastry.

Mayuram Viswanatha Sastry's composition in Khamas, *Jayathi Jayathi Bharatha Matha* won the distinction of being sung by Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer on India's first Independence Day and was broadcast by AIR.

Ramanathapuram CS Murugabhoopathy

*(Excerpts from the Tamil book 'Dhruva Natchathiram' written by Lalitharam)
Translation credit : Suresh Jagennathan, Coimbatore*



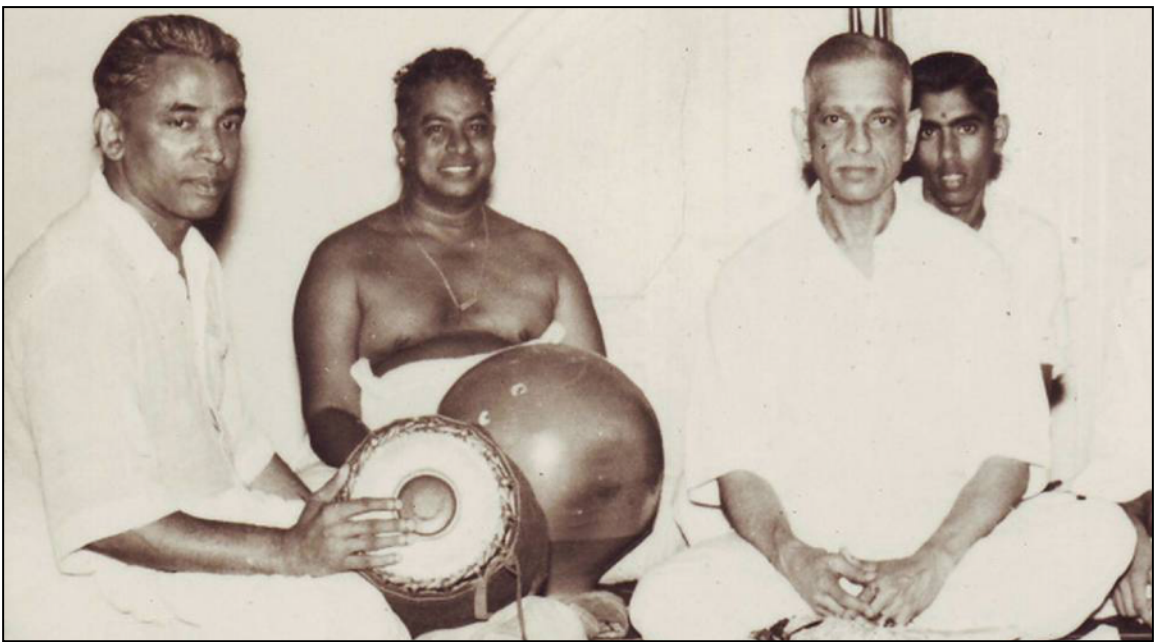
Ramanathapuram CS Murugabhoopathy who reached the heights of his craft comes in the lineage of Pudukkottai parampara. He was a contemporary of Pazhani Subramanya Pillai and had played for almost all the leading vidwans of his time.

Murugabhoopathy's ancestors were basically agriculturists. Their family was quite close to the Ramanathapuram Rajas (Samasthanam). When one studies the history of Ramanathapuram Samasthanam, one can understand that they were all quite interested and devoted to the music Industry. In fact rajas like Kasinatha Durai and his offsprings were so proficient in music that they were competent enough to perform

in kutcheris on their own strength. Before sabhas came into vogue, samasthanams like Ramanathapuram took care to develop and nourish the music industry. It is by virtue of such patronage that Murugabhoopathy's father, Sri Chitsabhai Servai, joined the gurukula of Pudukkottai Maanpoondia Pillai and developed his mridangam playing skills.

Even though he (CS Murugabhoopathy) had played for giants like Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar, he somehow did not develop into a kutcheri playing vidwan. He always respected the craft and played more for his internal satisfaction than for anything else. Sankarasiva Bhagavathar (one of Chitsabhai Servai's sons) said in an interview that his father always was playing "jathis" within himself and to himself. Whenever musicians visited Ramanathapuram Samasthanam, they used to stay in Chitsabhai Servai's house. Murugabhoopathy himself used to say later that there were no musicians who had not visited the Ramanathapuram Samasthanam and there is no song which had not been sung by them.

Chitsabhai Servai had four sons. Two of them were very proficient in music. Sankarasivam was his second son and he was sent by Ramanathapuram raja to the gurukula of Sri Harikesanallur Muthaiah Bhagavathar. Even though Sri Sankarasiva Bhagavathar performed in many kutcheris after learning from Muthaiah Bhagavathar, he became more famous and well known as a music teacher. In addition to developing his vocal skills at the gurukula, he naturally had the ability to develop his violin and mridangam playing skills to the extent that he could teach those skills to others.



Ramanathapuram CS Murugaboopathy accompanying GN Balasubramaniam

Chitsabhai Servai's fourth son Murugaboopathy was drawn to music because of his upbringing. He started playing the mridangam by looking at his father. Murugaboopathy recalls that looking at him playing the mridangam at such a young age, Azhaga Nambia Pillai used to keep him in his lap and teach him how to handle the "thoppi".

In his younger days Murugaboopathy used to playfully play on the mridangam just by listening to his father. Sankarasiva Bhagavathar made his learning more formal. Murugaboopathy's disciple Karaikudi Krishnamurthy, who knew about the early days of Murugaboopathy, recalls that while his guru Murugaboopathy was learning from Sankarasiva Bhagavathar, there were others like Ramanathapuram Easwaran who was also learning Mridangam at the same time. During those times Murugaboopathy was more interested in playing football and boxing with Ramanathapuram Raja's children than in learning music! He used to go for playing without the knowledge of his elder brother. Knowing that his brother would be sitting outside in the evenings, he used to get into the house through the backdoor by jumping the walls and enquire from other disciples what was taught during the day. Once he started playing based on his listening, it was as though he had been playing it for a long time.

Sankarasiva Bhagavathar used to smile and say "it looks like muruga has come back".

Two kutcheris turned out to be the turning points in Murugaboopathy's life. The first one was in RR Sabha in Chennai. At that time Sankarasiva Bhagavathar used to stay in Chennai and teach a number of disciples. Murugaboopathy was staying with him. Semmangudi's kutcheri had been organised in RR Sabha and Chowdaiah and Palghat Mani Iyer were supposed to accompany him. Mani Iyer had been to Mumbai and was supposed to be reaching Chennai on the day of the kutcheri. However, due to some train delays he was delayed en route and he informed the organisers about this from some station in between. Mani Iyer had become famous by then and a lot of rasikas were expected to come to the kutcheri just to listen to him. The organisers were trying to find out a good enough alternative so that the rasikas would not be disappointed and contacted Ramanathapuram Raghavan. By coincidence Murugaboopathy was in Raghavan's house at that time and Raghavan recommended Murugaboopathy's name. Murugaboopathy was a bit afraid to play for such greats and thought that if he asks for a high remuneration the organisers may go for someone else and accordingly requested for a high fee. But the organisers were in such a tight situation and they readily agreed ! (This was



Ramanathapuram CS Murugaboopathy accompanying Madurai Somu with M Chandrasekaran on Violin

stated by Murugaboopathy himself later in an interview). The rasikas were so much impressed by Murugaboopathy's music and by his "thani" that they kept asking for "one more thani" for him! Semmangudi ultimately gave him three "thanis" and the rasikas also encouraged him considerably that day.

Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar played a very important role in the development and progress of Murugaboopathy's music career just as he had done for Palghat Mani Iyer and Pazhani Subramanya Pillai. During his interview at Sampradaya, Murugaboopathy said that he played first time for Chembai in Thiruchendur. At that time he was more of a football player and donned a big moustache. It seems that Chembai thought how can this "boy" play mridangam? However, Murugaboopathy had listened to Chembai a number of times. He knew how the kutcheri would take place after all, and also knew what would make Chembai happy. He played accordingly and Chembai was greatly impressed and wondered aloud where he had been all along. Chembai had a very good habit of conveying to everyone whenever he saw a good performance. He then started recommending Murugaboopathy to everyone he knew. He was in fact responsible for Murugaboopathy playing for Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer at the Chennai Academy that year.

After these two instances, Murugaboopathy started playing for all leading vidwans. For al-

most 30 years, in almost all the reputed and notable kutcheris, mridangam was exclusively played by either Mani Iyer or Pazhani or Murugaboopathy says one of the issues of Sruti magazine. Violin maestro Lalgudi Jayaraman used to say that these three could be called "mridanga mummorthis" similar to "Sangita mummorthis". Pazhani and Murugaboopathy came from the same Pudukottai parampara and therefore there were a lot of similarities in the way they played. However they took care to establish their own specific styles so that no one could say that they played the same way. Whenever Mani Iyer or Murugaboopathy played the mridangam, Pazhani agreed to play the "Kanjira" which showed that Pazhani accorded the same status in his heart for Murugaboopathy that he gave for Mani Iyer.

There were many special aspects in Murugaboopathy's style of playing. Of these, what instantly appealed to the listeners was the *naadam* of his mridangam. Murugaboopathy's disciple Chennai Thyagarajan reminiscences "His mridangam was always 100% in tune with the sruti. Whatever be the level of vyavaharam or arithmetical content in his playing, each *sollu* came out as sweet as mixed with honey. One could never hear any dry *sollu* in his playing. Specifically, when he played the *sarvalaghu korvai-s*, his way of playing various *nadai sollu-s*, even as he seemed to handle the *saadham* of *valantalai* in a seemingly caressing manner as it

were, can be said to be one of the special aspects of his playing". It is no surprise that Madurai Mani Iyer, whose own adherence to sruti was akin to an *upaasana*, was so fond of Murugaboopathy's style of playing. In one of his kutcheris where the *tambura* was not upto the mark in its alignment to sruti, Madurai Mani Iyer remarked that he did not need the *tambura* since Murugaboopathy's mridangam highlighted the sruti beautifully. He continued the kutcheri without the *tambura*.

Like Pazhani, Murugaboopathy developed his own style of handling the "thoppi". Trichy Sankaran used to say that the way Murugaboopathy handled the thoppi was "his greatest contribution to mridangam playing". Normally when very fast solkattus are played, hoomkaram (gumuki) don't feature. However, when Murugaboopathy played, while farans came out of valantalai fast and furious, his left hand used to discharge hoomkaram from the thoppi unhindered. One could listen to these if one listens carefully to his recordings. Normally one used to spread the fingers while playing the valantalai. While playing the thoppi side, fingers used to be together while playing the sollus. Murugaboopathy said in an interview that he probably was the one who introduced playing the thoppi and valantalai in the same fashion. In his younger days he used to listen to Azhaga Nambi Pillai playing the thoppi and that encouraged and motivated him to play similarly. His disciple Lakshmanaraj says that, in a descriptive sollu, it was Murugaboopathy's speciality to play in the valantalai what used to be played on the thoppi and vice versa. Chennai Thyagarajan says it is very difficult to understand the solkattus when played by Murugaboopathy unless he explains it himself.

Murugaboopathy explained in an interview that he used to discuss with his brother about how Mani Iyer and Pazhani played in certain kutcheris. His brother used to explain in detail what they did. He used to grasp it and instead of repeating it the same way he used to play in his own style and that used to sound new and different.

Murugaboopathy used to regularly play for leading vidwans like Ariyakkudi, GNB, Madurai Mani, Semmangudi etc. And in his later days he played an important part in promoting talented young vidwans. He used to call "Somu" as his younger brother. He used to play for him regularly and enhance the acceptance of Somu's kutcheris. Similarly he added strength to Madurai TN Seshagopalan's kutcheris by playing a lot for him. It is also to be noted that Murugaboopathy was one of the most liked mridangist by Flute Mali.

In his long musical career, Murugaboopathy received lot of awards and recognition. Aasthana Vidwan of Sivagangai samasthanam (1949), Padmashree (1973), Sangeetha Nataka Academy Award (1975), Isai Perarinyar (1979), State Artist (1979) were some of them. The absence of Sangeetha Kalanidhi Award, considered as the highest award in the music industry, is a "conspicuous omission" as per Sruti magazine.

Those who ruled the music industry in the 40's and 50's slowly faded away from the scene in the 60's and 70's. Since many of his close colleagues passed away and younger vidwans were coming to the fore, he started reducing his kutcheris and giving more importance to pass on his experience and knowledge to others. He never gave up his self respect and in an interview to "sampradaya" mentioned that he plays only for those who treat him with respect. He mentioned that he does not want to play for those who give him "thani" and show two fingers requesting him to finish in two minutes.

In the 1980's he was the visiting Principal in the Music College run by Tamil Isai Sangam. He was a consultant to the Government Music College and also worked in the faculty of Fine Arts of Annamalai University. Murugaboopathy's disciple Lakshmanaraj recalls fondly that he used to teach his students anytime they go. He used to keep a mridangam for himself and one for his student and used to teach the student patiently till he gets it right.

One of the important vidwans who learnt under Murugaboopathy was the Kanjira maestro, late Harishankar. Similarly Mavelikkara Sankaran Kutty Nair, Karaikudi Krishnamurthy, Madurai

Chellappa, Kumbakonam Prem Kumar, Chennai Thyagarajan and B Druvaraj were some of the others who studied under Murugaboopathy.

