

Lalitha Kala Tarangini

Premier Quarterly Music Magazine from
Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira

Volume 2021, Issue 1

March 2021



Prof. TN Krishnan (1928-2020)

Senior Mridangist Vid. AV Anand Honoured

Senior Karnataka mridangist Vid. AV Anand was honoured with prestigious title
"Sangeetha Vedantha Dhurina" on 06 December 2020 at
The Bangalore Gayana Samaja
in the divine presence of
"H H Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar"

The title carries a purse of Rs. One Lakh each to Vid. AV Anand, a silver medal and a citation. This award is instituted in memory of our founder Shri. G Vedantha Iyengar who started the institution 65 years ago.



Standing Left to Right - Dr. MR Yogananda, Treasurer, SRLKM Shri HR Yathiraj - Vice President, SRLKM, H H Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar, Shri. GV Krishnaprasad, Honorary Secretary, SRLKM, Vidushi TS Satyavathi
Sitting - Vidwan AV Anand

March 2021

Tripunithura Narayanaier Krishnan (TN Krishnan) was a 'child prodigy'. However, he was not presented as one since the publicity and media blitz prevalent in those days were not like the one we have in current times. He was gradually nurtured with great care by his father A Narayana Iyer (Narayana Bhagavathar) which was supplemented by the guidance provided by Alleppy K Parthasarathy (father of Vidwan Alepey Venkatesan, a contributor in this edition), a prominent disciple of Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar. In those days, acknowledgment and word of mouth by senior vidwans was the only means to secure a chance in a concert and TN Krishnan got them in plenty. TN Krishnan's turning point came when he was relocated to Madras in 1943. He was supported by legends like Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Palghat Mani Iyer, Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, all vouching for his talent.

He climbed great heights and along with MS Gopalakrishnan and Lalgudi Jayaraman formed the holy trinity of Karnatic Violinists. He was the preferred violinist for legends like Ariyakudi, Semmangudi, etc.

While he climbed the highest level musically, he excelled academically too teaching our great art of Karnatic Music. He was the Principal at the Music College, Madras, and later went on to become the Dean, School of Music and Fine Arts, University of Delhi. While he has secured the highest award in music 'Sangita Kalanidhi', he was also decorated with the prestigious civilian awards like 'Padma Bhushan', 'Padma Vibhushan'. TN Krishnan's life is worth emulating and an excellent copybook for youngsters to mould their musical career.

This edition of the Lalitha Kala Tarangini is dedicated to Sangita Kalanidhi Prof. TN Krishnan.

Close relatives, friends, and family members of Bharat Ratna Pandit Bhimsen Joshi are celebrating his birth centenary this year. We carry an article as a tribute to the maestro in this edition. The author is a specially-abled Hindustani musician who has created a niche for himself in music against all adversities.

Lalitha Kala Tarangini in its effort to bring to the fore the long-standing sabhas in Karnataka, is featuring SPVGM Trust and CR Himamshu of Mysore, its founder. The article makes interesting reading about how the institute was formed and how CR Himamshu took on the mantle to run the institute when he was very young.

Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira successfully organised the founder's day on 28th February 2021 despite the prevailing pandemic. 'Sangeetha Vedantha Dhurina' was conferred on senior musician, musicologist Vidushi TS Satyavathi. The award carries a purse of Rs. 1,00,000, a silver medal, and a citation. 'Raga Laya Prabha-2021' award was bestowed on six of Karnataka's young musicians. The award carries a purse of Rs. 25,000, and a citation. Mysore Subramanya, musicologist and an art critic, distributed the awards in the divine presence of "HH Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar". More details available in this edition.

I wish all our readers a very happy Ugadi! May this Ugadi bring you all joy, health, wealth, and good luck throughout the year

regards,
Anand S

Contributors: Vidwan Alepey Venkatesan, HS Sudhindra, Kala Ramnath, MA Sundareswaran, M Chandrasekaran, Tripunithura Krishnamurthy, Charumathi Raghuraman, Seethapathy Chellam, The fiddling Monk (Kumaresh), CA Bhushan Toshniwal, Bombay Balaji, Rajashree Yogananda, C Ramakrishnan, HS Venugopal, RK Shriramkumar, Narasimhamurthy HK, Ramanathan Iyer, Sachi R Sachidananda

Photo Courtesy: Front cover photo - Ramanathan Iyer, Personal collection Alepey Venkatesan, Personal collection of Bombay Balaji, Personal collection of HS Sudhindra, Personal collection of Kala Ramnath, Personal collection of Tripunithura Krishnamurthy, Personal collection of Seethapathy Chellam, Personal collection of RK Shriramkumar, Photographer Prabhu Prasad (Mysore), Courtesy The Hindu

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TN Krishnan with his parents A Narayana Iyer and Ammini Ammal

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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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Lalitha Kala Tarangini

Inbox

To the Editor,,

Your article on Sree Rama Seva Mandali, Bangalore is timely and well deserving.

After reading it, I am compelled to add some more information about its founder Narayana Swamy Rao and his accomplishments. From scratch to riches, his labour and dedication to build the Mandali brick by brick accepting bouquet and brickbats with a smile, his humility, public relations etc. were of the highest order.

During the Kannada Chaluvali in the early 1960's, Mandali and especially Narayana Swamy Rao was the offender for inviting Tamil Nadu based musicians for Sree Ramanavami festival instead of Kannadigas! To express their anger, the agitators hurled stones and other missiles at the stage compelling cancellation of the top rank performer's concert midway, with the audience running for cover!

In the next year's concert, the same performer was invited who presented a good number of highly popular Kannada kritis to the joy of listeners as if in reply to the Kannada Chauvinism!.

Late Narayanaswamy Rao was like a bridge between musicians and other organisations. Whenever festival organisers from various places in Karnataka sought his help to arrange concert by top ranking performers, he would respond without a second word!.

A special issue has to be brought out to narrate the audiences's experience about the nice and joyful time they spent at the Mandali during Narayanaswamy Rao's period.

Regards.

CP Chikkanna, Bangalore

Dear Sri Anand, Editor,

I am immensely pleased to go through the souvenir on Pazhani Sri Subramania Pillai, renowned mridangist who passed away six decades ago and whose playing skill and style still inspires jubilant youngsters even today.

Soga soga mridhanga thalamu
Swara raga laya sudharasa
Thala Bekku thakka mela bekku
Kelano Hari thaleno
Thala melakalidha prema villadha Gana

The above ever green lines of saint composers Sadhguru Thiagaraja and Sangeetha Pithamahar Purandharasasaru stress the significance of mridangam. Reviving the glorious past and recalling the contribution made by the veterans to music is must for survival. Remembering the very names of their birth place itself bring jubilation to Rasikas, Ariyakudi, Chembai, Semmangudi and Pazhani to name a few.

I am privileged and proud to be born at Perundurai, just 13 kms from Chennimalai where Pazhani was born. Though his mother's untimely death left him uncared for, he had an unquenchable thirst for mridhangam. Only after Dhakshinamoorthi Pillai's suggestion and advice, his father Muthaiah Pillai gave his son vigorous and rigorous practice.

The more you sweat in peace,

The less you bleed in war.

Is a golden martial saying. It is applicable to music too. So he received everything what was taught by his father. At the tender age of twelve he was able to accompany any vidwan of any stature. The first two decades he lent his mridhangam support to Kanchi Naina Pillai, Mazhavarayanendhal Subbarama Bhagavathar, Mannargudi Rajagopal Pillai and Chithore Subramaniam Pillai made him as a rhythmic – oriented vyavahara expert. Other vidwans did not want him, and as a left hander there was an unusual fuss between himself and violinists such as V Sethuramaiah, Papa Venkatramaiah, Mysore T Chowdiah and Mayavaram V. R Govindaraja Pillai. So for about 2 to 3 years he had very meager concert chances.

At such a critical juncture Chembai, who was a Mahanubhava as described by Pazhani and advised him to lend a Sowkkyam or Sugabhavam support to his concerts and not to demand any money. He also resolved the fuss of violinists and gave him a number of concert chances, enabling him to become a first class Sugabhava vidwan by giving him more than one "Thani". This made him a much sought after vidwan. Many violinists gave him numerous concerts. He matched with the fast phase briga-ladden voice of G.N Balasubramaniam, the madhyamakala keerthanas of Ariyakudi, the vilambakala renderings of Musiri Subramania Iyer, the elegant and colorful sarva lagu swarams of Madhurai Mani Iyer and the intricate pallavis of Alathur Brothers. He, along with Lalgudi Jayaraman on violin retorted the intricate pallavis

of Mudicondan Venkatrama Iyer, aptly, enthusiastically and rhythmically.

His *laya* wars played with Iluppur Panjami Pillai, his own father and guru Muthaiah Pillai, Dhakshinamoorthi Pillai and Palakkad Mani Iyer were very much received and were feasts to both co-viudwans and rasikas as well. Palakkad Mani Iyer even went to the extent of knowing the secrecy of his Thoppi kumkis.

The glowing tributes paid by his disciple KS Kalidas, M Balamuralikrishna, Lalitha of Dubai, K.S Krishnamoorthi of Calcutta, Shailesh Ramamoorthi of Bangalore, TK Moorthi Palakkad Raghuv, Vidushi R Vedavalli and CS Murugaboopathi are most appropriate and deserving.

The magazine also bears the life sketch of AV Krishnamachar and Mrs Vallabam Kalyanasundaram are inspiring for youngsters. Pazhani's respectful encomium to Kanjira Manpoondia Pillai and Dhakshinamoorthi Pillai deserve to prove how even musically illiterates could become *laya* experts.

Like the previous editions, this one also deserves to be kept as a treasure. I expect many more such magazines in the years to come. Ultimately I whole-heartedly congratulate the efforts taken by LKT a grand success with folded hands

Regards.

PS Subramaniam, Perundurai, Erode, TN

Acknowledgements

SRLKM would like to thank senior mridangist Bombay CN Balaji who kindled the idea of a special issue of LKT dedicated to Prof. TN Krishnan. He was also generous in contributing the content for the edition for which we are grateful. Ramanathan Iyer, founder & lead curator. 'The ARTery', readily and enthusiastically agreed to be part of the development of the edition and has provided many inputs. He has shared some stellar photographs of Prof. TN Krishnan some of which are his own clicks. He was courteous to share an excellent photograph of TNK for the front page that will make this front cover one of the best we have had so far.

SRLKM is thankful to all the contributors for the content and photographs making this edition one of the best.

Regards, Editor.

Our Upcoming Programmes

04 Apr '21 04.30 pm Sunday	Lecture Demonstration by Dr. Radha Bhaskar - Facebook Live A Raga's Journey - Poorvi Kalyani, its origin and how it has evolved, Contrast and Comparison of how different composers have handled it, Characteristic phrases that bring out the raga bhava and its application to Manodharma Aspects.
11 Apr '21 04.30 pm Sunday	Ugadi Special - Facebook Live Dr. Jayanthi Kumaresh (Veena), KU Jayachandra Rao (Mridanga), UN Giridhar Udupa (Ghatam)
18 Apr '21 05.30 pm Sunday	SRLKM Auditorium Sri Tyagaraja Gana Sabha - Golden Jubilee Concert MS Sheela (Vocal), Charulatha Ramanujam (Violin), Arjun Kumar (Mridanga), Bhagyalakshmi M Krishna (Morsing)
25 Apr '21 04.30 pm Sunday	SRLKM Facebook Live Musical Tribute Vidwan TN Krishnan - RK Shriram Kumar (Violin Solo), Tiruvarur Baktavatsalam (Mridangam), Guruprasad (Ghatam)
08 May '21 04.30 pm Saturday	SRLKM Auditorium Padmashree Raghunandan and Goda Manu (Vocal Duet), S Janardhan (Violin), Ranjani Venkatesh (Mridanga) This concert will be available on SRLKM Facebook page live on 9th May, at 4.30 pm
23 May '21 04.30 pm Sunday	SRLKM Facebook Live Anahita and Apoorva (Vocal duet), B Anantha Krishnan (Violin), Akshay Anand (Mridanga).
13 Jun '21 04.30 pm Sunday	SRLKM Facebook Live Musical Tribute to Chief Founders of SRLKM Vidushi Smt. Ranganayakamma and Vidushi GV Neela. Anagha Yoganand (Vocal), S Janardhan (Violin), Nikshitha Puttur (Mridanga), Utham Shantharaju
27 Jun '21 04.30 pm Sunday	SRLKM Facebook Live Lakshmi Priya (Vocal), M Vijay (Violin), Ambur Padmanabhan (Mridanga)
04 Jul '21 04.30 pm Sunday	SRLKM Facebook Live BV Balasai (Flute), Mathur R Srinidhi (Violin), N Vasudev (Mridanga)

Sangita Kalanidhi TN Krishnan - Profile

Ramanathan Iyer, Chennai

Tripunithura Narayanan Krishnan was born on October 6, 1928 into an illustrious family of musicians acclaimed in the *Carnatic* and *Hindustani* traditions of Indian classical music. Both his parents, A. Narayana Iyer and Ammini Ammal, hailed from families whose musical lineage could be traced back five generations. Music was an integral part of his childhood in Tripunithura in the southern Indian state of Kerala where his father and *guru* A. Narayana Iyer was an eminent music educator. Narayana Iyer was an extraordinary teacher and strict disciplinarian who spared no effort in developing Krishnan's innate talent.

By his eighth birthday Krishnan was already being hailed as a child prodigy in Kerala, performing in temple festivals, accompanying visiting *vidwans* from the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu, and catching the attention of the music literati. At this point Krishnan was introduced to the renowned musician and patron Alleppy Parthasarathy Iyengar who recognised the enormous talent of the young prodigy and affectionately guided Krishnan and introduced him to all the eminent musicians of the day. This led to an apprenticeship under the legendary musician Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer under whom Krishnan shaped and developed his performance style.

In 1943 Krishnan traveled to Chennai, capital city of Tamil Nadu and epicentre of classical music in South India, to accompany the flute virtuoso TR Mahalingam in concert. That landmark performance quickly led to more concert offers and in a matter of weeks the young boy from Kerala had become the star accompanist to legendary musicians such as Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer,

Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavata, Musiri Subramaniya Iyer, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, GN Balasubramaniam, Madurai Mani Iyer, Alathur Brothers and the maestro flautist TR Mahalingam. "Master" Krishnan, as he was fondly addressed by fans and senior musicians alike, immediately endeared himself to the audiences with his virtuosity and youthful charm. The love and adoration he received from the people of Chennai was so overwhelming that Krishnan permanently settled there.

Krishnan's music represents the purest expression of the Carnatic tradition. His emphasis on melodic clarity, spectral fidelity, and a bold and emphatic bowing technique are unparalleled in his field. His instrumental style captures the essence of the *gayaka* experience which delivers the music with all the depth and emotion of a human voice.

In the midst of his concert commitments Krishnan has also carried on his father's tradition of teaching music to a number of students, both in the traditional *parampara* setting and more formal academic environments. In 1965, at the invitation of Musiri Subramaniya Iyer, a veteran musician and music educator, he joined the State Music College in Chennai as Professor of Music and subsequently served as its Principal. He also went on to serve as Dean of the School of Music and Fine Arts at the University of Delhi.

Prof. TN Krishnan has traveled the world, performing and promoting Indian classical music for the past sixty years. He has visited the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, Austria, Australia, the former Soviet Republics, the Middle and Far East not only performing and enthraling audiences but also conducting music

workshops for teaching and promoting awareness of Indian classical music.

TN Krishnan has been closely associated with several national and international institutions engaged in the preservation and development of the arts. He has served as the Vice-Chairman of the Sangeet Natak Academy, one of India's foremost cultural agencies involved in nurturing and supporting the traditional arts and crafts. He has also chaired various committees for the All India Radio and state universities and academies.

TN Krishnan has received numerous awards and honours over the many years. Most notable among them are:

- 1) *Padma Shri* (1973) and *Padma Bhushan* (1992) awards from the Government of India
- 2) *National Artist Award* from the All India Radio
- 3) *Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship* (2006)
- 4) *National Award* (1974) from the Sangeet Natak Academy

5) *Sangeetha Kalanidhi* (1980) from the Music Academy, Chennai

6) *Asthana Vidwan* of the Tirumala Tirupathi Devasthanam in Tirupathi

TN Krishnan was married to Kamala Krishnan and had two children, Viji Krishnan Natarajan, and Sriram Krishnan. TN Krishnan is one of the elder statesmen of the classical music community in India and a role model. He and his wife, Kamala, have travelled round the globe performing, educating and promoting awareness and appreciation of the rich culture and musical traditions of India. His rich and vibrant style has been admired and adopted by a number of the younger musicians including his daughter, Viji Krishnan Natarajan, and Sriram Krishnan, who carry on his musical legacy. His sister Dr. N Rajam is a famous Hindustani Violinist.

TN Krishnan left for heavenly abode on 02 November 2020.

(Ramanathan Iyer is an arts enthusiast, photographer and commentator. A wireless communications engineer by profession, he founded and curates The ARTery, a Chennai-based portal & performance space devoted to classical and performing arts)

Prof. TN Krishnan performing at the Music Academy with son Sriram Krishnan and daughter Viji Krishnan Natarajan accompanied by Thiruvarur Bakthavathsalam on Mridangam and Vaikom Gopalakrishnan on Ghatam (Picture courtesy Ramanathan Iyer, Chennai)



Prof. TN Krishnan : The End of an Era

Alepey Venkatesan, Chennai

The difficulty in writing about such a long-lived legend is that multiple memories crowd around in the head as you go down memory lane, especially if you have had as long and close an association with him as I have been fortunate to have had. And yet, words, inadequate as they are, remain the only vehicles for thoughts, emotions & memories which need expression.

