

Lalitha Kala Tarangini

Premier Quarterly Music Magazine from
Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira

Volume 2018, Issue 3

September 2018



Maharajapuram Santhanam

Chintalapalli : 800 year
Musical lineage

Harmonium
Arunachalappa

Dr. B Devendrappa

Kunnakudi
Vaidyanathan

4th Year Special Edition

MS Sheela honoured

The title “Sangeetha Vedantha Dhureena” was presented to Karnataka’s senior vocalist MS Sheela in the divine presence of “HH Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar” on 09 September 2018.

The title carries a purse of Rs. One Lakh to MS Sheela, a silver medal and a citation. This award is instituted in the memory of the visionary founder Shri. G Vedantha Iyengar who started the institution 63 years ago.



Left to Right Standing - Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar, Sri GV Krishna Prasad - Hon. Secretary, Dr. N Raghu, Assistant Director (Programme) at AIR, Sri DR Srikantaiah - President.

श्रीः ॥
॥ श्रीमते रामानुजाय नमः ॥



श्री श्री जगद्गुरु रामानुजाचार्य महासंस्थानम्
Sri Sri Jagadguru Ramanujacharya Mahasamstanam

ಶ್ರೀ ಶ್ರೀ ಜಗದ್ಗುರು ರಾಮಾನುಜಾಚಾರ್ಯ ಮಹಾಸಂಸ್ಥಾನಂ

ಶ್ರೀ ಯದುಗಿರಿ ಯತಿರಾಜ ಮಠ

SRI YADUGIRI YATHIRAJA MUTT

(Moola Stanam :- Tirunarayanapuram - Melukote-571431)

Founder Acharya : Sri Ramanujacharya



Ref No. :

Date :

ಶ್ರೀಮತೇ ರಾಮಾನುಜಾಯ ನಮಃ

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸಂಗೀತ ಪ್ರಪಂಚದಲ್ಲಿ ಮುಂಚೂಣಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಬೆಳಗುತ್ತಿರುವ ಶ್ರೀರಾಮ ಲಲಿತ ಕಲಾ ಮಂದಿರ ತನ್ನ ಸಾರ್ಥಕವಾದ ಹೆಜ್ಜೆಯನ್ನಿಡುತ್ತಾ ಸಂಗೀತ ಯಾತ್ರೆಯನ್ನು ಮುಂದುವರಿಸುತ್ತಿರುವುದು ನಮ್ಮೆಲ್ಲರಿಗೂ ಹೆಮ್ಮೆಯ ಸಂಗತಿ. ಕಳೆದ 60 ವರ್ಷಗಳಿಂದ ಸ್ವರ್ಗೀಯರಾದ, ಕೀರ್ತಿಶೇಷರಾದ ವೇದಾಂತಂ ಅಯ್ಯಂಗಾರ್‌ರವರು ಅಂದು ಹಾಕಿದಂತಹ ಬೀಜ ವಿಶಾಲ ವೃಕ್ಷವಾಗಿ ಅರಳಿ ಸಂಗೀತ ಪ್ರಪಂಚದ ಎಲ್ಲ ಆಯಾಮಗಳನ್ನು ಅದು ಸ್ಪರ್ಷಿಸಿ, ನಮ್ಮ ನಾಡಿನ ಕಲಾರಸಿಕರಿಗೆ ಅತ್ಯಂತ ರಸದೌತಣವನ್ನು ನೀಡುತ್ತಿರುವುದು ಆನಂದ ತಂದಿದೆ. ಅದು ಸಣ್ಣ ಪ್ರಮಾಣದಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಾರಂಭವಾಗಿ ಇಂದು ವಿಶಾಲ ವೃಕ್ಷವಾಗಿ ಬೆಳಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಅಂತಹ ಶ್ರೀರಾಮ ಲಲಿತಾ ಕಲಾ ಮಂದಿರ ನಾಲ್ಕು ವರ್ಷಗಳ ಹಿಂದೆ "ಲಲಿತ ಕಲಾ ತರಂಗಿಣಿ" ಎಂಬ ಅತ್ಯಂತ ವರ್ಣ ರಂಜಿತ ಹಾಗೂ ಭೌತಿಕ ಲೇಖನಗಳನ್ನೊಳಗೊಂಡ ಸಾರವತ್ತಾದ ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯ ಮೂಲಕ ಸಂಗೀತ ರಸಿಕರನ್ನು ರಂಜಿಸುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಈಗ ತನ್ನ ನಾಲ್ಕನೆಯ ಹುಟ್ಟುಹಬ್ಬವನ್ನು ಆಚರಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಇದರ ಶ್ರೇಯಸ್ಸಿನ ಹಿಂದೆ ಅರ್ಹನಿಶಿ ದುಡಿಯುತ್ತಿರುವ "ನಮ್ಮ ಮಂದಿರದ" ವಿ.ಕೃಷ್ಣಪ್ರಸಾದ್, ಅವರ ಕುಟುಂಬವರ್ಗ ಮತ್ತು ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಪದಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳನ್ನು ಹೃತ್ಪೂರ್ವಕವಾಗಿ ಅಭಿನಂದಿಸುತ್ತೇವೆ. ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸಂಗೀತ ಪ್ರಪಂಚದಲ್ಲಿ ಇದು ಒಂದು ಯಶಸ್ವಿಯಾದ ಪ್ರಯೋಗವಾಗಲೆಂದು ಹಾರೈಸುತ್ತಾ ಶ್ರೀಮಠದ ಆರಾಧ್ಯ ದೈವ ಶ್ರೀಲಕ್ಷ್ಮೀನರಸಿಂಹ ಹಾಗೂ ಶ್ರೀ ರಾಮಾನುಜರ ಶ್ರೀರಕ್ಷೆ ಅವರುಗಳ ಮೇಲೆ ಸದಾ ಇರಲೆಂದು ಆಶೀರ್ವದಿಸುತ್ತೇವೆ.

ಇತಿ ಶಮ್

ಶ್ರೀ ರಾಮಾನುಜದಾಸಃ

— ಶ್ರೀಯತಿರಾಜಃ

September 2018

It gives me great pleasure to release this forth year jumbo release of the Lalitha Kala Tarangini. In four years, we have covered many events, musicologists, musicians across different geographies and the magazine is well accepted by the music fraternity. It is a tribute to have covered some of our bygone doyens of Karnataka who were otherwise forgotten.

Maharajapuram Santhanam was a rage and reached dizzying heights with a huge mass following that no other musician enjoyed during his time. He descends as a 6th generation musician from Saint Thyagaraja parampara. It is always a challenge to be following a father who was a towering personality and a great musician. He had a mellifluous, clear and a sweet voice and his repertoire was built from his father's base and expanded to kritis in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Hindi.

He has gone on record saying he learned more from Lalgudi Jayaraman by just having him as his accompaniment. In 1989 when he was awarded Sangita Kalanidhi by 'The Madras Music Academy', he called Lalgudi Jayaraman to say that he (Lalgudi) deserved it more than him and that he would step aside if he (Lalgudi) would accept it instead. We dedicate this issue to melodious M Santhanam.

In continuing our coverage of the stalwarts of Karnataka, we present in this edition Chintalapalli parampara, Dr. B Devendrappa, and Harmonium maestro Arunachalappa. All of these are bound to be a great recollection of the bygone era for the old timers and for the young practitioners of music, it will be an opening up of the forgotten history.

SRLKM in a grand function presented the 'Sangeetha Vedantha Dhurina' award to senior musician MS Sheela. 50 other musicians were awarded the 'Lalitha Kala Suma'. The function was hailed as a very professionally conducted event.

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 Sankaranti 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 Karnatak Classical Music. SRLKM is a Trustee of Karnataka Fine Arts Council (Regd.) which is a consortium of 10 sabhas in Bangalore.

"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.

CP Chikkanna presents a very interesting article on Kunnakudi R Vaidyanathan comparing Kunnakudi to departmental stores meaning he was a musician for all sections of the people. He (Kunnakudi) thrilled his audience through his artistry on the violin as well as through his body language. The article in itself is a nice read for different sections of our readers. A must read....

On the occasion of the centenary year of DK Pattammal, we have selected an excellent article 'Friend philosopher and Guru' by Vid. Vijay Siva. I consider this an excellent article and has been written as sincerely as his performances. Vidhushi Kanyakumari pays her tribute to MLV on the occasion of her 90th birth anniversary. A must read for all youngsters.

'Sadashiva Brahmendra Vaibhavam' covers various aspects contained in the works of Sri Brahmendra - their philosophy, lyrical beauty, the special place they occupy in the hearts of great musicians as well as spiritual leaders over the past few centuries.

Anand S

Contributors - Pushpa Kashinath, Rajani Arjun Shankar, Dr. Rama V Bennur, CP Chikkanna, Sachi R Sachidananda, Prof. Aravinda Hebbar, Vidhushi A Kanyakumari, Vidwan Vijay Siva, Dr. R Ganesh.

Photo Courtesy - Personal collection Shri. K Srikanthiah (home called Parvathi), Paniraj, The Hindu archives, Personal collection of Pushpa Kashinath, Personal collection of Dr. R Ganesh, Personal collection of Dr. Shreekantham Nagendra Shastry, Personal collection of Vijayaraghavan disciple of Dr. B Devendrappa, Personal collection of Kunnakudi family, Personal collection of Shailesh Ramamurthy.

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Lalitha Kala Tarangini - Inbox

To the Editor,

The current issue of Lalitha Kala Tarangini with the cover feature on Madurai Mani Iyer (MMI) is very interesting and is truly a collector's item. What is fascinating is the detailed analyses by K.S.Kalidas especially with regard to MMI's favourite kritis, swara prastharas for the Tirup-pugazh and how he sometimes sang swaras in tisra gati.

Reading this, I feel compelled to share one of my experiences on listening to a recording of MMI singing the rare but delectable kriti of Tyagaraja 'vinanAsakoni yunnAnurA' in the raga pratApavarALi. After singing the kriti, to my great surprise MMI launched on to an expansive kalpana swara segment.

Structurally, the raga pratApavarALi is actually very similar to the much better known sAmA. pratApavarALi has the D P S phrase which marks it different from sAmA and the notes M G R S in the former are sung plainly when compared to sAmA. Tyagaraja's kriti is a masterpiece in my opinion since he has carefully structured the beginnings of the kriti's pallavi and the anupallavi with the D P S phrase in the mandhara and the Madhya octave respectively and has succeeded wonderfully in giving a separate and marked identity to pratApavarALi!

Listening to MMI singing swarams for pratApavarALi, one gets the impression that it is no way related to sAmA. It is sheer delight to hear the maestro revel in swara segment, completely at home with the tricky raga. Lalgudi Jayaraman's terrific responses add the proverbial icing on the cake!

The other article that instantly caught attention was the unusual and unique "Sacred trees in the Kritis of Sri



Our Upcoming Programmes

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 07 Oct 2018
Sunday
05.30 pm | SRLKM Auditorium
(Special Prog. on Devi Kritis)
Anjali Sriiram (Vocal), BK Raghu (Violin),
Tumkur Ravishankar (Mridanga), Omkar
Rao (Ghata) |
| 11 Nov 2018
Sunday
05.30 pm | SRLKM Auditorium
Apoorva and Anahita (Vocal duet), Mattur
Srinidhi (Violin), BS Prashanth
(Mridangam), Sunaad Anoor (Kanjari) |
| 18 Nov 2018
Sunday
5.30 pm | SRLKM Auditorium
JB Sruthi Sagar (Flute)
Nishanth Chandran (Violin)
Poongulam Subramanian (Mridangam) |
| 01 Dec 2018
Saturday
5.30 pm | SRLKM Auditorium
Release of CD containing select
compositions of Late Smt. Krishnaveni
sung by Charulatha Ramanujam by HH
Sri Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Ramanuja
Jeeyar followed by rendering of select
composition by team:
Charumathi Ramanujam (Vocal)
HM Smitha (Violin)
Jayachandra Rao (Mridangam)
Giridhar Udupa (Ghatam) |
| 02 Dec 2018
Sunday
5.30 pm | Mangala Mantapa Auditorium
NMKRV, Jayanagar 3rd Block. (Near
Jayanagar Metro Station)

Visaka Hari (Musical discourse)
Sub: Musical Trinity Sri Thyagaraja, Sri
Muthuswamy Dikshitar, Sri Shama Shastri
and Saint Sri Purandarada

Charulatha Ramanujam (Violin)
HS Sudhindra (Mridangam)
Sukanya Ramgopal (Ghatam) |

See back cover page for details of
Sankranti and Spring Music Festivals.

Muthuswamy Dikshitar” by Rajani Arjun Shankar. She has set the context of the article very effectively in the introductory paragraphs. As a performing musician, having sung several of the kritis she has mentioned, this article brings in a completely different perspective on the trees mentioned in the kritis, definitely adding to the overall stature and our interpretation of the kriti. I’m reminded of how, for instance, the Srimad Bhagavatham especially the chapters on Gajendra Moksham have wonderfully detailed descriptions of the trees and the surrounding Nature. Muthuswami Dikshitar has encapsulated the importance of the trees succinctly in his kritis and kudos to this article for highlighting them so well!

I enjoyed reading C Ramakrishnan’s letter to the editor on Chembai relating additional anecdotes. Dr. KV Gayathri relating the incident of how Chembai actually turned his position on stage to face the youngster violinist and gently teaching him step by step till the sangati was rendered perfectly; and then turning back to face the audience and proceeding with the concert as if nothing had happened was truly heartwarming!

Regards,
Mohan Santhanam, Chennai

To the Editor,
MMI and other legends fill the pages of June issue!

Thanks to the Lalitha Kala Tarangini team for introducing the readers to the legends of Carnatic Music issue after

issue along with many other interesting articles. The June issue, a special on Madurai Mani Iyer, gave us a complete account of the musical journey of the master, with several good articles by the experts, along with rare photographs which I greatly cherished. Dr. Nityashree Mahadevan’s article is a fitting tribute to another legend, D.K. Pattammal. Perhaps it could have been more elaborate! Articles on Sri Titte Krishna Iyengar and Sri R.R. Keshavamurthy were a good addition and most welcome. Their contribution to the field of Karnatak music is immense. A neat account of their resourcefulness is gladdening. I would even suggest to the SRLKM and Lalitha Kala Tarangini heads that along with the excellent, continued service to the field all these years, it would be a feather in their cap if they make available to the connoisseurs and students of Carnatic music, the compositions and books written by the two great masters - Titte Krishna Iyengar and RR Keshavamurthy.

As usual, LKT is full of valuable information and photographs, in fine print, encapsulated in silky-smooth papers! Best wishes for all your future endeavours.

Regards,
Harini Raghavan, Bangalore

Announcement

SRLKM is happy to announce the following awards for the year 2018

Sangeetha Vedantha Dhurina

(The Award is instituted in the memory of the visionary founder late Sri. G.Vedantha Iyengar with a purse of Rs. 1,00,000/- to each of the awardees, a silver medal and citation)

To

Vidwan Kumaresh and Vidwan Ganesh

(Felicitation - 10th February, 2019 at The Bangalore Gayana Samaja)



Raga Laya Prabha

(The award is to commemorate the memory of the Founder Director Vid. GV Ranganayakamma, Vid. GV Neela and Dr. GVVijayalakshmi with a purse of Rs. 25,000/- and a citation)

To

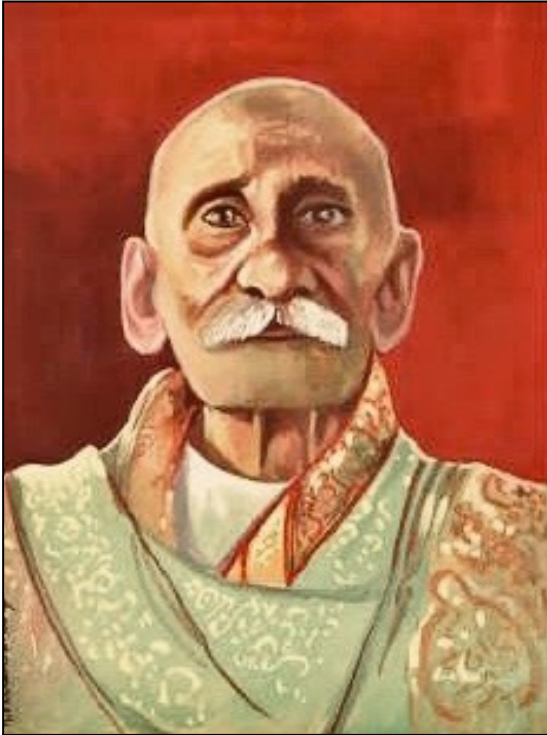
Bhargavi Venkatram (Vocal), B Vittal Rangan (Violin), YG Srilatha (Veena)

(Felicitation - 05 May, 2019 at The Bangalore Gayana Samaja)



Chintalapalli : An 800 year Musical Lineage

Sachi R Sachidananda, Bangalore



ಚಿಂತಲಪಲ್ಲಿ ವೆಂಕಟರಾವ್

ಕನ್ನಡನಾಡಿನ ಹಿರಿಯ ಸಂಗೀತ ವಿದ್ವಾಂಸರು. ತಮ್ಮ ಜೀವನಂತ್ಯ ಸಂಗೀತದಿಂದ ಮಹಾರಾಜರಿಂದ ಕಡು ಬಡವರವರೆಗೆ ಸಾಮಿರಾರು ಮಂದಿಯನ್ನು ತಣಿಸಿದರು. ದೇವರನಾಮಗಳನ್ನೇ ಹಾಡಿ ಗಂಟೆಗಟ್ಟಲೆ ಕಛೇರಿ ನಡೆಸುವ ಸಮರ್ಥರು. ಸೌಜನ್ಯದ ಮೂರ್ತಿ.