Murugaboopathy passed away in 1998 at the age of 84. Sri KS Kalidas in his eulogy talked about him as “last of the Titans”. When Murugaboopathy was alive the annual remembrance (Anjali) was started for Sankarasiva Bhagavathar. After Murugaboopathy’s death, the annual anjalis for both Sankarasiva bhagavathar and Murugaboopathy are being conducted by “Sankara Boopathy Trust”. In addition to conducting programs/kutcheris throughout the day, they also

invite and honour a few achievers from the music industry. Mridanga Vidwan Thiruvavur Bakthavathsalam and Murugaboopathy’s disciple Lakshmanaraj take a lot of efforts in conducting this annual event.

Sri KS Kalidas lamented in Sruti magazine that other than a few internet sites, no regional or national newspaper covered Murugaboopathy’s passing away. However, his mridanga nadham will forever keep ringing in the hearts of all those rasikas who were fortunate to have listened to him.

Tribute to TN Krishnan

Bombay Balaji, Chennai

🙏 Sri krishNam bhaja mAnasa satatam 🙏

The association of our family, with violin maestro Sri T N Krishnan, dates back to more than 50 years.

At my fathers request, he was magnanimous enough to play for my formal ArangEtram, way back in 1981 at Bombay.

Like they say, kuttu vizhundhaalum modhirakkaiyaal vizhavendum (Kuttu here means a knock on your head - it is better to get knocked down by a hand wearing a modhiram [ring] ..this implies that even if you get scolded or beaten, better it be by a good knowledgeable person). For me personally, it was a dream come true, and a great launch, in my learning process of this art form.

In 1983 I had the blessing of playing pakkavAdhyam with him, for the music concert of Sri Trichy swAminAtha Iyer and also his solo performance at rAgasudhA, Coimbatore. From 1985 onwards, I have had the good fortune of playing with Sri TNK on many occasions.

Some noteworthy events/blessings, that come to my mind are;



- Playing for his concert @ the kanakAbhishek 100th year celebrations of Kanchi paramAcharya, with Sri T H Vinayakram on the Ghatam
- Touring Sri Lanka for his jugalbandi concert with Dr. N. Rajam.
- His violin concert to celebrate the 110th birthday of sangEtha pithAmaha Sri Semangudi SrinivAsa Iyer.

Krishnan mama is an inspiration and a true legend. His music will remain etched in our memories for ever

KS Kalidas on Ramanathapuram CS Murugaboopathy

(Excerpts from the lecture demonstration of Sri. KS Kalidas during the Ramanathapuram CS Murugaboopathy Centenary celebrations held on 14 Feb 2014 at Ragasudha Hall, Chennai)

C Ramakrishnan, Chennai

Mridangam Maestros Palghat Mani Iyer, Palani Subramania Pillai and Ramanathapuram CS Murugaboopathy can be called as the Trinity in percussion front in the Carnatic Idiom. What strikes any listener when they hear the mridangam of Murugaboopathy is the magic of his nadam. The dhim nadam that comes out of his mridangam is unique- as sweet as the honey. You cannot hear *thesal* in his playing. It is very bright. The sollus are clear, crisp and compelling. A robust style of playing, with azhutham and clarity. While accompanying kritis he embellishes the songs to a great extent. He was capable of making any tani avartanam an interesting affair, any talam, any edam without converting it as a dry mathematical presentation. The prominent disciples of Murugaboopathy Sir are G Harishankar and Karaikudi Krishnamurthy. Vidwans like Harishankar will emerge only once in a yugam. Murugaboopathy never went on a spree of moulding disciples. It required enormous dedication

and hard work for any vidwan to become a disciple of Murugaboopathy.

He was a *vanangamudi*. He would never bow before any body. But he maintained greatest respect for Palghat Mani Iyer and Palani Subramania Pillai. In an interview he openly declared that Mani Iyer and Palani are my two inspirations. It is not an easy thing to get such compliments from a contemporary artiste. That shows his admiration for true vidwath. He used to admire the mishram of both these giants. Murugaboopathy adopted the best practices from both these giants. Real vidwans will take the good practices wherever they find. For instance, Palghat Raghu, although a disciple of Mani Iyer, has adopted certain aspects of Palani. That shows his respect for both these laya jam-bavans. In his later years, Murugaboopathy played maximum concerts with Madurai Somu and Madurai TN Seshagopalan.

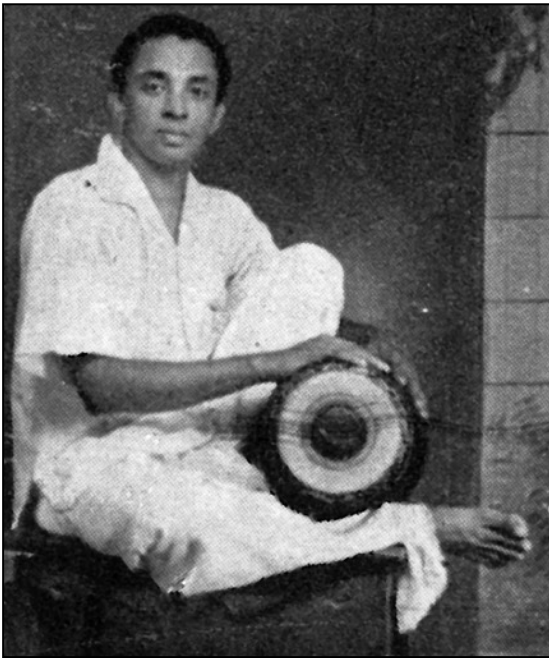
From Left - Ramanathapuram CS Murugaboopathy, HP Ramachar, Vidwan MT Selvanaryana and Anoor S Ramakrishna



TN Seshagopalan on Ramanathapuram CS Murugaboopathy

(Excerpts from Madurai TN Seshagopalan's talk on Ramanathapuram CS Murugaboopathy during his centenary celebrations on 14 Feb 2014 held at Ragasudha Hall, Chennai)

C Ramakrishnan, Chennai



Ramanathapuram CS Murugaboopathy

At a period when jambavans like Palghat Mani Iyer and Palani Subramania Pillai were the beacons in the musical world, another vidwan rising up to their level, getting recognition and sustaining his position is a mammoth task indeed and Murugaboopathy mama achieved that with astounding success. The surprising factor is that he entered the field relatively much late. But he got the natural vidhwat and vadya snehitam from a very early age. Vadya snehitam can be defined as the medium chosen for expression, the instrument, becomes a part of your body. Such people are quick to grasp the techniques of the art within a very short period. All musical

giants are like that. Murugaboopathy Mama was also like that.

I got the bhagyam of knowing him closely because of my blessing to do gurukulavasam with his elder brother the venerable Ramanathapuram Sankarasiva Bhagavatar. Chitsabhai Servai-father of CSM, Dakshinamoorthy Pillai, Muthiah Pillai (father of Palani Ayya) - all did Gurukulavasam under the respected Guru Mamundia Pillai. The entire family was steeped in music, especially layam. "Tadukki vizhunthalam Thathinginathom endru than veezhvargal" (even if they fall down, there will be a rhythm in that). Layam was an integral part of their self. Even while doing their daily chores or talking with somebody, thoughts on layam or calculation will be going on in their mind. Because I was a small boy, CSM mama had a deep affection for me and moved very closely with me. I was very fortunate in that. Right from my seventh year, I was fortunate to hear the concerts of all giant singers of that period and observe very closely. I sat awestruck at the divergent styles of accompanying. One day, Murugaboopathy would be accompanying Madurai Mani Iyer and the next day he would accompany Alathur Brothers in a totally different style.

A Navarathri concert of Madurai Mani Iyer in Madurai Meenakshi Amman kovil comes to mind. I was just eleven year old boy sitting in the front. Mama started the thani, Mani Iyerval told 'you can play rather elaborately the tani today. Great musicians have come to hear.' He played a pharan in the end - about three and half minutes. It was not mere sollu - it was soaked in nadam. At any point of time, there

would not be dry sollus of kanakku. It would be soaked in nadam. He never believed that it is enough to conform to the kanakku. I asked once 'How you are able to infuse this much nadam in the sollus whether chapu or araichapu etc' ? He never made any tall claims. He simply brushed aside. "Adellam periavaloda aasi thampi" (All because of the blessings of the elders). He was so humble. He never talked so high about his accomplishments. Kuchi vadyam (a type of mridangam) is played by the Pudukkottai vidwans. With one 'dhim' he will be aligned to sruti and the effect would be so musical. It is said that Madurai Mani Iyer performed one full concert with the Mridanga sruti of Murugaboopathy when his tampura failed.

While travelling together with Madurai Somu Pillai on concert tours, he used to impart subtle nuances in raga alapana. That is the extent of his wholesome knowledge on all aspects of music. But generally he was a very reserved person. Not very much social with other vidwans or patrons. The first breakthrough in his career happened when he accompanied Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar in the place of Palghat Mani Iyer who was suddenly indisposed. After his playing for the Kambodi varnam, Chembai was so pleased and asked "Ivvalavu naal engeppa irunday (where were you all these days?)". Afterwards, he played for Semmangudi in the Ut-savam conducted by Muthiah Bhagavathar in Veeravanallur and there was no looking back. When he played for Madurai Mani Iyer in a marriage concert, Palghat Mani Iyer came to hear the concert. When he said "I have come to this marriage specifically to hear your playing, he politely replied "What is so great in my playing. I am just following your vazhi". He was so unassuming.

His approach to thani itself was unique. His toppi patterns were something special. During a felicitation of CSM in Tirupati organised by Krishnaswamy, husband of Mani Krishnaswamy, Palghat Mani Iyer wrote a commendation letter. "Murugaboopathy is a giant in the field of percussion. His playing is an amalgam of the styles of giants Pudukkottai Dakshinamoorthy Pillai and Azhagunambi Pillai. He works hard to

achieve greatness and maintains the dignity in the profession. He never goes behind securing concert opportunities to earn money or fame".

Murugaboopathy Mama performed with me in Krishna Gana Sabha only after strong persuasion by Lalgudi Sir. I also did lot of home work and sang with dedication including songs special to that school to seek his asirvadams. I sang 'Amma Ravamma' and he played an exalting thani for that Khanda chapu kriti. His strokes had clarity, novelty, nadam and azhutham. The achievements of such giants cannot be brushed aside as God's gift, it is the result of tremendous sadhakam. There wont be any unnecessary stroke or empty sollu, nadai, or teka in his playing to impress the gallery. After the concerts, he used to discuss with me the highlights of the concert and there would be lot of learnings in that discussion.

When he goes as examiner in any audition, he will not be harsh to the candidates. Even at advanced ages, great vidwans used to spend time in perfecting their skills. They never used to take rest in their laurels. At the fag end of his life, while Palani Subramania Pillai was travelling in a train from Trichy to Erode, in the first class compartment, he closed the doors and was practising one abhiprayam throughout the night for performing next day. We have heard Tigerval singing Yadukulakambodi alapanam throughout the night. The handling of toppe by Murugaboopathy mama is amazing. The pharans he produced will be awe inspiring.

In the present days, when exhibitionism has become the order of the day, vidwans like Murugaboopathy considered the stage as a temple and performed their art as an offering to God. I am privileged to share my reminiscences about the mahavidwan with the large galaxy of vidwans and rasikas assembled here.

(SRLKM recognises the contribution of Parivadini (anchored by Lalitharam), which organised the centenary celebration of Ramanathapuram CS Murugaboopathy when most in the music world had forgotten the maestro. The articles covering the talks of Sri KS Kalidas and Sri TN Seshagopalan have been sourced from the proceedings of this event)

Sri Mahavaidyanatha Sivan's Melaraga-malika

Rajani Arjun Shankar, Chennai



Shiva as Madanantaka in Gangaikonda Cholapuram

(Legends and literary references)

Mahavaidyanatha Sivan was a great musician and scholar who lived in the second part of the 19th Century. Although he lived only to the age of 49, he started performing when he was just seven, and he enjoyed great fame and patronage from many rulers and Mathadhipatis of his time. Although we do not have a recording of his voice, its sweetness and range are legendary. He is also remembered for his virtues like piety and austerity. He has composed several Kritis too.

The Melaraga-malika can be undoubtedly called his magnum opus, considering its uniqueness, length and complexity. The first such work covering all 72 Melakarta Ragas was composed by Lavani Venkata Rao, a poet in the court of the

king of Tanjavur. It was in Marathi, in praise of Saktharam Saheb of the royal family. Mahavaidyanatha Sivan set it to music and performed it in the court, but the fact that it was in praise of a human being would have not been appealing to him. He then composed the Melaraga-malika on Lord Shiva, who is known as Pranatartihara in the temple of Tiruvaiyaru.

Many scholarly musicians have sung this great work, as well as written or lectured about its several unique musical aspects. Hence, this article is only meant to look at the various anecdotes connected to Shiva that find mention, sometimes directly and sometimes poetically couched in metaphors or addresses to Him.