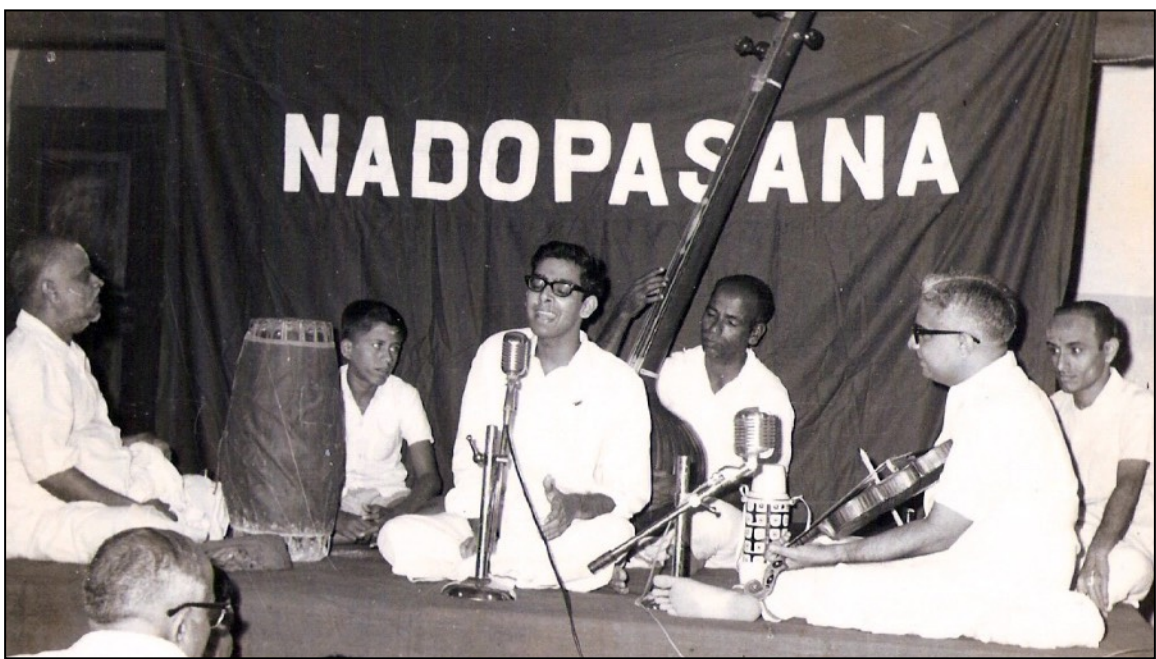
Back in my schooldays in the fifties & early sixties, every visit of TNK Anna to our Alleppey home meant that he would ask me to sing and play on the phono violin gifted to my grandmother by Marungapuri Gopalakrishna Iyer. In his deft fingers, the substitution of the wooden resonating chamber with a metal one made no

difference to the sweetness of tone that was a TNK patent. My mother always had ready for him his favourite rose milk (refrigerated using a pot filled with ice!). He was so devoted to my mother that he named his daughter after her.

Right from my childhood, the very best of Carnatic Music for me was synonymous with TNK and my mentor Palghat Mani Iyer accompanying my guru Shri. Ariyakudi.

For about 5 or 6 years, from TNK's boyhood to early teens, his father had entrusted him to my father's care. My family has the unique distinction of having two Ariyakudi disciples. My father, Alleppey Parthasarathy was one of the earliest (in the early 1920's) and I was the last. Since my





Alepey Venkatesan accompanied by TN Krishnan on Violin and Madurai Krishna Iyengar on Mridangam

father was host to most great musicians visiting Kerala, our home in Alleppey was a beehive of musical activity resonating with the music, intellectual exchanges and ready wit & humour of the best in the business, all year round. It was in this atmosphere that TNK's budding talent was nurtured during his most impressionable years. My father taught him the basics of the Ariyakudi baani & repertoire; He groomed the boy wonder in the Ariyakudi style for 5 to 6 years and then requested the guru to patronise him. Master Krishnan, as he was known in those days, also came into contact with the other great singers of those times in our home. My father was a very busy lawyer, his cases taking him to several places in Kerala & Tamil Nadu. He used to take his new find & his violin with him and showcase his extraordinary talents to his friends in whichever city he was visiting.

TNK was the favourite violinist for my guru Shri. Ariyakudi (ARI) & for good reason. ARI did not favour the technique of accompaniment, wherein the violinist is silent through half a minute of vigorous aalaapana by the vocalist and then plays just the tail-end phrase. He expected the violinist to be always on the alert, follow him closely like a shadow, reproducing most of what he sang at his usual challenging pace and fluency. TNK fit the bill perfectly, not only because of his felicity of expression and robust

tonal quality supplementing those of Ariyakudi but also because TNK brought with him a good insight into the Ariyakudi style and repertoire. No wonder, then, that TNK was my guru's preferred violinist.

And not just for my guru. For the entire galaxy of stalwarts of the golden era which came to an end with the demise of the violin maestro. This was a tribute to his capacity to adapt to different styles of music. Be it the hurricane madhyamakaala of Ariyakudi, or the lightning speed of GNB or the subnormal, leisurely pace of MDR or the lilting sarvalaghu swaras of Sem-mangudi and Madurai Mani Iyer or the ever changing unpredictable genius of Flute Mali - he was equal to every challenge. He was also the last surviving member of the celebrated violin triumvirate of TNK-LGJ-MSG.

My first concert with TNK was in 1972, when I was still in college. He introduced me to the Madras audience with paternal solicitude and that concert more or less launched my music career here. There were several concerts to follow, in which he accompanied me with this characteristic suswara and effortless fluency, knowing my guru's style like the back of his hand.

He was to accompany me in the Mysore sabha along with Palghat Raghu, sometime in 1973 or

74. When I was informed that he had arrived, I came out of the hotel room to receive him. Two minutes later, he walks out of the lift, violin box in hand. The moment he sees me, he shouts across the corridor, "There is 'Kutty (Junior) Ariyakudi'!!"

He thought highly of my music. He had attended many of my concerts and appreciated my adherence to my guru's voice culture, classical values and concert tradition and blessed me. He always had a fondness for me and I always held him in high regard and affection. On the rare occasion when I sat in the 2nd row at his concert, he would call me out and insist I sit in the front row.

When I was invited to participate in a Symposium on Ariyakudi Style of Music & give a concert in Delhi, TNK insisted I stay with him. After his morning practice, we went out for a walk in the University campus, talking about Music, what else? Thereafter, he insisted on driving me to the venue of the seminar! He had an abiding love of cars & canines. That apart, he wanted to look after me with the solicitude of an elder brother I looked up to.

I used to frequently request him to play Yadukulakamhoji, Sahana, Kanada & Suruti. After one of those concerts, he tells me, "In Suruti, how

did you like that particular phrase - you know the one I mean?". He knew how deeply I noticed the nuances when I listened to him.

What were the natural assets which made such stupendous achievements possible? First & foremost was his consistent shruti suddham. Quickly and without ado, he used to tune the violin accurately to the thambura, using only the bow (unlike violinists who use both hands while tuning to achieve a semblance of shruti unison).

Secondly, TNK became synonymous with the honeyed tonal quality. Last but not the least of his natural musical virtues was an amazingly consistent, clear vision of the classical aesthetics of our great ragas - a vision that was never blurred by notions of cerebral instrumental acrobatics in the name of manodharma. All these assets flowed into the crucible of unremitting sadhana to produce the TNK phenomenon of effortless mastery. Every time he picked up that grand, full, sweeping bow of his, you looked forward to experiencing the quintessence of a Todi, a Yadukulakamboji, a Sahana, a Kharaharapriya, a Suruti or a Sindhubhairavi and he never let you down by going off at a tangent.

Over the years, as a soloist, his manodharma took on a more and more meditative, introspective quality, but for all that, he never lost

Film producer SS Vasan's son's wedding concert - Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar accompanied by Prof. TN Krishnan on Violin, Palghat Mani Iyer on Mridangam and Palani M Subramania Pillai on Kanjira





File photo of late '50s - Young TN Krishnan accompanying Semangudi Srinivasa Iyer with Pazhani M Subramania Pillai on Mridangam

sight of the time-honoured swaroopa of the raga. As a disciple of Shri. Ariyakudi, I am grateful to TNK for preserving unblemished, my guru's version of Todi, steeped as it was in the ragaswaroopa enshrined in the compositions of the Trinity. TNK never lost sight of the pristine vision of gayaka baani Todi - the real Todi-anchored in the Trinity inspiration. Nor did he fall into the familiar trap several violinists are found to fall into - of dragging down the Todi gaandhaara so low as to make it sound like a combination of the chatusruti rishabha & saadhaarana gaandhaara as in Asaaveri. He struck the Todi gaandhaara with all its innate grandeur.

To have started at the top at the age 10 and to have stayed there for the next eight decades makes his achievement at longevity in the profession too stupendous to equal, let alone surpass.

Till the last, he remained a humble votary of Music. One of the unforgettable concerts he played was at the Max Mueller Bhavan in the early 70's, with a captivating Kanada & a silken Sahana fit for the gods and another was at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, perhaps 25 years ago. At the latter concert, the best had indeed bettered himself with a reposeful Kharaharapriya of chis-

elled perfection. He rose to sublime heights of tonal purity and pristine raga ruchi, evoked with a sweeping bow and meditative fingering. When we came out of the hall, just before getting into the car, he went so far as to ask me, "Today, it was not bad. What do you think?". I said, "As understatement goes, that one takes the cake! The fact is, you took us all to a higher plane!". That day, I had come face to face with the humility that can spring only out of true greatness.

What we have lost, the gods have gained. May the great musician revel in the music of a higher and better world, which sent us an ARI for vocal music, a Palghat Mani Iyer for mridangam, a Mali for flute, a TNR for naaswaram and a TNK for violin.

(Vidwan Alepey Venkatesan had the good fortune, at a tender age, to become a disciple of Shri. Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, the doyen vocalist of the 20th Century. He received not only the legacy of Ariyakudi's style of music but also the master's thambura and his hand written music note books. Later, Venkatesan had the privilege of close association, over a 9 year period, with the all-time great mridangam maestro, Shri. Palghat Mani Iyer, who was himself an ardent admirer of Ariyakudi, with deep insights into his style of music)

Speaking strings

Vidwan HS Sudhindra, Bangalore

I thank Sri. G V Krishnaprasad for asking me to write an article about the Maestro Sri TN Krishnan Sir.

It was way back in nineteen eighties, when my revered guruji Sri. M Vasudeva Rao sir, spoke a lot about the playing techniques that Sri. Krishnan sir used in concerts, that I was inspired a lot to listen to him in person. Though my mobility was restricted those days, I had a chance to listen to him in 1986 at a SPICMACAY concert in MES School. It was simply a great experience, and little did I know then that a day would come when I would accompany him in many of his concerts including the ones organised by SPICMACAY.

I was awarded the best mridangam artist in 2003 by the Music Academy, Chennai, and I received the honour from his golden hands. I regret not being able to get a copy of the photograph. By then I had heard him perform many

times with my guruji Sri. Raja Rao sir. I gained a lot of experience just by listening and concluded that his music was very divine and that one should be very careful while accompanying him. This realisation made me very keen on accompanying him but I had no opportunity.

My prayers were answered because of my true devotion to his music. One fine day in the year 2006 I received a phone call from Sri. Prasad of Naadabrahma Sangeetha Sabha, Mysore. It was a great day for me as he requested me to accompany the legendary Maestro on 28-1-2007. I was simply overjoyed and spoke to Krishnan sir to ask him for the sruthi and other details. I reached Mysore in the morning itself and was eagerly awaiting the concert time. As I had made it a habit of meeting the artist before the concert, I was constantly checking as to where he was. He had boarded the Shatabdhi Express at 6am in the morning, and at 11am I checked that it was still in Arakkonam. I heard that there

HS Sudhindra accompanying Prof. TN Krishnan at Nadasurabhi Cultural Association with Omkar Rao on Ghatam



was some problem with the tracks. I felt very uncomfortable and miserable. I kept tracking and came to know that Krishnan sir and Maami had not eaten anything. By 4 pm it had reached Bangalore. Still I wasn't sure that this concert would happen. I asked my student BN Shashidhar to immediately go to the railway station and give food to them as they had starved. They were very happy to have the food and truly blessed him and from that day they grew very attached to him and even visited his house. Sir and maami never forgot his gesture. I feel very proud about this. After going through severe delay and discomfort they reached the auditorium in Mysore by 6:45pm. I did namaskarams and stood speechless as I saw him sitting on the stage and tuning the instrument after a twelve hour long most uncomfortable journey. I was amazed at how the people who came to watch him also waited patiently for his arrival and for the concert to begin. He just had a sip of coffee and started the concert without any further delay. That was the first concert I accompanied him. He never knew me, or had heard of me. He still was very cordial to me on stage. After the first composition he looked at me and nodded in approval of my accompaniment. Since I was well prepared in my mind, I never gave room for any insensitive accompaniment and was very watchful and followed him religiously. The concert went on for almost two and a half hours. He played one of my most favourite compositions 'sukhievvaro'. It was so sensitive that he simply turned towards me and watched my accompaniment intently. Being a very sensitive artist himself and having played with every other stalwart, his playing is even more sensitive and demands utmost concentration. With the blessings of my gurus it was a great day for me as he appreciated me on stage itself in the presence of the audience. I only could do namaskarams to him with complete devotion. After the concert he showered all his good wishes on me and I came back to Bangalore contented.

He was very happy and impressed with my accompaniment. The same year he asked me to accompany him for 2 concerts in prestigious

sabhas. One in Indiranagar Sangeetha Sabha and the other in Nada Surabhi. From then on I have played more than a dozen concerts with the great maestro.

It was in 2011 that he invited me to Chennai to accompany him in Hamsadhwani sabha. After I went there I was even more happy as it was recorded by AIR, Chennai. Rarely do we get such opportunities that too with a Great maestro like him. He booked me for several concerts thereafter, but I could not go at all due to unforeseen circumstances. I also played several concerts with him in SPICMACAY. It reminded me of my younger days when I sat in the audience and watched him perform.

My experiences on stage are simply great with the maestro. His violin never required any amplification. He used to keep his violin at a minimum distance of one foot from the mic. His modulations with sound were amazing. Only because I was exposed to hearing my guruji accompanying him, it was easier for me to try matching those modulations. Basically TNK sir was a very calm person. He expected perfect silence in his concerts. Any disturbances from microphones, he just used to stop playing but never spoke a single word. He had the big heart to appreciate openly in public which was really a great blessing to me. His violin had no fine tune adjusters. It was directly tuned by operating the pegs of the violin. That was really surprising to me. His sruthi was always F. The moment he turned the pegs the pitch would just settle there.

His sense of dressing was simply great. He was very neatly dressed and the iron of his kurta was superb with no creases and his dhoti was extremely neatly draped as well. Once when I was admiring, he noticed it and smilingly said that the kurta was from Delhi. Maami pitched in and told me that he goes to only one tailor in Delhi where he gets his Kurtas stitched. It was nice to hear how particular he was about everything.

Though I am too young to describe his music, I would mention a few points. All his renditions were unhurried. That really boosted my energy



During 90th birthday celebration of Prof. TN Krishnan

to get deeply immersed in his music and just enjoy during the raga alapana. A single phrase used to give the picture of the entire raga. His neraval was very scholarly. The krithis he presented were always popular ones. The sarvalaghu swara patterns were simply amazing. He usually would select a vilamba kala krithi for the main item of the concert in Adi tala. He enjoyed the thani with a lot of involvement. I say this because he had played with all the maestros of mridangam and still he had the big heart to encourage artists like me.

He was very cordial, smiling and spoke gentle words with me always. I invited him to my house along with maami and he smilingly accepted. They spent an hour and were very clear to have only one rava idli each with some coffee. They blessed us all whole heartedly and left. Shashidhara and myself were invited to his 80th Birthday celebrations in Chennai. It was my pleasure to attend along with my gurupatni Smt. Padma Maami. He extended the invitation even on his 90th birthday for which Shashidhar and I attended. It was "Parama Bhagyam". That gives us all a beautiful message. A very disciplined life indeed. He was very meticulous about everything on stage and off stage. He carried his violin wherever he went irrespective of whether he had a concert or not. I heard that he was on a pilgrimage tour to Badarinath temple. Still, he carried it with him and practiced when he had

time. That's the discipline he had. Even at that age, he never gave up practice despite having reached great heights. I in particular have lost a great maestro who wholeheartedly encouraged me, brought the best out of me and blessed me. His music would never die.

During one of the concerts, he shared his experiences with Kanchi maha periyavar. He had to walk several kilometres in the dark, with lots of thorns everywhere. Without losing his spirit he went on and finally met the Swamiji and was asked to play for several hours. He finally took his blessings and returned home.

I take this as a message he left for me! Our journey in music or otherwise may be filled with many obstacles and hardships. But just the way he didn't let the darkness and the thorns in his path deter him from his desire to meet the Seer, we need to stay focused on what we want to be or become and not let difficulties in our path weaken us from reaching our destination. And the Destination thus reached is bound to bring great contentment and joy just the way the Maestro was rewarded by getting to play for several hours in front of the revered Maha Periyavar!

(HS Sudhindra is a senior mridanga vidwan of Karnataka. He is a 'A-Top' graded artist and the founder trustee and principal of Suswaralaya College Of Music)

Kala Ramnath on her family legacy

Kala Ramnath interview

(Kala Ramnath is the first child of Malathy and TN Mani, brother of TN Krishnan and N Rajam. Kala Ramnath was initiated in to Violin by her grandfather Narayana Iyer at the age of 2. She was featured in a concert with her aunt N Rajam at the age of 14. For fifteen years she studied with the Mewati vocalist Jasraj.

Apart from her innumerable national and International achievements, she is bestowed with Pandit Jasraj Gaurav Puraskar and Sangeet Natak Akademy puraskar.

She shares her experience with the family legacy and tradition). Our questions have been prefixed with 'LKT' below;

- 1) LKT: We have heard a lot about the impeccable bowing style of Sri TNK. You have spent time with Sri Narayana Iyer (who must have emphasised the importance of investment of time in practice of a great bowing style) and Dr N Rajam (whose beautiful bowing style and gayaki ang are very well known to music rasikas). You are a great violinist in your own right who also encapsulates these values. Could you please elucidate the importance of using the full length of the bow, the grip with which the bow is held, as seen in the style of all the great violinists in your family?