It was early 1930's. The Maharaja of Mysore was reading the day's newspaper - The Hindu of Madras. There was an interesting news item about music: as a part of a week-long wedding in an aristocratic family, many Carnatic concerts had been arranged. On the muhurtam day, it was the legendary GNB. He was famous for his Kalyani rendition. But the head of the host family, a great connoisseur, requested GNB to sing some raga other than Kalyani. The previous day

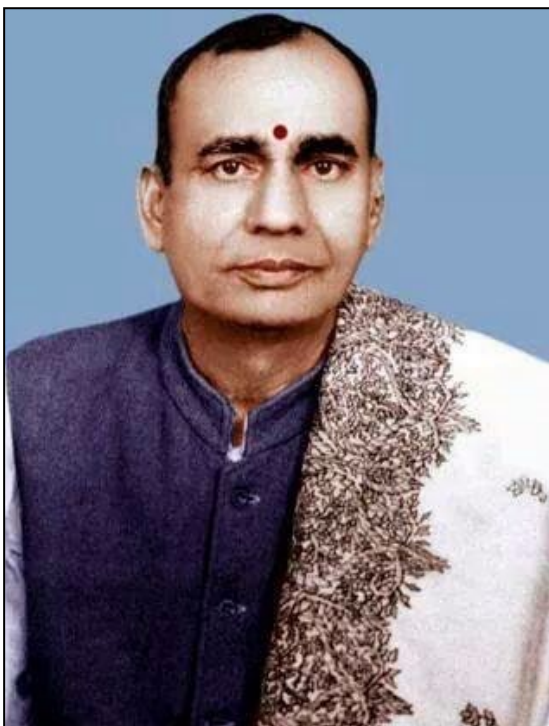
for Varapuje, a young artiste had presented such a magnificent Kalyani, full of brighas, that it was still ringing in his ears. A very surprised GNB obliged. His curiosity about the youngster remained to be cleared after the concert. The gentleman then played for GNB a few Columbia gramophone plates the youngster had cut recently: "Sriraghavam", "Shive Pahimam", "Ora jupu" and so on. The accompanists were stalwarts like Chowdiah, Palghat Mani Iyer and Vilvadri Iyer. The youngster had a robust voice, sang lightning fast brighas and sometimes his voice soared like Rajaratnam's nagaswaram. GNB was highly impressed and announced, "Whenever this singer performs and I follow, I shall not sing brighas. I will confine myself to gamaka sangeetha."

The newspaper mentioned that young artiste's name was Chintalapalli Ramachandra Rao of Mysore state.

HH Krishnaraja Wadiyar IV, reading the newspaper, was surprised that nobody had mentioned to him this young musician's name before - and it was a talent from Mysore state!

Vidwan Muthiah Bhagavatar was asked by the king to locate the artiste and bring him to the palace within 24 hours. It wasn't easy for Sri. Bhagavatar, as Sri. Rao had in the meanwhile gone away from Chintalapalli. Sri. Rao was finally located at Calicut where he was giving a performance, and he rushed to Mysore.

The young Chintalapalli Ramachandra Rao then performed in front of the king. It was such a performance that he was at once conferred the title of Asthana Vidwan. Soon, a second, special, concert followed in the Khasa Diwankhane (private listening chamber). The king enquired



Chintalapalli Ramachandra Rao

about the youngster's background. The youngster mentioned that his guru was his father himself, Vidwan Venkata Rao of Chintalapalli. Another new name, another surprise!

Sri. Bhagavatar now had to produce the father before the king. Sri. Venkata Rao came and performed. He sang 'Enduku Dayarādura', 'Evarūra', and so on. The Maharaja was mightily pleased with his music, full of grand old classicism. What a fortuitous discovery of a double treasure! The father too was anointed as the Asthana Vidwan. This was something that never happened before or after- a youngster not yet twenty was honoured by the Maharaja, and soon thereafter, his father was honoured!

An emotional Vid. Venkata Rao spoke to the Maharaja: "Your majesty, today I feel fulfilled. I had received recognition all over the country, but my mother state Mysore had not recognised me. That too has now happened. There is nothing more for me to achieve. I shall henceforth not perform in public, but only in Aramane, Gurumane, and Devasthanam".

Dr. Shreekantham Nagendra Shastry

Dr. Shreekantham Nagendra Shastry is the inheritor and a torch bearer of the 800 year old famed Chintalapalli Parampara. Dr. Shastry who is an erudite musicologist, musician, teacher and litterateur runs the Chintalapalli Parampara Trust now.

He has preserved many rare artefacts that includes mammoth collection of 10,000 compositions with notation by vaggeyakaras of the Trinity, pre-Trinity and post-Trinity of which nearly 5,000 are not known to exist in print media. The collection also includes 500 gramophone records dating back to the early 20th century, hundreds of books dating from 1865 A.D. and about 500 palm-leaf manuscripts.

Dr. Shastry learnt music under his grandfather Ambi Bhagavatar and later under Prof. R Satyanarayana who gave him lessons in musicology and Dr. Akella Mallikarjuna Sarma at Hyderabad.

He has directed research in music and has published a book on Mysore Sadasiva Rao containing unpublished kritis. He has been asked to undertake Lec-dems and is awarded fellowship by both Central government's department of culture as well as the Karnataka Sangeetha Nritya Academy. He is also bestowed with titles Kalabhushana, Gaana Sahiti Shiromani, Mysore Maharajah's Yogeendra Puraskara and so on.



When Sri. Venkata Rao secured Sangeet Natak Akademi award in 1967, at a ripe age of 93, Vidwan Mysore Doreswamy Iyengar. Interviewed Sri Rao and showered generous praise on him and compared him to giants like Vasudevacharya, Muthiah Bhagavathar and Bidaram Krishnappa.

Are you amazed at this story of the Mysore king and the musical father-son duo? I surely was, when I heard it from Dr. Shreekantham Nagendra Shastry. He is a famous musician, researcher, and as the grandson of Chintalapalli Ramachandra Rao, heir to the Chintalapalli lineage. That lineage goes back an astonishing 800 years!

Dr. SN Shastry's home is full of ancient scrolls, historical documents, books, musical instruments, statues, medals and awards, carefully preserved generation after generation. I consider myself fortunate that I can hear all this directly from him. He sings beautifully. He teaches music and Kannada at University level. His concerts and lec-dems are a feast for the head and heart.

Photo of old statue of Saṅgītarāya Thimmanṇa



I share here only a few vignettes from a large collection of historical facts and interesting anecdotes that I hear from Dr. Shastry.

Let us begin at the beginning. Was there “Karnataka Sangeetha” historically in this part of south India? Of course! Śārngadēva, the author of Saṅgītaratnākara, lived under the patronage of Yadavas of Devagiri who ruled Karnāta or the Deccan in the 13th century CE.

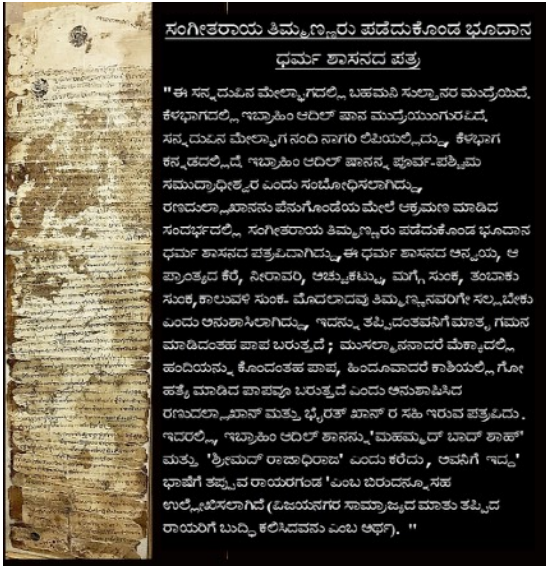
Mataṅga Muni, the author of Bṛhaddēśī, by his own reference, lived in the region of Karnataka during 5th-6th century CE. There are many references to Kannada prabhandas in his work. Bṛhaddēśī is also the first text wherein rāgas are defined and described. Many raga names mentioned like Karnatakambodi, Kannada Gaula, Kannada, allude to this geography.

Everyone knows that Saint Purandaradasa of this region is hailed as Karṇāṭaka Saṅgīta Pitāmaha.

Let us come to the story of Chintalapalli. BL Rice, in his Epigraphia Carnatica (1898), mentions a stone inscription of Veera Ballala II, the most famous Hoysala king, from the 12/13th century CE. It mentions that he endowed generously many classical artistes of these region-singers, dancers and avujakāras (percussionists). This edict is found on a Pillar near Ballalapura, now called Chikkaballapur and Doddaballapur. The village where the musicians lived was Chintalaballapura, later called Chintalapalli.

Three centuries later, Saint Vysaraya, the guru of Purandaradasa and Kanakadasa, travelled in the same region. Vysaraya established 1008 Hanuman temples all over Andhra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. He used to first draw the image of Hanuman in aṅgāra which would then be sculpted. All these Hanuman images show a distinguishing bell tied to the tail. Such a temple exists in Chintalapalli. Vysaraya was received with great honour in this village and a few families took Vaiṣṇava Dīkṣā. Vysaraya became acquainted with the family of musicians also.

Saint Vysaraya was the Guru of the Vijayanagara kings. With patronage from Krishnade-



Original Citation to Saṅgītarāya Thimmanṇa

varaya, he established a university called Lōkapāvana Viśvavidyālaya in Hampi. Sixteenth century European chroniclers Domingos Paes and Fernao Nuniz have described the convocation of this university, wherein Saint Vyasaraya was taken in a golden chariot procession with the graduands in classical music, Sanskrit, Vedas and other branches of learning marching behind. In this university, Vyasaraya enlisted the services of the musicians of Chintalapalli.

A medieval composer from Cheluvindala next to Chintalapalli, Gavi Rangadasa, in one of his compositions, uses a double entendre, Gajave-takara (elephant hunter). The word refers to Shiva, and equally, invokes the title of Devaraya II of Vijayanagara (ref. KA Nilakanta `). Archaeologists have found a large Vijayanagara inscription in Kannada at Cheluvindala recently.

A famous musician from Chintalapalli who was in Vijayanagara was Saṅgītarāya Thimmanṇa. At the fall of Vijayanagara in 1565, he returned to Chintalapalli. The music and dance schools continued to flourish there. Then a most interesting incident took place.

King Ibrahim Adil Shah's commander Ranadhulla Khan invaded many parts of Karnataka. He destroyed the Keladi kingdom. He drove Kempe-

gowda away from Bangalore to Magadi. But he was repulsed in Mysore (Raṇadhīra Kaṇṭhīra). Afterwards, on his way to Penu-gonda, he encamped in Chintalapalli. A local dancer was summoned to perform for him. She pleaded that she would not perform as per the instruction of her Guru, a great musician called Thimmanṇa. Ranadhulla was provoked, and posed a challenge for this "great" guru. If her guru could make music from a stone, Khan would let her go. Or else he would destroy the entire village. The frightened dancer ran and reported the challenge to the guru, Thimmanṇa. Thimmanṇa wanted to avert the danger to the entire village. He went to Ranadhulla Khan and asked for a specific type of stone, with a hollow formation. He got the stone, and directed carpenters to fashion a Veena using the stone as the main stem. He fitted frets and strings. Playing the Veena with a stick, he then sang! Ranadhulla was astounded. Convinced that a special power resided in Thimmanṇa, the Khan gave him a Jagir of 16 villages. He not only spared the village but honoured Thimmanṇa with the title Saṅgītarāya. The original citation in Nandinā-gari/Kannada with the Bahamani emblem is with Dr. Shastry and has been reproduced here.

How could music move a tyrant? Dr. Shastry explains that Adil Shah II himself was a great patron of the arts. He has even written a book called Kitab-é-nauras with a prayer to Goddess Sarasvati. It goes like this:

*nouras soor juga joti ani saroguni
yusat sarasuti mata
ibrahim parasada bhayi dooni*

"Oh mother Sarasvati! Since you have blessed Ibrahim, his work Navras will last long". This book has poems and couplets set to ragas. The manuscript is available in the National Museum at New Delhi.

We now fast forward to the nineteenth century. A link to the musical lineage of Saint Thyagaraja was established by the Chintalapalli family. Chintalapalli Venkata Rao was only five years old when his mother took him to be the disciple of Mysore Sadashiva Rao.

A few words about the Thyagaraja lineage: Sadashiva Rao had been the disciple of Walajapet Venkataramana Bhagavatar. When the young Rao was there, Saint Thyagaraja had been invited by Bhagavatar to grace the inauguration of the Rama Mandira. The town wore a festive look. In that auspicious environment, young Rao composed and sang spontaneously a song in Todi- *Śrītyāgarājasvāmi veḍalina*. The Saint was very impressed, and blessed the boy. Sadashiva Rao says in the same composition how he was blessed by Thyagaraja:

*gānaviracitakīrti nādakalāsphūrti nāradāmsas-
anjātulaina śrītyāgarāju.*

Originally, Sadashiva Rao belonged to Greampeta in Chittoor district. He was a matriculate - a rare qualification at that time. He married the daughter of Arani Jagirdar. His musical talent was readily appreciated by the people of Arani. Kopparam Chinnamuniswami Shetty and Muniswami Shetty supplied Arani silk sarees to the Mysore king, Krishnaraja Wadiyar III.

The king was a great patron of the arts. The brothers wanted to give Sadashiva Rao a good break. They brought him over to sing in front of the Maharaja. Impressed, the king made him an Asthana Vidwan. Since that time, he came to be known as Mysore Sadashiva Rao.

The five-year old Venkata Rao was brought by his mother and began his lessons under Sadashiva Rao. After Sri. Rao's demise, he continued lessons under Rao's disciple, Vidwan Hanagal Chidambariah. Seeing his great potential, Chidambariah put him for advanced training under Sri. Karur Ramaswamappa. He also learnt from Neykkarapatti Pallavi Sheshayyar, whose father Subbayyar was Saint Thyagaraja's direct disciple. Thus Venkata Rao became an accomplished musician.

Venkata Rao could not make an entry into the royal court as he was blocked by some elements. Venkata Rao had gathered a large repertoire including the Javalis of Sri. Surpur Ananda Dasa, a good friend of Sri. Sadashiva Rao. Venkata Rao boldly decided to try his luck beyond Mysore, and travelled to Surpur, Baroda, Gadwal,

Sandur, Vizianagaram, Vanaparathi, and so on. He gradually established himself as a much recognised and honoured musician in all those courts.

Venkata Rao continued to gather encomiums everywhere. He was a good friend of stalwarts like Bhairavi Kempegowda, Sharabha Shastri, Sakharama Rao, and Ramnad Srinivasa Iyengar. Sri. Iyengar's Tambura is in Dr. SN Shastri's possession.

Let us come to Venkata Rao's son, Ramachandra Rao. He was a prodigy and gave his first concert at the tender age of eight. He had imbibed the best of Carnatic music from the stalwarts who visited Venkata Rao's home in Chintalapalli. To launch this young talent, his uncle took him to Bangalore. Here, he became a student of the famous musician Palghat Someshawara Bhagavatar, who came from the musical lineage of Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer. Later, Rao also went to Annamalai University for advanced training under Ponniah Pillai and Sabesa Iyer. Having made rapid progress within a short period of six months, he returned to Bangalore with their blessings. Soon his successful career took off. That is when the incident reported in The Hindu of Madras, as narrated in the beginning, occurred and the young man got a big break.

As we said in the beginning, Venkata Rao had not secured recognition in the Mysore court, until his son broke through the cordon and impressed Krishnaraja Wadiyar IV.

Krishnaraja Wadiyar IV, perhaps the most resplendent of Mysore kings, was a great patron and a keen rasika. He used to tap his shoed foot and keep tala very precisely. He could pick out that single off-key violinist while listening to the Palace Band. Even some big names in Carnatic music had been unable to pass his exacting standards. He would walk out after just a few minutes of their performances. If he stayed and listened to any musician for over ten minutes, that pretty much signalled a successful career.

It is therefore remarkable that the Maharaja accorded Chintalapalli Venkata Rao and Ramachandra Rao great respect and made them perform twice for over 75 minutes in the

palace. These concerts were broadcast beyond the palace on loudspeakers. At the wedding of the prince Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar, it was Chintalapalli Ramachandra Rao's honour to be invited to give a recital.

Many writers and musicologists have written about Sri.Venkata Rao, including Prof. Sambamurthy, DVG, and HL Nagegowda .

Venkata Rao was an expert in Javalis. Many do not know that Krishnaraja Wadiyar III was himself an excellent composer of Javalis in Kannada. Dr. SN Shastry explained to me that not all Javalis are of an erotic nature. He sang several Javalis for me, in a wide range of ragas, themes, and even some full of the Advaita philosophy. His repertoire and knowledge of this domain makes him an expert.

Dr. Shastry has interesting letters written by the palace bakshi about increments and arrears to both Vidwans of the family. Venkata Rao and Ramachandra Rao each commanded a princely salary of Rs. 400 per month for many years. But

Review of Sri. Ramachandra Rao's concert

Sri Ramanavami Concerts: Review by Rajashree (13.4.1967)

Veteran in Form

.....Chintalapalli's ringing voice which can sail effortlessly through the three octaves again manifested itself. ...

Chintalapalli reached the peak of his form in Kalyani raga alapana. He gave an elaborate version of the raga in which he did not forget to introduce the titillating effects of the brighas. Rao's vibrant voice rose in a crescendo in the higher octave and shot into the unexplored regions of Ati Tara Sthayi, touching the shadja in one clean sweep. He did well to sing Mysore Sadasiva Rao's "Kanugoni Dhanyudanaithini" on Goddess Kanchi Kamakshi. It was a new item which provided a welcome change from the usual routine stuff. The kalpana swaras had a touch of originality.

after the abolition of the Privy Purse, Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar was compelled by indigent circumstances to stop the support to Palace artistes.

Years before, Chintalapalli Venkata Rao and Ramachandra Rao had been offered generous portions of land in Malleswaram. But they had turned down the Dewan's offer, saying they had no use for it. Now, with no court income and no habit of collecting fees from students, the family fell on hard times.

The All India Radio was also manipulated by some to deny respectable slots to musicians who did not have formal school education. So Ramachandra Rao was demoted to C grade. Ramachandra Rao did not give in. He fought a court case with the help of advocate Krishnamurthy (of Seshadripuram Ramaseva Samithi). The Radio had to tender an apology and restore Rao to A grade.

Chowdiah and later RR Keshavamurthy regularly accompanied Ramachandra Rao. Palghat Mani Iyer, Ayyamani Iyer and ML Veerabhadraiah provided mridangam accompaniment. His concerts were a feast of melody and technical excellence and were very popular.