Stories of Shiva from the Puranas and Itihasas

Naturally, the work extols Shiva for His well-known exploits such as the destruction of evil forces like the Tripuras and Jalandhara, drinking of the dreaded poison Halahala, subduing the pride of Brahma and Ravana, standing as an infinite column of light which Brahma (and Vishnu) could not fathom, etc. Let's see how the burning of Manmatha is described in the 10th Charanam set to Raga Natakapiya, in one possible interpretation of the words:

"Ananda-nAtaka-priya! Amaravara! Sri-nandana-aTavI-havyavAhana!" meaning "O one delighting in performing the Ananta Natana, the dance of bliss! O best of gods! O (wild) fire that burnt down the forest called Manmatha who is Sri-nandana, the son of Goddess Lakshmi!"

The stories from the Tiruvilayadal Puranam

Tiruvilayadal Puranam is a collection of 64 stories that describe the Leelas or sportive deeds of Shiva in Madurai, where He and the goddess are enshrined as Sundareshvara and Meenakshi.



Jnanasambandha depicted in stucco in the Kapalishvara temple, Chennai

It was first written in Tamil by Paranjyoti Munivar. Later Neelakantha Dikshitar composed a Kavya in Sanskrit, called Sivaleelarnava, that describes the same events.

One of the 64 stories is called “Viragu Vittra Padalam”. During the reign of Varaguna Pandya, once a great musician called Hemanatha visited from the North and challenged the court musicians to a musical contest. The king deputed Banabhadra, one of his court musicians to face him. Banabhadra, in trepidation, went to the temple and sought refuge in Shiva.

Later that evening, Shiva in the guise of a firewood seller, sat outside the guesthouse where Hemanatha and his disciples were, and sang and played his Veena. Hearing the wonderfully divine music, Hemanatha came out and enquired about him. The Lord introduced himself as Banabhadra’s disciple, who had been turned out by his Guru as his music was not good enough. It was now Hemanatha’s turn to tremble in fear. If a rejected disciple could make such music, what can one say about the teacher, he wondered. He decided to leave the town right away. Shiva appeared in Banabhadra’s dream and told him of these events and the latter was speechless with gratitude upon seeing the Lord’s mercy, in helping him tide over a crisis.

The 13th Charanam of the Melaraga-malika, set in Raga Gayakapriya, describes the lord as one to whom the wise singer called Bhadra (mean-

ing Banabhadra) is very dear, “*dhlra bhadraAkhyā – gAyaka-priya*”. The name of the Raga also gets beautifully thus incorporated.

Another episode in the Tiruvilayadal Puranam is the “Keeranai karaiyettriya padalam”. It describes how the famous poet Nakkeerar (also called Keeran), earned the ire of Shiva, but later, after hearing his poetry, Shiva was appeased and blessed Nakkeerar in many ways.

In the Melaraga-malika, the 21st Charanam in Raga Keeravani, the composer says that Shiva was won over by the poetry (vani) of the poet - “*Siva natklra-vANI-vaSaga*”. As earlier, the Raga’s name is woven in deftly.

In the 41st Charanam, set to the Raga Pavani, we find the mention of the old lady who appears in the Tiruvilayadal Puranam, in the “*Mann sumantha padalam*”. In this chapter, the river Vaigai is in spate and the Pandya king orders that every household must send one person to strengthen the banks. Shiva, in the guise of a young man, approached the old lady who lived alone, offered to go on her behalf and asked her to give him the “Pittu” (steamed rice cakes) she makes to sell, as his wages. Accordingly, he relished the Pittu and went on her behalf to the riverbank. The line describes him as “*bhOh pAvanI-pishTa-AsvAdana-rasika*” meaning “O one who delights in tasting the Pishta (Pittu) provided by the pure lady!”

Saints of the Periya Puranam

Karaikkal Ammaiyar is one the three women among the 63 Nayanmars. She was named Punitavati by her parents and even as a child, she was very devoted to Shiva. The Periya Puranam narrates how she was saved from her husband’s ire, by Shiva who gave a mango fruit miraculously in place of the one she had given away to a devotee.

Mahavaidyanatha Sivan describes this in the 32nd Charanam, in the Raga Ragavardhani. “*sadAnande tvayi rAgavardhanIm mudA punitavatIm rakshitav-Anasi*”, meaning “You gladly protected Punitavati whose devotion was ever-growing unto you, the blissful one!”

Jnanasambandhar, one of the most prominent Nayanmars, finds mention in the 64th Charanam set to the Raga Vacaspati. The verse describes Parvati, as the giver of enlightenment to this saint. This is in keeping with the account in the Periya Puranam which says that when he was a child of three, Shiva and Parvati came to bless him, and Parvati fed him Her milk from a golden cup, which made him a matchless poet, scholar and sage. Mahavaidyanatha Sivan aptly describes him as verily Brhaspati on this earth. “bhUmishu vAcaspati-sambandha-svAminE jnAnam dattavatlml”.

Sthala Purana references

The Sthala Purana of Tiruvarur says that Goddess Lakshmi worshipped Shiva there and hence the name Sripuram or Kamalapuram was given to the place. The very first Charanam begins with an auspicious reference to Lakshmi worshipping Shiva, although no Sthala is mentioned. The Raga name Kanakangi becomes a description of Her – the one with a golden body.

While talking about Shiva tasting “Pittu”, in the same (41st) Charanam He is described as “nlpavana-sundara”. Just as the event happened in Madurai, this epithet too describes the Lord as the Sundara or Sundareshvara who resides in Kadamba-vana, another name of Madurai. Nipa is a synonym of Kadamba and Madurai was earlier a forest of Kadamba trees.

In the Sthala Purana of Tiruvaiyaru, we hear about a young boy named Sucharita who had only five days to live and sought refuge in the Lord like Markandeya did. Shiva appointed his two Dwarapalakas, Uyyakkondar and Atkondar, to protect him. Atkondar himself killed Yama and protected Sucharita. This Atkondar has a shrine and is worshipped as the Kshetrapala of Tiruvaiyaru.

The 67th Charanam in the Raga Sucharitra, refers to the lord as one who is sung by bhaktas such as Sucharitra. Being a resident of Tiruvaiyaru, the composer would be aware of this story, which is otherwise not very widely known. The minor change in the name would be acceptable here.

Other literary references and features

In his “Shiva padadi keshanta stotra”, describing the form of Shiva, Adi Shankaracharya says in the verse that extols the nose “*nityam naScitamEtad viracayatu sukhEnAsikAm nAsikAyAm*”. Here “*sukhEna*” and “*AsikAm*” combine to create an alliterative effect with the next word. Mahavaidyanatha Sivan, in the 70th Charanam in the Raga Nasikabhushani, brings in the Raga’s name in a very similar manner: “*sukhEnAsikA bhUshaNam hi satAm*”, meaning that a blissful repose (“*sukhEna AsikA*”) is an ornament of great men.

The Kena Upanishad describes Goddess Uma Haimavati instructing Indra in Brahma Vidya (the knowledge of the Supreme Being). This is mentioned by the composer in the 63rd Charanam in the Raga Latangi – “*mananaSllatAm glrvANapateH janana-varjitAm uktavatlm*” (the goddess who spoke of the path of meditation to the king of the gods, which prevents further births).

There are many other references to Vedic mantras such as Shri Suktam, Shri Rudram and Aruna Prashnam and to other scriptures like the Smritis, Ghana Shastra etc. In several Charanams, Shiva’s devotees are described as possessing lofty qualities such as purity, dispassion, conquering Maya, giving up the ego, seeking only Mukti or liberation, wanting to worship the Shivalinga with Bilva leaves etc.

Sri VSV Guruswamy Sastrigal who has written a Tamil commentary on the Melaraga-malika, titled “Sivapriya”, has shown how the words often echo the contents of verses from Sivotkarshamanjari, Sivanandalahari, Kumarasambhava etc.

The Melaraga-malika has Dvitiya-akshara-prasa in every Charanam. This means that, the initial words of each of the two lines of every Charanam, have the same second syllable that creates a rhyming effect. For eg. In the 40th Charanam, set in the Raga Navanita, “*suradAnavanltAmrta-vimukha, varadAna-nirata tAraka*”, the words indicated in bold, have this feature.

Antya-prasa is present too. Hence the last word of every odd-numbered Charanam, rhymes with

the last word of the subsequent one. For instance, the last word of the 39th Charanam is “mAraka” which rhymes with “tAraka” in the 40th one mentioned just above.

Thus, the Sahitya of this magnificent work consistently and artistically incorporates these ornamental characteristics like Prasa and Raga-mudras, in every one of the 72 Charanams. There are also, as we saw, references to a wide

range of scriptures and books. All these aspects prove the erudition and poetic skills of the composer, along with his well-known musical prowess. In all, it is a very fulfilling and enlightening experience to listen to the Melaraga-malika.

Book Review:

‘Purandaradasa’s (and other’s) 108 verses, transliterated, translated and interpreted.’ by V Vasumathi

Anagha Yoganand, Bangalore

The Haridasas of Karnataka have contributed immensely to our cultural history, music and literature. Ranging across myriad dimensions of spirituality, philosophy, morals, devotion and Dharma, this bhakti movement enriched the lives of common people with verses and songs written in the common tongue Kannada. Prominent among the Haridasas is Sri Purandaradasa who is held as the father of Karnatic Music.

The author has compiled a set of Dasa sahitya, predominantly of Sri Purandaradasa. The analysis of each Keerthana in the book can be said to be threefold. The pure sahitya of the devaranama is first accompanied by the transliteration of the text into English for common understanding. This process is handled very skilfully in the book where the bhava or the essence of the sahitya is brought out well. Then, we have the significance behind the devaranama. Lastly, we reach the third fold which is the interpretation. Literature, as we know, is largely subjected to personal interpretation. Every literary text, especially poetry and verse has a background to it and an inner meaning that moulds and adapts itself in different forms to each reader and thus is subject to a magnitude of interpretations. The author's insights on each of the dasa sahitya is penned down passionately, providing context and further assisting the reader to understand it better.

The book in itself is a gift and a ready reckoner to people wanting to understand the rich compositions of our Haridasas. The threefold interpretation to this book sets it apart from other books. Not only does it prove useful to musicians who often sing devaranamas of these great saints, but can be read, understood and appreciated by all alike and it helps broaden the reach of these composers and to spread the greatness of Haridasas.

The effort, interest and research behind the book is very evident as one goes through the book. It is effectively translated and interpreted to bring forth the bhava with which the sahitya was composed. This book contributes immensely to help disseminate the essence of the compositions and knowledge provided by Sangeetha Pitamaha Sri Purandarada and all the other Haridasas to everyone. The author's drive and dedication to this work is certainly laudable and it is a copy worth preserving for its philosophical content.

(Smt. Vasumathi is a double graduate in science and education and also did another post graduation in Mathematics from Venkateshwara University. She worked as a school teacher and retired as the head mistress of a high school. She has written dramas and poems for various occasions and has them published in a book 'Golden necklace and other dramas'. An avid traveller, she enjoys singing and listening to music).

HP Ramachar the Kanjari maestro

CP Chikkanna, Bangalore



During the 19th century, in old Mysore area in Carnatic music concerts tabla was the main percussion instrument in the absence of mridangam. Senior players like Hyadyalu Puttachar, MS Seshappa etc. were the leading players. They were playing in Harikatha and Yakshagana also. Muthuswamy Thevar was a leading mridangam Vidvan in Mysore palace in the olden days. H Puttachar acquired proficiency in playing mridangam and trained many disciples who carved a niche in Carnatic music. Some of them are Morching Vidvan L Bheemachar, B Druvaraj, C Subbu, H Puttachar's son HP Ramachar, GV Krishna Prasad, M Vasudeva Rao etc.

Born in the year 1924 at Hyadyalu village in Nelamangala Taluk in Bangalore Rural district, Ramachar was deeply interested in his father's practice on the mridangam and his teaching to students in his house. He never showed any interest in school studies and discontinued in the primary stage and began to participate in Bhajans in and around Balepet, Cotton pet, Chickpet, Chamarajapet etc. playing on the mridangam. These bhajan mandalis were often visited by patrons of music and rich merchants. Many senior mridangam vidwans of that time noticed the talent of Ramachar and gave him many tips of playing and maintaining mridangam. Aruna musicals owned by Harmonium player Arunachalappa was the meeting place of all the doyens of the olden days that included Mysore T Chowdaiah, RR Keshava Murthy, LS Narayana Swamy Bhagavathar, his brother and leading percussive Vidvan LS Sheshagiri Rao, Honnappa Bhagavathar etc. Some of them invariably would come to meet H Puttachar also who was residing near by.

Ramachar soon started playing for dances and concerts. A Subba Rao's vocal, Arunachalappa on the harmonium, his son A Veerabhadraiah on the violin, Ramachar on the mridangam was a formidable team. Subba Rao's concerts were always house full for his soul stirring presentation of Devaranamas of various Saints, Basaveshwara Vachanas etc. I do not know from when Ramachar started playing on the kanjira.

I first heard him on the Kanjari accompanying Balamuralikrishna's recital at the Sheshadripuram Ramanavami series around 1962. TV Gopalakrishnan was the mridangam player. During thani avartanam both excelled on their respective instruments winning thunderous applause for each saval jawab rounds. Later mri-



Ramachar supporting Dr. Nookala Chinna Satyanarayana with Lalgudi Jayaraman on Violin and V Ramabadrhan on Mridangam at Sree Rama Seva Mandali, Chamarajpet, Bangalore

danga maestro Guruvayur Dorai introduced me to him to learn the 35 and 108 thala schemes that never happened! Instead I became his correspondent that lasted for over 15 years.