Kala Ramnath: If you want to express your music like a vocalist sings then one has to learn to use the full length of the bow. The movement and the pressure on the bow has to be very even and one has to disconnect the synchronisation of the use of both hands with regard to speed and movement. The way one holds the bow also determines how the bow moves, whether its in a



Kala Ramnath with her grandfather A Narayana Iyer

straight line which would bring out the best tone of the instrument or otherwise, also whether we are using our shoulder or wrist as wrist movement again is the right way to play and bring the best sound. Also while playing a phrase, cutting a phrase and changing directions of the bow movement at the appropriate place determines the seamless expression of a phrase like a vocalist would do.

- 2) LKT: If there are interesting ways in which this practice was ingrained during training, we would love to hear about those as well from you.

Kala Ramnath: First was to use the bow from one corner to the other end whether it be for just one note or a long phrase which means learning to fit in all the notes in the phrase. That would mean learning to control movement and pressure on the bow. I say pressure because that determines, if the sound is pure or with disturbances because if the bow is moving too slow and pressure is more, you hear scratchy tones.



Kala Ramnath with her uncle Prof.TN Krishnan and cousin Sriram Krishnan

Learn the sahitya of the composition, sing it and bow according to the syllables in the composition.

Use of the correct fingering to help in playing a particular phrase the right and easy way to bring about ease of playing and correct intonation.

- 3) LKT: Sri TNK also demonstrated an amazing fidelity to the swarasthanas (positions of the notes) and alignment to tambura/tanpura sruti. Please elucidate the salient aspects and ways in which this was practised. These are again strengths that run as a common trait in your family.

Kala Ramnath: We were always taught to play or practice with the tanpura from the beginning. Training to tune the tanpura in perfect pitch was another practice ingrained into us and therefore everyone at home had perfect pitch and hence extremely tuneful. Also we were made conscious of our going out of tune every time it happened and thus we were always conscious at home to pitch right and that got ingrained into our psyche.

- 4) LKT: Please share your experiences of how #1 and #2 are very important in Hindustani music as well, from your perspective as a great violinist of Hindustani music

Kala Ramnath : Whether it be Hindustani music or Carnatic music, both are based on the same pillar of microtones in music which is the basis of our ragas. Both are

based on the tonic and the drones or tanpuras to support us in hitting the right swarasthanas. So in total, Indian Music whether it be Hindustani or Carnatic is based on the same principles. So there's no difference there in both the streams of classical music in India.

- 5) LKT: Please share any delectable recollections you have, of your experiences with Sri Narayana Iyer and Sri TNK.

Kala Ramnath: I was literally brought up by my grandfather and he started my journey in music and violin when I was exactly two years old. My life revolved around my grandfather as he would teach me music, take me to school, help me with my homework and even put me to sleep by telling me stories, sometimes waking me up late in the night as he had some brilliant idea which he wanted to play on the violin. Whatever I am today, the total credit goes to him. My Uncle TNK also learnt from him and whatever he was and whoever he became was also due to my grandfather and that holds good for my aunt Rajam too. The commonality amongst all three of us was my grandfather.

When I was a child, my uncle and aunt would visit my grandparents during the summer and at that time, they would ask my cousins to play the violin in front of my grandfather and I would look forward to those times as a child waiting for my turn as I was the youngest among my cousins. But when I turned 11, my uncle had heard that I was playing well from a journalist who had come to interview my grandfather. He immediately came home and said he wanted to listen to me and that memory is something I cherish to this date.

I have always looked up to the legends in my family as role models and that has shaped who I am today.

Sharing the stage with Doyens of Karnatic Music

*Speech by TN Krishnan, Event organised by Gurusmaranam Trust in Chennai
held at Ragasudha Hall, Mylapore
Report by C Ramakrishnan, Chennai*

(Gurusmaranam Trust - a trust founded by Mridanga Vidwan Bombay CN Balaji, dedicated to Mahavidwan Palghat Mani Iyer, organised an evening with legendary violin vidwan Prof. TN Krishnan on 23 February 2020 in Ragasudha Hall which was a house full event. Excerpts from the concerts featuring Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar with TN Krishnan and Palghat Mani Iyer were played on the occasion. Sri.V Balasubramanian, connoisseur of music and Treasurer of Madras Music Academy put forth questions to TN Krishnan about his experiences of accompanying the stalwarts of music who were much senior to TN Krishnan in age. Prof Krishnan shared his experiences of sharing the stage with stellar musicians Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar and Palghat TS Mani Iyer. In the words of TN Krishnan)

My blossoming period

My father Tripunithura A Narayana Iyer was my first Guru. He was faculty at the RLV College of Music, Tripunithura. After establishing a firm foundation on the basics of Karnatic music, he also taught many kritis to me. Radio was the only source of listening to concerts those days. It was a luxury for us, but we used to listen from affluent peoples' houses in the neighbourhood. I have heard many concerts of Iyengar and other senior musicians over the radio. My instant grasping capacity helped to reproduce on the violin whatever songs I heard on the radio. My father always aimed at excellence and was a tough Guru to satisfy. This encouraged me to do more and more practice and achieve perfection. My father would take me to the music concerts held in temples, palaces and marriages which provided much exposure to concerts at a very young age.

Advocate Parthasarathy Iyengar (Papasami) of Alapuzha was a respected connoisseur of music and it was through him that I got the acquaintance of Iyengar and Palghat Mani Iyer.

VB: Did the age difference - almost a generation gap - between them (Ariyakudi and Mani Iyer) and Sri TNK have any impact on you playing and were you treated well?

TNK: I was a teen aged lad when I started accompanying Iyengar. I was accepted by them and there wasn't any differential treatment due to age difference. As I progressively adapted to their style, I think I had impressed them very much and hence they considered me a part of their team. Mistakes were overlooked with kindness as they knew my potential. And thereafter there was no looking back.

VB: How did Ramanuja Iyengar plan his concert? Was it based on the composition of the audience?

TNK: Ramanuja Iyengar was very intelligent in gauging the pulse of the audience. It was an in-born quality in him. His intuitive selection of kritis brought sure success in his concerts. There was never a dull moment in his concerts. In the Sri Raga pancharatnam, did you listen to the way Mani Iyer has played? Simple - but highly effective sollus, which is the hallmark of Mani Iyer's playing. In fact, I can say that I corrected the way I played some of the phrases in this pancharatnam, after listening to Mani Iyer constantly in concerts. He was able to create a mesmerising effect with his tekkas. The vibes amongst us was such that, when I used to think of a particular song, it would be sung for sure in the concert by Iyengar. I consider it a great blessing to have conversed with Mani Iyer. He



Prof. TN Krishnan sharing his experiences

would always be forthcoming to clear my doubts. Whenever I am in doubt, I recall my conversations with Ramanuja Iyengar and Mani Iyer.

The sarva laghu swara prastarams had to be played by me instantaneously. It was a test for my vidwat. Yet I came out unscathed. At times I have committed mistakes but they were generous to ignore my faults. It was a great learning on how to present effective neravals and swaraprastarams in a crisp manner. There was

kalapramana sudham in the music of both the giants.

VB: How will you describe the tani avartanam of Palghat Mani Iyer.

TNK: Palghat Mani Iyer was capable of playing tani even for two minutes. However, he will consider the duration of the kriti, neraval, swaras, tempo, audience reaction, and tailored his brilliant tani accordingly.

(All inputs provided by Bombay CN Balaji, Mridangist)

Bombay Jayashree Ramnath honoured with 'Padma Shri' - Glory to Karnatic music



Bombay Jayashree is the lone Karnatic musician included for the Padma Awards-2021 announced on 25 Jan 2021. She has dedicated her award to her Guru Lalgudi Jayaraman who kindled her creatively apart from guiding her musically and her mother who nurtured her musical vision and talent.

Her association with SRLKM dates back to decades and our music festivals always start with her concert drawing huge rasikas. We pass on our good wishes to her and pray almighty for more laurels to come her way in the future also.

Tripunithura Narayanaier Krishnan

*Original article in Malayalam by Tripunithura Krishnamurthy, Kerala
Translated by C Ramakrishnan, Chennai*

It is a matter of pride for me that my home town Tripunithura is the native place of three Sangita Kalanidhis - TN Krishnan, TV Gopalakrishnan and TK Govinda Rao. I have intimate acquaintance with all of them.

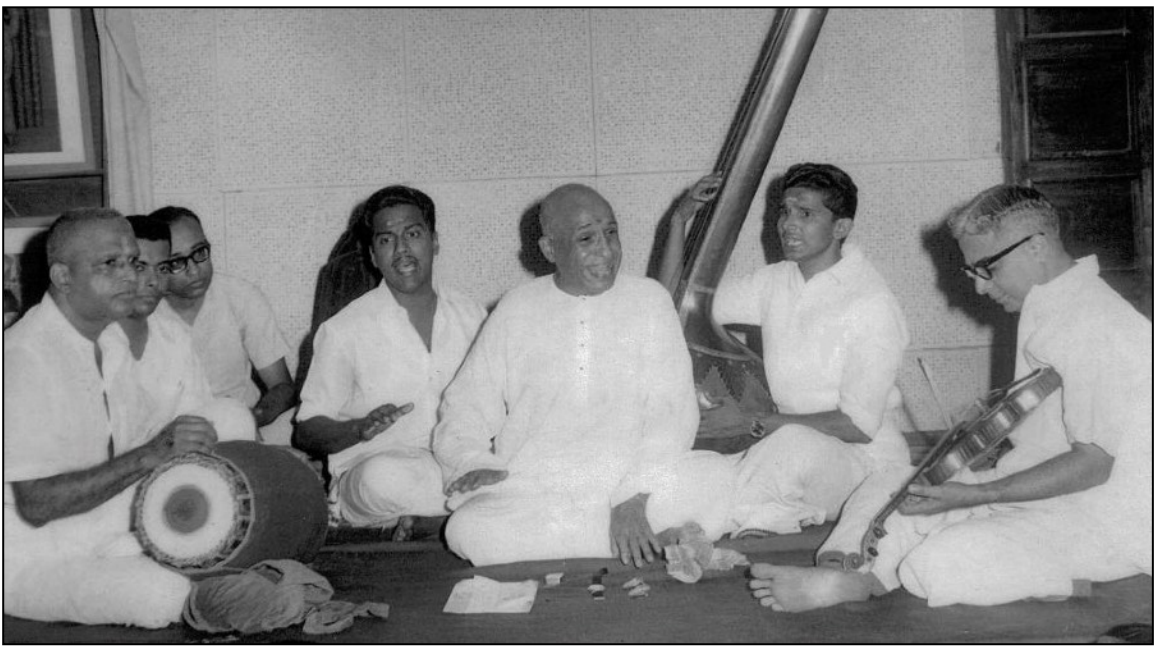
It was in the year 2009. I invited TNK sir for the MDR Remembrance day which I am conducting regularly since 2003. TN Krishnan was apprehensive that he did not know any of MDR's krithis. "Your presence is illuminating than performing MDR krithis." I said. "Since Tripunithura is my native land, I love to come and perform. I was six years old when I first performed in front of Poornathrayeesan, and there after so many venues." Said TN Krishnan. The concert on 26 April 2009 was a landmark event where

TNK was accompanied by Umayalpuram Sivaraman on the Mridangam and Tripunithura Radhakrishnan on the Ghatam. In the morning TNK spoke about MDR and in the evening TNK and Umayalpuram Sivaraman released the biography of Palakkad Mani Iyer 'Sogasuga Mrudanga Talamu' authored by me.

TN Krishnan was born on 16 October 1928 in Bhagavathar Math, a family of traditional musicians. TNK's grandfather Appadorai Iyer was the palace musician in the court of the Maharaja of Kochi. His father Narayana Iyer was a music teacher at the Radha Lakshmi Vilasom Music Academy (RLV). His father was his first guru. He studied at Srirudravilasam School till 3rd class. After moving to Thiruvananthapuram, he con-

During the Thiruvayyar Thyagaraja Aradhana - from right, Prof. TN Krishnan, Lalgudi Jayaraman, Papa Venkataramaiah, Mysore T Chowdiah





Prof.TN Krishnan accompanying Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer with Palakkadu Mani Iyer on Mridangam.Vocal supported by Palai CK Ramachandran, Kumara Kerala Varma

tinued his studies at SMV School and Model High School. His father was a strict task master and never allowed his son to compromise on violin practice due to mounting academic studies. His father made him repeat each sangati at least a hundred times. At the age of eight, he played the violin in front of Amma Maharani Sethu Parvathi Bayi at Kowdiar Palace and got her blessings which kept him in good stead till the end of his glorious life. When Doyenne Semmangudi Sreenivasa Iyer came to Trivandrum as the Principal of Swathi Tirunal Music Academy, TNK joined his gurukulam. The first turning point in the life of TN Krishnan came in 1942 when he got the opportunity to accompany the flute wizard T.R.Mahalingam in a concert in VJT Hall, Trivandrum. Mali appreciated the accompaniment of the young lad and took him as his regular accompanist. Gradually, he received the attention of all musicians and became a popular figure in Madras and other places.

Krishnan always said that he was blessed by Palakkad Mani Iyer at the age of six, which was the reason for his rise to fame and learned from Mani Iyer the etiquettes of a concert musician. At the age of nine, Krishnan accompanied Chembai in a Tenkasi concert with Mani Iyer. By the age of ten, he became acquainted with

Semmangudi, Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Alathur Brothers and Musiri Subramanya Iyer and other top musicians of the period.

TN Krishnan was providing violin accompaniment regularly in the Navarathri Mandapam for many decades. The Navarathri Mandapam had only vocal and two veena concerts for many decades. Deviating from this tradition, TN Krishnan's violin solo concert was held for the first time on 14 Oct 1999 accompanied by TV Gopalakrishnan on Mridangam and TV Vasan on Ghatam. Besides Navarathri Mandapam, TN Krishnan accompanied Semmangudi in the palace concerts on numerous other special occasions. Amma Maharani Sethu Parvati Bayi (Mother of Chithira Tirunal Maharaja) had a special liking for the violin of TN Krishnan. She quipped, "Every musician has to work hard and practice. It all came to Krishnan's hand like a sparkle. He has got all the blessings from Sree Padmanabhan."

In Oct 1982, the concert of Semmangudi Sreenivasa Iyer accompanied by TN Krishnan and Umayalpuram Sivaraman was arranged by Sree Swati Tirunal Sangeetha Sabha in Kartika Tirunal Theatre, Trivandrum in connection with the birthday celebrations of Amma Maharani. However, she could not attend as she was bed ridden. Dinner for the musicians was arranged



MD Ramanathan accompanied by young TN Krishnan and Palakkadu Mani Iyer

at the Kawdiar Palace. Post dinner, a concert by the same team of musicians was held before the Maharani. When Palai CK Ramachandran and Kumara Kerala Varma supported him, Amma Maharani said: "No one should support. I just want to hear only Semmangudi's voice." When Semmangudi was about to conclude, Amma Maharani said, "Don't Stop, continue." It went for one more hour. "If you perform like this, even if my soul is ready to leave the body, it will wait for a minute or two," said an emotional Amma Maharani.

Prince Aswati Tirunal Rama Varma learned various aspects of manodharma sangeetham from TN Krishnan at the Kawdiar Palace and Ramalayam in Madras.

TN Krishnan remained the favourite accompanist for all the musicians of his period. However, the concert of Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar with the accompaniment of TN Krishnan and Palghat Mani Iyer became a top scorer because of a special chemistry that worked between the three giant performers. TN Krishnan focussed on the raga aspect in the concerts than the kriti aspect. Later, he stopped providing accompaniment and morphed into a solo violin vidwan joining the league of Dwaram Venkataswamy Naidu.

TN Krishnan had great appreciation for the slow paced music of MD Ramanathan. He said "When MDR came into the concert arena, all the musicians were singing in madhyamakalam.

MDR showed the beauty of singing in vilamba kalam." It was TN Krishnan who first introduced MDR to Music Academy, Madras during the 1950 December season. Academy arranged the flute concert of TR Mahalingam with TNK and Palghat Mani Iyer as accompaniments. As usual, Mahalingam did not turn up. Krishnan convinced Academy President Sundaram Iyer that MDR can be requested for filling the slot. Both of them went to MDR's abode at Kalakshetra and requested him to sing in Academy. When Krishnan requested, MDR gladly agreed and it happened to be a memorable concert. That was the beginning of life long relationship between MDR and Music Academy. Although Palghat Mani Iyer appreciated MDR's music, he was initially reluctant to accompany MDR because of the low sruti. But Krishnan persuaded Mani Iyer to accompany MDR.

Mani Iyer and Krishnan were once returning to Madras from Calcutta after a concert. Krishnan was in the upper berth and Mani Iyer in the lower berth. While in their sleep, Krishnan shouted, "thirudan, thirudan!" Mani Iyer got up and turned on the light. There wasn't anyone. Krishnan had a bad dream and was scared. The money received as donation from Calcutta for the Thiruvaiyaru Tyagaraja festival was kept in Mani Iyer's box. Krishnan was obviously worried about the safety of the money.

TN Krishnan was equally adept in playing wind instruments. Once, Krishnan was travelling



MDR Day at Tripunithura in 2009. Release of book "Sogasuga Mridanga Talamu". From Left - Prof. TN Krishnan, Umayalpuram Sivaraman, MA Baby, Ex Education and Culture Minister of Kerala, Tripunithura Krishnamurthy.

along with Karaikkurichi Arunachalam by train. During the conversation, Krishnan said that he could play Nagaswaram. Karukkurichi was amazed to hear the sweetness of Krishnan's Nagaswaram playing. On another occasion, Mani Iyer along with his son Palakkad Rajamani and Krishnan were going to Papa Swamy's house in Alappuzha in a car. On the way, Krishnan looked curiously at a boy who was selling flutes and bought one. Looked back and forth, cleaned it and began to play. Mani Iyer enjoyed the flute recital. TN Krishnan's flute concert was held on September 12, 1971 at Triplicane Arts Academy with V Thyagarajan on the violin and Palakkad Mani Iyer on the Mridangam. TNK played a few more flute concerts.