What is the speciality of the Chintalapalli style? Open throated singing, Akaaraas, brighas, and Laya vyavahaaram. The repertoire is mostly pre-trinity, Trinity, and a few post-trinity. Even Thyagaraja compositions are sung quite differently. Dr. Shastry illustrates: The words "Nijavākulatō Swaraśuddhamutō Sogasugā" in a continuous cadence without breaks. Similarly, in *Kaligiyyuntēgāda*. Even the tempo changes from the present-day concert versions. Dikshitar's *Nīrajākṣi* and Thyagaraja's "*Manasā Eṭulo*"(faster). *Muddumomu* in Suryakantam is sung in a grand, slower tempo. Dr. Shastry concedes that the mainstream concert-singers are doing well by keeping many compositions afloat in listeners' minds, although their versions have moved away from the original versions preserved by Chintalapalli and other similar paramparas.

Dr. Shastry says they have preserved hundreds of old pallavis, too. Even Mrs. MS Subbulakshmi

had come and learnt pallavis from Sri. Rao. Venkata Rao used to sing a 16-kaḷe (Ṣōḍaṣa-kaḷe) pallavi. Dr. Shastry is now reviving it and teaching his disciples.

Dr. Shastry reveals a little known fact. Smt. Rukmini Devi was very keen to rope in Sri. Ramachandra Rao, knowing his multifaceted musical accomplishments and lineage, for a prominent role in Kalakshetra. He declined. This was before Sri. Vasudevacharya went to Kalakshetra. Happily though, after six decades, Kalakshetra has secured the services of Dr. Shastry as a member of the governing council.

Dr. Shreekantham Nagendra Shastry has obtained his doctorate in the subject of Kanaḍakāvyaḡaḡalli Saṅgītada Paribhāṣeḡaḡu (musical terminology in Kannada literature through the ages). He has studied 2700 kāvyas, and unearthed gems from the time of Pampa. Ponna (10c CE) says, “What is the use of music without Hindola raga, or a night sky without the moon?” In Kavirājamārga, (8c CE), two forms of music are mentioned: bedaṅḡe and cattāṅa. The first refers to music with Veena accompaniment.

Dr. Shastry grew up with his grandfather, Chintalapalli Ramachandra Rao. As a precocious strippling, he easily learnt intricacies of classical music at his grandfather’s knee. Till 1985, when Sri. Rao passed away, Dr. Shastry lived with him. He was then fifteen. He served him as a grandfath-

er and a guru, and benefitted from musical training as well as interaction with many stalwarts who used to visit Sri. Rao. Among them were Vidwans Honnappa Bhagavatar, Ayyamani Iyer, Palaniswamy, D Subbaramiah, Belakavadi Varadaraja Iyengar, RR Keshavamurthy... The young Shastry had an uncanny knack of picking up songs and imitating famous voices. Once, Sri. Honnappa Bhagavatar came home. Sri. Rao introduced his grandson and mentioned how the boy sang some of Bhagavatar’s famous songs. Sri. Bhagavatar was curious and encouraged the boy to sing. He sang from Mahakavi Kalidasa, Kannada’s first movie, which featured Honnappa Bhagavatar in the titular role: “*Sringaravahini Manamohini Priyakantamani Kamini*”. Bhagavatar was delighted and took out a ten rupee note from his right pocket and gave it to the boy. The boy reeled out a second song: “*Rajendra nam Rachisidenai Prabhu, Ranjipa Sukavyagala*”. He got another five rupees, taken out of the left pocket by Bhagavatar. The boy didn’t stop. “I can sing one more, Thatha!” Bhagavatar sighed as his pockets were empty, and said, “It will have to be another day, good boy”. Sri. Rao admonished his grandson for this importunate behaviour.

There is much more to discover and write about the Chintalapalli family. I look forward to my next session with Dr. Shastry. Did not Yehudi Menuhin call his autobiography, “Unfinished Journey”?

Mridangam Stalwart BK Chandramouli passes way



Karnataka lost one of its senior most mridangist on July 20, 2018 at his residence. He learned mridangam under veterans Gopal Rao, Palghat Raghu and Ayyamani Iyer and accompanied artistes like RK Srikantan, TV Shankaranarayanan before he completed his studies. He was associated in the formation of Karnataka Ganakala Parishath.

He had one of the most dynamic personalities and a sought after person by many sabhas when conducting festivals. He was associated with Tyagaraja Gana Sabha and the Malleswaram Sangeeta Sabha.

In addition to mridangam he was a Konnagol and Kanjira exponent.

Tribute to MLV akka

Vidushi A Kanyakumari, Chennai

MLV amma is a gem that India's culture and music has seen till date. My association with MLV akka is one of the most treasured one as not many people get to learn, live, travel, perform, share their mutual experiences with their guru and mentor. The 19 years that I accompanied MLV akka not missing a single concert were the golden years of my life. Since 1971, I played accompaniment with her till her end. To me each concert with her was a learning experience. My relation with her can be explained as that of a mother to child, guru to shishya, of an adviser and of a role model.

MLV akka was an open-minded person with no reservations. She would appreciate good music even if it was from a child. She is one of God sent talents to the world of Karnatak music as music came naturally to her. Ever ready to part with her knowledge to me, I consider myself lucky to have moved so closely with her. She

would always advise students to keep increasing their standards in the field of music. She knew the capability of every student of hers and had the big heart to highlight their talent when they accompanied her on stage. Often she would let her supporting disciples take over with solo phrases of neraval and swarams.

MLV akka's music was spontaneous. Playing for her was a challenging experience because she would never discuss her plan for the concert. This made it thrilling and interesting. And it needed total concentration and spontaneity from the accompanist too. In one of the concerts in Music Academy, her plan was to render a Pallavi in Shanmukhapriya but when it was time to begin the alapana for the Pallavi, MLV akka smiled at me and launched into Manirangu. It was a stunning presentation. She would honour the audience's request for songs and ragas be it a jana ranjaka number or dwi-raga Ragam



Tanam Pallavi. In the concert format prevailing then, RTP was sung in 3 stages in about 1 ¼ to 1 ½ hours. She had an unbelievably versatile voice which suited any form of music - Classical, Film, Abhangs or Dasarnamas. She is one of God sent talents to the world of Karnatak music as music came naturally to her. In all of my time spent with her, I have not seen her practice a single day!! She was also a eloquent speaker who could easily hold audience spellbound with her proficiency in Tamil, English, Kannada and Telugu. She was an icon of style, culture, power, humility and a person with great respect for others

Hectic travelling across the country and abroad drew me closer to her since we spent a lot of time together. She was too popular then to have encouraged a newcomer like me, yet she constantly guided and shaped my music. She was probably the only musician, who encouraged a woman violinist throughout her career. She would always advise me to keep raising the bar. During her last days, she was kind enough to give me her electronic tambura.

Just about the time I was thinking of doing something for MLV akka's 90th birthday, I got a phone call from Shakunthala Iyengar, who is a great admirer of MLV akka. She expressed her wish to handover to me MLV akka's Thanjavur tambura which my guru had gifted her in 1985. To me it is nothing short of a miracle and I am convinced that my bhakti and regard for her have been acknowledged by her. Now, after receiving this treasured possession of hers, I feel her presence with me all the more.

Her voice, her confidence, her choice of songs, stage presence, her versatility, her knowledge and command in music, her linguistic capabilities, her humility, her simplicity, her style, her power and most importantly the sense of mutual respect for any other person makes her the most admirable musicians of all times. MLV akkas treasure of music is sure to carry on for many centuries down the line. My pranams to MLV akka and seek her blessings in every walk of my life.

Kalavanta 2019

Karnataka Fine Arts Council (KFAC) invites applications from youth to participate in Kalavanta 2019, a Karnataka Sangeetha Concert Competition.

Date: January 15th to January 19th, 2019;
Award ceremony on January 20th, 2019

Venue: Bangalore Gayana Samaja, KR Road, Basavanagudi, Bengaluru

Applications must be submitted online ONLY through our website, <https://www.kalavanta.com>. The last date for submission of your completed application is OCTOBER 15th, 2018.

Those who should apply are:

Main artist :Vocal, Violin, Flute, Veena, and others

Accompanying artist : Violin, Mridanga, Ghata, Khanjira, Morching, and others

Totally, there will be 10 concerts - 30+ applicants (main artist + accompanying artists) will be selected to perform.

Watch the videos of the past seasons of Kalavanta as also the details about KFAC in the website.

Prior to submission of applications, kindly read the terms and conditions carefully to evaluate your eligibility. Additionally, ensure you have all the attachments needed handy prior to submission of your application. Once you have submitted the application, there will be no edits possible.

In case you need any clarifications, do not hesitate to write to karnatakafineartscouncil@gmail.com.

Maharaja's seat is still on void

Prof.V Aravinda Hebbar, Udupi



Maharajapuram Santhanam

When I was mad after Santhanam's music, none of a more aged than me would ever agree to his music. Maharajapuram meant the illustrious Viswanatha Iyer, for them, and never his son Santhanam. That was Viswanatha Iyer's eminence which brought boulders in the way of his own son Santhanam. Santhanam could not be noticed as a recognisable musician till his 20th year, when he was called to sing in the marriage concert of Sri TS Vembu Iyer (1948), father of Sri TV Shankaranarayanan. That prompted South Indian Club of Kolkata to invite him for a concert in Kolkata and later in the Tyagaraja Aradhana at Tiruvaiyar. Every one compared his 'childish' singing with the virtuous singing of his father's. The captivating booming voice of Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer, an impeccable personality for a Carnatic singer, his ever quipping words of wisdom, wit and jokes, made people

to reject his son Santhanam out rightly. Santhanam could not grow under this ever green tree of banyan. He had to go through many hardships and hiccups all through. He gave his first concert in Music Academy Madras when he was 30(1958)! The energetic young lad had to find place only at Jaffna, Sri Lanka as the Head of the Department of Music in Ponnambalam Ramanathan Music College. Santhanam stayed there for 5 years (1960-65). Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer who had his hey days all through had become fragile now and his music became stale as age passed by. His sonorous voice had some tremors, and lost lustre due to the lack of sustenance in Shruti. Mohanam, Arabhi and Kambhodhis got weakened due to lack of energy. It was at this period that Santhanam had a straight headway through in this field back in India. He cut a small HMV disc in 1970. He sang two pieces of raga malika, 'Sarangan Muruganai' and 'Srichakraraja Simhasaneshwari'. Those were the seven and half minute recordings which pushed Santhanam to lime light. The lost voice of Maharajapuram got revived again, people could see a grand gleam in Santhanam's new bronzy voice, though the old rasikas did not vote for the newer one. GNB, Semmangudi, Musiri were already masters then. But the magic of Santhanam's voice gave a sudden flash to his career. The voice culture, the pronunciation of sahitya and expression of its bhava, and the brimming talent showcased on the stage gave Santhanam a meteoric lift. Though he had a commanding and mellifluous sonorous voice, he did not misuse it unnecessarily for acrobatic twists or twirls, though some of his contemporaries were doing such mischief with their reverberating rich voices. Santhanam used very fine brighas at right places for an appropriate kalapramanam to embellish phrases. Reproduction of such brighas by any-



Maharajapuram Santhanam performing with M Chandrasekaran on Violin, Vellore Ramabhadran on Mridangam and Bangalore Manjunath on Ghatam (photo courtesy - "A Home called Parvathi" Shri. K Srikanthiah)

one else would become a miserable mimicry. He would take up the starting syllable from the sahitya a fraction of second later than expected, which would spontaneously kick the rasika to chirp or nod his head!. Like his father he too ventured to illustrate Hamsadhwani, Arabhi, Mohanam, Kalyani, Hindolam, Shuddha Dhanyasi, Khamach, Kambhodhi, more than ever. These, all time common man's recipes, made Santhanam so popular all of a sudden pulling crowds from all corners to his concerts. Hardly he ventured to indulge in the hard Kanakkus and brain boggling Muktais in his concerts. A progressive and decided way of Raga development marked his way of style. That would for sure soothe a lay listener. He laid emphasis on cleanliness of Raga renderings. His sarva laghus reaching the climax at the end mesmerised the listeners. Violin accompaniments by Lalgudi, TNK, MSG and M Chandrasekharan further elevated Santhanam's music for an all time record. Though mridangam wizards like Umayalapuram, Palghat Raghu, Karaikudi Mani, and Guruvayoor Dorai accompanied him, Vellore Ramabhadran was the most frequent, who made Santhanam's music most audible even for a gentle trill to the last bencher. In the later course of time Santhanam was mostly accompanied by Kovai Dakshinamurthy, Sikkil Bhaskaran, Tirupparkadal S Veeraraghavan, V Thyagarajan, and Nagai Muralidharan so that the loud applauses from the audience side could be fixed to Santhanam only! Santhanam became a big crowd puller in 1970s-80s. He regularly drew a very sentimental and

sensitive audience to his concerts. In Bangalore and such other Kannada platforms he was very popular as he had a big repertory of Kannada Dasa songs to cater to their needs. He was the one who drew a large sum of fees from music organisers. Once the 'Bho Shambho', his own composition in Mishra Shivanranjani (tillana), 'Sharanamayyappa', 'Raghavendra guru' and, some other tukudas like 'Ek sahara tera' of a Hindi film became popular he had to yield for the rasikas and sing for them. The gallery started swelling. Santhanam sir started his techniques to appease his rasikas in more than one ways and he reached to the top stardom. He became a 'Maharaja' of his time.

The tall Santhanam had an attractive attire of simplicity with white dhoti and a loose half sleeved collared white shirt. A parrot green shawl would decorate his shoulders while entering on to the stage which would immediately be unfurled once he squatted. A gentle smile of a different world apparently looking at his accompanists would sway on his broad face smeared with white vibhoothi.

I was one among such sentimental and sensitive ardent admirer of Santhanam, from 1975 till early 1980s. You may be surprised if I confess here that it was because of his, an RTP in Hindolam broadcast from AIR Chennai made me to turn to Carnatic music field, from Hindi Film songs field! The RTP which sounded very much akin to 'mann tarpat' song of Mohammed Rafiqi made me listen a bit more intent and that made

me to convert myself to become an ardent Carnatic listener and a passionate learner. That was on Dec. 24th 1974! I started listening to the Carnatic Gramophone recordings of all artistes through Radio stations and started my 'career' as passion (I am a retired professor of Botany) to document all those which are broadcast through Radio Stations in the form of a diary. A comparison of Hindi film songs with the Carnatic ragas and kritis were done at that time. That gave me an impetus to pursue Carnatic Music. I maintained Diaries, about 1500 pages in total now, documenting all the features of Carnatic music, which were broadcast from almost all South Indian AIR stations for about 15 years (1975-1990). Perhaps even AIR may not have that much of directory, as I possess! Maharajapuram Santhanam featured the most. Madness made me to go to Chennai and visit Santhanam sir and confess that I was his Ekalavya! Fortunate for me that he did not ask for my thumb finger as an offering! Instead he loved me very much for my passion and work I had done for Music. I started learning Carnatic music only later while I was on 30s. I went behind Santhanam sir wherever he went. I knew the repertory of songs Santhanam sir sang. My music had a conscious Santhanam's touch though I was learning it anew at Udupi by a local teacher. However, I did not copy Santhanam sir; neither had I liked his handling of grammar

of ragas. But the amazing glaze in the aesthetics he was sewing in his music was ever lingering in me. His very first note 'Sa' shadja was a resonating original voice which nobody among his contemporaries could maintain. His contemporaries would have shown more prowess and scholarship than him, but Santhanam remained unique for his immaculate style of exposition of ragas and lyrics.

Santhanam was awarded Kalaimamani from the Govt. of Tamil Nadu, Sangeet Natak Akademi in 1984, Sangita Kalanidhi from Music Academy Madras in 1989, Padmashree in 1990. He has two sons, bank employees, Sri Srinivasan and Sri Ramachandran. They are the torch bearers of Maharajapuram bani now. Maharajapuram Santhanam Trust has given a 2.5 lakhs donation to Tiruvaiyar Thyagaraja Samadhi dhyana mantapam. The Trust is active in promoting young and promising talents in Carnatic music. Many Cassettes and CDs preserve Santhanam music alive.

It was a tragedy on the way at Kumbhakonam when Santhanam sir was returning from his concert on June 24, 1992. He met with a car accident and succumbed to fatal injuries along with his dawning prodigious little girl student Akhilandeswari. The seat of Maharaja is remaining still void.

Senior Mridangist A Rajachar passes way



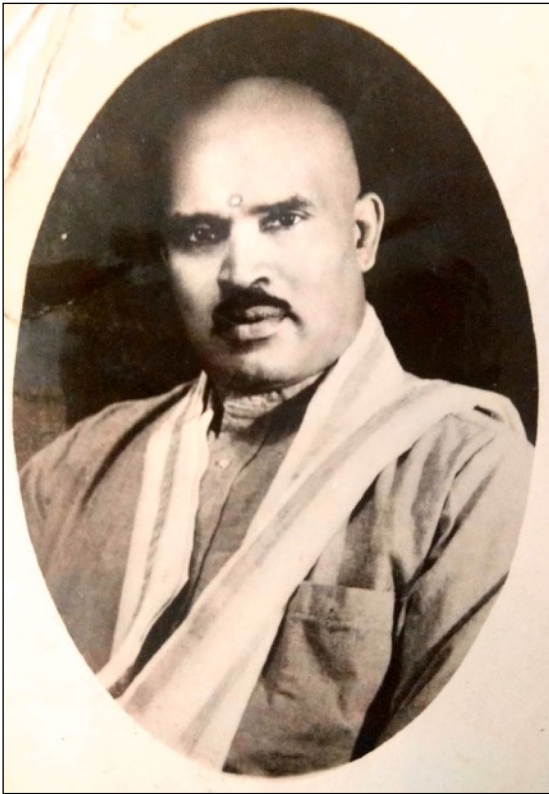
Nonagenarian mridangist Archakam Rajachar passed away on 24 July 2018. In addition to being a very good mridangist, he was a reputed Guru. Rajachar maintained the rich tradition of Palghat Mani Iyer's art. He had to patiently wait for six months before he was accepted as a disciple of ML Veerabhadraiah. He was taught in the Gurukula tradition and he served music for over six decades.

He was a graded radio and Doordarshan artist and he accompanied renowned musicians like Mysore T Chowdaiah, Gotuvadyam Narayana Iyengar, Palghat Ram Bhagavathar, RR Keshavamurthy, MR Doreswamy etc.

He served as a priest of Karanji Anjaneya temple for many decades.

The Legend - Harmonium Arunachalappa

Pushpa Kashinath, Bangalore



Harmonium Arunachalappa

Never-in the history of Karnatak music, there was any musician who could play Harmonium like my grand father Arunachalappa. His name and the instrument became synonyms in the field of Karnatak music.