It was ML Vasantha Kumari who provided many opportunities to Ramachar to accompany her in concerts in Madras during music festivals. Earlier to that he was her trusted help in Bangalore ferrying her in his old Standard Vanguard car of 1940 model during her concert visits to Bangalore. It was a vintage car that could comfortably accommodate six persons besides the driver. People used to call it "Ramachar Model". In those days, perhaps he is the only percussion player to go to concerts in his own car! His loyalty to her was so intense that he was always MLV's guest in her palatial residence in Mandaveli in Madras during his visits. From 1968 December onwards, I was a regular visitor during music festival with him in his car. During our stay at Madras, he would invariably pay a visit to leading performers of the day like Veena Balachander, mridangam maestro Palghat Mani Iyer, Yagna Raman, secretary of Krishna Ghana Sabha, Emberumanar Chettiar of Indian Fine Arts society etc who would invite him as a matter of

courtesy to accompany leading performers in their respective organisations and sabhas. He was very polite and highly diplomatic with these organisers but exactly the reverse with organisations in Karnataka! He firmly believed in earning name and fame in Madras and other places in Tamil Nadu, Andhra, Mumbai etc and capitalising this in Karnataka bargaining decent concert fee.

An interesting anecdote is worth mentioning here. In the mid 1970s he told me that he had decided not to participate in Sheshadripuram High School Sree Ramanavami concerts and that he would address the audience on the stage revealing the reason for boycotting the festival because of the ill treatment and paltry Rs 50/- payment per concert after many visits to the treasurer! I advised him Patience and told him that it is he who is going to be the victim and looser for his aggressive thought. I suggested him to meet the then President of the Samithi V Krishna Murthy (former president of Bangalore Gayana Samaja) and bring his displeasure to his notice and decide after his response. The president asked him to participate as usual and that he would take steps to ad-

dress his grievances. This resulted in hiking his concert fee to Rs.600/- per concert and three opportunities every year in the series!

In the year 1972 March, he was taken to Malaysia and Singapore by Veena Balachander to accompany him on the Ghatam and Kanjari. Mannargudi A Eswaran was the mridangam player. He played on both the instruments alternatively. After returning, he convened a press conference to share his maiden foreign tour experiences to music lovers through news papers. He was felicitated by his friends led by Bangalore Venkatraman, Honnappa Bhagavathar, BVK Shastry, A Veerabhadrarajah, Anoor Ramakrishna etc. I was deputed by Kannada Prabha daily. He distributed special gifts brought from Singapore to his friends mentioned above (except me). When someone suggested to BVK Shastry to present a writeup on him, he brushed it aside as there is nothing special in it!

I was summoned to his house. His family members were deeply hurt by Shastry's remarks and his aged mother was in tears. It was then, I prepared a write-up and got it published in Sunday's magazine section. During my interactions for the article, I casually asked him about the list of musicians he had accompanied. He reeled out the names of doyens like Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Balamuralikrishna, MLV, Mysore T Chowdaiah etc. besides three generations of local musicians. Two days later, he issued a statement in Letters column countering my mentioning of three generations of local musicians stating that it is because of the encouragement of senior musicians of Karnataka like Chintalapalli Ramachandra Rao, B Devendrappa, A Subba Rao, RK Srikantan, Veena Doreswamy Iyengar etc. that helped him reach the present stage and this fact is missing in my writeup deliberately!

Shocked by this unexpected negative response, I met the then editor Ramakrishna Murthy and showed him my original script approved by him and requested to publish my reply. It was then that he revealed the real facts. After reading the article, many local vidvans took him to task for omitting their names in the write-up cancelling

some of his concerts during the forthcoming Ganesha festival and unless his letter countering my statement is published as per their dictats, his profession and life is in jeopardy! The editor told me that he too is deeply hurt by this development and decided henceforth not to entertain music related articles in Kannada Prabha! It was only after his retirement, I again started writing on being encouraged by the later editors Khadri Shamanna, YN Krishna Murthy etc.

Thereafter my relationship and interactions with him stopped. It was during the concert of Namagiripettai Krishnan during a Ganesha festival, we met face to face. He profusely apologised swearing upon God that he was compelled to sign the letter which he never read to compromise with local musicians! At the intervention of our common friend Guruvayur Dorai, we compromised and our friendship resumed.

During the music festival stay at Madras, Ramachar expressed his desire to play in MS Subbulakshmi's concert and sought my help. As I didn't have any Introduction to the Doyenne, I conveyed this to my friend Guruvayur Dorai who was accompanying her on mridangam and sought his help. He simply said, when time comes, his ambition would be fulfilled by Lord Guruvayurappan. Not to give up, I started writing letters to Sri. Sadasivam requesting him that listeners are very eager to see Kanjari Ramachar in MS Amma's concert team and to provide him a chance. My plan clicked and Ramachar was invited for MS Amma's concert since her regular Kanjari player Nagarajan was not keeping well and Harishankar was pre occupied accompanying MLV. From then onwards until his retirement he accompanied MS Amma several times and also made way for his daughter Latha.

Ramachar during his long career made several experiments by fixing alloy metallic coins to the instrument for special sound effect. Whenever we met Palghat Mani Iyer, his only request was to teach him the way the Kanjari wizard Pudukkottai Dakshinamoorthy Pillai played and

his techniques. Mani Iyer's reply was "You are really playing well. Don't bother about past maestros. I am telling you this honestly".

He had given many lecture demonstrations about the evolution and techniques of playing Kanjari during the Madras music festival in pure tamil under the aegis of Indian Fine Arts Society where he instituted an award in the name of his father H Puttachar to a young percussion player winning in the music competition every year. In the late 1970's he joined Bangalore Station of All India Radio as mridangam player. That post was reserved for VS Rajagopal. We friends saw to that post was stayed and got Ramachar appointed as a special preferential candidate through our contacts in Delhi and Rajagopal joined later on.

In his long career, Ramachar was highly courageous and dynamic. His courage and sponta-

neous response to the difficult challenges posed by leading players like Umayalpuram Sivaraman, TV Gopalakrishnan etc. during the concert was a joy to listeners. He was the most sought after Kanjari player and toured many Countries abroad teaming with violin maestro Lalgudi Jayaraman. He was the director of women ensemble of percussive instruments "stree tala tarang" and successfully lead the team to several Countries abroad. He was the recipient of many awards like Palghat Mani Iyer memorial "Kanjari Kala Shiromani", Mysore T Chowdaiah National award sponsored by Academy of music, Bangalore, Laya Vadhyha Gambhira, Sangeetha Kalarathna from Bangalore Gayana Samaja etc. He was the founder member of Karnataka Gana Kala Parishath and a member of experts committee. He died after a brief illness on 23 June 2006.

Kalavathy Avadhoot at SRLKM



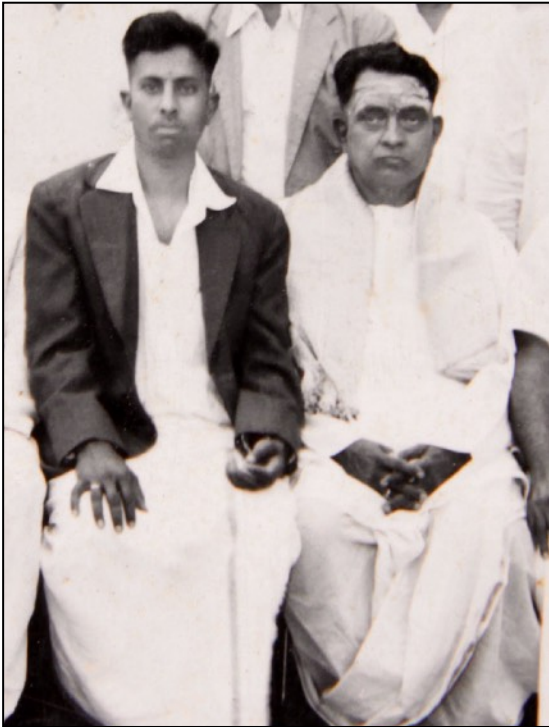
As a part of the ongoing online facebook concert series, Smt. Vid. Kalavathy Avadhoot presented a concert as a tribute to the memory of Bhata Ratna Dr MS Subbulakshmi on account of her 104th birth anniversary. She was accompanied by Sindhu Suchetan on the violin, BR Srinivas on the mridanga and SN Narayanamurthy on the Ghatam. The concert comprised of compositions that were popularised by MS Amma and frequently sung by her. The 'Veeriboni' Ata tala varna by Pacchimiriya Adiappaiyer set

the tone for the evening's concert. This was followed by 'Vande Vasudevam' in the raga Sree by Annamacharya and 'Sobillu saptaswara' by Sri Tyagaraja in roopaka tala. This was succeeded by a swarajathi of Sri Syama Shastri, 'Rave Himagiri Kumari', 'Narada Muni' in raga Kamavardhini by Tyagaraja Swami and Sri Mysore Vasudevacharya's composition, 'Brochevarevarura' in Khamas. This was followed by a devaranama in the raga Shuddha Dhanyasi 'Narayana' by Sri Purandaradasa. The piece de resistance was 'Sarojadala Netri' in the raga Shankarabharana by Sri Syama Shastri which was followed by layavinyasa by Vid. BR Srinivas and Vid. SN Narayanamurthy. She rendered some of the all time favourites like 'Kurai ondrum illai', 'Dasana madiko enna' and Dhanashri Tillana by Sri Swati Tirunal. The concert was concluded with an MS Amma classic, 'Maitrim Bhajata'.

The concert was a fitting tribute and left the audience reminiscing about the great legend.

Kaliyugada Ramadhoota Shri. SVN Rao

S Anand, Bangalore, Based on an interview with SN Varadaraj



Shri. SVN Rao with Mysore T Chowdiah

It was the peak of the Ramanavami music season in the late 1950s when Shivarapatna Vasudev Rao Narayanaswamy Rao (Shri. SVN Rao hereafter) received a telegram from TR Mahalingam (Mali) that he (Mali) would not be able to perform for the Mandali concert slated for the next day. In an unprecedented move, Shri. SVN Rao took an ambassador car early morning at 4.00 am the next day and drove down to Chennai and convinced Mali and brought him to Bangalore and had him perform at 9 pm as scheduled that went on till early hours of the next day. The concert accompanied by Mysore Chowdiah on Violin and Pazhani Subramania

Pillai on Mridangam continues to be one of the most memorable concerts in the Bangalore Ramanavami concert history to date.

Shri. SVN Rao was born on 21 December 1924. Being the son of a police officer, he participated in the freedom struggle at a very age. The unfortunate death of his close friend and a fellow patriot during the freedom movement in a police firing completely transformed his outlook towards life and society. He turned spiritually-minded, surrendered himself to the Lord Ramachandra, and spent the rest of his life worshipping the Lord. His aim was to bring about harmony in society through music which is a manifestation of 'Bhakti'. He believed music had the ability to kindle the soul and bring people together across culture and creed.

Inspired by Bala Gangadhara Tilak, he conducted Ganesha festivals and Kamannana Hunnime. Organisers were left with surplus funds when one such celebration was concluded. As if by the divine intervention of Lord Ramachandra, Shri. SVN Rao conceptualised the idea of conducting the Ramanavami celebration by offering music to the Lord by utilising the surplus funds.

Shri. SVN Rao started the Ramanavami celebrations in the year 1939 in a humble way on the footpath in front of Shri. Rudraiah's house (Bangalore Body Builders fame) on Chamarajpet 3rd cross road under the banner 'Balakara Ramaseva Mandali' and it was an annual event. Through these events, Shri. SVN Rao wanted to bring about harmony among people through music which was an off-shoot of bhakti and our rich culture. For ten long years, he had to fight the acrimony of British imperialists who did not conform with the noble cause. The Ramanavami concerts used to be held in front of a painting



Nostalgic file photo of a concert at Chamarajpet Sree Rama Seva Mandali - MS Subbulakshmi accompanied on the Violin by Mysore T Chowdiah with Kalpathi Ramanathan on Mridangam (Photo courtesy Srinivasan Visvanathan, Grandson of MS Subbulakshmi)

of Lord Ramachandra standing majestically with his consort Sita, brother Lakshmana and, his Bhakta Hanuman (Mukhya Prana). With time the Ramanavami celebrations developed in magnitude and stature and in the year 1949 the celebrations moved to a hall just above the BDCC Bank in Chamarajpet where it continued till 1952. Shri. SVN Rao approached the then Mysore Maharaja Shri. Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar who magnanimously provided him space to perform celebrations in 'Bangalore City Institute' which was under his control. Shri. AN Rama Rao (Brother of A Na Kru, Shri. AN Krishna Rao a Kannada Literary giant) stood shoulder to shoulder with Shri. SVN Rao during these challenging times. About this time, 'Balakara Ramaseva Mandali' had grown to be one of the popular music institutes under the new banner 'Chamarajpet Sree Rama Seva Mandali'.