Memories.....memories..... TN Krishnan went on his heavenly abode on 02 Nov 2020. But his sweet memories and sweetest music will remain for ever.

(About the author - Tripunithura Krishnamurthy, is an ardent admire of MD Ramanathan's music from his childhood days. He has been organising MDR commemoration day every year from 2003 at Tripunithura, Kerala. He has published short stories, novel based on MDR 'Kedaram', biographies of Palakkad Mani Iyer 'Sogasuga Mrudangathalamu' and Neyyattinkara Vasudevan 'Chittaswarsngal'. He retired as a drawing teacher in 2008).

TN Krishnan harmonious with Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar

While it is a fact that TN Krishnan's violin playing full of gamakas is greatly influenced by Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, many a vidwans moulded TN Krishnan towards this. Alleppey K Parthasarathy Iyengar (father of Alepey Venkatesan who has generously contributed an article in this edition) who was a disciple of Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar taught many a kirthanas to TN Krishnan during his younger days and he was in a way exposed to Ariyakudi's bhani. TN Krishnan had no problem at all in following Ariyakudi and it came naturally to him from the beginning.

To “TN Krishnan” Sir

Charumathi Raghuraman, Chennai

It was providence that brought me into the wondrous and most cherished orbit of violin Maestro Padma Bhushan Shri. TN Krishnan Sir. It happened exactly 25 years ago. I was a young girl, a novice violin student in Mumbai. At the suggestion of a close family friend, my mother and I proceeded to meet TNK Sir at the NCPA, where he had a visiting professorship. I was too young and clueless to realise that, at that very moment, I had found the purpose in my life as a violinist.

Upon entering NCPA’s campus, we were taken to Sir’s workshop where I filed into a room brimming with eager eyes and ears all tuned to a welcoming soft face and a distinguished aura. I

was one among many, but his charisma was disarming and personalised to every single person. The violin sat on him like the perfect head jewel of a crown.

Then, like a true Zen master, TNK Sir wielded the instrument that served his every command and musical gesture. There was no microphone or any other artificial enhancements, just the simple acoustic violin which filled the room at the NCPA and my heart. The sound was complete as its own entity. The richness of the tone, the purity of the bowing, the sway and lilt of the melody and many more magical qualities I was unqualified to know at that time, became imprinted in my mind on that very first encounter with TNK Sir and the violin.

To my great fortune, he graciously took me under his wings as a pupil. He tiptoed the line between being a strict disciplinarian in the class and the equivalent of an affectionate grandfather outside of it. He was insistent on constant practice and chartered my playing style and technique by repeatedly saying, “azhuththi vaasi”, meaning bow boldly to achieve clarity of tone. After class, he would offer me tasty sweetmeats to ease any pressure I had as an anxious student.

Sir was a thorough traditionalist in his approach. He wanted a student to achieve complete command over the basic tenets of the music before venturing into other styles and interpretations. To this effect, he would discourage even casual listening to the myriad artists in my early formative years. This became clear to me later, for good reason.

It was 1998 and my tutelage under Sir was still in its early years. Just a few days before one of





his solo concerts in Chennai, Sir sprang a pleasant surprise to my parents by suggesting that I accompany him. Though my parents may have met his decision with a slight trepidation, the grace of the Guru is an all protective blanket. Little did I know then that the greatest blessing and seat of musical education was going to be on stage with Sir! Though I was not familiar with the mechanics of the kutcheri, nor did I know what was to be the musical presentation for that day, Sir completely guided me through the concert, encouraged me and restored my confidence with genial prompting and appreciation. That concert was truly the turning point in my career as a violinist.

I recollect one connoisseur growing lyrical over Sir's violin playing. He said Sir's bowing and fingering are God given gifts, but only through diligent practice, Sir had made it his personal watermark on the music. The bowing and fingering were synchronised akin to a priest waving the

aarthi flame and ringing the bell in counter directions. When this metaphor extends to the violin, one can see the similarity where the bowing hand needs to go perpendicular to the fingering as a devoted combined movement.

A raga, in TNK Sir's hands, always seemed to find a way to express itself in its classical purity and grandeur; his heart commanded the fingers. His music was replete with raga bhava that seemed deceptively effortless to the listener but was in fact, mind-bogglingly difficult to conceive and deliver as a performer. His instrumental style captures the essence of the gayaka experience. Sir presented the violin in its fullest spectrum of sound and depth from the lowest sruthi in performing with Vid. Sri. MD Ramanathan to the highest sruthi with Vid. Sri. TR Mahalingam. And as a soloist, his F pitch violin will remain as the hallmark of an instrumental expression in Carnatic music.

TNK Sir - his persona and his enchanting music awed one and all with delight and ecstasy. The sheer grace of TNK Sir and the élan with which he carried himself across all age groups earned him a colloquial moniker, "The Rock Star of Carnatic music". To his teeming admirers, TNK Sir was like their version of James Bond, fully replete with the latest gadgets, cars, and pristine sartorial choices, always witty and fresh as a rising Sun.

All of the aforementioned attributes beautifully crystallised into that cheerful face adorned with chandanam and a warm smile, is the lasting impression of TNK Sir I carry forward.

TN Krishnan's message to the world

I will only repeat what my father told me: "Whatever you do - be it the violin or vocal - keep at it. It might be tough, and you might have to give up many things, but if you want to excel, this is the only way to do it. Remember that the bad notes will creep in, even without your knowing it. It only depends on how much you play everyday. There is no other prescription." Despite my experience and the amount of practice I do even today, I feel butterflies in my stomach when I face the audience. It is the fear of not being up to the mark. I know people will be easy on me now with my age, but don't I have to be true to myself?

Courtesy The Hindu

To “Sir”, With Reverence

Seethapathy Chellam, Chennai

It was in January 1981, just after my guru was awarded the Sangeetha Kalanidhi, when my tutelage under him commenced. He used to drop his son Sriram at school - Vidya Mandir, Mylapore - in his Fiat car. My mother would walk me to school and I, as an eight year old, used to watch him in awe. Every time I saw the car pull up at the gates of the school, I would tug at my mother's saree insisting on learning the violin under him. Little did I realise that later on I will be playing the violin in the School Orchestra with Sriram!

Although Sir had accompanied Ariyakudi Sri T Ramanuja Iyengar in my family's wedding concerts in the 1950s and 1960s and was familiar with my paternal grand-father, it was only through Late Dr. S Jagadeesan, a close friend of

my father and our next door neighbour, that the relationship was renewed. Dr. S Jagadeesan was the physician for many musicians and prominent members of the music circle, including Sir, Papanasam Sri Sivan, Flute Sri TR Mahalingam, Sri S Balachandar, Sri Chitti Babu, Dr. N Ramani, Thanjavur Sri Upendran, Guruvayur Sri Dorai, the Sikkil Sisters and Sri SY Krishnaswamy (ICS). Thanks to him, my guru agreed to teach me and took me under his wing. Much later, sitting in Dr. S Jagadeesan's verandah, my guru once referred to me as his “Prathama Sishyan” - a high compliment indeed from a guru.

The most important and striking facet of Sir's music was his absolute adherence to Sruthi. His outright “Sruthi Suddham” came equally from the strings of the violin as it did from the bow.

File photo of a Seethapathy Chellam's family function - KV Narayanaswamy accompanied by Prof.TN Krishnan and Palakkadu R Raghu. Dr. S Jagadeesan is behind Prof.TN Krishnan



It was in his left hand - fingering on the violin, in as much as it was in his right hand - the bowing technique. His right hand had a strong yet flexible grip of the bow. He had a divine and majestic command over the bow and the violin. How else could a person play such wonderfully melodious music while accompanying Sri MD Ramanathan (whose sruthi was below ½ Kattai) and Flute Sri TR Mahalingam (whose sruthi was 5 Kattai) and anything in between, contemporaneously! The effect created by the heights of "Sruthi Suddham" scaled by him was by itself a mesmerising experience for the audience.

Sir achieved this by a deep understanding of the instrument, in turn made possible by "Asura Saadhakam" - especially in his formative years under the strict training and supervision of his father Sri A Narayana Iyer.

If my guru was not playing the violin, he was thinking about it. He respected the violin's Western origins and adapted it effectively to Carnatic music. Only gut strings were used and seldom metallic ones. The 'E' string alone had a fine tuner and the remaining strings - A, D & G - were tuned solely with the pegs. The horse hair in the bow was maintained at the correct minimum tension after application of just the right quantity of rosin. The entire length of the bow was exploited remarkably. Simple fundamentals, especially to achieve a clear and rich tone, which made him unique.

Sir's understanding and execution of raga lakshanam knew no bounds. From the very first phrase, there would be no doubt regarding the identity of the ragam and its essence would be displayed.

From the fore finger to the little finger (in the left hand) – all were put to effective use. Each one of them was employed appropriately to bring the utmost effect to a sangathi/musical phrase.

Illustrations:

1. The Sahana phrase "Pa Ma Pa Sa Ni Da Pa" played in the "A" string with the middle finger and the ring finger being used only for the Nishadham.

2. The Suruti phrase "Pa Ni Pa Ma Ma" again played in the "A" string with the little finger used for the "Nishadam" and the fore finger and ring finger, for the successive "Madhyamams", respectively.
3. The Pantuvarali phrase "Ga Pa Ma Da Pa Pa Ma Ga Ri" or "Ma Pa Da Pa Da Ma" – the fore-finger for the "Madhyamam".
4. His trade-mark sangathis in the delineation of ragams like Thodi, Shankarabharanam, Kalyani, Karaharapriya, Kambhoji, Bhairavi, Yedukula Kambhoji, Poorvi Kalyani, Ananda Bhairavi, Bilahari, Behag, Sindhubhairavi, Jonepuri, Chenchurutti, Nadanamakriya and so on.

The list is endless.

The vocal appreciation (sabash etc.) of yesteryear great artistes and doyens of carnatic music can be heard in the recordings of concerts when my guru played such sangathis.

Sir's fingering technique was also extremely effective in gamakams which were just correct and appropriate in measure.

My guru's violin accompaniment of main artistes transcended generations of musicians which included gurus and their sishyas. He has accompanied artistes right from Sri Tiger Varadachariar. His accompaniment especially for Ariyakudi Sri T Ramanuja Iyengar, Chembai Sri Vaidhyanatha Bhagavathar, Semmangudi Sri Srinivasa Iyer, Sri GN Balasubramaniam, Madurai Sri Mani Iyer, the Alathur Brothers, Flute Sri TR Mahalingam and Palghat Sri KV Narayanaswamy, along with Palghat Sri TS Mani Iyer, Palani Sri Subramania Pillai, Palghat Sri R Raghu and Umayalpuram Sri K Sivaraman on the mridangam, in innumerable number of concerts, needs specific mention. I have heard from reliable sources that rasikas used to say that Sir was born to specially play the violin in Ariyakudi Sri T Ramanuja Iyengar's concerts. This is relatable to Sir being mentored by Alleppey Sri K Parthasarathy (Papasmami Iyengar), who was a senior disciple of Ariyakudi Sri T Ramanuja Iyengar.



Prof.TN Krishnan and Seethapathy Chellam Violin duet concert accompanied by Palakkadu R Raghu and Vaikom Gopalakrishnan on Ghatam

My guru would not waste any time on stage (either for tuning the violin or for any other reason) when his turn came. He was an extremely sought after accompanist and there were instances when he played three concerts in a day. Concert dates have been fixed by the main artiste depending on Sir's availability.

Sir was in Delhi when our Prime Minister Sri Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated. He was among the few musicians called to the Doordarshan studio to pay musical homage. After rendering a few ragams, he suddenly chose Mohanam which is generally considered a happy ragam. But on that day, the Mohanam that he presented was soulful, poignant and full of pathos. Such was his command over ragams.

Seeing and hearing him play gave the impression that it was effortless. Indeed, he has advised me that it should seem so. But to reproduce his music is easier said than done.

Classes in his Bhageerathi Street residence were scheduled right after he returned from the Government Music College, where he was then serving as the Principal. From the way the violin bow is held, I had the privilege of being taught by him. Classes were almost always one on one. It would be either him sitting with the violin or on the sofa opposite me. Viji or Sriram would also demonstrate on the violin. Rarely would he speak while teaching – he could

communicate whatever needed to be learnt by his actions. One had to simply observe him in order to imbibe.

Sir was fond of playing Varnams. He would emphasise that they should be practiced daily and played in a disciplined manner. He has rendered numerous varnams including the not so popular ones like the Narayana Gowlai and Rithi Gowlai varnams in Ata Taalam. He learnt the Narayana Gowlai Varnam from Semmangudi Sri Narayanaswami Iyer.

My guru insisted on "Azhuttham". He would remark that clarity should not be sacrificed and that one need not worry about "Abhaswaram" (out of tune notes) initially. Tonal modulations should be played with clarity.

He moved to Delhi in 1985 as the Dean of the Faculty of Music & Fine Arts in the University of Delhi. He hence requested his father to teach me and Sri A. Narayana Iyer was happy to take me as his disciple. He was a kind man who charted a daily schedule for me which included 7 hours of violin practice! It was during this time, in December 1985, that Sir suddenly decided that I should have my "Arangetram". The previous evening he told my father that I will be playing alongside him!

I later spent the summer of 1987 with Sir at Delhi. Kamala Mami was a welcoming and generous host. The rigorous training sessions dur-

ing that period were invaluable and will always be cherished by me. He large-heartedly made me play a concert with him and Sriram at the India International Centre at that time. Subsequently, on many occasions, he has encouraged me by gracefully inviting me to play alongside him.

As a person, Sir was charismatic and dignified. He commanded respect - his attire being just one of the reasons. There was always grandeur in what he did - his arrival at the concert venue, the way he sat on stage, tuned the violin, interacted with the other artistes on stage, engaged with the audience etc. He maintained professionalism with Sabhas and concert organisers and the status of artistes in their eyes rose because of this. He was respectful towards other artistes and has helped many of them - both his contemporaries and juniors.

He used to say that when he was young, no one would strum the Tambura or play the Taalam during practice sessions. There were no elec-

tronic gadgets. He was hence of the opinion that Sruti and Taalam sense should be developed by rigorous practice.

Despite playing the instrument for close to 90 years and enslaving it, he once said that every time he took the violin out of its case, he would be concerned about playing it properly.

Sir has passed on but his music is eternal.

(Seethapathy Chellam is a student of Prof. TN Krishnan. He started performing in concerts from December 1985 and has played alongside his gurus - Prof. TN Krishnan, Dr. S. Ramanathan & Alepey Sri P Venkatesan. He has accompanied many artistes including Manakkal Sri Rangarajan, Sri Sanjay Subramaniam, Sri N Vijay Siva, Bombay Smt. Jayashri, Flute Sri R Thyagarajan, Flute Smt. Mala Chansrasekar, Smt. Nithyasree Mahadevan, Palghat Sri R Ramprasad and others. He has served as the President of the Youth Association for Classical Music. By profession, he is an advocate practising in the Madras High Court).

Nadajyothi Sangeetha Sabha Trust (R) during their 'Nadajyothi Sangeetha Sambhrama-2021' festival, honoured Bangalore Shankar, AV Anand, Ranjani Venkatesh on 14 February 2021 at Sri Rama Mandira, Malleswaram



SRLKM Founders Day

Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira honoured Senior mridangist AV Anand with 'Sangeetha Vedantha Dhurina' award.

The 'Raga Laya Prabha 2020' awards were conferred to six talented youngsters of the state and Pallavi Sammela Award to four youngsters on 06 December 2020. Senior Vocalist Vidushi TS Satyavathi distributed the prizes to youngsters.

The program was held at The Bangalore Gayana Samaja auditorium in the divine presence of "H H Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar"



Sitting back row Left to Right - Smt. Rajashree Yogananda, Vid. Radesh (Mridangam), Shri HR Yathiraj - Vice President, SRLKM, Shri. GV Krishnaprasad, Honorary Secretary, SRLKM, H H Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar, Vidwan AV Anand, Vidushi TS Satyavathi
Sitting front row Left to Right - Lakshmi Priya, Anjali Sriram, Heramb, Maduri Kaushik, Apoorva Krishna, Hemantha, Dr. SV Sahana, Eeshwar Aiyyer, Abhiram G Bode

TN Krishnan - The name that became the Violin

The fiddling Monk (Kumaresh), Bangalore

The ring of the name - TNK - brings in a sense of joy, happiness, and contentment to the mind. To say that he was a musician of the highest caliber is like saying, "the Sun gives light to the universe".

He is one of a kind artiste who will live forever in the minds of artists, connoisseurs, and music lovers generation after generation to come. He brought that beautiful sound out of the instrument, which changed the perception of the sound of Indian Violin completely. His tone was so very sweet and yet very bold and intense. The texture and beauty of the sound of the Violin somehow found its rightful expression when TNK mama played it. He was the first of the three musical geniuses who made the blue print of the art for playing the Indian Violin. (The other two, as everyone would know are Lalgudi sir and MSG sir.)

The technique of his playing was by far the easiest and best suited for the Indian way of playing the Violin. It is also the most expandable. The greatness of any work is when it is relevant to any given time and is timeless. I say this because, being initiated in the same school of the art of playing the Violin, the possibilities that the technique gives in exploring new ideas and avenues on the instrument is so very seamless and accommodative.

Without a strong foundation, a structure however beautiful it may be will not stand long, similarly without good and strong fundamentals, exploring and expressing music through an instrument can be a nightmare. That way, TNK mama's technique is totally high tech and a boon to the Indian violin fraternity.

My earliest memory of Mama was in the year 1976. We had just moved to Chennai. Our father had learnt to play the Violin, from Sri.-Narayana Iyer sir, TNK mama's father. Our father, wanted to pay respects to his Guru and also get him to bless us. Those days, TNK mama was living in a place called Sreenivasapuram in Raja Annamalaipuram area in Chennai. I have a very vague memory of that visit, but I remember the black Premier Padmini car which he had. He was one of the very few musicians who had a car in those days. He never compromised on the good things and good values in life. He always lived life King size and so was his music - Majestic.