I have been listening to grandpa's story from my father B Vishwanath a veteran violinist and my mother Saraswathi (daughter of Arunachalappa), since my childhood. My uncle Ganakalabhushana A Veerabhadraiah was-sharing lot of information with us. While thinking about this great person,

it is very interesting to know his contribution to our music and his journey as an artiste.

Arunachalappa's-parents lived in Cottonpet, Bengaluru. They were-highly cultured. They were very religious. Arunachalappa was born after his parents visited Arunchalaswamy Temple at Thiruvannamalai, (during 1899) hence-was named Arunachala. At a very young age he lost his parents and his uncle Pallappa took utmost care and got him admitted in the gurukula. He was very keen in learning. He was very quiet, soft spoken and lovable.-His calligraphy was a matter of approbation among all.

Beside the school education, he took interest in games like Badminton and Football. He attended a local gymn to do physical exercises. There was a football team called "Active Union Team" and Arunachalappa enrolled himself as a member. He played "full back" position. The goal keeper was Narayanaswamy (who later became a music teacher to my grandpa).

Right from the age of seven, Arunachalappa showed interest in music. Those days people used to go to the temple daily. Bhajans were regularly conducted near and around the temples in Cottonpet. Some would sing, while some would accompany them on musical instruments.

Arunachalappa started to spend time with this Bhajan group. He was very much attracted towards Harmonium. He would go to the Bhajan mutt and try to produce some sounds on the harmonium. He just fell in love with the Harmonium.

One day, Subbarayappa (son-in-law of his uncle) noticed Arunachalappa practising this instrument secretly. He-was running his fingers magically over the instrument. Subbarayappa himself



Left to Right - B Vishwanath, Arunachalappa, Bangalore Manjunath (Ghatam) along with PM Nehru, Former CM K Hanumanthaiah, and dancer Maya Rao

was a good harmonium player, so he taught-and suggested some methods to him. Meanwhile, his-uncle also encouraged him. Subbarayappa asked Arunachalappa to learn music from Narayanaswamy Bhagavata.

Without second thought Arunachalappa requested Narayanaswamy to teach him music. Narayanaswamy gladly agreed to teach him. Thus, these two friends became guru and shishya. He learnt violin for a few months from Narayanaswamy. Later, he only played Harmonium. It seems Arunachalappa used to practice, practice and practice a lot. He forgot food, gymnastics, games and friends. Music and nothing but the music occupied his whole time. At this time, his uncle chose a suitable girl and he got wedded to her.

Every Saturday Bhajans were held at Arunachalappa's place wherein renowned Tabla artiste Rangappa, Violinist Puttappa, Tayappa, Ananthashastri, Someshwar Bhagavata regularly participated. Bhagavata would sing, Tayappa on the violin, Arunachalappa on the harmonium and Rangappa on the mridangam or tabla. Slowly Arunachalappa became famous. Even after reaching great height and becoming very famous in this field, his simplicity, humility, and well mannered behaviour never parted from

him. There were many kathakalakshepa artistes and Arunachalappa gladly accompanied them.

For some reason Narayanaswamy left Bangalore and Arunachalappa started to learn music from the great violinist Puttappa.

Arunachalappa lost his wife during this period. His uncle and guru Puttappa advised him to get married, but Arunachalappa was not interested saying he had already wedded the Harmonium. His opinion was not considered and finally Annapoornamma entered Arunachalappa's life in 1919. She was very beautiful, charitable minded with noble characteristics. About 4 years later, my uncle A Veerabhadraiah was born.

The fame of Arunachalappa travelled to Mysore. There lived a very popular drama star by name Varadacharya. He was a fan of Arunachalappa. He requested him to play for his dramas, and without any hesitation Arunachalappa accepted and performed for dramas. Sometimes he used to play violin for the dramas as he learnt the same from Narayanaswamy Bhagavata.

Arunachalappa having accompanied great masters like Tayappa, Puttappa, Karur Krishnacharya, Chintalapalli Venkat Rao and such others, became very famous. Once the famous Kempe Gowda, who was addressed as Bhairavi Kempe



A Subbarao accompanied by Arunachalappa on Harmonium, A Veerabhadraiah on Violin, AV Anand on Mridangam

Gowda came to visit Arunachalappa. Arunachalappa was very happy and requested him to sing Bhairavi and Begade.

After listening to Arunachalappa playing harmonium, Kempegowda hugged him and said "you are an extra-ordinary human being. Every musical instrument is a creation of God and he has chosen you for Harmonium. Nobody can play begade and bhairavi evoking its form and spirit on this instrument like you".

The Gramophone company was situated in Cantonment, Bangalore. The officials had heard a lot about scintillating performances of BS Raja Iyengar and Arunachalappa. They wanted to get them recorded. Hence, approached the artistes and requested them to render one item without exceeding 3 minutes duration. 'Jagadoddharana', a composition of Purandaradasa was selected and recorded. The record containing 'Jagadoddharana' was completely sold out within a month of its release, which was a record at that time.

Bidaram Krishnappa of Mysore, had respect and love for Arunachalappa and BS Raja Iyengar. He wanted to introduce them to Maharaja Nalvadi Krishna Raja Wadiyar. One day Bidaram Krishnappa mentioned about BS Raja Iyengar and Arunachalappa. Wadiyar himself was proficient in music and agreed to hold a concert at darbar.

Just an hour before the concert, the Maharaja came to know that Arunachalappa is a harmonium player and not a violinist. He called Bidaram Krishnappa and told that he cannot imagine harmonium as an-accompanying instrument. Bidaram Krishnappa, convinced Maharaja that Arunachalappa plays violin but keeping a harmonium. Maharaja was not happy and he gave just 30 minutes time for the concert. Darbar hall was full. The programme commenced and the stipulated thirty minutes went off. The King did not get up from his seat, indirectly indicating to the artiste to continue. Only after the mangalam, everyone came to know that more than 90 minutes had elapsed. Maharaja praised them "splendid" "marvellous". He gave credit to Bidaram Krishnappa for having arranged this programme. He wanted them to come and perform every year on his birthday celebration and during Dasara festival. Turning to grandpa, Maharaja said "Congratulations Arunachalappa, you are a great and lustrous son of this soil, a credit to this-state".

A second invitation from the gramophone company was awaiting. The duo accepted and recorded 'Ksheerasagara Shayana' and 'Brochevarevarura' and so on.

BS Raja Iyengar and Arunachalappa toured Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu-and allured the



A Subbarao accompanied by Arunachalappa on Harmonium, A Veerabhadraiah on Violin, Narayanamurthy on Tambura, and young AV Subramanya on Sruti box.

entire audience. Pudukottai Dakhinamurthi Pillai the mridangam and Kanjira celebrity was a great admirer of these two artists from Karnataka. Once he said to Arunachalappa "I think you have done some penance, may be in your previous births. No doubt that this instrument has become auspicious because of you."

Once, Kanchipuram Naina Pillai invited the duo to perform at Tyagaraja Festival. Alathur Brothers performed with the accompaniment of Alathur Venkatesa Iyer on the Harmonium. Arunachalappa was glad to listen to this great artiste. Next day BS Raja Iyengar performed and Alathur Venkatesa Iyer had the opportunity to listen to the Harmonium played by Arunachalappa. He was very much impressed and gave some valuable suggestions. Arunachalappa was humble enough to mention that Alathur Venkatesa Iyer was in a way his mentor!!

The fame of BS Raja Iyengar and Arunachalappa reached even North India. On invitations, they gave programmes at Pune, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Lahore, Karachi, Delhi, Calcutta and such other places. During one such occasion, they visited Kashi to perform at the University. Pandit Madanmohan Malaviya was the Vice-Chancellor. Pandit Madanmohan Malaviya spoke to BS Raja Iyengar about his dislike towards the instrument

Harmonium and requested BS Raja Iyengar to have the violin as the accompaniment. For that, BS Raja Iyengar said "Arunachalappa is my very life and he is one of the geniuses, this-country has produced., I am sorry, I cannot perform without him". After some time, Malaviyaji agreed and told him that the University had planned to honour him with some memento, besides remuneration and it will be given only to him and not to Arunachalappa.

BS Raja Iyengar informed everything to Arunachalappa but his reply was "I am happy that we are performing".

Throughout the concert, audience listen to them as if in a trance. While proposing the vote of thanks, Malaviyaji said that "I committed a grave mistake by telling Sri. BS Raja Iyengar to have violin accompaniment. I had no idea about the knowledge and extraordinary proficiency of Arunachalappa. I apologise for what I said about him. The University is going to honour BS Raja Iyengar who gave us a superb performance but I hope he would not mind, if I honour Arunachalappa first. I present this gold medal, weighing two sovereigns, to this magic maker on the Harmonium, on behalf of you and on my own."

Such-anecdotes were many in the life of Arunachalappa.

Those days musical instruments were not considered to be of very good quality. Only if there was a rapport between the artiste and the maker, then such musicians would get the best services. Though good quality materials were available, it was difficult to select quality instruments. Arunachalappa thought why not to manufacture instruments of excellent quality. The thought of making perfect instrument made him engage the required craftsmen, he sat with them and supervised. In 1933 he opened a music shop "ARUNA MUSICALS" in the Balepet area of Bangalore. He invented Cutbellos Harmonium which was bringing out continuity between swaras. From the day one, Aruna Musicals became the household name in the music circle.

Arunachalappa was accompanying many vocalists like D Subbaramaiah, Chintalapalli Ramachandra Rao, A Subba Rao even Sangitha

Kalanidhis, Mysore T Chowdaiah and Mysore V Doreswami Iyengar have had the pleasure of his harmonium accompaniment. The celebrity TR Mahalingam had preferred to play with Arunachalappa on a number of occasions. He knew the knack of accompanying for a Vocal artiste, a Veena, a Violin or a Flute. He valued friendship to a great extent. He possessed a charm and his manner of behaving with friends was something to be experienced that whoever moved with him became very intimate.

He participated in the stage play of the great Gubbi Veeranna Company, Bellary Raghava, Devudu, CK Venkataramayya, TT Sharma, Shamanana, Venkatasubba, Hirannayya and few others, either on the violin or on the Harmonium. He never felt below his dignity to play for dramas. Later, he stopped playing violin only to enhance the glory of his beloved harmonium.

Mysore T Chowdaiah and Mysore T Gururajappa accompanied by Arunachalappa on Harmonium and Palani Subramania Pillai on Mridangam





M Balamuralikrishna accompanied by Arunachalappa on Harmonium, ML Veerabhadraiah on Mridangam, Bangalore Manjunath on Ghatam and young AV Manjunath on Sruti box.

Many aspiring students came to learn music. He had to attend concerts, look after manufacturing unit and teach music. Students would assemble at his house at ten in the night. Annapoornamma would serve them tasty dinner. Muniswamayya, Narasimhayya, Gundappa, Bapayya, Honnappa Bhagavatar, B Vishwanath, (my father) and Seethama were some of Arunachalappa's disciples.

Although Arunachalappa was born in a Veerashaiva family, he was not biased to any particular religious worship. He was a staunch devotee of Saint Sri. Raghavendra of Mantralaya. (There was a "Brundavana" situated in the Seetapati Agrahara).

For about 18 years, he conducted aradhana festival at Laldas Venkataramana Swamy Temple. The festival had two permanent programmes one by Mysore T Chowdiah and another by A Subba Rao, of course with Arunachalappa's accompaniment.

My uncle Veerabhadraiah was a very loveable person. At a very young age, he started learning violin from Narayanaswamy Bhagavatar, along with HV Krishnamurthy. Later my uncle became one of the veteran violinists of Karnataka. He was called "Annayya" by musicians and got a title called "King of Strings", as he was import-

ing high quality strings, musical instruments and accessories from Germany and other countries. He along with HV Krishnamurthy and Anoor S Ramakrishna performed at many sabhas throughout India. This trio became very famous at that time and Palghat Mani Iyer, Palghat Raghu, Umayalapuram Sivaraman, Karaikudi Mani, used to accompany them on many occasions.

An important chapter in the life of Arunachalappa was meeting the legend Balamuralikrishna on the occasion of Ramanavami festival. Dr. Balamuralikrishna's performance was fixed by the Ramaseva Mandali at Chamarajpet with Lalgudi G Jayaraman. This was in 1964. Lalgudi Jayaraman could not come due to some reason. There was no time to get another violinist from Chennai. The Secretary, Narayanaswami Rao, mentioned the name of Arunachalappa to Balamuralikrishna that he would request Arunachalappa to accompany on Harmonium. Balamuralikrishna was not happy to perform with Harmonium as accompaniment. But Narayanaswamy insisted and pleaded Balamuralikrishna to perform with Grandpa for atleast 30 minutes and then decide whether to continue the concert or not. At last Balamuralikrishna agreed and the two great geniuses met for the first time, greeted each other and then the con-

cert began. Thousands of people were waiting eagerly to listen to this concert. As per the condition, Balamuralikrishna had to sing for two hours or so, but it went on for four hours. Balamuralikrishna was so much inspired by the remarkable play of Arunachalappa. Four hours passed like four minutes. Balamuralikrishna expressed his utmost respect to Arunachalappa in front of the audience. He apologised and said "It is very rare to find an artiste of this calibre. The way he-presented the raga today was something remarkable. I never expected such melodies nada from instrument like Harmonium. If he agrees, I shall have his accompaniment in all my programmes." Arunachalappa also expressed his appreciation saying "they say you are a prodigy, genius and all that, but-you are all the more than that".

Later, Balamuralikrishna invited Arunachalappa to accompany him for his viola concert and vocal concerts. Even today, the tape record of that viola programme is available. Balamuralikrishna used to ask people about the accompanying instrument. It seems nobody would recognise it as harmonium. Then Balamuralikrishna would mention "that is Harmonium by Arunachalappa"!!!! Musicians who have not seen him playing harmonium, if they hear through recordings, will think either it is flute or violin (including myself). Such was his fingering technique, continuation of swaras, raga bhava, mastery over the instrument!!!

Balamuralikrishna used to mention-musicians that there is a MUSIC TEMPLE in Bangalore. He

insisted them to visit and take blessings from Arunachalappa.

As usual, Arunachalappa planned to celebrate Saint Purandaradasa Aradhana in a grand manner. He arranged music concerts, one among them was A Subbarao's vocal concert. Accompanying Subba Rao was not at all new to him. But that day, he asked Subba Rao to sing elaborately. Subba Rao was at his best that day and started singing kalyani raga. He intervened and said "Rayare, shall I play for sometime?" Everybody was surprised because, after the vocal rendition, normally he would do his part and there was no need to ask. Subba Rao felt something unusual about him. Then Subba Rao started singing "Idu Bhagya" a very popular devaranama of Purandaradasa. The programme came to an end. But that was his last programme!!! May be he could sense that he will not play his dearest instrument again in his life. He was muttering "Idu Bhagya".

After the festival, he was feeling uneasy and felt chest pain. Immediately he was rushed to the Hospital. and doctors diagnosed it as heart attack. It was 4th February 1966, the great maestro's lips were continuously murmuring "rama rama". There were lot of musicians, relatives, friends, students whom he always valued in his heart. The doctors were giving hope but he left this world around 4 pm that day.

The golden era had come to an end. But his music and his soul-stirring melodies will ever linger in our ears. He will be remembered-for ever!!!

Lalitha Kala Suma Award for Cultural Institutions

Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira is felicitating 50 prestigious cultural institutions of Bangalore on Sunday, 3rd March 2019 at 5.30 p.m. at the The Bangalore Gayana Samaja auditorium in the presence of His Holiness Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar. The honours will be presented by Dr. Shatavadani Ganesh. Names of the selected institutions will be published in the next edition of our magazine.

A celebration like no other

Sachi R Sachidananda, Bangalore

On 9th September, Sunday, the Bangalore Gayana Samaja auditorium wore a festive look as the Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira conducted the G Vedanta Iyengar Memorial Awards function in the holy presence of Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar.

The well-known musician Smt. MS Sheela received the Sangeetha Vedantha Dhurina Prashasti. This is added to a long list of awards that she has won over her stellar career including the recent Sangeet Natak Akademi Award.

Over fifty musicians of repute, including vocalists, violinists, vainikas, flautists, Nagaswara vidwans, percussionists and even a senior Mridan-

ga/Tabla maker received the Lalitha Kala Suma award.

Many of these artistes have won our love through their performances over the years, especially over the All India Radio. It was fitting that Dr. N Raghu, director, AIR looking after Amruthavarshini and Raaga 24/7 FM classical channels, was the one who gave away the awards.

The function stretched to nearly four hours but a large audience of fellow musicians, students, artistes' families and rasikas spanning three generations stayed on and participated enthusiastically.



The Kala Mandira is doing incomparable service for 63 years now, conducting concerts, running a music school, giving away awards, and publishing a magazine rich in content. Incredibly, every single award in cash and kind has been given by utilising the family finances and without any corporate sponsorships. It was heartening to see during the function that the fourth generation of the family is equally committed to learning and celebrating classical music.

His Holiness in his benediction stated how he felt an integral part of the activities of the Mandira. He blessed all the artistes and explained how classical music is the most effective path to spiritual progress.

The function showed the vital role Mandira is playing in the lives of musicians and music lovers. Such celebrations augur well for its future.

MS Sheela on her Sangeetha Vedantha Dhurina Award

I am honoured to receive the Sangeetha Vedantha Dhurina Award which is bestowed on me by Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira. It is a special moment for me in my life considering that the award is presented by HH Sri Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Ramanuja Jeeyar of Yadugiri Mutt.

I will be failing in my duty if I do not acknowledge the contributions made by Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira founded by Shri. Vedantha Iyengar 63 years back. The family members have been successful in fulfilling the vision set out by the founder to encourage and support the cause of music and music fraternity.