The festival acquired so much popularity that people referred to it as the "City Institute Ramanavami Festival". The festival was a pride of Bangalore with prominent personalities like Maharaja Shri. Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar, Dr. S Radhakrishnan, VV Giri, R. Venkatraman, Rajaji, PV Rajamannar were inaugurating, and being

part of the festival which was considered an extension of the December music season in Madras.

Those were the days when Shri. SVN Rao was a bachelor and for personal reasons kept away from family and stayed in Malabar Lodge in Chamarajpet. Mysore T Chowdiah was a regular visitor to the lodge and used to stay there often. That was the time when his relationship with Chowdiah blossomed and lasted all his life. It was also the time when his relationship with Bangalore Ghatam Manjunath developed and they were all part of the big things to come in due course. Several Karnataka giants Chintalapalli Ramachandra Rao, C Honnappa Bhagavathar, Harikathe Krishna Bhagavathar were the regular performers in those days. Over a period the festival that lasted 7-10 days expanded to 36 days and it was Mysore Chowdiah who expanded the horizon of artistes across the music spectrum by bringing stalwarts like Ariyakudi, Chembai, GNB, Madurai Mani Iyer, etc. The part played by VT Srinivasan, President and Srinivasa Iyengar (Pen name - Rajashree), Ex-Secretary of The Bangalore Gayana Samaja (BGS) is immeasurable. MS Subbulakshmi and other senior mu-



Shri. AN Rama Rao (Right extreme) *Mandali's first President* with Shri. SV Narayanaswamy Rao (wearing a coat) with DK Pattammal and her husband Eswaran between them

sicians concerts were fixed due to their goodwill with the artistes. As a gesture, BGS stopped all their programs from April to May every year just so that all their members can attend daily concerts at the Chamarajpet Sree Rama Seva Mandali whose venue was a stone throw away from BGS.

During the year 1967, through the efforts of Kengal Hanumanthaiah, a tall congress leader, a resolution was passed in the assembly that the Mandali would be provided a place at the old Fort High School grounds from March to May every year for the Chamarajpet Sree Rama Seva Mandali where it continues to hold its festival to date.

Late Shri. BVK Shastri, acclaimed musicologist of Karnataka has this to say "When I came to Bangalore, there were about 70 odd places where Ramanavami was celebrated under the thatched roof but most were dedicated to religious activities. There were about 8-10 venues where musical programs were held as part of the festival but it was only two or three venues where the musical offering was focussed and out of these, Chamarajpet Sree Rama Seva Mandali was the oldest and the most prominent. As Mandali moved from place to place, its strength and proportions expanded multi-folds and today it is probably the only venue where 4-5 thousand people can enjoy live music. Shri. SVN Rao's contribution to the growth of the institution is unparalleled".

Shri. SVN Rao was in service with big corporates like LIC of India, HAL (Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd.). As the scale of the operations increased, he had to sacrifice his profession and dedicate full time towards the Ramanavami festival. The festival was well known in the country and became a benchmark, a venue where top-quality musicians be it Karnatic or Hindustani took pride in performing. It was a tradition for MS Subbulakshmi to perform on the final day. Late Shri. BVK Shastri further says "A leader should possess advanced planning, Organising, Patience, and Commitment, etc. to run a festival of this magnitude and effectiveness. Shri. SVN Rao had all these qualities in plenty. He was a man of few words but high on action. Though he looked humble, his achievements are gigantic. The seed he planted has now grown to be a huge tree and today it continues to be as popular as it was with his son Shri. Varadaraj at the helms of affairs"

In those days huge pandal used to be erected at the Fort High School grounds with bamboo poles and Zinc sheets giving way for an open-air concert hall which has undergone modernisation in current times. A sparkling 10 foot tall brass Mandapam, a magnified replica of a silver mandapam with the Maharaja's of Mysore is kept at the southern side of the concert hall forming the backdrop for the stage. Large panchaloha statues sculpted from his native Shiv-arapatna of Lord Ramachandra, Sita Devi, Lak-



Sree Rama Seva Mandali Mascot

shmana, and Hanuman adorn the Mandapam. The deities are well decorated every day with utmost sincerity all through the month-long musical extravaganza with Shri. SVN Rao staying at the pandal throughout the festival and personally performing the Pooja and Havana for Lord Ramachandra. He has penned down Lord Ramachandra's name (naama) ten million times and he would worship Lord Ramachandra by means of religiously reading Sundara Kanda a segment of Valmiki Ramayana that narrates Hanuman's selfless devotion to Lord Ramachandra.

So deep-rooted was Shri. SVN Rao's Bhakti and devotion to Lord Ramachandra, that Lord showered his benevolence by appearing in his sleep and revealed to him a vision of Hanuman. An overwhelmed Rao immediately designed an image of Hanuman as he appeared in his sleep, which became Sree Rama Seva Mandali's Logo.

Shri. SVN Rao was a committed devotee of Sri Raghavendra Swami at Mantralaya and Vijaya Dasaru. It was a ritual for him to take a Darshan of the Raghavendra Swami in the month of November before setting out to finalise the artistes for the Raamanavami Festival. He would stay in Chennai all through the Madras music season for a month, and book the artistes for

his festival with Rs. 20 as token advance and Mantralaya prasadam.

Chamarajpet Sree Rama Seva Mandali festival is probably the longest-running music festivals for over 6 decades. In the past, it lasted for 48 days with the Golden and Diamond jubilee festivals running for 54 and 64 days respectively. In current days too, it is probably the longest with 31 days of music. Rightly so Shri. Jayachamaraja Wadiyar commended young SVN Rao's Mandali as 'Gnana Gana Sabha'. Likewise India's first Governor-General Shri. C Rajagopalachari lauded Shri SVN Rao for his leadership and referred to the Mandali as 'Temple of Music'.

Mysore T Chowdiah and Shri. SVN Rao who was younger than him had a great friendship and called Shri. SVN Rao Rama dhoota 'Maruti'. Chowdiah performed regularly in the Ramanavami festivals, both as solo, and accompanying giants like GNB, Madurai Mani Iyer, Ariyakudi, etc. TR Mahalingam (Mali) shared a close relationship with Shri. SVN Rao and had invited him to accompany him on Tambura on a few of his concerts.

Mandali has given ever so many memorable concerts in the past of maestros like Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Chembai, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Alathor Brothers, GNB, MLV, MDR, Madurai Mani Iyer, Emani Sankara Sastry with MSG, Emani Sankara Sastry with Amjad Ali Khan, Chitti Babu, Madurai Somasundaram, Maharajapuram Santanam, Sirgazhi Govindarajan, etc. some of which bring nostalgic feelings even today. Bharat Ratna MS Subbulakshmi has performed a record 36 concerts for Mandali since

Shri. SVN Rao with Flute maestro Mali





Shri. SVN Rao with KJ Yesudas at the Sree Rama Seva Mandali, Chamarajpet

her first concert in the early 1960s which is probably a record by itself. The Mandali stage has given a perfect launching pad for the young musicians in the past who are today the who-is-who of Karnatic music.

Madurai Somu was very popular and one could see a full house in his concerts. He used to sing 'o rama ni namamemi ruchira' of Badrachala Ramadasu which was a favourite of the audience and he even used to sing 'narayanaswami poojita rama' for that kriti with the rasikas eyes going moist. A concert of Maharajapuram Santhanam with Nagai Muralidharan and Vellore Ramabhadran was marred by rain but none of the rasikas moved out and the entire concert was supported on the UPS system. The vibration was felt hours after the concert especially his favourite tukudas like 'ragi tandira', 'bho shambo' etc. in the second half. In those days the concerts used to start by 7 pm and used to go up to 11 pm with some of the Madurai Somu concerts going past midnight. Commuting being a challenge, elaborate arrangements were available to ferry the people to different parts of the city by Town Buses arranged by the Mandali. It was a ritual for Shri. SVN Rao to meet Dr. Yesudas on the 25th of every year during Christmas

and exchange pleasantries. He would give him Mantralaya Prasada and a token advance of 20 Rs. towards the concert. In the year 1999, as if he anticipated himself becoming one with Lord Ramachandra, he told Dr. Yesudas 'My son Varadaraj will be visiting you from the following year and do accord the same co-operation'. 10 days later on January 05, 2000, Shri. SVN Rao breathed his last and became one with Lord Ramachandra whom he worshipped all his life.

Smt. Narasamma, wife of Shri. SVN Rao sacrificed a lot in her life as well as took care of the entire family. She brought up the children to what they are today while Shri. SVN Rao was completely devoted to music and in the service of Sree Rama. He had no time for anything else. It is said that the organisation would not have sustained but for the role played by her.

A national award for music is constituted in the name of Shri. SVN Rao. The award is presented during the Ramanavami festival conducted by Varadaraj and his team. Today the award itself is made worthy by associating itself with some of the maestro's like M Balamuralikrishna, MS Subbulakshmi, RK Srikantan, Lalgudi Jayaraman, etc.

A lot has changed since the time Shri. SVN Rao became one with God. The organisation has grown leaps and bounds and today it is probably one of the biggest operations to get the infrastructure up and running. The idea is to continue the tradition and path paved by Shri. SVN Rao and provide the best possible musical experience for the rasikas. 40 loads of materials are transported to the venue location to support the festival. Mandali has incorporated many modern-day amenities. They have installed special air cooler fans considering that the festivals happen outdoor and during peak summer. Specialised LED display flex boards are imported from China and assembled at the venue costing lakhs of rupees. The overall budget for the festival which was about 35 Lakhs about 20 Yrs back is estimated at over 2 Cr today. The present pandemic has hit the Mandali like never before

and for the first time in 80 yrs, the festival could not be conducted though a few concerts were webcast live. While the Pandemic is a worry for the year 2021 also, Mandali wants to take things as it comes and see how the new year pans out. It is heartening to see that the Mandali is doing everything to continue Shri. SVN Rao's vision to celebrate the Ramanavami in the best way possible by providing music of the highest standard.

Shri. SVN Rao never aspired for recognition and awards as his services were completely dedicated to Lord Ramachandra. While he rejected many such recognitions, the Mandali was awarded the Karnataka Rajyotsava Award posthumous in the year 2001. The Government of Karnataka as a respect for his service towards music and society in general has named the 2nd Cross of Chamrajpet as SV Narayanaswamy Rao Marga (Road).

Shri. GV Krishna Prasad speaks on Shri. SVN Rao

Shri. SVN Rao was a very religious person and devoted his life entirely to the service of Lord Ramachandra. Though he celebrated Ramanavami through music, he did not compromise any of the rituals and stayed at the makeshift pandal all through the festival for over a month and personally performed pooja to Lord Ramachandra. The Pooja used to go on from morning till evening with a concert starting late evening around 7 pm.

In those days, when I was working at the Bangalore City Town Planning department, he used to visit me and my director Shri. KS Ramegowda who was a patron of music. Through my director's instruction, I used to interact with over 20 branches of our office and help him sell the tickets. The tickets were 100 and 200 Rs. denominations for the full season of music. I used to personally collect the sale proceeds and hand it over to him.

Shri. SVN Rao's commitment and dedication to the festival is something I have not seen in any-

body all my life. I remember him with a Coat, Dhoti, and a Tilak, engage an Auto Rickshaw, and visit various offices like the Chief Engineers office, Income Tax office, Commercial Tax office, Police commissioners office, etc. months leading to the festival. It was a daily routine for him to set out in the morning and return back only by night in order to arrange the funds for the festival.

I have seen people prostrating in front of him out of respect. Jambavans like Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Chembai, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, etc. respected him highly. He has put in enormous efforts to build Sree Rama Seva Mandali from scratch and today it takes a pride of place among all institutions in our entire music eco-system.

I have no words to express my gratitude for this great man who served Lord Ramachandra all his life. It goes without saying that the music we have today in Bangalore is a result of the legacy left behind by him.

Mudhra Veena Festival

C Ramakrishnan, Chennai



Vidushi Padmavathy Ananthagopalan receiving the 'Vainika Mudhra Award' from Nalli Kuppuswamy Chettiar on 23 Aug 2014 during the 'Nalli's Veenotsav 2014'. Seen in the photo are Radha Baskar and Mudhra Bhaskar (Extreme left)

Mudhra, the Chennai based Sabha organised the Virtual Veena Utsav 2020 from 4 Sep to 10 Sep which were webcast in paalam tv as well the Mudhra25 Facebook page. The veena concerts of leading vidwans and vidushis collated from the archives of Mudhra were made available for enjoyment for the rasikas over the globe.

Among the musical instruments, Veena is considered as a divine instrument as it adorns the hands of Saraswathy - the Goddess of knowledge. It is next to human voice, as it can reproduce the dasavidha gamakas with precision and an accomplished vainika can bring out the sahithya bhavam in the Veena quite eloquently. But sadly, the Veena concerts are sparsely attended and the sabhas also give limited opportunities to Veena vidwans. I feel the situation is better in Bangalore as compared to Chennai. In this context the exclusive Veena festivals organ-

ised by Mudhra assume importance as they give opportunity to many Veena artistes to show case their talents.