What is so magnetic and attractive about TNK mama was, his ability to be in a position of poise and grace at all given time. This reflected on his music as well. Ever smiling and cheerful, his music was full of intensity and completeness. His control or his versatility on the instrument was instinctive. He was able to make a statement through his music. Practiced perfection and control is one thing, but to get the same through instinct is altogether a different ball game. For him music was the language and violin the tool, and he was very comfortable communicating his multi-dimensional musical ability through the instrument, be it a Solo, or a Jugalbandhi or as an Accompanist.

Having performed with great masters, he very well understood the aura of greatness in music and greatness in the persona, and was very comfortable being that part. While he was humble, he never compromised on anything that he thought was required for a musician of his stature.



Prof. TN Krishnan being honoured with the award 'Nadasri' during the 'Vadhya Vaibhava' festival at The Bangalore Gayana Samaja. Left to Right Standing - H H Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar, Achutha Rao Padaki, VP BGS, Kumaresh, Dr. MRV Prasad, President BGS,

I had the blessing of spending a few days with him just before the "Nadasri" - award ceremony during the Vadhya Vaibhava Series held at Gayana Samaja, a very delightful and far reaching learning experience which cannot be expressed through words. I can say that, I had the experience of watching a person completely in control of his thoughts and actions.

He kept on saying, "I am not done playing Bhairavi Varnam, yet ! "That is after 80 years of playing that Varnam, what do I take out of such a statement ! It cannot be that he had not understood the raga or the flow of the raga. It should be understood as, "the taste for music and the sound of ragas were still unsatiated for the 89 year old, young musical mind".

He literally stormed in to the music world as a child prodigy and was darling of the crowd and stayed that way through his life. My father always used to say, TNK was the favourite of all leading stalwart singers of those days.

His aura and personality was such that, even in an institution like Music Academy, he could very comfortably play Christmas Carol, year after year on the 25th of Dec, and he was appreciated for that. Nobody else could have pulled that OFF. That is TNK mama for you. A towering musical personality, leaving an indomitable mark in the music world.

Salutation to the great master.

How TN Krishnan came under Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer

TN Krishnan's family shifted from Ernakulam to their native Trivandrum during the times of War. It was during the Navaratri festival at the palace where Narayana Iyer (TN Krishnan's father) asked TN Krishnan to play in the august gathering of Vidwans Musiri Subramania Iyer, Tanjavur Vaidyanatha Iyer, Boodalur Krishnamurthy Sastrigal, Palghat Mani Iyer, Papa Venkatramaiah, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer and others. Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer was the Principal at the Swathi Tirunal Music college at that time. All the Vidwans collectively decided that TN Krishnan should be guided by Semmangudi. Further when Narayana Iyer was transferred from Trivandrum, Semmangudi suggested that TN Krishnan can stay at his house that enabled him to learn musical values.

Maha Vidwan Brahmashri TN Krishnan Sir

Reminiscences of Vidwan Parur MA Sundareswaran as narrated to S Anand

It gives me a great privilege to share my memories of TNK Sir, on whom one can talk forever, as his music had no boundaries. My grandfather and my father (Shri Parur Sundaram Iyer and Shri Parur MS Anantharama Iyer, respectively) used to call him 'TNK Sir' and always talked about him. My grandfather and TNK Sir's father Vidwan A Narayana Iyer were very good friends. My grandfather, an acclaimed Hindustani musician, had a high appreciation for TNK Sir's sister vidushi N Rajam, who developed her violin in Hindustani style. My grandfather proudly wrote a letter of recommendation in support of vidhushi N Rajam, to Pandit Omkarnath Thakur, the first dean of the music faculty at Banaras Hindu University (BHU) at Varanasi, based on which she commenced her journey at BHU. TNK Sir was close to, and knew, all my family members viz., MA Krishnaswamy (brother), Rama Sundareswaran (wife), MS Ananthakrishnan (son), and MS Ananthasri (daughter). To be called in to speak about him is both my pleasure and bhagam.

My experiences with TNK Sir have spanned from 1965 to 2020. My Brahmopadesam was performed in the year 1965 when I was only 7 years old at Sri Thiagaraja Sangeetha Vidwath Samajam in Mylapore, Chennai. It was there that I met TNK Sir for the first time, and took his blessings.

In my father's own words, TNK Sir's violin, even when heard for two minutes, will bring to the fore clarity, brevity, inner heart, and soulful music. My father has the rare distinction of having performed duets with the Karnatic trinities of violin, viz., TNK Sir, Parur MS Gopalakrishnan Sir, and Lalgudi Jayaraman Sir. My father taught vio-

lin along with TNK Sir at the Music College, Madras; TNK Sir went on to become the Principal of the college.

Music College, Madras and TNK Sir

My arangetram happened in 1965 when I played along with my grandfather at Sri Thiagaraja Sangeetha Vidwath Samajam. TNK Sir had been listening to my music and blessing me till his end in 2020. From a very young age, I used to visit the music college, everyday. There were towering personalities associated with the music college in those days like Maha vidwans Alandur S Nataraja Iyer (violinist and brother of Vidwan S Ramanathan), Varagur Muthuswamy Iyer, Ramnad Krishnan, Sandhyavandanam Srinivasa Rao, Palakkadu KV Narayanaswamy, TM Thyagarajan, B Rajam Iyer, Budalur Krishnamurthy Sastrigal, Karaikudi Muthu Iyer (Mridangam), Keeranur Ramaswamy Pillai (Nagaswaram), Tiruvarur Lakshappa Pillai, Balakrishna Ayya, etc. I used to go to the music college directly from my school at 3.30 pm and join my father and TNK Sir; and my classes sometimes would go up to 5.30 pm. TNK Sir and my father were very close, just like brothers from the same family. TNK Sir would attend my father's classes and my father would attend TNK Sir classes; each knew what the other was teaching. The violin class room was overlooking the Adyar river. The classes were shared between my father, TNK Sir, and Alandur S Natarajan Sir (brother of Dr. S. Ramanathan). On several occasions, TNK Sir would request my father to take his classes, and my father would readily agree and teach the students with TNK Sir's patantaram, his sangatis, and the fingering employed by him. TNK Sir has reciprocated the



Sitting L to R: Alandur S Nataraja Iyer (Brother of S Ramanathan), Prof. TN Krishnan, MS Anantharaman. Two ladies standing behind are students of Music College Satya (Malaysia) and Bhagya (Jaffna).

same especially when my mother Smt. Ananthalakshmi Ammal was bedridden for over 7 years. They had high regard and acknowledgment for each other's style and patantaram. The bonding between them was of the highest order and the students world-over even today cherish the photographs of my father and TNK Sir together.

TNK Sir had a big heart

I was accompanying young Mandolin Srinivas in the late 1970s for an AIR programme which was broadcast between 9.30 to 11 pm. TNK Sir was returning back from Thiruvaiyaru in his Fiat car and he tuned in to my concert from his car. To our surprise, he listened to the entire concert and called my father from a STD booth near Viluppuram, and predicted a very good future for me. Further, he called many vidwans and informed them of my concert and performance. Subsequently, he attended several of my concerts, accompanying Alepey Venkatesan, Chingleput Ranganathan, etc. I still remember his appreciation for one of the kritis I played; 'evarito ne delpudu' in Maanavathi, in a concert.

Similarly, my father would attend the concerts of his children, Sriram and Viji, and wholeheartedly bless them.

My son Ananthakrishnan performed a solo concert during the opening ceremony of the violin shop set up by one Mr. Balakrishnan. TNK Sir presided over this function and wholeheartedly blessed my son. Similarly, my son performed for Omkarnath Thakur Academy in Mumbai, where vidushi Dr. N Rajam was present and blessed him.

TN Krishnan's playing style

TNK Sir's exploits with the violin can be broadly categorised under two heads viz., 'Hardware' and 'Software'. By hardware, I mean the physical instrument, the strings that make up the violin, etc. (essentially what you can see). By 'Software', I mean the sound quality, tonality, etc. (what you can listen and experience).

Violin Hardware

In his formative years, TNK Sir (and others like him) had their training on violin using gut strings. In cricket parlance, this is equivalent to playing cricket on a matt wicket without a helmet. He could play from ½ "kattai" to 6 "kattai" on those strings but generally in 4 ½ "kattai". Later on the use of 'Pirastro Strings' was a Childs play for him. It is like progressing from a 'Godrej Typewriter' of those days to the present 'Computer Typing'. Today's artistes should compare that Typewriter/that pitch/ those strings to today's violin which will give an idea about the challenging training they had undergone. That is the reason why even today, the moment the bow is put to the violin you know it is TNK sir or Parur MS Anantharaman.

Violin Software:

Software refers to the sound quality and tone emanating from TNK Sir's violin. A kutcheri will be a success by the mere presence of TNK Sir or Maha vidwan Murthy Sir. (many times, even their gracing a kutcheri is enough to make it a success).

These days, we have electric and electronic violins with 5 to 50 strings. But TNK Sir used the 4 string acoustic violin, generating wonderful

nadam with a resonant 'Sadjam'. My father used to say that what you don't get in 4 strings, you cannot get in 40 strings. In Tamil he used to say 'anai balam vendam..jnana balam vendum (you don't need an elephant's strength but need gnanam). You must work on your music and need anai balam at start but jnana balam should later join anai balam. Only then you can take your music to the vidwans and rasikas'. Till his very end, TNK Sir performed with the same 4 string violin.

In my 32 years of AIR experience, I have recorded and heard several concerts of TNK Sir solo, and accompanying Semmangudi Mama, Balamurali Sir, etc. I have immensely enjoyed his violin, especially without a mic. He was very affectionate towards me when we interacted during the recording for National Programs and Sangeeth Sammelan concerts. He had a lot of confidence in my recording skills. He never used to verify the recordings and always left it to me.

My experience with TNK Sir at the AIR

I recollect a memorable concert when vidwan TV Gopalakrishnan accompanied TNK Sir's solo concert at the AIR, Madras. That concert is still etched in my memory. In that National Programme of music, he played a soul-stirring Panthuvrali. I purposely did not start the recording immediately as I wanted to listen to him without a mic in the hall they were performing (where you hear only Mic-less music). I always used to book the studio for the entire morning during these sessions just so that I can hear him Mic-less. The 'azhuttam' he generated, confident bow balancing, and the sound he produced with the violin is unimaginable. The Todi and Bhairavi with his unique style and the special gamakam he employed for these ragam was marvellous. Such playing is wonderful to hear but very difficult to produce. I have enjoyed over 100 such recordings and consider myself fortunate.

One incident that requires a special mention is when TNK Sir was made the Principal of the Music College after vidwan Sandhyavandanam Srinivasa Rao retired. I was with my father that day and it was in the Principal's office that it all happened. TNK Sir asked my father to wait at

the college till 6 pm and that he would come back and see him. We were waiting for quite a while when he showed up around 6 pm. He passed on a sweet box and a Govt order making my father 'Professor of Music' and said 'We have been working together for 20 odd years and I wanted to make sure that you are also recognised along with me'. Incidentally, the post was created specifically to recognise my father. We later learned that while we were waiting at the college, he went in his Fiat car to meet the Chief Minister and the Secretary and ensured that my father's orders were also released along with his. I can never imagine such bonding between two senior musicians. I really wonder if there will be another senior vidwan like him with such a big heart.

Parur lineage that includes Vidwans Parur Sundaram Iyer, my father Parur MS Anantharama Iyer, my uncle Parur MS Gopalakrishnan respected TNK Sir's lineage. These two lineages will always travel together for many more generations to come. It is in our lineage that Hindustani and Karnatic music are both fully integrated. My grandfather vidwan Parur Sundaram Iyer and vidwan A Narayana Iyer both vouched for 'Bharatiya Sangeetham' and tried to bridge the gap between North and South Indian Music styles.

From the age of 6 till 92 years, TNK Sir stuck to his own original style considering his art a God-given gift and a 'prasadam' from his Guru despite many changes taking place with the violin instrument as well as the way it was being played (hardware and software). He surrendered himself to his Guru completely. His strong conviction kept him connected to his style without an iota of change. TNK Sir is one of the all-time great violinists to have been born. I am glad I spent some quality time with him in my life. My pranams to the great vidwan.

(Parur MA Sundareswaran is the elder son of vidwan Parur MS Anantharaman. He is a leading senior violinist in Chennai and is bestowed with prestigious awards like Kalaimamani from the Govt. of Tamil Nadu)

Swaradhiraj : A Tribute to Pt. Bhimsen Joshi

CA Bhushan Toshniwal, Poona

To any student of Indian classical music, the name PT Bhimsen Joshi is known right from the beginning of his musical journey. Such was the influence of this legend on our music that, musicians across all Gharanas tried to imbibe something or the other from his music into their style. Beginners take inspiration from his herculean efforts to learn music, while those who are concert artists, marvel at his immaculate presentation of an ideal music concert, with unsurpassed consistency. Some get enthralled by his long clear ultra-fast taans with effective use of voice dynamics, while some get mesmerised by his melodious alaps. A lover of light music gets connected to God through his devo-

tional Bhajans/Abhangs, a semi-classical music listener has tears in his eyes when he listens to his Thumris. In this article, I have tried to take a bird's eye view of this maestro's musicianship, to find-out the secret of his success.

Powerful yet melodious voice

people always thought that, to sing the style of Kirana Gharana one must have a thin, high-pitch voice. But when we talk of Bhimsenji, the first thing that comes to mind is his powerful voice, which is not the traditional voice for his Gharana. Bhimsenji showed us that any powerful voice can be extremely melodious, if you can give the correct voice throw for various genres. This voice throw was the result of rigorous



Sadhana. Panditji says, “I would do Kharaj Sadhana (lower octave practice) from 4-6 AM. My Guru Savai Gandharva often said that, whatever you sing in the middle octave, (like nyasa, Meends, Gamakas etc) you should be able to do it in the lower octave as well.” His use of voice for singing Khayal, and Thumri would be totally different. Even in Khayals his voice tonality would vary with the Raga bhava. His voice would sound cheerful when he sang ragas like Yaman, Shuddha Kalyan, while for ragas like Darbari Kanada, Malkauns etc. it would invoke ‘Gambheera Rasa’. For ragas like Shankara, Durga etc, his voice would invoke ‘Veera Rasa’. Even in his taans his use of voice dynamics (especially in the higher octaves) fascinated the audience. When asked about how he achieved this, he says, “I used to practice ragas like Todi, Multani, and Puriya in morning, afternoon and evening respectively. Until I master one thing, my guru would not be satisfied and would not teach me anything further. He believed that, if you master one thing, you can master all. But if you try to master all at once, you would lose everything.”. His voice would be strong and powerful for Khayal and soft and melodious for Thumri/bhavgeet/natyageet etc. Another important thing is this transition in voice throw would occur, the moment he switched over from one genre to another.

Unique style of singing

even though Panditji belonged to Kirana Gharana, he imbibed elements from Jaipur, Gwalior, Agra and other Gharanas to form his own style. He even inculcated some things from Carnatic music and people find a bit of Carnatic as well in his Alaps. He brought more Laya Ang in his presentations by introducing Bol Alaps, which would come at the end of an Avartan (while he elaborated a raga in slow speed). Once a Maestro from Jaipur Gharana said to him, “Your Kirana Gharana artists take an eternity to elaborate a raga.”, after which Panditji brought the art of compact presentation in his music. His long ultra-fast Taans (which would cast a magical spell on audience), and mastery over various types of Tan patterns was his important contribution to Kirana Gharana, which was otherwise

known for its elaborate alaps. Panditji says, “To become a good artist, one must be a good robber of knowledge and aesthetics of others. Wherever I find beauty, I try to imbibe it.”

Thoughts on an Ideal Concert

Panditji would often say, “One should be able to sing precisely in a concert. Even if you have 50 Taans in mind you should be able to sing the best among them.” He also warned the upcoming artists about the difference between concert and practise. “Practise implies removing the weaknesses from your voice/singing, and trying to master what you are not good at. While concert is the presentation of what you know best.”

Another thing he focused on is the taste of his audience. “One learns with experience what the audience wants on a given day. Some days, you will have audience which wants more Alaps, while other days, the audience may want more Taans/boltaans. An artist should be able to manage all kinds of audiences.” Once, Panditji’s concert was arranged at a village. He started with Raga Yaman. However the people were still chatting among themselves. After just 2/3 minutes of Yaman, Panditji started one of his immortal Abhangs, and the audience became silent immediately. Once, the organisers wanted Panditji to have songs from the lighter forms, but Panditji sang Raga Purvi putting his heart into it, and was highly appreciated.

During his long concert career, Panditji faced many challenging situations. For example, once he had to sing after Ustad Amir Khan. Ustadji had rendered raga Darbari, which was one of his best. Everyone was skeptical as to how Panditji (who was young then) would handle the situation. Panditji hummed something like Darbari, and someone asked him, “Are you also singing Darbari?”, to which panditji said, “yes.”. All of Panditji’s followers were now afraid. However Panditji showed a different shade of the same raga, and wiped Ustad Amir Khan’s rendition from people’s mind. He had to sing many times after Pandit Ravi Shankar, Pandit Kumar Gandharva etc. in all such situations, his

rigorous Sadhana, and his self-confidence helped him.

I conclude this section with a very important thought by Panditji. "Music changes every ten years. The artist should also change accordingly. In my younger days, concerts started at 10 PM and ended at 6 AM, but in today's times, an artist must be able to present the Raga in a short time without compromising on its aesthetics.". Panditji has sung the popular Bhairavi "mile sur mera tumhara" (which was used for a project of national integration) for 3 time durations which differed by just a few seconds.

Raga selection

Panditji was often criticised for singing the same ragas time and time again. Panditji answered this in the following manner. "Every gharana/artist has its own set of ragas which he has mastered and which give him pleasure as well. Only thing is that our Kirana Gharana is criticised because where there is sugar, there are ants. Even if I sing Raga Shuddha Kalyan for 2/3 days in a row, you will get a different shade of it every time. A performer should not focus on mere number of ragas, but should focus on how to aesthetically innovate more and more in a raga, and enrich his musicianship. One must understand that, in one life, we can master only 25-30 ragas.". Having said this, Panditji did not stick to ragas rendered only by Kirana Gharana artists, but also rendered ragas from other Gharanas such as Yamani Bilaval, Chaya Malhar, Gaud Sarang, etc. He also tried some jod ragas such as Bageshwari Bahar, Hindolita, Lalat Bhatiyar, Marwashri, etc. One of Panditji's own creation was a Jod raga called Kalashri, which is a combination of Kalavati and Rageshri. he believed that while presenting a Jod Raga one must have both the ragas in equal proportions, and they should be mixed effectively.