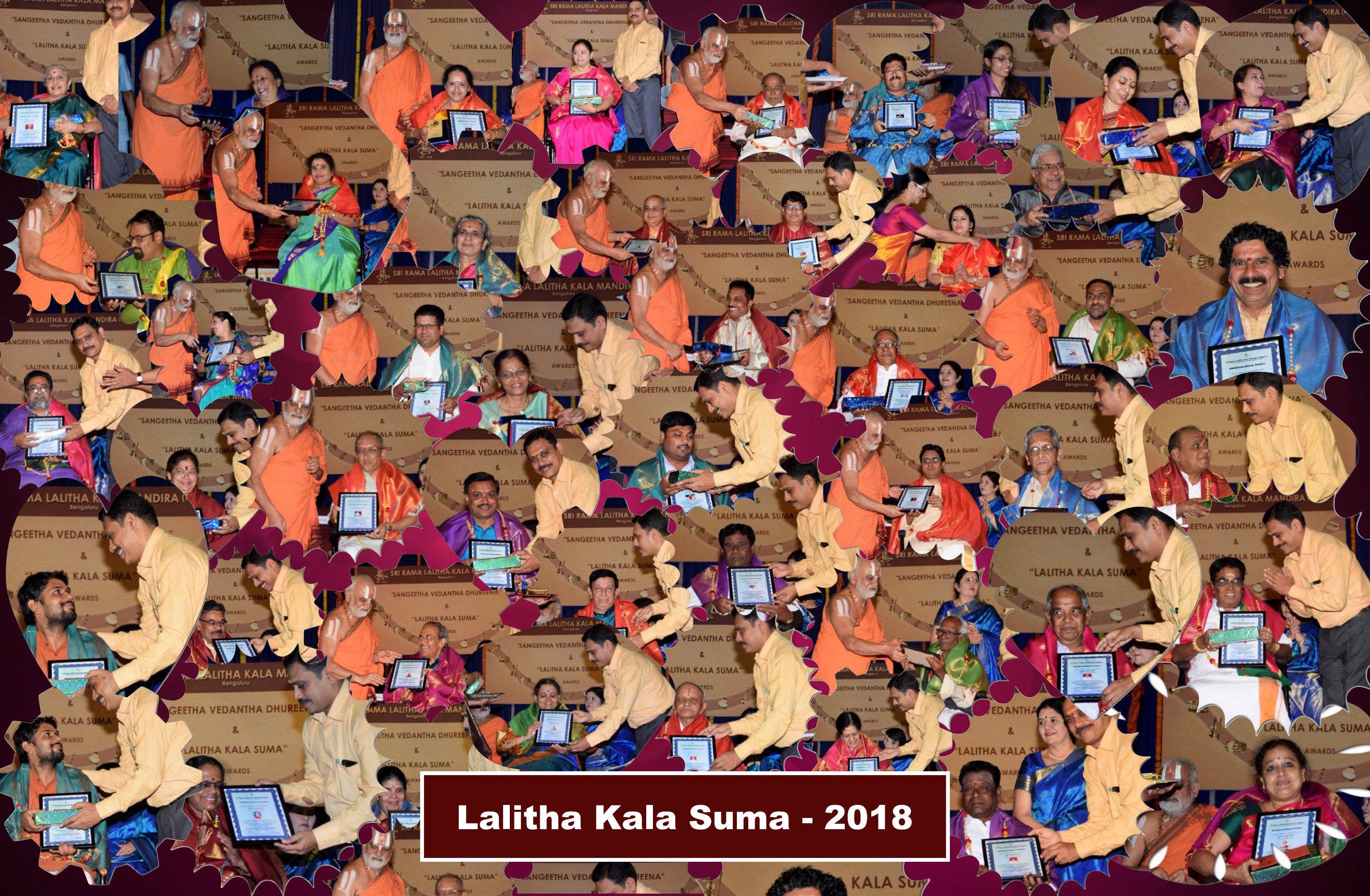
I am glad that the institution is supporting all sections of musicians be it youngster, senior musician or Veteran with recognitions that carry a hefty purse. These awards are instituted in the names of the founder Shri. Vedantha Iyengar and their children's. I must admit that the conduct of the award program under the leadership of Shri. GV Krishnaprasad was most professional. Needless to say that the Mandira is doing a yeomen service to the cause of music a fact that we musicians and music lovers of Bangalore ought to be proud of.

The members of the family have completely dedicated their life towards music. The 'sadane'

and the 'tapas' of each member of the family surpasses all boundaries and presents a benchmark that is impossible to outclass.

The family has also made a huge sacrifice to use the proceeds of the property to mobilise the resources for running the institution. It is heartening to note that the quality of the programs organised by the sabha is absolutely top class attracting huge crowds.

My family members join me in passing on our gratitude to Shri. GV Krishnaprasad and members of Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira. May God bless you all with good health and strength to take the Mandira to even greater glory in the years to come.



Lalitha Kala Suma - 2018

Friend philosopher and Guru

Vid. Vijay Siva, Chennai

One evening in early August 1991, just about six months after my guru Sri DK Jayaraman's demise, DK Pattammal's son I Sivakumar presented me before her: "Vijay has accepted to sing a concert of patriotic songs on 15th August. He needs your help." She was sitting with her eyes closed, listening to her practising students seated around. She raised her head on hearing her son's voice and affectionately welcomed me. She then must have read in me the same helplessness she experienced when Ambi Dikshitar was snatched away from this world after imparting to her only a couple of Dikshitar kritis. She still rues over his demise. She knows that helping me would mean reaching out beyond the capacity of her memory, an arduous task at her age. But she sounds positive and she asks me to come after two days.

Obviously she is reluctant to say 'no' to an earnest student and as ever as she does, she is going to bank on her corpus of grit to recollect the songs for me. This is the grit, the world speaks of in profusion, which made DKP the

first Brahmin woman to ascend a concert platform, challenge male preserve in pallavi singing, cross swords with the British through patriotic songs and bring to the fore numerous Tamil and Dikshitar kritis which were unapparent in concert circuit.

When I return to her a couple of days later, she has promptly recollected many songs from her huge stock of patriotic music and is waiting to offer them to me. First the teacher must be alert and equipped, she seems to believe, and only then comes teaching. Is it a belief imbibed from tutelage under many stalwarts and not from a single formal teacher?", I wonder. As she feeds me with the songs, Namakkal Kavi's "Aadu ratte" flashes across her mind. She hasn't sung it for several decades, but this song will suit the occasion well. She will not leave it ir-retrieved. She seeks the help of her husband Sri Iswaran to hunt for the recording of the song from her personal archives but does not wait for the result of the search. She goes into mental search, closing her eyes, not even aware that the lunch



served for her lies cold. She hums the tune and it's lyrics before singing it full-throated. The search is over, once again her grit had to come to her rescue and she starts teaching. By the time I thank her and pack-off, her husband announces the retrieval of the recording and plays it. I stand flabbergasted. How could she recollect a song after so many years without missing even the minutest of the sangatis! She smiles as if to mean, 'This is child's play for me'.

For Pattammal, learning, teaching and recollecting are an enjoyable routine exercise. She refuses to allow age to catch up with her and remains unrelenting in her generosity. "Haven't my teachers TLV, Ambi Dikshitar, Sivan, Prof. Sambamurthy, NS Krishnaswamy Iyengar etc. all unflinchingly taught me their best? Shouldn't I do so to my disciples?", she reasons out her generosity.

To Pattammal, teaching does not stop with classroom lessons. She must know at the earliest how the student fared on stage and how press and public responded to it. By the time I ring her up on 16th August morning to report on the previous evenings concert, she has already obtained a first-hand account of the per-

formance and its sidelights and opens the conversation with a chuckle, "You sang with a Gandhi cap on your head!". This time it was Nithyasri who did the reporting. This concern is for all students and not just one. Kavitha Ramnath has been geared up to sing a few songs in Sivarathiri Akhandam just after midnight. "Listen to her," she summons me affectionately apparently wanting me to report to her on her performance. If she had stayed awake past midnight praying for Kavitha, I wouldn't be surprised.

To pray for students' success is a family trait. D K Jayaraman too did it on several occasions for his disciples. Their concern and anxiety would mean sleepless nights, frequent calls to the disciple conveying last minute tips and sometimes even forgoing food - much to the annoyance of their family members. 'Why this concern? Should she fret so much. ..?' you ask Pattammal... She would say, "TLV waited to see me as a Sangita Kalanidhi before breathing his last that very night. Papanasam Sivan trudged several miles to teach me and granted unconditional permission to record his songs anytime for any company. The Telugu Vadhiyar looked upon me as his own daughter. Naina Pillai

Learning session with DK Pattammal



heartily wished me well even in death bed," as if to indicate that love for disciples is a quality she has unconsciously imbibed from her teachers and is ever determined to practise it.

"You are going to present a concert of Shyama Sastri kritis? I saw in the papers today. You may not be aware that he has composed a mangalam. Come today and learn it," she says to me one morning in April 1995. Obviously she has no hesitation in instructing a disciple to learn nor does she wait for him to approach her. But how is she able to adapt herself to students of many age groups and establish instantaneous rapport? It is sheer magic. In reality, she does not adapt. She doesn't have to. Speaking from the heart in clear and affectionate language and tone, she makes all of them feel like innocent little children and mutual understanding comes instantaneously. The feeling lingers for long after the lessons.

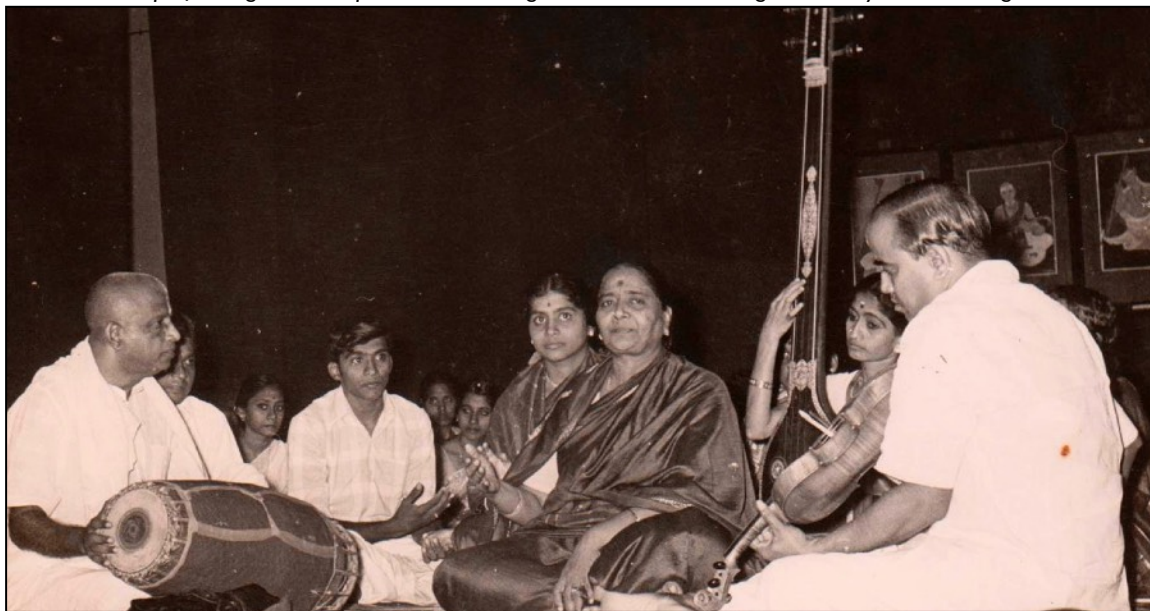
To see Pattammal shower encomiums on her disciples when they live up to or exceed her expectations, it is a marvel-very few teachers praise their students in such bounty. Madhumita, a doctor student, cannot believe that she has gathered so many words of praise from Pattammal. "How transparent is her love for disci-

ples!", many like Madhumita bewilder. If Pattammal's love for her disciples is complete, the disciples' regard for her is no less. Her brother and first disciple DK Jayaraman excelled all her other disciples in his love and regard for her. "She is everything to me - matha, pitha, guru and God. I cannot live to see a hurdle befall her," he would say looking at Patta's portrait in his drawing room. He christened his house 'Rohini' - the star under which Pattammal was born. Once an astrologer predicted evil prospects for those born under this star. This was more than adequate to upset DKJ. He took Pattammal's horoscope to every reputed astrologer in town till he was convinced that the prediction was ill-founded. "Should an evil befall her, I wouldn't live to see it," he said with a choked voice. The words ultimately turned out to be true in a very ironic way! Evil befell her in the form of DKJ's death. She still weeps for him.

At DKJ's classes, a phone call from Pattammal signalled a big break from lessons. But we enjoyed the delay by listening to him share the most trivial of trivia with her.

While in each other's company, they would talk on mundane matters, on music, pay tributes to each other and sometimes pause for several

DK Pattammal performing with Thiruparkkadal Veeraraghavan on Violin and Palghat Mani Iyer on Mridangam



minutes as if in speechless conversation - two hearts full of mutual love and affection.

DKJ blushed like a child and would be all smiles for hours together, when Patta praised him. She in turn, understood her brother and disciple only too well. When she found him depressed or worried, she assumed the role of a caring mother to console and comfort him.

If love and affection come to her in abundance, bhavam comes into her music in no less strength. To her, music is an emotional outpouring filled with resonation raga bhavam and clear-cut diction.

She leaves no stone unturned in cultivating this in her disciples. One morning in March 1992, she is disturbed by a call from me, "Could you help me with a song welcoming the new (Tamil) year? I would like to sing it on the eve of Tamil New Year's Day in my concert in Srirangam". "Oh yes! Go on writing and bring it to me....?" She replied enthusiastically. In a few days, I stand before her with a song 'Chittira Paavai' and she immediately jumps into a tunesmith's role, soaking it in Danyasi, tightening the sangatis and polishing it to shine like a well knit 'Sangita Gnana-mu' or 'Balakrishnan Padamalar'. As I learn it she stops and looks for something I am missing. It is the bhava. "How will you feel if 'Aangeerasa Aandu' gracefully walked towards you in the form of a devatha with a bowl of happiness and prosperity? Wouldn't you welcome her with all your heart? Visualise it and sing". That does it! She has opened up the bhavam in the rendition and we rejoice singing it together many times over.

To a teacher who does so much, paying dakshina would seem silly but failing to do so would mean ungratefulness. After many sessions of learning, I offered her a basket of fruits and flowers with a few rupees in an envelope topping them - very much the way she would have done to her childhood music teacher 'Telugu Vadhiyar' when he visited her several years after she became a legend. Like the Telugu Vadhiyar the Iswarans resented it. "Who asked you for all this?", "Sir Iswaran yelled. I pleaded, "I don't see this as paying a fee for your services

but as an offering I would place in a temple as thanksgiving to the Lord for blessing me. Even God accepts tokens drenched in love and regard. Why don't you?" The heavy silence that followed was broken only by the whisper of tears that shed from Pattammal's eyes.

DKP and DKJ believe that guru shishya relationship should benefit students not only academically but also monetarily. DKJ said in unambiguous terms: "Never allow my friends or relatives to exploit our relationship to slice down your monetary gains especially when I am not alive." Once a close acquaintance of DKP approached me for a concert, which I turned down due to paltry remuneration. Unhesitatingly he sought DKP's help to influence me to accept it. "We never indulge in anything that would be monetarily unprofitable to our disciples. We say this keeping in mind your close association with us," the Iswarans dismissed him. Given this sort of protection, it is only natural that none of her disciples - however short or long be their tutelage - have deserted her.

Her concern for the disciples' well-being surfaces again and again. They share secrets with her and she guards them safely while expressing words of comfort. Even the kith and kin of her students share a special relationship with her and she amuses herself calling them minding their deep attachment towards her.

Pattammal never fights shy of admitting her faults, even if pointed out by a disciple, or even learning from them. Once she agreed to my invitation to sing a concert of patriotic songs at Trichy but wished to present the first half with regular kritis and fill the next half with regular pieces. She was apprehensive about the success of a full fledged patriotic song concert. I acceded to her wish though I was quite sure her apprehension was unfounded. In a few days, she chanced to hear me present a concert of patriotic pieces, at Kalki Krishnamurthy Memorial trust, from beginning to end, and when I met her next, she showed me a list of songs she proposed to render at Trichy. It was all patriotic, top to bottom. She confessed with pride that she had changed her mind after listening to me

and had also borrowed from me an idea for swara singing in Bhairavi piece '*Thondru Nigazh*' - "All these years I never conceived this line - '*Viranmagalam Yengal Thai*' suited for swara singing. I sang them only after your '*Thondru Nigazh*'. Struck by the straight forward humility and delighted that my idea had been borrowed, I also learnt the most important lesson in life - absorb good things from all sources, take pride in learning.

Undoubtedly this virtue has made her a remarkable musician. Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer had no second thoughts in acknowledging that only two artists produced music absolutely supreme and wholesome - Ariyakudi amongst men and DK Pattammal amongst women. Pundits and commoners have hailed her music as soulful. Babu Rajendra Prasad had moist eyes when he requested her to repeat '*Chetasri Balkrishnam*' (Dwijavanti) twice and GNB appealed 'once more' to listen to her '*Sivakamasundari*' (Mukhari) at a Music Academy concert. School and college students and freedom fighters in 1930's and 1940' held her songs in awe.

How else could she have sung so many hits in films inspite of laying down stringent conditions: only patriotic or spiritual songs, no playback for artistes - only background numbers, no duets, no sharing of microphone with any other male vocalist other than her brothers...

Rasikas craving to listen to her '*Naan Oru vilaytu*' or '*Nannu Brochutaku*' at least once is a common occurrence and she has never lamented singing or repeating a song, no matter who asks for it. When a stranger just walked into her house introducing himself as her admirer and asked her to sing a song, she did so happily as she would have done for Babu Rajendra Prasad or GNB.

"I shall perform and teach till people want me to. Only God has to bless me with adequate strength to do so. I wouldn't like to live a minute after I have lost this strength." She prays.

May God bless her eternally with this strength.