The Mudhra Veena festival was started in the year 2005 inspired by Mr. Raghuram Iyer of New Delhi. In the initial years, the festival was conducted for two days with half an hour slots for the vidwans and vidushis and from the year 2014, the concerts were recorded in Mudhra music studio and webcast in Paalam TV providing 90 minutes slots to provide full justice to the versatility of the veena artistes. A senior Veena artiste was conferred the Vainika Mudhra award also. This year, in view of the pandemic situation, select concerts from their archives were webcast on line to have a wider reach among the rasikas. Though all the concerts conformed to high standards, some of the concerts are etched in the memory.

The concert of Sangeetha Kalanidhi Padma-
hooshan Madurai TN Seshagopalan on the inau-
gural day provided a grand feast starting with
'Merusamana' with 'O Rangasayi' as the main
kriti. The roaring manodharmam of Se-
shagopalan was vividly expressed through the
medium of Veena. The Kharaharapiya of Jayanthi
Kumaresh was delectable while the 'Nannu vi-
dachi' and 'Ekamresanayike' in the first half of the
concert provided enough vishranti. Ramana Bal-
achandran has been impressing the rasikas
everywhere with his sensitive and vidwat laden
approach and in this concert his Yadukulakam-
bodi alapana for 'Sree Rama Jayarama' and the
main song 'Koluvai unnade' in Bhairavi were rich
in manodharmam and aesthetics. Mohanam was
the main suite chosen by Dr. RS Jayalakshmi and
she played an elaborate alapana, tanam preced-
ing 'Jagadeeswari' - the composition of Tiruvurur
Ramawami Pillai.

Nisha Ponni from Tiruvananthapuram comes in
the lineage of Sangeetha Kalanidhi K.S.-
Narayanawamy. Her Bhairavi alapana, tanam
and the 'Balagopala' kriti of Dikshitar were
soaked in melody. The Veena couple Jayasri and
Jayaraj presented a wholesome concert with

impressive Kapi for 'Intha sowkhyā' and Ragam
Tanam Pallavi in Thodi. All the accompanying
artistes played with sensitivity and understand-
ing. The audio and video were superior in quali-
ty. The viewership was encouraging for all the
concerts.

There were fourteen concerts with the partici-
pation of forty five artistes - Veena artistes and
pakkavadyam artistes, which were made avail-
able free for music lovers, but Mudhra Bhaskar
solicited donations from generous music lovers.
A minimum donation of Rs.800 for rasikas in
India and US\$25 for rasikas abroad were col-
lected to be shared among the artistes who are
going through a difficult time owing to the pan-
demic situation. In his Facebook page, Mudhra
Bhaskar profusely thanked the large hearted
music lovers who contributed liberally and re-
ported that the mount collected had been dis-
tributed among the artistes. In this, seven Veena
artistes were magnanimous enough to forego
their remuneration and wished that the amount
may be paid to their accompanists. One Vainika
wished that his share may be given to one tam-
bura artiste.

A laudable effort indeed.

TS Ramaa passes away



Popular Karnatic musician TS Ramaa passed
away on 19th October 2020. She was 70 Yrs
old.

She started training in music at the age of 3 and
learnt music from Jayam-Bhagyam Sisters and

later trained under Prof. V Ramaratnam of My-
suru, Seethalakshmi Venkateshan and Suganda
Raman. She had a traditional approach to her
music and known for aesthetic presentation.
She was a A Grade artiste of AIR and head of
the department of music at APS College, Ben-
galuru and established the PG music course at
Jain University, Bangalore from scratch.

She was conferred with title 'Ganakalasri' by
Sangeet Natak Akademi. Sri Rama Lalitha Kala
Mandira honoured her with 'Lalitha Kala Suma'
in the year 2018.

Team Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira conveys
heartfelt condolences to her family members,
admirers and disciples

Twelve years in the divine proximity of my revered guru

Vidwan M Vasudeva Rao, Bangalore



I started learning Mridanga from guru Sri H Puttachar when I was 12 years old. I was taught percussion and classical vocals uninterrupted for 11 years in a manner similar to but not exactly the gurukula system. I learnt Varnas, Kritis, and Pallavis alongside Mridanga. He could easily lose his temper while teaching. He used to often quote the famous saying “danDam dashaguNam bhaveth”. Fortunately, he was relatively lenient towards me as he knew that I walked 3 miles from Chamaraja Pete to Balé Pate everyday to attend classes. I was very studious and enthusiastic. I completed by Junior level board exam in percussion within two years of commencing lessons, and learnt all the way to reach Vidwath level.

Guru Vidwan Puttachar had accompanied many stalwart musicians of his era. I had heard him recollect his experiences of playing many concerts accompanying Vidwan BS Raja Iyengar, all

the notable musicians from the Chintalapalli tradition (particularly Vidwan Chintalapalli Krishnamurthy), Asthana Vidwan RS Keshavamurthy, Vidwan B Devendrappa, Harmonium Vidwan Narasimhaiah, Vidwan Anoor Soorya Narayana, Vidwan Honnappa Bhagavathar, Vidwan Ramanagara Narayana Iyengar, Vidwan Bangarapete Krishnamurthy, Vidwan Kulithalai Krishnaswamy, Vidwan D Subbaramayya, Vidwan Pallavi Chandra Singh and others. My guru used to pleasingly mention that physicist Sir CV Raman, who had studied the harmonics of Indian percussion drums, was fond of my guru’s Mridanga playing. A special quality in my guru was his way of encouraging deserving students by giving them opportunities to play alongside him. I used to play Dholak while accompanying our guru’s Mridanga in live concerts of Vidwan Chintalapalli Ramachandra Rao, Vidwan Devendrappa, Vidwan Narayanaswamy Bhagavathar, Vidwan Kuroodi Venkannacharya, Vidwan Veene Raja Rao, Vidwan Govinda Swamy (Vocalist) and many others. My guru used to ensure that the accompanying student had something new to learn in every concert. He was a pioneer in conducting percussion (Taalavadya) ensembles. He introduced taalavaadya centric concerts by training his students in diverse instruments. Students who were privileged to accompany him and those who took part in group performances included Vidwan HP Ramachar (my guru’s son), Vidwan Harishchandra, Vidwan C Subbu, Vidwan L Bheemachar, Vidwan Nateshan, Vidwan Ananthappa, myself, Vidwan VV Srinivasa Rao, Vidwan B Druvaraj, MD Eshwar, GV Krishna Prasad and others.

Guru Vidwan H Puttachar polished my teaching skills too. He gave me opportunities to participate as a co-examiner (assisting him) in music



Vintage photograph of H Puttachar and his disciples. Seated in the middle with walking stick is H Puttachar. To his left seated are C Subbu, Natesh, Vasudeva Rao. To the right of H Puttachar is HP Ramachar, L Bheemachar, Anantharamaiah (Shantha Tabla works) and Krishna Rao (Bata). Standing second row in between C Subbu and Natesh is C Cheluvaraj. Above Cheluvaraj standing in top row is B Rajashekar. Third right of C Cheluvaraj is Druvaraj. Standing second left of C Cheluvaraj is Ananth (Violinist). To the left of Ananth is VV Srinivasa Rao. Picture taken at Sri Laldas Venkataramanaswamy Temple, Balepete (Photo courtesy - Vasudeva Rao)

exams conducted by the Karnataka Secondary Education Examination Board. I later came to know that my guru, as a senior member of the Taalavadya board, had a significant role in shaping the syllabus for music exams conducted by the state government of Karnataka. Through his

efforts, Carnatic percussion was recognised as an independent domain under annual music exams.

It is only due to my guru's good wishes and blessings that I have been able to serve Karnatic music in my limited ways. I am indebted to him.

A Raga's Journey - Synopsis

SRLKM Facebook Live Lec-Dem series by Dr. Radha Bhaskar, Chennai
Programme Schedule - to be announced



A Raga's Journey - Purvikalyani will be the raga handled by Dr. Radha Bhaskar in this presentation. After Kalyani, this is the most popular

Prathi madhyama raga which has been handled by many composers through the ages. This raga has interesting references in treatises with regard to its swarupa and the different interpretations of its arohana-avarohana. Every compositional genre finds expression through this raga. Purvikalyani offers interesting study also from the manodharma aspects in terms of how certain key phrases define the raga and yet, how it also offers space for unbound creativity.

Through compositions and manodharma aspects, the different facets of Purvikalyani with reference to its history, evolution, interpretation and practical application will be examined.

Dr. HS Anasuya Kulkarni

Vidwan BN Ramesh Bangalore



Dr. HS Anasuya Kulkarni daughter of Shri HP Suryanarayana Rao and Smt. HS Ambamma was a noted singer in the yesteryears. She was popularly known as HS Anasuya. She learnt music from Sangeetha Vidya Sagara Vidwan RR Keshavamurthy and Sangitha Kalanidhi Vidwan T Chowdiah. She was a graded artist of A.I.R. She has given many concerts in all prestigious platforms and Sabhas. She was awarded Gold medal at the Music Academy, Chennai for rendering Purandaradasa Krithis. She got B.A in History, Economics and Music and PhD from Annamalai University. She was a National Champion in Basket-Ball and a very active sports person in all sports activities and won several prizes. She also participated in Inter University Youth Festival held at New Delhi and was awarded First prize in Music.

Anasuya's life took a major turn after her marriage with Shri Narayan Kulkarni in 1964, who was an officer with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Her passion for Hindustani music made her to get in touch with Ustad Mohammed Hussain Sarahang, a senior respected musician of Patiala Gharana. Her training was such, that she was able to accompany him on vocal in his concerts and on Radio Kabul. Her Ustad was very much impressed

with her learning and presented her his Swara Mandal. A school going boy in her neighbourhood used to play a string instrument which attracted her attention. After enquiry, she came to know that it was Sarod. Her Ustad got her a new Sarod and gave her with his blessings. This was the beginning of her musical Instrument collection. She spent 9 years in Kabul and later Shri Kulkarni was posted to Mongolia and then on to Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Uganda, Ethiopia, Bhutan. Each of the countries has different types of musical instruments. Anasuya collected those instruments and also learnt the technique of playing them from the top musicians. She also started teaching Karnatic music in local universities and schools. While at Mongolia, Kulkarni visited China and Anasuya gave concert and also collected many Chinese instruments.

During her stay at Indonesia between 1977 to 1983 she saw many metal instruments and particularly got fascinated by Bamboo instrument Anghklung, a communal instrument played in a group. It is one of the National Instrument of Indonesia. It is made of only Bamboo and bamboo thread is used to bind different parts together which produces very melodious and soothing sound. Sound is produced by rattling/shaking the Instrument. In their country it is played in orchestral type, each person holding one frequency Instrument of playing in succession to produce music with a conductor guiding them. It is very popular and enchanting. In India, when we talk about bamboo musical instruments, no other instrument comes to our mind other than flute. A brilliant idea struck Anasuya "Why not I introduce this Anghklung in to Indian music?" In Indonesia, Anghklung is played in standing posture holding it in one hand and rattle/shake with the other hand as directed by the



Dr. HS Anasuya Kulkarni with Indonesian instrument Anghklung

conductor. In India, music performance set up is to squat on floor with all the accompanying artists on either side. To suit our stage requirements, a stand was developed to accommodate 8-9 notes. The height of the stand to suit the height of the artist and the artist to have interaction with the audience and wide enough for comfortable hand movement to play with comfort. We made this stand easy to dismantle for ease of transportation. It took about 3 years enough money was spent along with enough time spent with carpenters and after many discards, is the background story for the present day stand you see on the platform. However, innovation and improvement is a continuous process. She named this instrument as “ANKRANG” A for Anasuya, N for Narayan Kulkarni and Rang from Jalata “rang”.

Anasuya particularly learnt to play Gamalon, Indonesian metal instrument and participated in concerts. She was invited by Indian Fine Arts, Singapore as an external examiner for music Examinations. While she was at Papua New Guinea (1984), she was invited by Indonesian

Govt. to play Anghklung in Indonesian troupe at Perth, Australia for Indian Ocean Festival and was interviewed by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. During her stay abroad she organised many benefit programmes in aid of school and hospitals. Anasuya organised International music programme in aid of National Arts school of Papua New Guinea where wives of the Ambassador of countries residing in the country played Anghklung. The students of the Music School participated in this programme. The money collected was used for maintenance of musical instruments. The Arts School students used to remain unemployed, after completing their education. An interesting outcome of this programme was employment to many by the hoteliers for their music bands. Until then, they were recruiting musicians from Singapore and Australia.

On return to India after retirement of Shri Kulkarni in Bhutan, Anasuya's new musical journey started. She and Narayan Kulkarni established Musical Instruments Museum at their residence in J.P. Nagar, Bangalore under the



Dr. HS Anasuya Kulkarni along with Sathya Sai Baba, MS Subbulakshmi, Sadasivam

banner of Institute of Ethno-Music. Her collection of different types of musical instruments from various countries are: 1. Aerophones (Wind Instruments), 2. Chordophones (String Instruments). 3. Idiophones (Ghana Vaadya- hit and produce sound), 4. S Membranophones (Drums - skin instruments.)