Devotional and other forms of music

Panditji tried his hand at various other forms of music such as devotional songs, bhavgeet, film songs etc. His devotional songs in Marathi, Hindi and Kannada earned him mass popularity. He says, "It is the duty of the singer to understand the full meaning and be one with the Bhava of

the song. Then he can sing anything." Panditji also did many jugalbandis with the Carnatic music maestro Dr. M Balamurali Krishna, through which he made an effort to bridge the gap between Carnatic and Hindustani music.

Conclusion

Bhimsenji's powerful voice, his skill to cater to all kinds of audiences, his non-conformist attitude, his ability to handle various forms of music, helped him to become one of the most successful exponents of Indian classical music.

Bharat Ratna Swarabhaskar Pandit Bhimsen Joshi will be remembered forever through his divine music.

About the author:

Bhushan Toshniwal is a Divyang and God's own creation. Some are born great, some achieve greatness through dedication and determination, but very few are those, who, in spite of their disability, make the cruel and prejudiced world take notice of them. CA Bhushan Toshniwal's life journey serves as an inspiration to one and all. Having lost eyesight, when he was 20 days old, he had to face many rejections in terms of getting admission in school/college, people's scepticism about his ability, inability to get a guru for music, lack of brail/audio books for commerce stream, etc. but through his strong will-power, hard work, efforts to strive for perfection, never give-up attitude, and the ability to make the best of available resources, he has reached great heights in the fields of academics, music and motivational speaking. Along with CA, Bhushan possesses 6 other post graduate degrees, in music, business management and insurance. He came first in sangeet alankar all over India. He is a child prodigy, who sang 5 raagas at the age of 5 and performed at the prestigious Savai Gandharva Mahotsav Kundgol, at the age of 7, where he was blessed by Padmavibhushan Gangubai Hangal, and Bharat Ratna PT Bhimsen Joshi. He is the winner of the reality show Takdhinadhin, finalist at Sankara super-singer, and a semi-finalist at Saregamapa, and Maharashtra Sangeet Ratna. He performs both Hindustani and Karnatik classical, and is a graded artist of radio and doordarshan. He is the recipient of the scholarship from the Government of India, and from Savai Gandharva Mahotsav Samiti for his musical talents, and Dhirubhai Ambani scholarship in academics. His gurus include the likes of Padmashri Anup Jalota, Padmashri Padmaja Fenani Jogalekar, Dr. Vikas Kashalkar, Ustad Rashid Khan, (for hindustani) and Jayalakshmi Krishnamurti, and Sangeet Samrat Chitravina N Ravikiran (Karnatic).

Majestic, Dynamic, and Reverberating

Vidwan Bombay CN Balaji, Chennai

The three adjectives which to a certain extent sums up the feeling of a Rasika, when he listens to the music of Sri M D Ramanathan with Sri T N Krishnan on the violin.

Firstly, the tonal quality from the violin of Sri TN Krishnan in the sruti of Sri MDR which ranges between A to B in the pitch-pipe, is impeccably majestic, weighty and at the same time, extremely pleasing and melodious to the ear.

The art of accompaniment, as advocated by Sri TNK, strictly adheres to the pakkavadhya dharmam of not over playing, and always providing the required support, to enhance the manodharma of the singer, and the overall presentation.

In Sri MDRs music, the scope and potential to showcase one's vidwath is immense, but at the same time the violin vidwan needs to exercise restraint to ensure that there is not a semblance of over playing or over shadowing the melodious flow of Sri MDR's music. Sri TN Krishnan's accompaniment is a model lesson in that respect.

Of course, given the enormous effort Sri TN Krishnan has taken to ensure that Sri MD Ramanathan's music reaches a wider audience, and more importantly by also performing alongside Sri MDR on numerous occasions, both had developed a special camaraderie, mutual admiration and a complete bonding on the musical front.

Prof. TN Krishnan accompanying MD Ramanathan with Vellore Ramabadran on Mridangam



The anticipation with which Sri TN Krishnan plays, be it for the varnam, ragam, krithi, Sri MDRs own compositions, chittaswaram, neraval, swarakalpana, Ragam Thanam Pallavi, Virrutham in ragamalika, thillana and most importantly the famous MDR Mangalam, is totally involved and of a very superlative quality. Here a special mention to be made about the spontaneity with which Sri MDR professes his music and the sheer brilliance with which Sri TNK anticipates the same.

Another important aspect of the music of Sri MD Ramanathan is the vishranthi and sowkya, emphasising on the lyrical beauty of the compositions rendered and also maintaining a perfect kalapramanam right through the presentation. Here too Sri TN Krishnan matches note to note as well as beat to beat.

To sum up I would like to rephrase a composition by Sri TyAgabrahmam to state rAman-AthaswAmi mantramunakku MA jeeva mu KrishnaswAmi mantramunakku RA jeeva mu

Jai Jai Rama Krishna Hari, Jai Jai Rama Krishna Hari

*Shri TN Krishnan, a man venerable,
his memory for us ever so palpable;
For a smile danced always on his face,
as the violin his hands did lovingly embrace.*

*He was a titled Sangeetha Kalanidhi,
an august member of the violin trinity;
Honoured as Tirupathi Asthana Vidhwan,
awarded Padma Shri, Bhushan, Vibhushan.*

*TNK mama's was my first concert Carnatic,
Shanmukhananda Bombay, a venue dramatic;
I sat mesmerised, the experience fantastic,
on stage a maestro, enthusiastic, ecclesiastic!*

*He called me Deva with such great fondness,
played at my wedding, rejoicing, all kindness;
He ever awoke in me a passion considerable,
as his bow caressed out rhythms inexorable.*

*The music, humour, smile contagious,
a life itself surely so very sweet, melodious;
In my heart this great man will reside deeply,
may TNK sir, and his music, endure eternally.*

By
Jaidev R. Iyer

Anagha Yoganand performing for Sangeet Natak Akademi, Ministry of Culture, Government of India with S Janardhan on Violin, Nikshit Puttur on Mridangam, Utham Shantraju on Ghatam with Tambura Support provided by Rajashree Yogananda



Musical Musings - Mysore Vasudevacharya

*Originally written for 'Sangeetha Samaya' by Sangita Kalarathna S Krishnamurthy
Translated to English by Rajashree Yogananda*

(Sangita Kalarathna S Krishnamurthy was the eldest grandson of the celebrated vaggeyakara Mysore Vasudevacharya. He was also a Karnatic musician and served in the AIR 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 in the book reach a wider audience to enjoy it as much as we did writing it in LKT).

Vaggeyakara Mysore Vasudevacharya, my Tatha (grandfather) had crossed eighty years of age that day when he sat to sing at the Gayana Samaja. One could say that the onset of old age was evident by looking at him, but could also say that it had not yet reached his vocal chords. Years of rigorous practice had given him a rich sonorous voice and it appeared as though the old age was afraid and hesitant to show itself in his voice. It was a sublime kutcheri that went on for four hours. Tatha's favourite raga Kambhodhi had taken the lion's share on that day's kutcheri. His manodharma that day was a reflection and fruition of years of practice. The raga unfurled beautifully. Even in madhyama kala, he maintained the tautness within well conceived frame work of the raga. After the pallavi, as was his usual routine, he concluded the kutcheri with a Sanskrit shloka in ragamalika.

Many dignitaries and rasikas were present that day to listen to his kutcheri. DV Gundappa, who was very close to thata was also there to listen. His very presence may have inspired thatha's singing that day. When the concerned person

stood up to offer vote of thanks, everyone noticed that tatha too got up and started to talk. We could say without any doubt that he was a wonderful orator who infused humour in his talks and they were as interesting and absorbing as his music. But that day, everyone were perplexed as to the reason for his standing up to talk.

Tatha began "I am 80 years old; though that has not diminished my enthusiasm to sing, it has taken a toll on my body. Therefore, I will not be able to perform in sabha kutcheris anymore. This is my last sangeetha seva to all my abhimaanees (fans)".

"This is not possible. I want to prove that this is not true. There will be another kutcheri of Vasudevacharya on this same stage and that too very soon" said DVG. The whole sabha clapped in unison.

Three or four months later DVG came to Mysore to visit my tatha. He was accompanied by Rallapalli Ananthakrishna Sharma, P Srinivasarayar and CK Venkataramaiah. "Very soon the secretary of the Gayana Samaja will be visiting you. We have all come to pray that you heed to his request. Your gaana sudha must be heard eternally by all of us" said DVG. He unfolded a new pair of Melkote dhoti, pleated and entwined it and put it on tatha like a garland and prostrated.

Tatha was at a loss for words. He looked at his son whose facial expression told him to wait and give an appropriate reply when required. Tatha kept quiet.

The secretary came within 3 or 4 days with the request. Tatha did not consent and the secre-

tary did not relent. Finally, my father had to intervene and said bluntly “he will sing if you pay two hundred rupees for his kutcheri”. Tatha was taken aback. In those days, remuneration of two hundred rupees was unheard of and honestly not affordable. My father thought that this was the easiest way to make the secretary back track his request.

“is that all? here is hundred rupees advance” said the secretary. My father’s calculation had quickly turned upside down. Highly satisfied, the secretary prostrated to Tatha and left. Tatha was almost wailing, “never in my life have I ever demanded remuneration for my kutcheris. Today your father has literally sold my art in front of my eyes. How will I ever be able to lift my head and walk?” said a very pained Tatha.

I was very touched seeing the turmoil that he was undergoing. Even now, my heart wells up with emotions when I think of how tatha treated his art with utmost reverence and respect.

After the kutcheri was over, tatha put his hands on my shoulder and whispered “how was today’s kutcheri Kittanna? Your father has put a price to my kutcheri, did I live up to that?” my eyes welled up with tears and I was unable to say anything.

Tatha believed firmly that knowledge was a sacred gift from Goddess Saraswathi and could not be used for commercial purposes. He lived up to his beliefs. It was this quality of his that enriched not only his art but also his life. This way of thinking does not pertain only to my tatha. It was the way of life for all the scholars and artistes of that time. One of the greatest names in veena, vainika shikhamani veene Sheshanna would perform for a meagre sum of five rupees and would respectfully receive it with all humility. I have heard my tatha say this several times.

Another reason for tatha’s success when it came to learning was his discipline and determination. When tatha was learning music under veene Padmanabhaiah, he was never able to sing in shruthi. When the guru used to sing ‘Sa’ and hold the shadja, his shishya would repeat, but it

would slip to kakali nishadha or rise to shuddha rishabha. Moreover, there would be a tremor in his voice like a person who experiences the early morning chill, especially in December. His guru was short tempered. One day when the guru was teaching tatha, he lost his patience listening to his shishya’s apaswara. “Do you call this sangeetha? Please go and eat mud” he said.

My Tatha was a ‘Hata yogi’. From that day onwards, he started to culture his voice and this practice continued till his last days. “Why do you want to put so much effort at this age tatha? You do not have to sing in a kutcheri or give a radio performance!” we grandchildren would tell him.

“So what if I do not sing in kutcheris now? The voice has to always be under my control. Even if I do not practice for a day, the voice will not heed to me”.

As a result of this sincere practice, my tatha’s voice had become very mellifluous and even during his old age he could hold on to thara sthayi shadja and stay there for 15 to 20 seconds with ease. His voice had attained what we call ‘Naada Gaambhira’.

Sheshanna once took along my tatha for a kutcheri in Coimbatore. Sheshanna took the audience to gandharva loka with his playing. Such was the magic. Highly impressed with sheshanna’s playing, the organiser paid twice the remuneration and honoured him. After this, Sheshanna wanted to pull my tatha’s leg and told in jest “this person sings very well and deserves to be heard”. My poor tatha was unable to grasp the joke behind Sheshanna’s talk and took it seriously. It never crossed his mind that Sheshanna who was elderly and leading light in the music field would make fun of him. He believed him.

Tatha had kept infant steps in music and as a student was learning to sing. As tatha began to sing, there was a lot of commotion in the hall, one could hear people laugh and have fun at his expense. One of them asked tatha to stop singing. “please stop singing. It is like drinking neem oil after having tasted amrutha previous-

ly". Sheshanna was laughing behind his handkerchief. Tatha was very angry with this kind of humiliation. He let go of his singing and immediately sought shelter in Sanskrit literature. He, by then, already had a firm grip over the Sanskrit language and recited an extempore poetry in Sanskrit which meant "You are only shesha (meaning Sheshanna), but I am Vasudeva who has trampled and stood on you". Listening to this, all the people in the sabha became calm and quiet. The organiser also showed his respect to tatha by paying him a handsome remuneration. Though this gave some comfort to tatha, he could not get over the humiliation he faced for his singing. He at once made up his mind to rigorously pursue singing till the time he could get Sheshanna to appreciate his singing and say 'bhale'.

It was time to return to Bangalore and both of them had a heated argument in the railway station. Tatha said "You are the reason for my humiliation. To compensate for it you have to start teaching me until I reach the level where you can appreciate me".

"You are the North pole, whereas music is south pole. Why bother? Go and make a living through your brahminical practices" said Sheshanna. It was like pouring ghee to the already raging fire. Tatha exploded in anger "I will discard this Yagnopaveetham if I am unable to sing whatever you teach me"

"Okay let us see where this will lead to. I will teach you the ata tala varnam in Shankarabharana. I will teach you every line just once. You will have to sing the entire varnam before we reach Bangalore" challenged Sheshanna.

Teaching of the varnam progressed along with the chugging of the train. Sheshanna was in the 2nd class compartment of the train whereas tatha was in the 'Gandhi class'. Tatha would get down at each station, go to Sheshanna's compartment, learn each avartanam and go back to his compartment to practice. By the time the train reached Bangalore, Tatha was thorough with the varnam. When tatha sang the entire varnam without making a mistake, Sheshanna's eyes became moist with tears. "It is very essen-

tial for a student to have this kind of determination and perseverance. Acharya you have a golden future ahead of you" he hugged tatha and blessed him.

There was a marriage celebration at Diwan Sheshadri Iyer's house. Befittingly, the celebration was on a large scale. Renowned musicians Patnam Subramanya Iyer and Mahavaidyanatha Iyer had come down on special invite. Arrangements had been made for their stay at Maharaja's Sanskrit school. Tatha was a student there and was stunned beyond words when he heard them practice early in the mornings. He realised that he could nowhere compare the music being taught in the school and the music of the renowned singers. This prompted a deep yearning in tatha wanting to learn music their way. It was a farfetched dream for him to turn into reality. First of all, he had to travel and stay in Thiruvaiyaru, (which many had not even heard of) for four to six years to learn under this Mahavidwan was stretching it a bit too far. To top it, tatha was not financially well placed. He wanted a person who could support him to nurture his dreams and aspirations.

He decided to ask Maharaja Chamaraja Wadiyar to patronise him. Tatha knew that the Maharaja would visit the foothills of the Chamundi every Tuesday and Friday, riding his horse to pay his obeisance to the family deity. He would patiently wait there in order to meet the king. This went on for around six months. Finally his perseverance paid and the king accepted to be his beneficiary.

He started his gurukula vasa under Patnam Subramanya Iyer. His stay there was not a bed of roses. He used to work hard day and night and sleep out of exhaustion on the outside 'jagali' of his guru's place. He also had to bear the onslaught of mosquitoes with their own brand of music.

There was no sign of the guru wanting to teach him, even though he had spent months staying there. He could not bring himself to ask his guru as to when he would begin to teach, plus he faced difficulty to converse in Tamil. All these did not deter Tatha who was very focussed to

reach his goal. He finally had the grace of his guru because of his sincerity in all the work given to him. He continued his gurukula vasa for six years and imbibed everything; He assimilated the essence of Thyagaraja Sampradaya and grasped the nuances of composing kritis sitting at the feet of his guru and finally became one of the famous vaggeyakaras of this century.

After returning to Mysore, tatha was fortunate to have his first kutcheri in the presence of veene Sheshanna. After the kutcheri, Sheshanna placed a golden bracelet in his hand and was very vocal with his appreciation. What Sheshanna had predicted earlier had come to fruition on that day! He was the recipient of several honours and titles from the Mysore palace, the Government and many institutions. He was given titles like Sangeetha Shastra Ratna, Sangeetha Shastra visharadha, Sangita Kalanidhi, Sangeetha Sahitya Vallabha, Sarasagana Shiromani, Gaanakalaa Kovida, Padmabhushana and so on.

Whenever tatha composed a new krithi and was asked as to when he had composed it he would reply "God has made me do it now", never would he say that 'he' had composed it.

Whenever a new composition was ready, he made sure that it was heard by at least by a few scholars. "Why do you want to publicise it so early?" we would object to it thinking that Tatha was after self praise but on the other hand it was because of our ignorance. He would reply saying "look, I am not Sarvagana. When four people listen to it, they will tell me if there are faults or shortcomings either in sahitya or in the raga sanchara. I can then correct it. It is stated in the shastra that if there is a fault in maatra or gana, our family will not prosper in terms of progeny. You all are young growing children. Hence I have to be very careful."

Tatha lost his father when he was an infant. He had to fight with the prevalent notions of that time that a person born to a good family could never take up dance, drama or music. He had to fight poverty, face the contempt of his relations, bear the demise of his wife at a very early stage in life, the loss of his grown up daughter, professional jealousy, palace politics and so on. There

were hurdles at every stage of his life and yet, he never conceded defeat. Just like the horse which has a strap over its eyes to see in one direction, he was steadfast in his pursuit of music. In spite of all difficulties that he had undergone, Tatha never spoke about it with anyone. He had built around himself a fort of naada, laya, tala and raga and was always into naadopaasana. Come what may, he maintained his equanimity (stitha pragna).