Suswaralaya College of Music Anniversary Celebration

Anniversary Celebration of the Suswaralaya College of Music will be conducted between 01 Nov to 04 Nov 2018. The programme is being conducted in association with Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira. Sri Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramana Jeyar Swamiji will confer the title '**Swaralayashruna**' to noted Veena Artiste Vid. MK Saraswathi. While the festival includes all day programmes, evening concerts only are listed below;

01 Nov 2018, Thursday, 6 - 8.30 pm

MK Saraswathi, Rajyashree Joshier and Aishwarya Manikarnike (Veena Trio), S Ashok (Mridanga), SN Narayanamurthy (Ghata)

02 Nov 2018, Friday, 6 - 8.30 pm

Hemmige S Prashanth (Vocal), Charulatha Rammanujam (Violin), Patri Satishkumar (Mridangam), H Prasanna (Ghata)

03 Nov 2018, Saturday

4.30 - 5.30 pm

JK Yoga Keertana (Vocal), Aniruddha Bharadwaj (Violin), Trichy G Aravind (Mridanga), Srinidhi (Ghata)

6 - 8.30 pm

KV Krishnaprasad (Vocal), BK Raghu (Violin), K Sadgurucharan (Mridanga), Bhagyalakshmi M Krishna (Morsing)

04 Nov 2018, Sunday

4.30 - 5.30 pm

Eeshwar Aiyer (Vocal), Mandya Nagaraj (Violin), Subbu Nagendra (Mridanga), S Uttam (Ghata)

6 - 8.30 pm

Madurai TNS Krishna (Vocal), Dr.R.Hemalatha (Violin), Tumkur B Ravishankar (Mridanga), BS Arunkumar (Morsing)

For more details contact - 94480-59595

Gana Visharada Dr. B Devendrappa

Dr. Rama V Bennur, Mysore



Dr. B Devendrappa

Ekalavya from the epic of Mahabharatha was the embodiment of concentration, Guru bhakthi and self respect. He has always remained an inspiration to disciples who are truly interested in learning. Just a few decades ago, a young boy from Chitradurga too was longing to learn from his favourite Guru and would go to any extent to be his disciple. He too had the determination, concentration and yes, of course self respect. His heart had decided on the Guru and he would learn from him only. But unfortunately he was oblivious of his not so musical voice.

Vidwan BS Ramayya, who hailed from the family of 'Madakarinarayaka', the well known ruler of Chitradurga was himself an exponent of music and Dance. He was a disciple of the swamiji of

Betageri. He had served the theatre for many years. He was a talented person, who could also play on many musical instruments. His wife was Smt Tulasamma. Devendrappa was one among their eight children. Born in 1899, he had inherited his father's love for art and music. Ramayya naturally introduced all his children to music. House was reverberating with the sound of Veena, Dilruba, Sitar, Violin, Gottuvadhy, Jalatarang and many other such instruments. It did have its impact on the young mind of Devendrappa. He knew his future was in music which he loved deeply. He was attracted by these different musical instruments and could easily play on any instrument. Probably, this experience and such exposure to music during his childhood really inspired him to do many more experiments in the years to come. It gave him such self confidence which made him so bold that very few could challenge him.

After completing his lower Secondary examination, he became a school teacher in Honnali, at the tender age of 16. Needless to say his reverence to music continued undisturbed. Once, he happened to show his multi faceted talent of playing many instruments to Gadigayya Gawai of Shiralakoppa. The Gawai appreciated him and suggested to him that he should practice vocal music, which precedes any instrumental music. These words impressed him very much. And so he decided to master vocal music. He had learnt to sing but his quest for learning from a good Guru got shot up. He totally ignored his gruff voice as a result of his adolescent age.

He had heard many gramophone recordings of Vidwan Bidaram Krishnappa and was an ardent fan of his music. He had already considered Krishnappa as his 'Manasika Guru'. He decided to go to Mysuru after hearing Gadigayya's advice, to learn vocal music from the illustrious Vidwan Bidaram Krishnappa. It was a dream come true

when he met Sri Krishnappa. He poured his heart out and requested him to accept him as his disciple. Naturally the Guru wanted to know how much he knew already. Hence, Krishnappa asked him to sing a song, which Devendrappa did. After listening to his broken voice, Krishnappa said that his voice was no good and it was not suitable for singing. Those words hit him hard. He was truly shocked. This was something he had never expected. The ambition of his life was totally shaken up. His inner voice whispered him to try his luck with other musicians. He was rejected by them too. It was as though all doors were closed. The future looked very bleak. It was then, that he got an opportunity to attend a baithak of the Great Hindustani singer Pandit Abdul Kareem Khan. Pandit's magical music did cast a spell on the mind of the young Devendrappa. The magical effect of the Pandit's music was so great that Devendrappa then took vow to accomplish a voice similar to the golden voice of Abdul Kareem Khan and this banished the idea of suicide which had occurred to him. That was the effect of music!

It became his mission to mould his voice. Rigorous practice in the wee hours of all the different varase's that he knew became his routine. This 'Herculean' effort did soften the minds of some musicians, who came forward to teach him a few compositions. But his dream of learning from Bidaram Krishnappa still remained a dream. He requested Krishnappa to at least give him a photograph of him so that he could prayerfully practice in front of the picture of his Guru. He went to his hometown partly satisfied. He decided to undergo teachers training in Shivamogga for a livelihood to mitigate his disappointment. The natural beauty of Shivamogga not only kept his interest in music alive, but also inspired him to burst in to singing or playing instruments often. His classmates, knowing his deep interest in music, encouraged him to indulge in continuous practice in the presence of his Guru(his picture). But his body could not take this rigorous practice and as a result became a victim of pneumonia. While recovering from pneumonia, he suddenly noticed the transformation in his voice. Lo ! it had gained altogether a new quality ! His joy knew no bounds.

B Devendrappa with his family members and disciples (B Sheshappa brother of B Devendrappa is on Veena, B Parashuram another brother of B Devendrappa is standing second from left, Chakrakodi Narayana Shastri a senior disciple of B Devendrappa is standing extreme right)



The undying wish to become a musician and learning from his Guru resurged and pushed him to approach Krishnappa again.

God had different plan for him! A diamond merchant, who supplied diamonds to the King befriended him and was very much impressed by his interest and talent in music. Skipping the usual screening by the Bhakshi, the merchant managed to arrange a Jalatarang recital by Devendrappa in the Palace during a celebration. Any music concert would be witnessed by the stalwarts like Seshanna, Subbanna, Bidaram Krishnappa and others, apart from the King himself. Wodeyar had heard Hindustani music played by Moulana Bhaksh on Jalatarang. But he was now impressed with the Karnatak music being played on this instrument. Naturally he was curious to know who was his Guru. Devendrappa promptly pointed at Bidaram Krishnappa and said that Krishnappa was his Guru. A confused Krishnappa could not say anything. Maharaja not only expressed his good feelings and asked him to train the boy well, but also appointed him as Asthana Vidwan! Thus, Devendrappa's training began under Bidaram.

His thirst for music was quenched by the open minded teaching of his Guru. A long awaited dream was fulfilled. In a short period, he was a full fledged musician. HH Krishna Raja Wodeyar encouraged him to visit the important places of South India and perform to exhibit his talent. That was a good opportunity for Devendrappa to establish himself as a good musician. He visited many places and earned name and fame along with many titles like 'Gayaka Rathna', 'Ragalapana Chathura', 'Gaana Kesari', 'Gaanaalankaara' and 'Gaayaka Saarvabhuma'.

HH Jayachamaraja Wodeyar invited him to perform nine different instruments on nine days. Pleased with his multi faceted talent, conferred the title 'Gana Visharada' on Devendrappa during his Vardhanthi celebration. Devendrappa was also sent to China as a member of Indian cultural forum. His music was always bold and had a variety of shades. He could change its colour by blending both the Karnatak and Hindusthani styles. Never did he bother about the com-

ments. His mind would be constantly working on some innovative ideas. Vachanas of Sharanas and the songs of Shishunala Shariff were not in vogue then. He not only tuned them, but would include them in his concerts. Thus, he was the pioneer in popularising the Vachanas. He was an ardent devotee of Lord Hanuman and started celebrating 'Hanuma Jayanthi' Sangeethotsava for ten days. He would perform with a number of accompanists. He also had started 'Sri Maruthi Seva Vadya Mela', an unique orchestra with his students.

His house was a Gurukula. A number of students stayed there and learnt music from him. Chakrakodi Narayana Shastri, Pallavi Chandrapa, MS Ramayya, MS Govindaswamy, his nephew BS Vijayaraghavan are some of his disciples who were known to be very good musicians. Devendrappa was also a composer. He has composed nearly 30 Keerthanas and composed music for a number of Vachanas. After leading a contented life of a musician for 87 years, Gana Visharada Dr. B Devendrappa attained the lotus feet on 6 June 1986.

About the author - Dr. Rama V Bennur is the daughter of Swaramurthy VN Rao and the great granddaughter of Veena Sheshanna. She has written her thesis on Musical Instruments found in ancient Kannada Literature. She has been active in the Mysore Music groups and has been contributing to news papers and magazines for the last 25 years. She has presented many papers in Music Conferences.

Vishaka Hari

Musical Trinity Sri Thyagaraja, Sri Muthuswamy Dikshitar, Sri Shama Shastri and Saint Sri Purandarada

**02, Dec
Sunday**



My Guru, Maharaja Of Music

Dr. R Ganesh, Chennai

It was a sunny Sunday afternoon in Thanjavur town when I was doing my 9th standard in Kalyanasundaram Hr. Sec. School. I just made a casual visit to my friend Giri's house.

When I pressed the calling bell, Giri's mother opened the door and said that he was not there and when I was about to leave the doorstep and then a melodious song leaked through the door ajar. The voice was magnetic and most enthralling. It entered my heart and occupied it fully.

Even after i came back home the mellifluous line was lingering in my ears even during sleep. The next day I met Parimala mami - Giri's mother and asked about the song that I happened to hear the previous day. She played it again for me and it was "Nandagopala...." - kriti

of Muthuswamy Dikshitar in Yaman Kalyani rendered by Shri Maharajapuram Santhanam. Since then my idol was Shri Maharajapuram Santhanam.

My father used to gift me and my sisters for securing high marks in school for every exam. While my sisters opted for ornaments, I opted for a cassette of Santhanam sir and I was thrilled to receive AVM's release of his fantastic music - it had songs 'Sri Mahaganapathe' in natai, 'Paripalaya saraseeruha' in pantuvarali, 'Nannupaalimpa' in Mohanam, 'Ranganathude' in Sowrashtram, 'Evarichirira' in Madyamavathi, 'Srichakraraja' and 'Thungatheeravirajam'. Sri Thirupparkadal Veeraraghavan and Shri Vellore Ramabhadran had accompanied him in the album. I played it countless number of times and got totally imbibed in every bit of it. Soon I got





Maharajapuram Santhanam supported by Dr. R Ganesh

all songs by heart. Slowly I started collecting more and more of his songs and became addicted to his masterly renditions. In my school at every opportunity I sang his songs and also won competitions.

By then I made a sankalpam that I should become his disciple. Many a times I had told my father Shri M Radhakrishnan, an ardent rasika of Carnatic music about this but he used to say that it can be only an utopian dream since Shri Maharajapuram Santhanam Sir was already at the peak of fame. My father made it a point to take me to his concerts in Thiruvaiyaru and also in The Madras Music Academy in Chennai. Every time he used to introduce me to him and also express my desire to the Maestro.

In the year 1986 I wrote the entrance exam for Veterinary medicine and I was allotted a seat in Namakkal Veterinary College. I pestered my uncle (chittappa) Shri M Chidambaram who had influence in the State Government to get me a seat in Madras Veterinary College, so that I could realise my dream. My uncle's efforts paid and I was allotted a seat in Madras Veterinary College and I shifted my base to Chennai leaving my family in Thanjavur.

I was staying with my another uncle Shri Sundaram at Ashok Nagar in Chennai. Within 2 days of our reaching Chennai acceding to my request, my father took me to Shri Santhanam

Sir's house at Sivagnanam Road, T Nagar in the morning. I was thrilled to enter his house and felt that my goal was at an arm's length. At that time his son said that Sir was to sing in Krishna Gana Sabha that day evening and he was giving voice rest. I insisted if I could just take his blessings... I was allowed. I took the blessings of my Idol and left the house with disappointment. We were trying to get his appointments but in vain. My father, by then, lost hope and returned to Thanjavur. He also asked our family friend to take me to another musician who was a great vidwan and good teacher. Though I met him at his house, I was only thinking of No.12, Sivagnanam Road which was my "NO.10, Downing street"

On a Sunday suddenly I barged into the house of Sri Santhanam Sir and I saw Dr. J Balasubramanian chatting with him in the hall and also some family members. Sir recognised me and asked me to sing. I sang "Narayana ninna" followed by "Upacharamulanu...." the adi tala kriti of Saint Thiagaraja in Bhairavi both of which I learnt from his cassettes. On hearing this Sir said "naalaikku vaa....naane unakku class edukkarEn" (come tomorrow and I myself will take the class for you). I could not believe.....I was feeling as if I was on Mount Everest. I wanted to shout and tell this great news. I had to control my joy.

My father on hearing this could not believe this. The next day I went to Sir's house with fruits and thamboolam and he taught Ata Tala varnam "Vanajaakshi..." in Kalyani and he asked to come daily and as days passed I could see that he was impressed with my progress in music but he had the knack of always shifting my target a little beyond my reach as he taught me a song. As days passed by he asked me to stay in his house and sometimes when I left for my uncle's house, he used to say that I could wear his shirt and it will do the job of the dhoti also for me as I was very small and boyish.

Within a month of my entry into his house, I could see that his house was made of music where I could drink, eat and breath music. His sons and daughter would be singing upstairs and



my Guru at the ground floor. I watched and imbibed in every bit of his life during that time.

As days passed, he chose me as his vocal accompaniment and it was on 9th August 1987, at Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, I ascended to the concert platform as his vocal support. He tested me on the stage by allowing me to sing some of the difficult sangathis in songs like 'Dayavillaya Dayalo' in Karaharapriya and 'Ninnanodi' in Thodi. That was a milestone in my life. It was like icing on the cake. Learning from him itself was a great dreamand sitting behind him and performing was beyond my imagination.

I had the good fortune to sing along with him at prestigious platforms like The Madras Music Academy, Narada Gana Sabha, Krishna Gana Sabha, Tamil Isai sangam in Chennai and also in famous platforms like the Bangalore Gayana Samaja, Delhi Siri Fort Auditorium, Mumbai Shanmukhananda Hall among other places. At many places I was taught songs in the morning at the place we were staying and evening was put to test on the stage and with the grace of God I succeeded.

Whenever he went abroad he used to write to me letters without fail. A habitual non-shopper, he himself went to a market in Dubai to buy a wrist watch for me.

As I stayed at his house I learnt not only the art of singing but also the art of conversing, public relations, teaching, charity etc. for he was a master of all these great qualities.

I was the track singer for many of his albums like HMV's 'Govinda ninna namave chanda', AVM's 'Saravana bhava', Dasara Padagalu, Bhajans of Swami Dayananda etc.

One day when I was attending my cousin's marriage, sir sent a message through a friend asking me to come home immediately. It was at 9 pm when he handed over a set of rough sketches of 8 new songs and the next day morning he asked me to sing those songs in AVM studio with the orchestration by Sri L Krishnan (father of mridangist Arun Prakash) and the recording ended at 10 pm with the last song being liked by everyone which was the historic 'Bho Sambho'.

Soon, apart from track singing, he encouraged me to do editing of his audio works, prepare lay out for inlay cards etc. Every time I returned from college, he used to ask me "inniki ethanai maattai konnai?" (how many cows did you kill today)

In march 1992 when I finished my Veterinary Medicine course and got the registration from council that entitled me to prefix my name with "Dr." he was overwhelmed with joy. I was immediately invited to join service but he asked me to take up music full time and at his command I did so.

A great human being, he always made me take breakfast or lunch or dinner sitting along his side to see that I always had a good meal. He was my Mother, Father, Guru and God during my golden period with him.

When HMV decided to launch the album of Thillanas of Shri Lalgudi Jayaraman with the orchestration of Shri MS Viswanathan, Sir asked me to learn the Thillanas and asked me to sing the track in the recording. After the recording, he said "I am proud of you"

An equally supportive Mami (sir's wife) said "nee nanna munnukku varuvai" (You will come up very well). Later the original voice was given by my sir in the recording. I had finished the editing and a date was fixed by Sir for listening the final work and approving for release - it was 24th June 1992.

On the night of 22nd June myself, Sri Ramu (Sir's cousin) and baby Akila left Chennai for Kumbakonam where he had arrived from Coimbatore with mami. On 23rd June at 4.30 pm the concert was fixed at Swami Dayananda Matriculation School, Manjakkudy. The accompaniments were Nagai Sri Muralidharan and Trichy Sri Harikumar. My father had come from Thanjavur to listen to the concert. While proceeding to the platform, sir asked "Ganeshaa... Why don't you also start individual performance?" It was jerk for me and I asked why he asked so. But he was very particular and on the stage he asked me to render the Meera Bhajan 'Metho Savariyaa' solo and thus performed my arangetram.

After the concert we went to Uppiliappankoil and as there was no place in car for me, in a rare gesture he made me sit on his lap and it was the greatest moment of my life. From there we went to the house of Swamiji and proceeded to Hotel Rayas where from all of us were preparing to leave by car the next day morning. At 10 pm. when I was massaging his legs, suddenly he told me 'Ganeshha, nee busla kilambu' (Ganeshha you leave by bus). Wonderstruck I asked if I had done anything wrong. He said 'no ippo kilambu busla' (No, leave right now by bus). When I was about to move he asked me to do Namaskaram for him and I left the hotel and reached Chennai at 6 am the next day but by then my Guru had been snatched away at Kooteripattu by a heavenly conspiracy. The car they were travelling in had met with a tragic road accident.

But his soul continues to bless me till this day and if I am somebody today its because of the Great Maharaja of Music whose place is till vacant in the Field of Music. He lived for music and his music lived for him.

(The author is a musician, nama sankeertanam artist and a Veterinary Doctor)

Vignesh Ishwar (Vocal), Vittal Rangan (Violin), Akshay Anand (Mridangam), Anirudh Athreya (Kanjari) performing at SR-LKM on 30 Sep 2018



Kunnakudi, the departmental store

CP Chikkanna, Bangalore

"How come you are a violinist par excellence, a music director of eminence, a film producer, a researcher, an able organiser besides huge fan following that includes the Country's President, Prime minister, Chief Ministers etc.?" a barrage of questions greeted Kunnakudi Vaidyanathan by journalists after his violin recital at Kuvempu Kalakshetra, Shimoga under the aegis of Bhadravathi station of AIR in the early 1990's. "I am a departmental store where you can pick and choose whatever you want" a cool reply sent a roar of laughter among those present on the stage.

I was with him on a mission to mobilise funds from donors for constructing his pet project of a magnificent memorial to Saint Thyagaraja at Thiruvaiyaru a town in Thanjavur district in the state of Tamil Nadu

Born as the second son of Sanskrit/Vedic scholar, a musician, and a Harikatha exponent Ramaswamy Sastri in 1935, Kunnakudi Vaidyanathan was highly allergic to music and school studies that he discontinued before completing 2nd standard. He was initiated into violin playing by his father owing to the embarrassment of his daughters Subbulakshmi and Sundaralakshmi who were compelled to perform without the violin accompaniment in a vocal duet concert due to the absence of violinist Haridas Ramachandra (family friend) in a festival concert near Karaikudi.