Nearly 300 instruments from various countries-Mexico, Philippines, Uganda, Ethiopia, Papua New Guinea, Mongolia, China, Indonesia, Bhutan, South Africa and Tanzania etc. in all from 26 countries. Anasuya' musical Instruments museum is unique and is visited and highly appreciated by many senior respected artists like Bala Murali Krishna, Lalgudi Jayaraman, Vikku Vinayakram, Diplomats, dignitaries, school and college students, Research scholars etc. For the benefit of posterity and for safe keeping, Anasuya and Narayan Kulkarni have donated the Instruments to Vishwa Museum, at Mysore Avadhoota Datta Peetham. Shri Shri Ganapathi Sachidananda Swamiji, who has taken personal interest in displaying the Instruments on level of an International standard Museum.

Anasuya has also donated few instruments to Musical Instrument Museum in Phoenix, Arizona (USA). Also to Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal. Madhya Pradesh; Indian Music Appreciation Museum, J.P.Nagar, Bengaluru.

Anghklung is unique instrument and she has been devoting all her time and energy in popularising the instrument by training students the art and technique of playing. She has been giving concerts at various National and International conferences,

Her most memorable concerts:

1. Anasuya gave an Anghklung programme at the India International Centre, New Delhi and one of the audiences was late Narayana Menon who was then Secretary of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi. He was very much impressed with the programme and invited her to his office to record her Anghklung music for preservation in Akademi archives.

2. During 400th Centenary celebrations of Shri Purandaradasa at Hampi, her programme was in the evening. After she sang "Aacharawillada Naalige" out of ecstasy, many persons from the audience started throwing money on the stage. After her allotted time for the programme was over she got up. There was a hue and cry from the audience insisting that she continue to sing more songs. The organisers came on the stage to pacify them and promised to organise Anasuya's special programme next day.



Dr. HS Anasuya Kulkarni in a Lec-Dem at The Music Academy in 1983. Seen in the background are Sripada Pinakapani (President of the conference), S Ramanathan, RK Venkataramana Shastri

3. World/International Conferences

- Durlabha Vaadya Vinod Conference, Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh)
- World Bamboo Conference, Indore. (Madhya Pradesh)
- World Bamboo Conference, Brussels
- World Bamboo Conference, Thrissur (Kerala)
- International Music Conference, Bengaluru.
- East West Encounter, Bengaluru
- International Karnatak Music Conference, Durban (South Africa)

Other Memorable Concerts

- a) Concert in the presence of Shri Sathya Sai Baba who was very much pleased with Anasuya's music and blessed her with a saree and also blessed the anghklung
- b) A Special concert at Music Academy, Chennai in the presence of Vid. Madurai TN Seshaagopalan, President of Music Conference, TK Govinda Rao, Vedavalli, TV Gopalakrishnan, Vellore Ramabadrana, Sanjay Subramanyam, and many musicians, students and Research scholars
- c) Special concerts at Yavanika for the United Nations Day showcasing variety of foreign Instruments with 24 artists on stage, a nov-

el and unique concert in which Karnatak music was played on foreign instruments

- d) Concert at Raj Bhavan for the Gandhi Jayanti Day celebration in august presence of Honourable Governor Shri Hans Raj in 2002
- e) Special concert with 10 Anghklung players at Avadhoota Datta Peetham Ashram, Mysore in the august presence of Shri Ganapathy Sachchidananda Swamiji

Special theme based Pancha, Nada, Swara, Raga, Vadya, Ranga, Vaibhava concerts for the Golden Jubilee celebration of Karnataka Gana Kala Parishat On 9th February , 2020. The programme was very well appreciated by the entire audience..

She has given lecture/demonstrations on various interesting music subjects. Also conceptualising theme based concerts, PANCHA VAADYA NAADA VAIBHAVA, a theme based programme of Pancha thatva at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan for packed audience in 2016 with 5 Anghklungs, 5 string instruments, 5 Indian percussion and 5 foreign drums, 5 chief guests, 5 lamps, 5 Ragas, 5 Nades, 5 Indian states, 5 other countries music etc. This programme was acclaimed by the media and public.



Ex President Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam appreciating Dr. HS Anasuya Kulkarni's achievements. Also in the picture Mr. Narayan Kulkarni, the man behind her achievements

Anasuya has been conferred with many awards. To list a few:

- 1) "Karnataka Kala Shree" by the Kannada and Culture Department of the Govt. of Karnataka.
- 2) "Gana Kala Bhushana" by the Karnataka Gana Kala Parishat

- 3) "Kempe Gowda" award by the Government of Karnataka.
- 4) "Artist of the Year" by the Gayana Samaja.
- 5) "Gana Bhushana" by Ceylonese Association, Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia)

Dr. HS Anasuya Kulkarni is a multi faceted, talented artist. A well known singer playing Indian music on Anghklung, good teacher, good orator who has given many lecture/demonstrations, an athlete and sport person, collector of various curios, painter, vegetable carving, Indonesian Batik, copper tooling, curious. She has travelled extensively all over the world, very active and enthusiastic person even at 80+ age. She is a role model for many Indian families as to how to utilise their time usefully in learning the culture, music, art etc. of their host country which helps in understanding and mixing with local people. Music is divine which connects people of various nations and builds up bondage of friendship.

Anasuya has been interviewed by many press media, television. Her articles have appeared in many press media

Vidwan H Puttachar's rigour kept me afloat in Carnatic music

Vidwan B Druvaraj, Bangalore

As the eldest son of Morsing Vidwan L Bheemachar, it was natural that I started learning classical music from an early age. When I was 8 years old, my father took me to his guru Vidwan H Puttachar for Mridanga lessons (1967). I used to attend my music class after school every evening. There was a fixed time for commencement of a class but there was no fixed time for concluding it. Unless and until I rendered all the lessons to his satisfaction, I had no chance of going home. If he was upset due to some other reason, and if my luck had run

out, I must have spent hours on end presenting the same thing.

Vidwan H Puttachar always taught vocal singing to students of percussion. I learnt vocals along with Mridanga for three years. He was proficient with playing the Harmonium too! He used to teach vocals from Sarale varase to Kritis while playing the harmonium and wanted his students to always practise with Shruti support. We had to be comfortable rendering Aadi Taala Varnas in three speeds and Atta Taala Varnas had to be flawlessly presented in Aadi Taala in Mishra Nade.



H Puttachar teaching youngsters at his house. Clockwise from left - Krishnamurthy, B Druvaraj, H Puttachar, AV Kashinath, Ashwathnarayan (Son of Anantharamaiah of Shantha Tabla Works)

As students of percussion, AV Kashinath (now a well-known Khanjeera Vidwan), my younger brother B Rajashekhar (now an established Morsing Vidwan), and I were awestruck at Vidwan H Puttachar's vocal prowess. He had a large collection of Kritis, a clean paathaantara (compositions without errors), and was a powerhouse of Pallavis set to difficult Raagas and rare Taalas. Many vocalists including Vidushi Bhagyalakshmi Ramanna, Vidwan Tumakuru Ramaiah, Vidwan SR Araadhya were learning advanced vocals from him.

I was lucky to accompany my guru (Mridanga) and my father (Morsing) on dholak. I started performing Mridanga independently for live concerts in 1972 and cleared the Vidwat board exam a few years later. Whenever my guru came to know that I had fared well in a concert, he would apparently share his happiness with my father but he never expressed his appreciation or approval in my presence. My guru and his wife lived on their own after his son had moved out. I was doing household chores, assisting

with daily shopping, bank transactions and even used to collect rent from tenants on his behalf. After he met with a motorbike accident, his physical mobility was restricted in his older age but his musical spirit remained intact. He continued to teach from his bed. In 1979, I took his permission and continued my training under another doyen in the field of percussion Vidwan Ramanathapuram CS Murugaboopathy.

In 2007, the Bengaluru based Percussive Arts Center gave me an award instituted in memory of my guru Vidwan H Puttachar. On that humbling day, my mind was preoccupied with two feelings (a) how lucky I was and (b) how arduous it was being a student of Sri H Puttachar. He always performed impromptu and wanted me to be ready to tackle anything on the stage, without rehearsals or being informed in advance. He trained his students to be ready like him. I don't think we can be half as good as he was but his rigorous training not only paved the path but also has continued to hold my hand in my journey with Carnatic percussion.

Reminiscences of my guru Mahavidwan H Puttachar

Vidwan L Bheemachar, Bangalore

I started my training in Carnatic classical vocal under Vidwan Hyadalu Puttachar when I was 14 (1945). His residence in Choula Galli was within walking distance from our home near Nagar-tara Pete in Bengaluru. By then, Sri H Puttachar was a venerated artiste who had accompanied (on the Mridanga) all the leading vocalists and instrumentalists in Karnataka. Initially, I felt intimidated by his stern approach to teaching but over time realised that he deeply cared for his students. He taught me every day and I learnt mainly Varnas and Kritis for almost 7 years. I was struggling to remember my music lessons while I focussed on my job as an apprentice goldsmith. I requested and my guru too felt that percussion may better suite my nature. He started teaching me Mridanga and I even tried practising Ghata. I had played Mridanga and Ghata at Bhajana sabhas and concerts for a couple of years. The turning point came in 1955. A kind elderly gentleman had leased his goldsmith's workshop to me with all the machines

and tools intact. I stumbled upon an old Morsing in a drawer while cleaning the shop. I tried playing the Morsing and showed my techniques to Sri H Puttachar. He must have seen something in my Morsing play and said that Morsing may be my saviour in Carnatic music. He also knew that there were no notable Morsing artistes in Karnataka at that time and felt that I might benefit as a pioneer. He asked me to practice all the Sollukattus of Mridanga and Konnakol in Morsing. I experimented and he was there at every step to instil self-belief.

My first concert as a Morsing artiste (1957) was with my guru on the Mridanga and the legendary Vidwan Mysuru T Chowdiah on the Violin (solo). The concert was organised by the renowned Harikatha exponent Sri Gururajulu Naidu at his house for Sadguru Tyagaraja Aradhana which gave me a lot of confidence. After a couple of similar concerts, my guru insisted and generously promoted my Morsing by giving many opportunities. He had instructed me to

H Puttachar in a Lec-Dem during first musicians conference of Karnataka Ganakala Parishat in the year 1970. From left - H Puttachar, B Druvaraj, Krishnamurthy, AV Kashinath,





Vintage photograph of H Puttachar with senior musicians on the occasion of G Chennamma honouring the artistes from the school Gana Mandira, located at HB Samaja Road, Gandhi Bazar. Seated is Sri H Puttachar. To his right standing is G Chennamma, next to her is B Jayamma. Behind H Puttachar is RS Keshavamurthy, Behind RS Keshavamurthy is RK Srinivasamurthy and RK Prakash, To the left of H Puttachar is T Puttaswamiah, Veena Raja Rao, AN Subba Rao, Sheshadri Gavao, Belakavadi Srinivasa Iyengar, A Subba Rao, Shambulingappa (Photo courtesy - Vasudeva Rao)

keep my concert attire always ready in my workshop. He would come to my shop on his motorbike, often without prior notice. I had to close my shop and go with him to play Morsing at a concert. His Mridanga was on my lap and my Morsing travelled in my shirt pocket, close to my heart.

Vidwan H Puttachar's mastery over difficult Pallavis was unmatched. He could reproduce any Pallavi in three or more speeds with any edupu in any taala on the concert stage without prior knowledge of the concert plan or Pallavi sahitya. Those days, it was common to see thani avarana (percussion solo) being played at three different edupus of the same taala, after the main artiste's rendering of kalpana swaras at three places. He could tackle those with ease and finesse. He was a brilliant teacher of vocal singing as well as percussion. He wanted students of percussion to learn vocals and particularly Varnas with all their rigour. Among his students and my contemporaries, Vidwan C Subbu and Vidwan HP Ramachar (son of Vidwan H Puttachar) went on to become accomplished percussionists.

I continued playing the Morsing in support of my guru's Mridanga in live concerts as long as he was actively performing (1977). We accom-

panied some well-known names including Vidwans Mysuru T Chowdiah, Chintalapalli Venkata Rao, Chintalapalli Ramachandra Rao, Chintalapalli Krishnamurthy, Veene Raja Rao, P Bhuvaneshwaraiah, BS Raja Iyengar, Anoor Sooryanarayana, Ballari Brothers, Harmonium Arunachalappa, B Devendrappa, Honnappa Bhagavathar, Mysuru V Doreswamy Iyengar, RK Srikantan, RR Keshavamurthy, Pallavi Chandrapa, Pallavi Chandra Singh, Vidushis Papa Choodamani, MN Ratna, and many others. Morsing gave me an opportunity to learn on the stage from my guru. It was challenging and rewarding.

He continued to impart lessons in person. I worked as a goldsmith until 9 pm and after dinner I used to go to his house for music lessons that invariably continued until late after midnight. My guru used to lovingly remark that "Bheemu struggled to master this tough art but his children will find it easier because Bheemu persevered gallantly". His blessings indeed came true. My children (two of them learnt from him directly) have made their mark in Carnatic classical percussion. His affection for me had made many people think that Bheemachar was H Puttachar's younger son. It was my great fortune to have a fatherly figure and a great guru like him to guide me.