It was the evening of 17-5-1961. Just as the sun was setting, Tata's life was also getting prepared to set just like the sun. We were all totally unprepared for it. Infact, a doctor had just examined his pulse and predicted 'undoubtedly, you will live up to hundred years of age tatha'.

Tata must have sensed that he was coming to the end of his life. He asked vidwan boodaluru Krishnamurthy Shastry who was present to come closer to him. Both had immense respect and appreciation of each other.

"I think my work over here has come to an end. Please do give me permission to leave. I have one last request. I was only able to reach the peripheral of the ocean of music. I do not know how many times I have to be reborn in order to reach the other side. I would like prostrate to all the sangeetha vidvans irrespective of their age. Kindly bless me that I will be the recipient of the entire knowledge of this great art form at least in my next birth" begged tatha.

"This kind of humility can only be found in people who worship music and know that it is as vast as the sky, as deep as the ocean and as lofty as mount Meru. Why is tatha speaking like this today" he whispered, with tears in his eyes.

The evening prayers were offered. It was around eight fifteen when tatha called his grandson Rajaram to bring the tamboori and sing the devaranama 'intha Prabhuva kaaneno ee jagadolage'. He got down from the cot and lay down on the mat with a pillow. He asked his grandson to bring the tamboori closer to him. "can you strum it a little louder, I am unable to hear it" said tatha and started enjoying the sunaada emanating from the tamboori. Around

eight twenty five, he lifted his head in order to listen to the naada much closer. He felt his head spin and put his head back on the pillow, never ever to lift again.

Tatha who spent ninety six years of his life immersed in the world of naada became one with the divine naada of tamboori.

Tatha may not be around us, but he still lives and lightens all of us through his beautiful compositions.

HK Narasimhamurthy on TNK

Original thoughts of HK Narasimhamurthy translated by Asha Ramesh, Bangalore



I had only heard of TN Krishnan but hadn't met him till when I went to Madras in 1967. I met him for the first time when I joined the Central College Of Carnatic music. He was a professor there. A very nice and affable man, he would take classes for an hour everyday and would teach very well. I play the kirtanas, he taught me, till date.

Though he knew I was a student of MS Gopalakrishnan, he still had a lot of liking for me. In fact, he took me along with him to Mysore, twice or thrice, paying for my tickets. Not that I had any work there I would just accompany him, roam around with my friends and would go back with him. Later, when I applied for a scholarship, he was the judge. Knowing fully well that I had given my name to study under Sundaram Iyer, he still selected me and gave me a scholarship.

After finishing college, I continued to study under MS Gopalakrishna. At that time, he had gone to his friend's house, Mr. Natarajan, a

committee member of The Music Academy. The music academy was fixing the programme and they wanted a violinist to fill a slot. Mr. Natarajan told Mr. Krishnan, about the requirement. Mr. Krishnan immediately referred my name saying that a student by name Narasimha Murthy from the college could help with it. He didn't know my whereabouts but told Mr. Natarajan that he would find out. He somehow found out my address, I was staying in a small by lane in somebody's house, and came there and asked me whether I was free on December 26th for a recital in the Music Academy. He then took me and introduced me to the Secretary and gave me an opportunity to accompany Ms. Sitalakshmi Venkatesan in the programme. I hadn't even applied for it, but TN Krishnan, very affectionately, gave me the opportunity.

He was not only my Guru but also a well-wisher. He had helped me in various ways. He was a large hearted person. Never thought twice about spending money. He always travelled in First Class compartments in trains. Even though the other artistes travelled by second class, he never thought otherwise. He lived like that till the end. He gave music performance even at 92, as a triad with his son and daughter. A great man, in this respect he performed till a few days before his death. His, was a classical style. Since he was under Semmangudi Srinivas Iyer for a long time, he imbibed this style. A nice classical style which lot of people follow.

(HK Narasimhamurthy is a senior violinist and a sought after Guru of Karnataka)

SRLKM annual awards - 2021

Rajashree Yogananda, Bangalore



H H Sri SriYadugiriYathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar delivering his speech during Annual awards 2021 - Left to Right: Shri HR Yathiraj - Vice President, SRLKM, Shri. GV Krishnaprasad, Honorary Secretary, SRLKM, Swamiji, Vidushi TS Satyavathi, Mysore Shri. Subramanya

On 28th of February, SRLKM had arranged its annual award function where the title 'Sangeetha Vedanta Dhurina' was conferred upon the prolific and enigmatic artiste Smt. Vid. TS Satyavathi by his holiness Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar. Prof. Mysore V Subramanya too graced the occasion as the chief guest for the event.

This was followed by the presentation of the awards 'Raga Laya Prabha' to the budding, talented and upcoming artists of Karnataka - Archana and Samanvi for vocal, Rakshita

Ramesh for Veena, Vaibhav Ramani for violin, Adamyia Ramanand for Mridanga and Anoor Sunaad for Khanjira.

The event began with an invocation by Archana and Samanvi, set to tune by their guru Sri Aravind Hebbar. This was followed by the award ceremony after which, the audience were treated to a solo violin concert by Vaibhav Ramani who was accompanied by Adamyia on the Mridanga and Sunaad on the Khanjira.

HUMBLE REQUEST

Saint Sri Purandaradasara Aradhana Samithi in association with Sangeetha Sambrama Trust has arranged Sri Purandaradasara Aradhana at National level "Purandarotsava - 2021" from April 21st to 25th April 2021 in the evenings at Karanji Anjaneya Swamy Temple Premises, Basavanagudi, Bangalore - 560 004. Devotees are requested to attend in large numbers and contribute liberally for the success of the National Festival.

Prof. TN Krishnan - Recollections

*Sangita Kalanidhi M Chandrasekaran
As told to C Ramakrishnan, Chennai*

TN Krishnan was a very close friend of mine. He was about ten years elder to me, but we shared the same wave length in our thoughts on various aspects of music. I first heard him in 1950 in the Music Academy when he was accompanying Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar. He started accompanying great vidwans even at a young age and was called Master Krishnan. Those days, he was accompanying Iyengar most of the time, even though he embellished many concerts of other doyens of that period - like Chembai, Viswanatha Iyer, Musiri, GN Balasubramaniam, Madurai Mani Iyer, Alathur Brothers Semmangudi etc. Each one had a very distinct bani, and he was quite at home with any vidwan and every one appreciated his playing very much, in spite of the huge age gap. That first concert is still etched in my memory.

A violinist when he plays pakkavadyam, should always remember that his duty is to embellish the concert, support the main vidwan, and he should never make it his solo concert. TN Krishnan always followed this dictum and he embellished the concerts of all the vidwans whom he accompanied, never tried to project himself.

Another concert that I very much enjoyed was the one which was organised by RK Sreeramkumar. In this concert, there was no violin support and it was all along TNK only with his bow dipped in honey and a manodharmam built over years of accompanying doyens in music. It was a memorable concert. I accompanied RK Srikantan in that series.

Two Sangita Kalanidhi's M Chandrasekaran and TN Krishnan in a Violin duet concert accompanied by Umayalpuram Sivaraman and Tanjavur Upendran on Mridangam



TN Krishnan excelled in whatever ragam he played. But I feel his Thodi is captivating. He played an unforgettable Thodi in Krishna Gana Sabha in 1967. Astounding manodharmam, rounded gamakams, measured brighas, nothing in excess. Everything contributed to the edifice of Thodi he built that day. I also relish his other ragams like Sankarabharanam, Sahana, Kapi, Neelambari, Yadukulakambodi, Suruti etc.

We have played many concerts together as Double Violin concerts with double Mridangams. It was a roaring success. The debut concert was held under the aegis of Nadopasana in PS High School on 29 August 1971 and till 1974, many such concerts were held in all leading sabhas. This was much appreciated by the cognoscenti and leading vidwans attended our concerts. We both belong to different Guru parampara, but conducted the concerts with great aesthetics, coordination and proportion. We had no ego problems. In fact, there was no practice sessions prior to the concerts. Every thing was spontaneous. We once played a Thiruppavai concert. In 1972, when the country celebrated the Silver Jubilee of our Independence, we were invited by AIR to perform a duet concert in Delhi. Vellore Ramabhadran and Tanjavur Upendran provided mridangam accompaniment.

We also played a programme titled STEREO SYMPHONY in 1973, consisting of two violins, flute by KS Gopalakrishnan, Veena by RK Suryanarayana, Mridangam by Vellore Ramabhadran and Umayalpuram Sivaraman, under the aegis of Bharatiya Fine Arts, Mumbai and held in Shanmugananda Sabha Auditorium. It was well received by the rasikas and attracted rave reviews from the press. In this programme, flautist KS Gopalakrishnan played a captivating alapana of Abheri and he was immediately booked for a flute solo concert by Shanmugananda Sabha - his maiden concert in that Sabha.

The mutual camaraderie between TN Krishnan and myself got thickened over the years. In the year 1982, Rama Seva Mandali, Bangalore, arranged a vocal concert of mine with TN Krishnan on the violin. This also received very good response from the public as well as the Press. Many of the above concerts are available in you tube.

Thus, I had many memories of sharing the stage with my friend TN Krishnan. Even though he has left this mortal world, his memories and music will remain with the music lovers for ever.

TN Krishnan - Noteworthy Quotes

Difference between accompanying and performing solo in TNK's words: "While accompanying I have to maintain maximum restraint. Never try to over do things. You must know the doses to be administered. Your performance should not mask that of the main artiste."

"The number of critics has now surpassed the number of singers, but there is still a dearth of good and healthy criticism. All that the so-called critics do is to write nice things about all performers."

"The lack of great masters is a disadvantage for the present generation of singers." "Musicians, especially youngsters, who try to become famous overnight are not only destroying music but also their talents. Years of hard work is needed for an artiste to mature and fame earned in a short time will be short lived."

"I have never played the violin for the audience. I only play for my own satisfaction. The performance of an artiste reached its peak only when he performs for himself"

"Even after 70 years of stage experiences, I still feel that there is more to explore, in ragas like Thodi and Sankarabharanam. I love teaching. I am seized with the ecstasy of delight, when I teach. I find more scope for learning. Also I wanted to share what I have learnt with others. Till then I will be restless."

A person in pursuit of excellence

HS Venugopal, Mysore



Any casual talk or serious discussion about music organisations of Mysore and even Karnataka invariably makes a reference to 8th Cross, SPVGMC Trust and CR Himamshu. 8th cross is a unique music organisation, sans a building and an office. It has a mobile office in a music freak called CR Himamshu, the secretary of the organisation and concerts are held literally on the 8th cross road of the VV Mohalla. He started organising concerts at 8th Cross, when he was barely 10 yrs.

Tell us something about your family background

"I belong to a family of musicians. My mother Smt Rajamma was Piteelu Chowdaiah's niece. My grandmother Chandramukhi Chowdaiah's

sister. She was a disciple of Bidaram Krishnappa. She was a very good singer. She used to perform with Chowdaiah. She was a scholar in Sanskrit and a good Harikatha artiste. It was she who taught the art of Harikatha to the cine artiste Pandharibai. She had performed all over India. Once Lalgudi asked me about my grandmother, as Chembai had told him about her. Marriage came in the way of her career. She was not allowed to do anything. Her talent got wasted.

My mother had her initial training from her mother. Later she learnt from T Puttaswamaiah, Chowdaiah's brother and then from AR Krishnamurthy. My mother was a performing artiste. For some time, she was a staff at the Fine Arts College, University of Mysore. My father was CR Gowda. He was working in Sericulture Department. He passed away when we were quite young. My mother was the sole breadwinner. She used to teach music at home.

How did you get into music?

I have been listening to music since I was four years old. We were staying just behind Bidaram Krishnappa Rama Mandira and I used to sit in Chowdaiah's car and go there. I have heard a lot of vintage music. I have heard Ariyakudi during the dasara festivities. He was accompanied by Chowdaiah and TK Murthy. I had been to Chennai in 1957, when Chowdaiah was awarded Sangeeth Kalanidhi. Then Music Academy still did not have a permanent building. programmes were held in the pendal. I had a good knowledge of ragas, because of listening. I did not learn music formally. I was sent to Smt Vasumathi to learn light music. I was very good at mimicry. I used to mimic, many musicians including Chowdaiah. Chowdaiah had seen me mimicking him. I had been exposed to the best music

of all times. This has made me very selective. I am always in search of excellence. For me only good music matters. I am not worried from where it comes. I am not bothered about caste, creed, religion, region, gender, etc.

How did you take to organising music concerts?

When I was young there was a group consisting of Mahalingu, Rama Iyengar, Das and others who were organising music programmes in VV Mohalla. I joined them. I was about 11 years old then. I used to do some chores like getting coconut fronds, collecting donations, etc. With my mother's help we organised concerts of the local artistes. The first programme that I organised independently was of Mysore brothers. Then we started arranging some concerts of local artistes and invited a few from outside. In fact there were two sabhas in which I was active. They were Chowdaiah Sangeetha Sabha and Prasanna Vidya Ganapathi Mahotsava Sangha.

Sahukar Timmappayya was the President of Sangeetharatna Mysuru T Chowdaiah Sabha. My mother was Vice-President and myself and Soundaramma were members. Then out his goodwill towards Chowdaiah sir Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar accepted to perform in the Chowdaiah Sangeetha Sabha. He was accompanied by T Rukmini and TV Gopalakrishnan (TVG). That was in fact a turning point. TV Gopalakrishnan became very close to me. He has helped me a lot. He helped me to fix the concert of KJ Jesudas. TVG's vocal concert was also fixed. Both of them had the same accompaniment of Guruvayur Dorai and MS Gopalakrishnan. To begin with the programmes were in town-hall. Then shifted to Jaganmohana Palace. When Jaganmohana palace was not available, the concerts were held in Sahakara Bhavana. Veena Balachandar, Emani Shankarashastri, Shemmangudi, Nedanuri, KV Narayanaswamy have all performed for the sabha. KVN was accompanied by VV Subramanyam and Umayalpuram Sivaraman. In 1968, I started a competition in Chowdaiah's name. All the top artistes of today's Mysore have participated in those competitions. They were held for three complete

days. Competitions were held in the genres of classical music, light classical and film music.

I had to leave Mysore in 1977 after the demise of my mother. I went to Bangalore to live with my brother. Then I couldn't continue Chowdaiah memorial concerts and the competition. 8th Cross continued without any interruption as I was doing everything from Bangalore. Again Chowdaiah Trust was given a new lease of life and continued for 3 years. A number of workshops were conducted in collaboration with the University of Mysore. First year Madurai TN Sheshagopalan presided over the conference. He was conferred the title 'Gayaka Shikhamani' and was presented a purse of Rs 25,000. During the morning sessions there were demonstrations. On the following years TN Krishnan and Umayalpuram Sivaraman presided over the conference. A three day festival was conducted in Tirumakudalu. Then again its activities were discontinued. Now, again there are efforts to renew the trust.

Now tell us about the 8th cross

Earlier SPVGMCTrust was called Prasanna Vidya Ganapathi Mahotsava Sangha. It became registered body in 1986. It was registered under the name Prasanna Vidya Ganapathi Mahotsava Charitable Trust. Then in 2003 it was reregistered a SPVGMCTrust because at the government offices they raised an objection that it was a spiritual trust and not a cultural organisation.

We did not have permanent structure, not even a pendal. The programmes were literally on the 8th cross road. we used to bring coconut fronds and make a thatched roof for the programme. Even when Chowdaiah Sir came to play here, it was like this only. On the day of his programme, it rained very heavily. So Chowdaiah told that he would play on the next day. Deshikachar had to perform the next day. Chowdaiah sir understood our problem. He asked us to inform Deshikachar that he would accompany him on the violin. Out of reverence to Chowdaiah, Deshikachar told us that he will finish playing before Chowdaiah sir's arrival and Chowdaiah would play a solo concert. Chowdaiah came and we took him to have coffee. While sipping cof-



File photo from 2019 - TV Shankarnarayanan performing with Nagai Muralidharan on Violin, Tumkur Ravishankar on Mridangam, Sharath Kaushik on Ghatam at the SPVGM, 8th Cross, VV Mohalla, Mysore

fee he told us that he has prayed Kote Anjaneyaswamy not to trouble us. Probably God listened to his prayer. It did not rain.

Did not the artistes ignore you, because you were young?

Artistes were truly great people. They never ignored me or treated me like a young boy. Let me just tell you my experience with TR Mahalingam. I was very fond of TR Mahalingam. Those were the days when Mali was a riddle to most of the organisers. I went to meet him with Dindigul Nataraj and requested him to give his dates. He said ok and told that he would come by bus. I returned. Everybody laughed and told that I was a fool to believe that Mali would come and that too by bus. Mali did come and the programme went on very well. He never played truant to any of his concerts at the 8th cross.

Once during Maharajapuram Santhanam's programme it rained very heavily, and he could not sing. Then he told the awaiting audience that he would stay back and sing the next morning. It was a Sunday. There was a big crowd and he sang for four hours. Parur accompanied him on the violin and our own artiste Srinidhi provided him mridangam support. Our silver jubilee celebrations unfortunately coincided with the unrest related to Venkataswamy Commission Report. There was rasta roko and rail roko. In fact the artistes from Madras and Bangalore took a lot of risk, came and performed here. T Rukmini

came in a lorry and our Khanjeera artiste Bheemachar came on a TVS moped all the way from Bangalore to fulfil his concert schedule. Always all artistes have cooperated with me. All of them were touched by my love for classical music and never insisted on the remuneration or never expressed any dissatisfaction because concerts are arranged on the road.

Why do you struggle so much? You can shift it to some hall?

No as long as I am alive I want to continue it on the road. There is something special about that place. But for the Police Commissioner Kasturi Rangan none has objected to it. We get the highest number of audience in Mysore.

What did you do for money?

What else? Go from house to house literally begging. Fund raising was really a herculean task. Some really treated me like a beggar. But, somehow, we could get enough money each year. We have never failed to pay any artiste. We in fact make spot payment.

How did you fix the artiste's remuneration?