This incident is nothing but divine's blessings recounted Kunnakudi Vaidyanathan during our interactions for a profile on him in Kannada Prabha's weekly magazine sheet from Bangalore. When he was 12, doyen Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar visited his friend Ramaswamy Sastri on

Kunnakudi Vaidyanathan in a concert



his way to nearby Karaikudi town. Sastrigal ordered his son to play before his guest and seek his blessings. Iyengar advised the lad to practice constantly and to accompany him during the special concert in Karaikudi Murugan's Temple on Vaikunta Ekadasi festival with Karaikudi Muthu Iyer's Mridangam accompaniment.

Ariyakudi was so large hearted that he presented all the songs the lad was familiar with in his concert and encouraged him. What little name and fame, I have earned, I dedicate them at the holy feet of my mentor and the doyen said Vaidyanathan.

Since his early days, Vaidyanathan was attracted towards film music. Owning a radio was a luxury in those days. He went to films in the nearby Karaikudi Town and precisely practiced catchy film songs on the violin. At the age of 18, after the death of his father, he joined noted film director G Ramanathan at Modern studios in Salem as "C" grade violinist and gradually promoted to "A" grade. He followed Ramanathan to Madras and joined HMV, the leading recording company and later became it's music director. During his stint with HMV, he came in to close contact with leading producers Meyappa Chettiar, BR Pantulu, Chinnappa Devar, K Balachander, noted music directors Vishwanathan Ramamurthy, GK Venkatesh etc., He also came in contact with noted actors MG Ramachandran, Sivaji Ganesan, Bhanumathi, Jayalalitha etc. and composed music to over 8000 songs in various categories like Karnatak, light music, folk music, film songs, instrumental ensemble etc. Of all these, it is Carnatic music which is supreme and mother of all forms he declared. My stint at HMV provided me lot of opportunity to improve my creativity in music he averred.

His violin solo concerts were always divided into two segments aiming at the gallery, ensuring satisfaction to different sections amongst the audience. The first half pure classical music whereas in the second session, it was light music, film songs and audience requests etc. With broad smile and abhinaya, he would facially interact with the audience by his abhinaya while his fingers freely traversed along the strings. It

was akin to tight rope walk in a circus show! His command and mastery over the instrument, bowing and fingering techniques were unique and highly indisputable carrying the stamp of his authority which listener could easily identify! He averred that violin maestro the great Mysore T Chowdaiah was his role model and source of inspiration that he always placed him on high pedestal. What all Chowdaiah achieved on 7 strings violin, he was able to accomplish a fraction of it on his 4 strings violin he averred.

Sometimes, his exploration of major ragas was within contours, parameters and methodical but once his imagination reached its Crescendo, he would explode into a different mood producing various sangathis, sound patterns traversing to taara sthayee defying classicism by the twangs, producing the melodies as if Flute, Veena, Sitar, etc. carrying his audience to ecstasy greeted by a thunderous applause. In the later stages of the concert, he would choose to play Veda gosha '*Shamno Vishnu Sham Varunaha*'.

Answering my query with regard to post Thyagaraja composers and their important contributions to Carnatic music, he reeled out long list of names starting from Patnam Subramanya Iyer upto GN Balasubramanyam of recent times. He hailed the compositions of Mysore Vasudevacharya for the rich raga and sahitya bhava and fluent Telugu language in his lyrics. He rated Papanasham Sivan as the best among all post Thyagaraja composers, who was hailed as Tamil Thyagayya. When I sought his justification, he quoted several compositions of Sivan and compared them with those of Thyagaraja. He quoted the composition of Thyagaraja "*Ksheenamai Tiruga*" in the raga Mukhari which is in the arohana, whereas Sivan's "*Shivakama Sundari*" also in Mukhari is in avarohana! Likewise there is Thyagaraja's "*Ninnuvina Naamadhendu*" in the raga Navarasa Kannada which starts from avarohana and in contrast to this Sivan has presented "*Naanoru Vilayattu bommeyaa*" arohana! If the Saint wanted ten thousand eyes to relish the beauty of Lord Venkateshwara "*Venkatesha Ninnusevimpa padhi Velu kannulu gavalinayya*" in the raga Madhyamavathi, Sivan required one crore eyes to enjoy the beauty of Lord kapaleshwarar,



Ex Chief Minister Jayalalitha presenting a diamond-studded violin to Kunnakudi Vaidyanathan

the presiding deity of Mylapore in Madras (*kaana kan koti vendum*) in the raga Khambodhi, a favourite of Madurai Mani Iyer. Similarly, he quoted Thyagaraja's "*Samaja varagamana*" and Sivan's "*Saama Gaana lolane*" in Hindola raga. He hailed Sivan's skill of using swaraaksharas in his numerous compositions.

Other area of Vaidyanathan's interest was musical therapy. When he was a boy, due to diabetes, his father went into a coma. Any amount of treatment, medication, japa, tapas and prayers were futile to restore the patient's health to normalcy. Finally at the suggestions of family physician, Vaidyanathan started playing the raga Bhairavi before the patient every day and night. One day, due to slip of finger, an apaswara emerged. The patient uttered "hoom" as an expression of his anguish to the joy of the family and gradually he regained his health.

Vaidyanathan sought the co operation of medical practitioners to try music therapy in patients suffering from hyper tension, depression, post operative treatment using ragas like Dharbari, Kannada, Ananda Bhargavi, Reeti Gowla, Sindhu Bhairavi etc. and achieved remarkable success.

Former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalitha was a disciple of Vaidyanathan. To mark the silver jubilee of his violin solo career, a colourful

function was arranged by his fans and well wishers in Sadguru Gnanananda Hall in Madras in 1992. It was presided over by CM Jayalalitha with noted film music director MS Vishwanathan, Maharajapuram Santanam, Veena maestro Chitti Babu, myself and a Sabha secretary from Kerala were the guests to felicitate him. The function was graced by the entire cabinet ministers, MLA's, senior officials and film actors. I was allotted 15 minutes time to speak in Kannada, Maharajapuram Santanam in Tamil, Chitti Babu in Telugu and the person from Kerala in Malayalam which the Chief Minister heard with rapt attention. Sudha Raghunathan rendered the invocation. In her speech, the Chief Minister's described Vaidyanathan as her revered Guru who not only taught her the song "*Amma enral Arul*" but also got it sung by her for a film. She mentioned how she was encouraged by her mentor MG Ramachandran, the crisis/ordeals she encountered while discharging her duties, maintaining law and order etc. and how the song played by Vaidyanathan "*Nagu momu galaneni*" in Abheri relieved her of tension. She appointed him as the Dean of all the Govt. Music Colleges through-out Tamil Nadu with Ministerial status and also as secretary of Tamil Nadu Govt. Isai, ilal (literature), Nataka manram with noted actress Bhanumathi as the chair person.



Kunnakudi Vaidyanathan paying tributes to Saint Thyagaraja at Thiruvaiyaru

During his tenure, Veena Maestro Dr. Mysore Doreswamy Iyengar and Suma Sudheendra were conferred the Tamil Nadu State award "Kalaimaamani". He started 'Raga research centre' in Chennai and arranged periodic lecture demonstrations by eminent musicians and scholars with regard to the evolution of ragas, their nomenclature, powers and effect of these ragas on human beings, animals and nature, emphasising research to investigate the origin and period of the age old ragas etc. and explore the rich cultural heritage bequeathed to us by the past generations. The Chief Minister allotted him a piece of land in Chennai besides financial assistance to pursue his research and studies.

He conceptualised a mega event 'Raga Vaibhava', a thematic programme with the active participation of over 90 musicians in various disciplines under his direction to demonstrate the effect of various swaras, their powers, importance, beauties and how various composers employed these ragas to bring out the wonderful universally hailed music productions like Thyagaraja Pancharathnas, Muthuswamy Dikshithar and Shama Sastry's masterly compositions, etc. conveying their message to listeners.

One such programme was arranged under the aegis of Bangalore's Sree Rama Seva Mandali in 2006 which received mixed reactions from the huge audience.

In 1982, he succeeded Balamuralikrishna as the secretary of Sri Thyaga Brahma Aradhana Sabha at Thiruvaiyaru with Madurai Somasundaram and strived very hard for conducting Thyagaraja aradhana successfully by ensuring financial assistance from Central Sangeet Natak Akademi, enrolling rich sponsors and philanthropists for mass feeding during the aradhana, live telecast of Aradhana Concerts by Doordarshan etc. With the consent of President Moopanar, he prepared a master plan for the construction of a memorial for Thyagaraja at a huge cost of Rs. Three crores, purely out of public contributions. It consisted of a Naadha dhyana Mantapa, saptha swara vasal (doors), a meditation hall, a library, museum, a dining hall, 72 rooms representing 72 mela karta ragas with the name of the raga etched on each room in accordance with the serial number of melakarta raga. After the death of Moopanar, the Sabha shelved the memorial project and converted it into a marriage choultry besides demolishing the old



Kunnakudi Vaidyanathan receiving honours from Ex PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee

house of the Saint and replacing it by a new structure after selling the ancient lands bequeathed to the Sabah by donors brushing aside his opposition and objections.

In 1995, he took over the trusteeship of Bangalore Natarathnamna trust from Abhayambike with a controversy he bought it from her. He refused to transfer the trust property that includes the saint's Samadhi and the building to the Sabha which created a lot of obstacles and pin pricks in discharging his duties that compelled him to resign the secretaryship which was rejected by the general body meeting.

His abhisheka to the Thyagaraja idol was a feast to the eyes. He would carry holy Cauvery water on his head from the river around 3 am to the tune of Nagaswara. He used about 50 litres of milk, 35 litres curds, 25 kgs honey, 25 tender coconut water, sandal wood paste besides holy ash with the Mahamangalaarathi around dawn followed by the second abhisheka by the Thyagaraja Shishya parampara trust and lastly the third abhisheka by the Sabha.

His another important contribution is the presentation of 13 episode Television serial 'Sangeethaaradhane' produced by him for Bangalore Doordarshan in early 1990's,

It was directed by Pattabhiraman (Pattu), younger of the famed directors duo Krishnan Panju who directed Sivaji Ganesan's maiden film

"Paraashakthi" in the early 1950. I was his Kannada mentor for his conversations in the serial that included Panel discussions about the origin of music to "Saama Veda", creation of new ragas by mixing the arohana of one raga with the avarohana of another raga, highlights and the hidden messages of Thyagaraja in his Pancharathnas, their meaning etc. with senior local musicians that included Veena Maestro Dr. Mysore Doreswamy Iyengar and others.

Different Temples in and around Bangalore were selected for shooting some of these presentations employing film techniques of double and triple acting in which the violinist was in dual role both as the main player and his own accompanist, playing violin trio in tandem (triple acting), presentation of mahudi song employing live snakes to give it a natural effect in the precincts of Dodda Basavanna Temple in Bangalore, the grand finale in Vishwa Roopa Dharshan Temple of Vijaya Vittala near Nelamangala provided a beautiful ambience for the songs "Krishna Nee Begane Baaro" and the concluding item "Rama Mantrava Japiso" in the raga Jonpuri popularised by Nedanuri Krishna Murthy. This serial was well received by the viewers with the Bangalore Doordarshan receiving over 500 letters requesting for continuation of the serial that resulted in Vaidyanathan's concert fee crossing over Rs. One lakh with an average 2 to 3 concerts in Karnataka every month!



Kunnakudi Vaidyanathan receiving Padmashri award from Ex President Abdul Kalam

During his long innings of over 60 years, he has brought out over 400 audios and video cassettes. His audio cassette "Cauvery" for children was a marvellous technical extravaganza presenting different course of the river starting from Talakaveri upto its merger in the Bay of Bengal. One could experience the giggling flow of the river with the birds chirping, Temple bells, Veda paarayana on the banks of the river by the youngsters, roaring of the water falls etc. wherein his imagination has reached his peak winning him the coveted national award by AIR as the best instrumental music production.

Inspired by the success of films Shankarabharanam and Sindhu Bhairavi, he produced the film "Thodi Ragam" with TN Seshagopalan as the hero and main singer which flopped in the box office. His next film 'Isai Chakravarthy' with Rananikanth as hero was dropped after the matinee idol withdrew following the poor response to Thodi Ragam.

He had a permanent and trusted team of over 10 percussionists in various disciplines along with a permanent amplification arrangement set. He treated his percussive team as his own siblings and ensured that they received the

same treatment and hospitality by the organisers accorded to him. He helped them financially to have their own house emulating the late Sirkazhi Govindarajan.

In his long innings, Vaidyanathan was decorated with several awards and rewards that include Padmashri, Central Sangeet Natak Akademi award, Tamil Nadu State award Kalaimamani, Honorary doctorate by Anna University, Chennai, Sangithakala Shikamani, Mysore T Chowdaiah National award by the Govt. of Karnataka, T Chowdaiah award by the Academy of Music, Bangalore, a golden violin presented by his fans and friends etc., the list is very large.

He started a school Kunnakudi Gurukula and trained many students and some of them shared the dais with him in his last few concerts. In 2008 July he succumbed to a massive heart attack bringing an end to a colourful era in the history of Karnatak music.

Purandaragurum Vande

Sachi R Sachidananda, Bangalore

A scholarly essay on the Saint Composer Purandaradasa begins with this prayer:

Vyāṣabōdhita-śiṣya haridāsa-kulavarya |
nimma nenevude puṇya pāḍuvude śubhakārya
||

Translation: Oh noble sir, you are the disciple of preceptor Saint Vyasaraya. You are the foremost among the lineage of Haridasas. Your remembrance is our good fortune, and to sing your compositions is our auspicious duty!

This prayer pretty much captures the mood created in this concert conducted by Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira recently. Titled “Purandaragurum Vande”, the concert was presented by a team of redoubtable artistes led by Vidwan RK Shriramkumar, on Saturday, July 7, 2018 in the Bangalore Gayana Samaja auditorium.

Vid. RK Shriramkumar was vocally supported by Vid. Amritha Murali, Vid. Ramakrishnan Murthy and Vid. Bharati Ramasubban. Vid. Charulata Ramanujam was on the violin, Vid. K. Arun Prakash was on the mridangam and Vid. Anirudh Athreya was on the Kanjira.

The artistes were in perfect synchrony, a tribute to their hours of practice. That the Guru on the stage was himself the tunesmith for many songs was an advantage. The songs were presented in ragas of eternal classical charm. The concert was structured without the usual cutcheri embellishments. But the fare was indeed rich, and we did not miss the usual alapanas, niraval and swaras or tani avartanam.

The list of items presented will give an idea of the grand tapestry of music we enjoyed for more than 3 hours:

1. *Sadguru gajāsyavānī, Śankarābharaṇa, ślōka*
2. *Jaya jaya cinmudrakare, Śankarābharaṇa, ślōka*
3. *Saccidānandarūpāya, Māyāmālavagauḷa, ślōka*
4. *Manmanōbhīṣṭha dātāram, Behāg, ślōka*
5. *Śaranu Śaranu Benakane, Behāg, Mīsrachāpu*
6. *Dāsarendare Purandaradāsarayya, Śrī Vyāsarāya, Yadukula Kāmbhōji, Khanḍachāpu*
7. *Ādaddella Olitē Ayitu, Pūrvīkalyāṇī, Adi*
8. *Achyutānanta Gōvinda, Sulādi, Rāmakriyā, Jhampa, Matya, Dhruva, Ata, Eka talas.*



9. *Muyyakke muyya tīritu, Nādanāmakriyā, Ādi (trīśra)*
10. *Śaranu Vēnkataramaṇa, Sāranga, Miśrachāpu*
11. *Kaṇṇāre kaṇḍe nā achyutanā, Athana, Miśrachāpu*
12. *Mahadādidēva namō, Mōhana, Miśrachāpu*
13. *Karunānidhiyē īsha, Kurinji, Miśrachāpu*
14. *Kandēna Uḍupiya Kṛṣṇarāyanna, Kāmbhoji, Miśrachāpu*
15. *Rāma embō eraḍakṣarada Mahimeyanu, Kēdāra, Gaula, Kēdāragaula, Khandachāpu*
16. *Baḍavarolage (Uḡābhoga)*
17. *Naranādamēle Harināma, Nādanāmakriyā, Ādi*
18. *Enthā Celuvage, Bhīmplās, Ādi*
19. *Hari Citta Satya, Jaunpuri, Miśrachāpu*
20. *Nīnyāko Ninna Hangyāko, Jinjhūti, Punnā-gavarāli, Nādanāmakriyā, Kurinji, Kāpi, Yamunā Kalyāṇi, Sindhu Bhairavi, Ādi*
21. *Bhāgyādā Lakṣmi Bārammā, Madhyamāvātī, Ādi*

Vid. Shriramkumar did a commendable job of introducing the theme of each song, and its context. He gave also a brief sketch of Purandaradasa's early life as a miserly merchant, the divine intervention that triggered his transformation, his philosophy, and the songs he sang spontaneously in front of various kshetras he visited. His musical and literary contributions were also described. We were transported alternately to glorious kshetras, into the ecstatic devotional world of the composer, and even into the inner sanctum of Purandaradasa's close dialogues with Lord Krishna, Purandara Vitthala. I share here the swirl of my thoughts going on since the concert, "Purandaragurum Vande".

The golden age of south Indian history was the three centuries of Vijayanagara rule. World travellers have documented the mythical grandeur of the empire: its fabulous wealth, its openness and the continued patronage of art and architecture. The historian, KA Nilakanta Sastri writes, "that today, South India is still adorned by a large number of great temples that enshrine the artistic achievements of successive generations of Hindu master-builders...furnish-

es some measure of the success that attended the efforts of Vijayanagar and its rulers."

The saint composer Purandaradasa (1485-1565 CE) was very much a product of this cultural milieu. First as the gems and jewellery merchant, Srinivasa Nayaka, with the sobriquet "Nava-koti Narayana". Then after his transformation, as a spiritual disciple whom his guru Sri Vysasaraya described as the exemplar among Haridasas. Then as the Karnataka Sangita Pitamaha who standardised the pedagogy of our music system as well as structured the Sapta Suladi Tala system and the misra/khanda chapu talas. His body of work was prolific (4.75 lakh songs!) and encyclopaedic (in devotional content as well as social commentary). Much of it has been fortunately preserved by successive generations of Haridasas, musicians, and rasikas.