Musical Musings

*Originally written in Kannada by S Krishnamurthy, grandson of Vaggeyakara
Mysore Vasudevacharya
Translation credit - Rajashree Yogananda)*

Sangita Kalaratna Shri. S Krishnamurthy was the eldest grandson of the celebrated Vaggeyakara Mysore Vasudevacharya. He was also a Carnatic musician and served A.I.R. for more than three decades. Due to his proximity to all the leading vidwans of his time and the King, His Highness Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar he has been the recipient of many interesting anecdotes and incidents which he has shared in his book "Sangeetha Samaya" published in Kannada which makes very interesting reading. It is our humble wish that at least some of the articles reach a wider audience and enjoy it as much as we did writing it in Lalitha Kala Tarangini. The stories are as narrated by Shri. S Krishna-murthy.

A.B.C. Grade - Mahalingam

Nalwadi Krishna Raja Wadiyar was well known throughout the country for the encouragement he gave to the fine arts and his deep knowledge and refined taste for music and literature. Because of this, all the artistes from every corner of the country aspired to perform in his presence and be the recipient of his generous grace. It was not possible for the King to listen to all the artistes who came to his court. The King came up with a solution and set up an examination committee. The committee had to examine the artistes and according to their competence, grade them as Top, A, B, C and report it to the King.

This is in accordance with the Audition norm which the Akashvani has now, but was practised much earlier in the King's court. Artistes who were graded under 'C' category would be paid with travel expenses. Artistes under 'B' grade were given a nominal sum. Only those artistes who were given 'top' or 'A' grade were eligible to perform before the King. His Highness would

never miss to listen to the kutcheris of 'top' grade artistes, and he would only choose artistes from 'A' grade whom he wanted to listen. The kutcheris would always be conducted in the kalyana mantapa located in the palace. Facilities would be provided to the general public and rasikas to sit in the front yard to listen and enjoy.

Now, the committee was comprised of stalwarts like Veena Sheshanna, Veena Subbanna, Vasudevacharya, Muthaiah Bhagavathar and Veena Venkatagiriappa who were all Asthana vidwans. The very mention of their names was enough to send mild shivers down the spine of any artistes, let alone playing in front of them. Each of these stalwarts would give marks to the artistes separately and finally they would tally the marks and give the artistes their respective grade.

In our times these examinations would be held in the courtyard house of Veena Subbanna which was located in the old Agrahara of Mysore. Many a time, the strumming of the tamboora would go on for three to four days without a break. Out of overwhelming curiosity, the scholars, students, young artistes and noted rasikas would lay a siege to the house of Subbanna in order to listen to the artistes who had come from outside. I usually used to be present on all those days and the experience of listening to them amidst all this was akin to Gandharva loka.

There is one incident which has stayed etched in my memory. I can easily say that the flute maestro TR Mahalingam was then a boy of eight to nine years. His superb playing was way beyond his years. T Guru Rajappa, who was the brother of T Chowdaiah was to accompany Mali

on the violin. The entire sabha was hypnotised by the playing of young Mali on his flute. The sweetness of the nada emanating from his flute, the beauty of the raga being played, accuracy of the kaala pramaana and also his demeanour with no trace of fear or hesitancy to play in front of stalwarts is not easy to explain. T Chowdaiah who was also seated there was beside himself filled with brahmaananda.

Mahalingam must have played for twenty to twenty five minutes, when Chowdaiah got up. He took the violin from his brother and re-

quested most humbly that he also be given a chance to accompany the Bala Saraswathi.

To this, Subbanna commented that age did not matter where knowledge was concerned and it should be given its due respect.

T Chowdaiah was already a house hold name in playing violin and wanting to accompany a genius young boy who had the makings of a maestro, showed the open mindedness and graciousness of Chowdaiah in wanting to recognise this. We were all witness to this and filled our minds with emotional ecstasy.

Acharya PS Narayanaswamy passes away

A tribute from his student Vidwan Kunnakudi Balamuralikrishna, Chennai

Though PSN sir had been sick for a while, these past few days have not been easy at all! While I wanted to write something about him, nothing that I write can summarise the mammoth musician and human that he was! For one, I don't want to accept that he's gone and then really what can I write - I know what I know because of him.

12 days have passed since he left the mortal world but seems like yesterday I saw him sitting on his favourite wooden chair and singing along with us!! It's still numb and surreal and sometimes I thankfully forget that he is gone - just to wake up and know that am living and going to live in a world where I have to be without his guiding glance!

We all have heard about horcruxes and the horrible truth behind them.. If there can be something which is the EXACT OPPOSITE of it in every way possible, that's PSN sir.. each and every one of us have a bit of his soul in us and in the most positive way possible!

His concerts were unbelievable in their creativity and the effect that he created! A few of his

favourite ragams were Varali, Nattaikurinji, Danyasi... and he made us feel a sense of completeness and finality when he sang! He was the epitome of what a Guru can be - for every single one of his students.

My heart bleeds to write this but he is no more in person.. true - he lived a full life, sang incredible concerts, had loads of fun, travelled, taught a big bunch of students and enjoyed the company of a plethora of friends.. but nothing - nothing prepares or allows me to accept this dark truth!

He was a carefree happy contented person who excelled in everything he touched.. we got life lessons each time we met him - not just music classes and repertoire improvement.. he rarely spoke during classes and when he did speak, it created life changing impact on my mind and my approach towards music.. and I have never felt the 50 year difference when I stared at him for the first class since the age of 9 (and he was 59) but he was this fatherly or (depending on the situation) grand fatherly figure for our entire family .. and he was such a cutie with his practical jokes and nakkal



We were once again treated to another half an hour of pure musical bliss.

And his incredible generosity - either towards anyone who comes for help or to his students who come to learn.. he gave it all.. he lived his music and there was always this subtle way of showing what he believed by singing but never enforced on the students.. that way we all took what we could and learnt and sang the same kruthi but each one of us sounded different and original, if I may say!

The world knows what he meant for all of us. But I saw what I meant to him - and that is

something priceless and the best thing ever to have happened to me! Be it when he became emotional when I got my first prize for a concert; or when I saw his eyes while he held my hand like I was a baby as he took me to a doctor while I was going through some voice issues; or be it when he decided to surprise me by giving me my first tambura while I thought he was taking me for a pancharathnam recital... the many many times he and Mami fed me the minute I came for class.. and seeing him in my concert - that made me feel that the concert was successful then and there.. and also those smiles we exchanged when he liked something of what I sang !!!

well, as I see, I can keep on going because it's 27 years worth memories and a lifetime to cherish them!

For Vijayadashami - as I sang at his house, each and every sangati - I heard his voice and his body language and God! that smile while singing one of his trademark spiral sangathis!

Do Rest In Peace Sir!

(Lalitha Kala Tarangini has covered a detailed interview with PSN Mama by Deepa Ganesh of 'The Hindu' in its January 2015 edition which is available at http://www.srlkmandira.org/newsletters/LKT - Magazine_Jan2015.pdf (Nedanuri Krishnamurthy front page). Team Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira conveys heartfelt condolences to the family members, admirers and disciples).

PSN about Manodharma

Manodharma music cannot really be taught, it is acquired only through intent listening. The patterns can be formulated only through practice. Distribution of words in niraval should be done evenly, one should not sing akaaram to substitute words or cluster them towards the end of the taala. We should keep cognisance of where each word falls in the taala cycle Only then will niraval have its aesthetic appeal. Manodharma, according to PSN is not just about working out combinations with a given scale. It is more a matter of personal feeling and experience of the bhaava of the raga. This is what gives the raga its distinct colour. In fact many phrases used in manodharma sangeeta may not be found in compositions and this itself bears ample testimony to this fact.

Enrico Caruso (1873-1921)

Courtesy: Dr. Gururaja Karjagi, Karunaalu baa belake, Bangalore



An inspirational story about the life of Italian musician.

I have listened to many youngsters complaining “wish we were born in an affluent family that would have helped us to have more opportunities”. There is no grain of truth in this; in fact, if one is determined to achieve something in his life nothing can become a obstacle provided one has the will power to pursue it. The life of Italian Opera singer Enrico Caruso is an example for the above saying.

Enrico Caruso was born in the city of Naples, Italy on February 25th 1873 to a very poor family . His parents had twenty one children, with twenty boys and a girl. Eighteen of their children did not live to see their 10th birthday. Enri-

co's father was a mechanic in a foundry. His father wanted Enrico to help him and apprenticed him to learn the ropes of the job. It was only his mother who insisted that he attend school to receive basic education and enrolled him in a school run by a church pastor.

The boy would work all day and would attend school at night and on Sundays. He loved to sing. His mother encouraged him and taught him whatever little she knew. She later sent him to a music teacher to further his singing. After listening to him sing, the music teacher assessed him by saying “your voice sounds like the wind trying to come through the slits in the window. You cannot call yourself a singer. I am yet to hear a voice worse than yours”. This was a very bad beginning to a boy wanting to learn. His mother comforted him by saying “I do not know why the teacher reacted that way, but I think you have a beautiful singing voice. You just practice your singing”.

Encouraged by his mother, the boy mustered enough courage and started singing the folk songs of Italy. There was no one to hear his singing. He started singing folk songs of Neapolitan by the roadside of Naples to small gatherings. Slowly, his signature high pierce singing became popular and people started to pay to listen to him.

He now enrolled to learn classical singing under a teacher. By now he had made a name and there were many teachers eager to have him as their pupil.

His popularity reached such dizzy heights that he became a Demi God and icon to the youngsters in England and America. His music transgressed borders. Enrico is the very first singer to have had recordings by the gramophone

company. Tickets would be sold out six months prior to his programme. He had minted gold coins having his face for circulation. Enrico Caruso became a living legend in his lifetime and his story became inspirational to many.

Looking back at his life at the beginning when he was just a poor boy his life looked bleak

bereft of any opportunities. His situation was worse than what our young friends of today have faced and complained. The difference being Enrico had the grit and determination to achieve what he set out for. He was steadfast and persistent in his efforts. He showed that these were the qualities required to achieve one's aspirations.

H Narasimhaiah and Gandhi Cap

Courtesy :Violin Vidwan S Shashidhar



The founder of National Education Society, Bengaluru, the former Vice Chancellor of Bangalore University, a staunch Gandhian himself and noted educationist Dr. H Narasimhaiah was an ardent lover of Karnatic music. He was regularly attending music concerts at Bangalore Gayana Samaja auditorium, which was at a stone's throw distance from National college hostel, where he stayed, as a bachelor.

Until 1980's, the Gayana Samaja Auditorium had no permanent cushion chairs and the audience had to sit on the mat, cross legged and listen to kutheries, which were of not less than 4 hours in those days. The hall used to be jam-packed during concerts by leading artistes especially during the annual conferences.

A true Gandhian Dr. HN, as he was fondly known amongst his admirers, was never seen without his humble white Gandhi cap. He could be spotted with bare headed though at the Gayana Samaja.

Once after the concert during the annual conference, as the audience started leaving the hall, one his students, asked Dr. HN, "Sir, you are not in the habit of going out anywhere without your trademark Gandhi cap but how is it that you have come here without the cap"?

Known for his humorous and witty replies, Dr. HN Immediately replied "Yes, I know that. Being the only person in the entire auditorium wearing the Gandhi cap, I would have caught the attention of all others in the hall. Everyone would be talking of my Gandhi cap and not listening to the music performance. Moreover, the cap needs some respite from this head. So I do not wear my Gandhi cap while coming to Gayana Samaja".

The gathering around chuckled at his response.

SRLKM Facebook Live Concerts



- 1) HK Venkatram and Master Vishnu Venkatram (Violin Duet), Arjun Kumar (Mridanga), G Guru Prasanna (Kanjari)
- 2) Adithi Prahlad (Vocal), S Janardhan (Violin), BS Anand (Mridanga), N Guru Murthy (Ghatam)
- 3) Eeshwar Aiyer - Pallavi Sammela First Prize Winner (Vocal), Mattur Vishwajit (Violin), Anirudh Bhat (Mridanga)
- 4) Kanchana Sisters (Kanchana S Shriranjani and Kanchana S Shruthiranjani), BK Raghu (Violin), KU Jayachandra Rao (Mridanga), UN Giridhar Udupa (Ghatam)
- 5) Musical Tribute to Dr. MS Subbulakshmi - Kalavathy Avadhoot (Vocal), Sindhu Suchetan (Violin), BR Srinivas (Mridanga), SN Narayana Murthy (Ghatam)
- 6) Krishna Jayanthi Concert - Heramba and Hemantha (Flute Duet), Vaibhav Ramani (Violin), Akshay Anand (Mridanga), Sukanya Ramgopal (Ghatam)

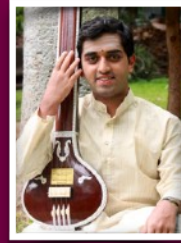
SRLKM sincerely acknowledges the contribution of Hitesh Ranjan towards the live streaming of Facebook and Youtube concerts. We greatly appreciate his effort.

SRLKM 2020 Awards

06 December 2020, 04.30 pm onwards



"Sangeetha Vedantha Dhureena - 2020"
Vidwan AV Anand



"Raga Laya Prabha Award - 2020"

Clock wise from top left:
Anjali Sriram, Apoorva Krishna,
SV Sahana, Heramb and Hemanth, A Radesh

"Pallavi Sammela Award"

Clock wise from top left:
Abhirama G Bode, Eeshwar Aiyer, Madhuri
Kaushik, R Lakshmi Priya,