In those days we did not have telephone at home. We had to book trunk call and wait. Sometime there was exchange of letters bargaining the remuneration. But now, none of the artistes invited to the 8th cross speaks about his/her remuneration. In those days artistes were more obliging. Very often they travelled in third class and they were put up in the house of



Sangita Kalanidhi A Kanyakumari being felicitated by SPVGMC. Seen here with R Vasudevamurthy, President SPVGMC and N Narasimhan, retired IT Commissioner to the right (Photo courtesy - Prabhu Prasad, Mysore)

some music lover. Sometimes we would arrange in Hotel Indra Bhavan. They would ask me to increase the remuneration. In case their demand was not met, they would say, "It is okay this time, but set it right next time." Now the artistes are very particular about the hotel. Earlier most of our artistes would come in tonga or auto. It is only later on that patrons like KV Murthy made arrangements to pick up the artistes in a car.

Why did you start fixing the accompanists yourself?
If you allow the reputed artistes to bring their own accompanists, they will bring somebody, who is less competent, so that they can be paid less. This would affect the quality of the concert. I am more worried about the quality of the concert. So, I started fixing the accompanists. Before finalising, I suggest a few names to the main artiste and ask them to choose one among them. Usually I suggest the best names, so they can never turn down my choice. In those days my first preference was Upendran, Umayalpuram and Guruvayur Dorai. MSG has played for our trust 30 years continuously. Lalgudi and TNK have also played a number of times. Even L Subramanyam, Kunnukkudi have come to 8th Cross. Almost all the mridangam artistes without exception have played in the 8th cross. I have invited artistes from Kerala (Velukutty Nayar, Krishnan Kutti Nayar), Andhra

(Yella Venkateshwara Rao, Patri Sateesh) and Tamil Nadu. We had concerts of KS Gopalakrishnan and Neyyattinkara Vasudevan from Kerala. Neyyattinkara was a class musician. There was one more artiste by name MG Radhakrishna. He was very good, but he became a playback singer.

While fixing accompanists, sometimes accompanists like Umayalpuram, Lalgudi had to be paid more than the main artiste. Similarly Mani Iyer and Chowdaiah were always paid more than the main artiste.

In today's generation there are many who are good singers but nothing comparable to the old stalwarts. None probably to compare with either Lalgudi or Umayalpuram. The depth of their music is something different. If GNB sings a raga that was ultimate. MLV was one such name. Among the next generation there is only TN Seshagopalan. He is unparalleled as far as raga delineation or swaraprastara is concerned. He used to sing Kambodhi or Shankarabharana for an hour. I don't have any name to compare with him. He used to sing such rare sangatis filled with raga bhava. Even in terms of calculations he is unparalleled. His pallavis are very special. His singing was almost like playing nagaswara. Real music is in Nagaswara hence it is the yardstick. Nobody can elaborate either Bindumalini or Dwijavanthi like he did.

How do you recognise whether an artiste is good or bad?

Usually I get some feedback from some senior and trustworthy artistes from Madras. For example Lalgudi. If Lalgudi speaks good of some artiste, he/she will be really good. Now KV Prasad tells me. He, in fact, makes me to listen to those youngsters. All the artistes, who used to come to the 8th cross as young boys like Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Vijaya Shiva, Balaji Shankar, Rajkumar Bharathi, TM Krishna, Mandolin Sreenivas, Abhishek Raghuram have now soared to such great heights. Of all these people, the most unfortunate ones are Mandolin Sreenivas who passed away at such an early age and Rajkumar Bharathi who lost his voice.

By 1970-71 all the top artistes of the time were performing in the 8th Cross. Umayalpuram Sivaraman has played for almost 50 years. MSG for more than 30 years TR Subramanyam used to come from Delhi. So was Emani Shankara Shastri. As they were in good jobs, they never demanded exorbitant fee. Hindusthani artistes like Lakshmi Shankar, Rajeev Taranath, Vishwamohan Bhat, Hariprasad Chourasia, Ronu Mujumdar have performed in the 8th Cross.

Have you observed any special feature in In Madras, which you don't find here?

I have found a phenomenon in Madras, which I have not seen here. Usually all the senior and veteran artistes attend the concerts of the youngster, which is a real test for the youngsters. Similarly, they also attend the concerts of their peers, which is a real challenge to those, who are on stage. In Karnataka I have not seen artistes doing this.

Tell us about your relationship with other sabhas in Mysore.

I do have a good relationship with all the sabhas. Sometimes sabhas request me to fix up artiste and I will do it for them. I fix artistes for my friend Sriram who organises Ramanavami concerts. Sometimes, sabhas from Mangalore and Doddaballapur too request me to arrange artistes.

Why did you not do conferences under the auspices of SPVGMC Trust?

Even though we have not organised conferences, we have conducted a number of workshops, demonstrations. Scholar musicians like S Rajam, Chitraveena Ravikiran, TN Sheshagopalan others have conducted workshops. I think SPVGMC Trust is the only organisation in Mysore, which has conducted so many workshops.

Apart from SPVGMC Trust have you worked with any other music organisation?

I held the office of the secretary in the JSS Sangeeth Sabha for two years. Then I resigned. Even there I tried my best to arrange good concerts. Even now I am organising Moonlight music concerts for the JSS. All great artistes have performed in the Moonlight music concert series. Many rare jugalbandi like that of Praveen Godkhindi and the pianist Anil Srinivasan have been organised there. I try to arrange good concerts wherever and whenever I have an opportunity.

You were a member in the syndicate of Gangubai Hanagal performing university. Tell us something about it.

MLA Vasu was instrumental in nominating me to the Syndicate. Everything is not alright there. There are a number of scandals. No Vice-Chancellor has taken any interest in developing that university. No permanent staff is there, neither does it have a campus. Even the Government has not taken any interest.

What are your future plans?

I have plans of setting up a gurukula. You cannot think of local, regional and such things there. You can only think of quality and excellence. A few years ago, my friend Guruprasad had bought 100 acres of land near Tumkur. We were working finer details by involving stalwarts like TN Seshagopalan, TN Krishnan, Pandit Rajeev Taranath and others. Unfortunately, the untimely demise of Guruprasad put an end to the whole project. Now I have approached vidwan Kumaresh and he has approached some sponsor, who has promised to give 20 acres of land.

(HS Venugopal is an author and has to his credit a book on MS Subbulakshmi)

A Tribute to TN Krishnan

RK Shriramkumar, Chennai

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TN Krishnan was as gentle as his music

The soothing sweet strains of Surati from the finely tuned strings seep deep into one's soul and you experience an ineffable bliss. This feeling defines vidwan TN Krishnan's violin artistry.

Carnatic music has seen many a stalwart violinist, and TNK stands tall among them. Spanning a glorious career of more than eight decades, he was not just an excellent performer; he evolved a technique of violin playing that lent it a supreme level of sophistication and perfection.

The quality of the tone of his violin is well-known. What is less known, however, is how untiringly he strove to achieve that impeccable sound. Even the manner in which he would pick

Prof. TN Krishnan has been a great source of inspiration and I consider him my manasika Guru. I have learned to play and built my personality considering him a mentor and a role model

up the violin bow, let alone hold it, is an essential exercise that every student of the instrument should try to emulate. His grip on the bow, the comfortable positioning of his arm, and the free-flowing movement of his wrist, not only aided in producing an incredible tonality, but was also a delight to watch.

There was a romance to his elegant long-drawn bowing and the gentle traversing of his fingers on the strings. Whenever he saw a violinist not using the bow in its entirety, he had this amusing question to ask - why should you be miserly and use only a fraction of the lovely 29¼ inches that the manufacturer of the bow has given us?

One could never perceive the change of direction in the movement of his bow. It was so seamless that one could revel in the unbroken karvai of a swara or the endless cascade of a raga alapana. He always attributed the distinctive tone of his violin to his bowing technique, and his penchant for using the gut strings. Immaterial of the sruti he played in - be it a C or C sharp for Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar or Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer or Madurai Mani Iyer, or a F for his solos, or a G for Mali, or a G sharp of the lower register for MD Ramanathan, his playing blended perfect sruti and dynamic tonality.



RK Sriramkumar with Prof. TN Krishnan when the title 'Isai Peroli' was bestowed on him (RK Sriramkumar) by Kartik Fine Arts

Casting a spell

The highlights of his art were sruti, swara, raga and bhava shuddham. Every swara and anuswara in his playing could cast a spell on listeners. The fingers of his left hand, shaped like the inner filaments of the banana flower, fondly caressed the strings to bring forth such virtuosity. Even a single note such as an antara gandhara could hold you rapt.

He strongly believed in the values of simplicity and self-restraint. This did not mean that his music was simplistic. Rather, deriving immense strength from his inner spirit and years of intense practice, his music seemed effortless and deceptively simple. The amalgam of tone, dexterity, purity and tranquillity defined his soundscape.

In the Carnatic tradition, the violin is an integral part of a concert and thus, as an accompanying instrument, it is expected to recreate the same contours of gamakas rendered by the vocalist. Krishnan mama's inimitable playing technique could reproduce these contours exactly; using innovative methods to bring in a gayaka bani to his playing.

He had a flair, a gamaka-laden vishranti with which he played prayogas of ragas such as Sahana, Varali, Devagandhari, Yadhukulakamboji, Saramati and Kapi. The ease with which he handled phrases on a single string, especially in ragas like Kalyani, Purvikalyani and Hindolam was amazing. His finesse in playing janta swaras and 'veral adi' phrases in ragas such as Thodi and Mohanam, and the madhyama kala and durita kala phrases played with panache in Sankarabharanam, Kamboji and Kharaharapriya were awe-inspiring.

The bounce in his bow and the verve in his fingers while playing a Ragamalika tanam or niraval and kalpana swaras and the light and shade effect that he employed in his renditions of Behag, Khamas and Sindhu Bhairavi were unmatched.

A majestic life

Groomed by the distinguished friends with the celebrated, the maestro's journey in music has always been on a majestic path. Never did he compromise on Carnatic music's core values. He understood that the transcendental joy of music is beyond technique or dictum. It was reflective of his happy and contented soul. One never saw him despondent or without his trademark smile. The positivity and good cheer he exuded translated into his sublime art.

The same refinement that distinguished his music percolated into all aspects of his life. Whether it was his love for dosa with chutney and molagapodi, his curiosity for technology, his passion for cars, or his stylish half-sleeved kurtas (he had a dedicated tailor to make them). His people skills too added to his charm.

To borrow a phrase from the 'Narayaneeyam': Hanta bhagyam jananam (humanity is truly fortunate). One bows to the man and his music with a deep sense of gratitude

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Archana and Samanvi duo - a cut above the rest

Sachi R Sachidananda, Bangalore

Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira continues to do, even during this Covid time, what it is best known for - encouraging young talent and providing great music to rasikas.

The latest, on the occasion of Sri Purandaradasa Aradhane, was the duet concert of Vid. Archana and Vid. Samanvi, from Sri. Aravinda Hebbar's school of music in Udupi. It is a matter of pride for people of this region that the youngsters are making their mark in music and showing how they are a cut above the rest.

This concert was recorded in Udupi and streamed live on Facebook and later uploaded on Youtube under the title Dasa Shreshta Sri Purandaradasa Aradhana by Vid. Archana & Vid. Samanvi - Vocal, accompanied by Vid. B. K. Raghu - Violin; Vid. Nikshith Puttur - Mridanga; Vid. Sharath Koushik - Ghata. The concert lasted over 160 minutes and featured all Kannada compositions tuned expertly to give a great Carnatic concert experience.

The girls speak a chaste Kannada and know the songs very well, judging from their confidence and good pronunciation. They mentioned each song's composer and tunesmith, and one was happily surprised that the timeless Dasa compositions with their narrative quality, metaphysical import and endearing devotion were presented deservedly in a highly musical syntax of Lakshana and Lakshya.

The opening song was presented as a verry Daru - 'Nandanandana' in Valachi Raga, Adi Tala, tuned by Sri. Tirumale Srinivas. Valachi simply shone in the song with beautiful swaras, jatis and emphasis points that brought to mind the image of an expert dancer like Smt. Krishnaveni

Lakshmanan of Kalakshetra. There was a rapid-fire round of swaras too.

Next, when the short but pithy Pantuvarali alapa led to the beautiful composition '*Harināmakīrtane anudinamālpaga*', this reviewer thought of the famous Bhagavatam shloka on navavidha bhakti- '*śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ smaraṇaṁ pāda-sevanam arcanaṁ vandanaṁ dāsyarṇ sakhyam ātma-nivedanam* (SB 7.5.23)'. The Haridasa compositions are unique - they eloquently sing of the Lord's stories and man's spiritual path, as well as the pitfalls of worldly life and common human folly. And every song's final message is the same - how to get out of the world of bondage and reach the Lord. The navavidha bhakti that Prahlada extols was covered in a sequence in the songs presented by Archana and Samanvi.

There was beautiful niraval and a volley of swaras in the Pantuvarali song. They then took up Brindavana Saranga - a shloka by Jagannatha Dasa followed by the famous song by Vijaya Dasa, '*Sadā ennaḥṛdayadalli vāsamādo Srīhari*'. Grand sweeps of Brindavana Saranga and intricate, rapid phrases that would challenge any musician extracted the last drop of melody and made it into an unforgettable song.

The music created by their guru Sri. Aravinda Hebbar is exquisite. All the songs rendered except the first one have been set to music by him. His musical stature deserves widespread acclaim and these songs deserve to become a part of mainstream Carnatic concert repertoire.

Vid. Raghu is ever dependable as a violinist and enhances the music always unobtrusively. Vid. Nikshith distinguished himself with extremely



Archana and Samanvi performing for SRLKM with BK Raghu on Violin, Nikshit Puttur on Mridangam and Sharath Koushik on Ghatam

sensitive and deft strokes that added an extra dimension to each song and put the singers at much ease.

Shankarabharanam followed - another masterpiece of Purandara Dasa, '*Kaṇṇinolaṅge Noḍo Hariya*'. They presented the song with very competent niraval and swaras. The song is a veritable manual of Raja Yoga describing the ascent of Kundalini through the six chakras and the vision of the Lord in sahasrara. Yama, Niyama, Pratyahara...all aspects are covered. The music, again by Sri. Hebbar is grand and measured with a royal gait. Every listener hearing this concert would by now would concur that Archana and Samanvi are "a cut above the rest". Musical talent is like a raw diamond, parents have to discover it and take it to a master. Sri. Hebbar is that master, and Udupi being a hub of spirituality surely would have helped. The young artistes readily display mastery over musical grammar, immaculate diction, and concert-worthy manodharma. Their skills have been further honed by Vid. Chitraveena Ravikiran, whose stature in Carnatic music is unmatched.

'*Muddu Tāro*' in Patadeep - a very evocative description of Krishna's childhood pranks and pass times, as described by Yashoda, followed. Then a fast-paced Kapi Narayani and the song '*Gopiya Bhagyavidu*' continued in the same refrain, describing Krishna's stories. The artistes exchanged some charming, sizzling, repartees.

The next song in Mayamalavagaula, the sahitya dripping with precepts of charity and right-

eousness: '*Ēnu illada eraḍu dinada samsāra*', again had the *Dhātu* very appropriate for the *Mātu*. The song was presented with good niraval and swaras. A very good tani by Nikshith and Sharath followed.

The songs that followed were '*Indireśana bhajiso*' (Ramadasa) in Shuddha Kalyan, '*Nōḍu nōḍu Gōpi ninna magana looḷiya*' in Bhageshri, a javali '*Eṣṭokāla hambalisidaru baradehōde O sakhi*' (Subbaraya Chokkadi) in Khamach, '*Tārammayya Tandu Tōrammayya*' in Punnaagavarali. All the tunes by Sri. Hebbar were haunting.

The concert ended with three choice stanzas from *Mankutimmana Kagga* by Sri. DV Gundappa - '*Nūraru matavihudu*' (stanza 934), '*Mōhana Ānandabhairavi*' (stanza 932) and '*Ellarigamīga namō*' (stanza 922) in a beautiful bouquet of ragas. The poet takes us to the pinnacle of theism, aesthetics and universal devotion in his own inimitable way. Sri. Hebbar does full justice to the themes with the choice of ragas. The last raga Sindhu Bhairavi rounded up the mood very well.

One can assert that the duo Archana and Samanvi have a bright future ahead. They have got into the concert-stage mode of delivery and there is nothing tentative about their music. Archana has a softer voice and Samanvi the stronger voice and sharper tone. They blend very well. The future is indeed rosy for them. God bless.

Senior Musician, Musicologist Vid. TS Satyavathi Honoured

Senior Karnataka Musician and Musicologist and disciple of RK Srikantan
was honoured with the prestigious title

"Sangeetha Vedantha Dhurina" on 28 February 2021 at
The Bangalore Gayana Samaja in the divine presence of revered
"H H Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar"

The title carries a purse of Rs. One Lakh each to Vid. TS Satyavathi,
a silver medal and a citation. This award is instituted in memory of our founder
Shri. G Vedantha Iyengar who started the institution 65 years ago.



Standing Left to Right - Rajashree Yogananda, Shri HR Yathiraj - Vice President, H H Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar,
Shri. GV Krishnaprasad, Honorary Secretary, SRLKMDr. Mysore Subramanya, Musicologist and music Critic,
MR Yogananda, Treasurer, SRLKM
Sitting - Vidushi TS Satyavathi

SRLKM Founders Day

Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira honoured Senior Musician and Musicologist TS Satyavathi with 'Sangeetha Vedantha Dhurina' on 28 February 2021. The 'Raga Laya Prabha - 2021' awards were conferred to six talented youngsters. Musicologist and Critic Shri. Mysore Subramanya distributed the awards. The program was held at The Bangalore Gayana Samaja auditorium in the divine presence of "H H Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar"



Sitting back row Left to Right - Shri HR Yathiraj - Vice President, SRLKM, Shri. GV Krishnaprasad, Honorary Secretary, SRLKM, H H Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar, Vidushi TS Satyavathi, Shri. Mysore Subramanya
Left to Right - Rakshit Ramesh, Archana, Samanvi, Vaibhav Ramani, Adama Ramanand, Sunaad Anoor