Sri Purandaradasa was a very learned man. In the very first song that was presented, he describes Ganesha as "Ekavakya Pravina". This is an intricate theme in Mimamsa developed by sage Jaimini. Many other songs were replete with mythological and scriptural references. In his song, "Dasarendare Purandaradasarayya", his Guru himself extols him thus:

nītiyellavanaritu nigamavēdyana nitya
vātasutanallihana varṇisutali
gītanartanadinda kṛṣṇanna pūjisuva



pūtātma purandara dāsarayya

Translation: Having mastered all the dharma shastras, describing through his songs the One realised through the Vedas and who dwells eternally in the heart of the devotee (Hanuman), through music and dance did Purandaradasa worship Krishna; blessed was he indeed!

In the Suladi presented, we were given a grand tour of a musical composition in Ramakriya (corresponds to present-day Pantuvarali). This suladi is in five talas, with weighty metre and meaning. It describes beautifully the various avatars of Vishnu, and goes on to depict the image of Lord Venkateshwara of Tirupati from the lotus feet to the gem-studded crown, with chakra, “vedamaya shankha”, the hand showing “ide Vaikuntha”, and so on.

Purandaradasa’s Suladis have been cited by Tulajaji Maharaja in Sangita Saramrita (1735) and by Subbarama Dikshitar in Sangita Sampradaya Pradarshini (1904). This Ramakriya suladi has been notated by Subbarama Dikshitar.

The song in Yadukula Kambhoji was on the Yantroddharaka Hanuman of Hampi, installed by Sri. Vyasaraaya. Vid. Shriramkumar’s tune fills the song with a spirit of celebration of the world’s earliest superman, the Mahavira, Hanuman.

The song in Mohana described the avatara of Ahobila Narasimha. The adbhuta rasa of the Lord’s appearance that shook all creation has been captured by the saint composer vividly. The musical presentation matched the imagery.

The song presented in Kambhoji is a masterpiece, fully showcasing the descriptive powers of the saint composer. We experience every facet of the Udupi kshetra from the waves of the sea to the Anantheshwara temple, the eight mathas and the Madhva sarovara. The description of Krishna is simply delectable. This song can easily be the grand central piece in any Carnatic concert. It has elegant language, musical structure allowing for several sangatis, and a scope for lovely niraval.

In Muiyakke Muiya, Purandaradasa narrates how he lost his temper at Vitthala who had come to him in the guise of a young attendant. The Lord wants to teach him a lesson and subjects him to great humiliation by being falsely accused of stealing the deity’s ornament, gifting the ornament at night to a devadasi. As the dasa is tied to a pillar in Pandharapur and whipped in public, he realises that the Lord is settling scores. Purandaradasa taunts the Lord, “if you indeed want the title of Bhaktavatsala, should you not be at the beck and call of your devotees? How can you take offence at a small slight from me, and settle scores (as I am your devotee, after all!)? ”

Vid. Shriramkumar drew our attention to the metrical beauties of great compositions, especially Dwitiyakshara Prasa and Antyakshara Prasa. He cited the works of the Trinity, Tevaram, Divya Prabhandam, and showed the prasa structure. The prasa structure in Purandaradasa’s compositions were also highlighted with many examples.

The concert had time-honoured compositions like “Dasarendare”, “Adaddella”, “Ninyako”, and “Bhagyada Lakshmibaramma”. It had musically very rich compositions like the suladi, “Kannare Kande”, “Naranadamele”, “Rama embo”. It had meditative songs like “Karunanidhiye Isha”, “Hari Citta Satya”. It is safe to say every rasika in the audience was deeply moved by the worshipful, melodious, and contemplative atmosphere created by the concert.

Vid. Shriramkumar enjoys great respect among today’s top musicians for his lineage, considerable musical accomplishments, compositional skills, evident spiritual fervour, and a researcher’s bent of mind. He has also groomed highly competent disciples.

For every Carnatic rasika, “Purandaragurum Vande” is indeed a great celebration. Many of us that thronged the Gayana Samaja auditorium that day will savour memories of the concert for a very long time.

Sadashiva Brahmendra Vaibhavam

Rajani Arjun Shankar, Chennai

Sadashiva Brahmendra has an exalted place among the Jnanis and Rajayogis who have traversed this land. He is venerated on par with the Rishis of yore, such as Shukabrahmam, by ascetics as well as ordinary people. His life history is well-known. Along with the story of his renunciation at a young age, his astounding scholarship, and his Guru bhakti which made him give up speaking altogether, many miraculous events are also recounted, indicating the Ashta-Siddhis being at his disposal. By virtue of the many things he has done, such as, consecrating temples and installing Yantras, providing guidance to the rulers of Thanjavur and Pudukkottai, composing devotional Keertanas and Stotrams and writing profound books on Yoga Shastra and Advaita, Brahmendra has provided compassionate support to people at every level of spiritual Sadhana.

Kanchi Mahasvami has described Vishnu and Shiva thus: They represent the first and final stage respectively of liberation from the world. A burnt object first turns black, retaining its form. Further incineration makes it white, formless ash. Vishnu and Shiva are indeed black and white like this. Hence spiritual activities which are part of the world, part of our usual life, are connected more to Vishnu, such as Hari-katha, Hari-nama-sankeertanam etc. while those that are followed after giving up worldly activities are often described as Shiva-yoga, Shiva-Jnana etc.

On reading his works, one could say that this subtle differentiation can be seen in Sadashiva Brahmendra's approach too. His Keertanams are mostly in praise of Vishnu, exhorting one to chant the names of Krishna or drink the nectar of Rama's name. His Stotrams, as well as invocations at the start of works on Advaita, are on Shiva. The Stotrams also contain Advaitic thoughts. For instance, in the Navavarna Mala he

says he realised his real self, after Shiva's merciful glance fell on him.

Although a great Avadhuta and Advaita Jnani, Brahmendra advocates the path of Nama-sankeertanam, i.e. repeated chanting of the names of God, since this path is easily accessible to all people, in every station of life. This path does not demand that one should renounce the world or practice severe austerities. It is therefore considered the most effective way to salvation in Kaliyuga, the age we live in.

In Shiva Manasika Puja, he describes the impossibility of performing ritualistic Puja to Shiva. How can one meditate on one beyond thought, or prostrate to one who is all around! The futility of some other aspects of Puja such as Madhuparka, Dhupa or Tambulam, are brought out with subtle wordplay. How can one offer Tambulam (betel leaf preparation) to Him who is Sumukha-raga (which this means "red-lipped" indicating he has no use for Tambulam that reddens the lips)? But then Sumukha-raga also means one who has a smiling, pleasant countenance. How can one offer Sumana-Anjali (handful of flowers) to the one who is Sumanah-shekhara (this can mean 'one who already has flowers on his head', or 'the head of the Devas')? Such puns provide an interesting variation from the other aspects of Puja, which have factual limitations, such as offering food to the ever-satisfied one, or fanning one who knows no tiredness.

The declaration of staunch Shiva-bhakti in Verse 26, where he says "Enough of those gods who don't carry a deer, don't ride a bull, don't bear Ganga, and did not destroy Manmatha's pride", is greatly similar to the verses 34 and 35 of Shiva Bhujangam of Adi Shankaracharya. Advaitins see all the gods as one. Yet, when one particular

form is being praised, that deity is exalted as supreme.

The use of the seven grammatical case-endings (Vibhaktis) in seven consecutive verses (Verses 16-22), reminds us of the Vibhakti Kritis of Muthuswamy Dikshitar. Similarly, in the Navavarna Mala (Verse 6), his instructions to his head to bow to Shiva, hands to worship Him and speech to speak His praises are reminiscent of Appar Swamigal's Tiru-anga-malai ("thalaiye nee vanangai").

One of the most amazing incidents demonstrating the greatness of Sadashiva Brahmendra, is the visit to his Samadhi at Nerur of Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharati Mahaswamigal, around the beginning of the 20th Century. The Jagadguru, the 33rd Peethadhipati of Sringeri, felt the presence of an unseen power pulling him while passing nearby and therefore went to Nerur. He spent a few days in meditation there and had a vision of the saint. He has composed two beautiful Stotrams on Brahmendra, Sri Sadashivendra Pancharatna Stotram and Sri Sadashivendra Stava. The latter has 45 verses and substantiates by mention, many of the miracles that are narrated in the life of Sadashiva Brahmendra.

There are also many Kritis in praise of Sadashiva Brahmendra composed by Meesu Krishna Iyer, in the past century. Some of the well-known ones are 'Paramapavana' (Ranjani) and 'Daya-payonidhe' (Jaganmohini). Some others are 'Karunarasa-jaladhe' (Abhogi), 'Bhavaye Paramagurum' (Hamsanandi), 'Brahmanandame' (Reeti Gaula), 'Paramatmani' (Bhuvanagandhari), 'Nee pada-darshanamu' (Malayamarutam) and 'Hamsaham' (Shankarabharanam).

These kritis, as well as the earlier-mentioned Stotrams by the Jagadguru, are currently rendered as a part of the Guru Vandanam in the Bhajana Sampradaya Paddhati, and this is followed by singing of Sadashiva Brahmendra's Keertanams.

The Kritis or Keertanams of Sadashiva Brahmendra, though only 23 are available to us, form a part of the compositions that are performed

in Carnatic Music concerts too. The Vaggeyakara Caritramu of Subbarama Dikshitar gives a brief summary of the life of Brahmendra and mentions that his Sanskrit Keertanams are very popular. As mentioned, most of these extol

Excerpted from 'Compositions of Sri Sadasiva Brahmendra, Semmangudi Srinivasier Golden Jubilee Trust Publication, 1990'

About 55 years ago, when Sri Achuthananda Saraswathi Swamigal, better known as "Varahur Periyaval" was staying in Semmangudi, I had the privilege of paying my homage to him. At the Swamigal's bidding that I should sing the Kirthanas of Sri Sadashiva Brahmendral, I started learning the songs from some Vidwans who knew the kritis. For some pieces, I myself set the "varnamettu" and they were regularly published in the "Swadesamitran" weekly. They are now being published in book form for the first time.

These Kritis, blessed by elders and heartily welcomed by rasikas whenever I rendered them, I respectfully dedicate to the sacred memory of Sri Varahur Periyaval who first impelled me to sing the Kritis of Sri Brahmendral.

Semmangudi R Srinivasa Iyer

Sri Achuthananda Saraswati Swamigal



Vishnu. A few of them are philosophical and advisory in nature, such as ‘Chinta nasti kila’ or ‘Sthirata nahi nahire’. There are several Kritis which describe Advaitic thoughts and experience, as felt by a Jnani, such as ‘Sarvam Brahma-mayam’ or ‘Purna-bodhoham’. One can see similar proclamation of the Advaitic experience in some of Muthuswamy Dikshitar Kritis. One such example is ‘Sri Kamalambikaya’ (Sankarabharanam), where he states “Saccidhananda paripurna brahmasmi”.

Scholars have opined that one can see the influence of Brahmendra’s Kritis ‘Manasa Sanchara re’ and ‘Khelati mama hrdaye’, in Tyagaraja’s kritis ‘Manasa Sanchara re’ (Punnagavarali) and ‘Nadachi nadachi’ (Kharaharapriya).

All the Kritis of Sadashiva Brahmendra contain very lofty thoughts in mostly simple and straight-forward language, making a direct appeal to the heart. One of the interesting features in the contents, are references to Puranic personages who we rarely see mentioned in other Kritis in the Carnatic Music compositions. Kuchela, Jambavan, Akrura, the wrestler Chanura, the demons Mali and Sumali, and the Vanaras Gavaya and Gavaksha some examples. They are also filled with pleasing alliterations, especially Antya-prasa. To take an example, “Bhajare Raghuviram” we find:

bhaja rE raghuvlraM mAnasa bhaja rE bahudhl-
ram
ambudaDimbha viDambana gAtraM ambuda
vAhana nandana dAtram
kuSika sutArpita kArmuka vEdaM vaSi hrdayAm-
buja bhAskara pAdam
kuNDala maNDana maNDita karNaM kuNDali
mancakam-adbhuta varNam
daNDita sunda sutAdika vlraM maNDita manuku-
lamAshraya Saurim
paramahamsam akhilAgama vEdyaM parama
vEda makuTI pratipAdyam

(A closer look would show us that the first words of each line, such as daNDita and maN-Dita, also rhyme)

In the past century, stalwarts in the field of Carnatic Music like Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, M Balamuralikrishna and Voleti Venkateswarlu have rendered the Kritis in various beautiful Ragas. Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer has dedicated the book of these Kritis brought out by him, to Sri Achuthananda Saraswathi Swami, also known as Varahur Periyaval, a Sanyasi who, in his own words, impelled him to sing the Kritis of Sadashiva Brahmendra.

Words uttered by saints like Brahmendra are like Mantras – one need not understand the meaning of the songs or verses, for them to be efficacious in giving us peace and joy. Yet, for most people who live mainly in the realm of words and intellectual understanding, reading and internalising the meaning leads to a deeper and sustained enjoyment of another kind, which we hope the translations on this blog will provide.

Alphabetical List of compositions

Ananda pUrNa bOdhoHam - madhyamAvati
Ananda pUrNa bOdhoHam - SankarAbharaNaM
bhajarE gOpAlam - hindOLam
bhajarE raghu vlram - kalyANi
bhajarE yadunAtham - pilu
brahmaivAham kila - nAdanaAmakriya
brUhi mukundEti - kuranji
cEtaH Srl rAmam - suraTi
cintA nAsti kila - navarOj
gAyati vanamAli - miSra kApi
jaya tunga tarangE - kuntaLa varALi
khElati mama hRdayE - aThANa
khElati piNDANDE - sindhu bhairavi
krlDati vanamAli - sindhu bhairavi
mAnasa sancaraE - sAmA
nahirE nahi Sanka - mOhanaM
pibarE rAma rasam - yamunA kalyANi
prati vAram vAram - kAmbhOji
pUrNa bOdhoHam - pUrvi kalyANi
sarvam brahma mayam - chenchurutti
smara vAram vAram - kApi
sthirathA nahi nahirE - punnAga varALi
tadvat jlvitam - klravANi

(Rajani is a Sanskrit teacher based in Chennai, with a deep interest in Carnatic Music, particularly in the Kritis of Muthuswamy Dikshitar. She can be reached at rajani.shankar18@gmail.com. This article is taken from her contribution to Sri V Govindan’s blog, www.sadasivabrahmendra.blogspot.com).

Mannargudi 60

Anand S, Editor

Kalaimamani Mannargudi A Easwaran is a master accompanist who has served music for 60 years. His mridangam playing is characterised by brilliance, precision, subtlety and spontaneity that reflects a harmonious blend of grammar and aesthetics. He was born in to the family of Sanskrit scholar Appayya Dikshitar in 1947. He started learning mridangam at the age of 8 under Kunniseri U Krishnamani Iyer. Subsequently he learnt from Palghat Kunjumani Iyer and Guruvayur Dorai.

He joined with Trichy AIR initially and then moved to Chennai AIR and served AIR for over 23 years. Surprisingly he had to attend 13 interviews before finally being selected to join AIR, Trichy which probably shows the standard of music those days.

He is one of the most sought after mridangam accompanist for several decades. He has per-

formed with doyens like MS Subbulakshmi, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, MLV, Veena Balachander, DK Pattammal etc.

Easwaran is a recipient of several honours, including the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (2008) and Kartik Fine Arts' Lifetime Achievement Award along with other titles such as Kalaimamani, Sangeetha Choodamani, Mridanga Kala Sironmani, Vani Kala Sudhakara and Asthana Vidwan of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam.

A Program was organised by his disciples, admirers and relatives at Narada Gana Sabha, Chennai on 11th August 2018 to commemorate his outstanding journey of 60 years. Senior dignitaries Dr. Nalli Kuppuswamy Chettiar, Guruvayur Dorai, Guru Karaikudi Mani, Sangita Kalanidhi Sanjay Subrahmanian, Nagai Muralidharan, VV Sundaram, and V Narasimhan participated.

Left to Right - Radha Baskar, A Rajasubramanian (Brother of Mannargudi), Nagai R Muralidharan, VV Sundaram, Guruvayur Dorai, Dr. Nalli Kuppuswamy Chettiar, Mannargudi A Easwaran, Guru Karaikudi Mani, Sanjay Subrahmanian, V Narasimhan (Astika Samajam)



GV Krishnaprasad honoured

HH Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar
blessed GV Krishnaprasad with a specially brought
'Thomala' a garland of flowers from Thirupati.



*Left to Right Standing - Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar, Vid. MS Sheela,
Sri DR Srikantaiah - President, Sri HR Yathiraj - Vice President
Sitting - Sri GV Krishna Prasad - Hon. Secretary,*



Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira (Regd.)

Recipient of Karnataka Sangeetha Nritya Academy award for 2015-16 (Karnataka Kalashree)

9th Main, Banashankari II Stage, Bangalore - 560070. eMail - srlkmandira@gmail.com, Website: www.srlkmandira.org. Hon. Secretary - (M) 7760907939

30th Year Karnataka Classical Music Extravaganza

Festivals dedicated to Late Smt. GV Ranganayakamma and Late Smt. GV Neela, Chief Founders, SRLKM



Sankranti Music Festival - Jan 2019

(Venue - Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira Open air Theatre, Time - 5.45 - 8.30 pm)

01-01-2019, Tuesday

Dr: K Krishna Kumar - Vocal
BU Ganesh Prasad - Violin
Bangalore V Praveen - Mridangam
G Omkar Rao - Ghatam



02-01-2019, Wednesday

Sriranjani Santanagopalan - Vocal
B Vittal Rangan - Violin
K Arun Prakash - Mridangam
V Ranganath Chakravathy - Ghatam



03-01-2019, Thursday

Aishwarya Vidya Raghunath - Vocal
RK Shriram Kumar - Violin
K Arun Prakash - Mridangam



04-01-2019, Friday

Dr: Nityashri Mahadevan - Vocal
MA Krishnaswamy - Violin
Neyveli Slands Subramanian - Mridangam
S Srishyla - Ghatam



05-01-2019, Saturday

Dr: Jayanti Kumaresh - Veena
KU Jayachandra Rao - Mridangam
UN Giridhar Udupa - Ghatam



06-01-2019, Sunday

OS Thyagarajan - Vocal
Mysore V Srikanth - Violin
Dr: Trichy Sankaran - Mridangam
KV Gopalakrishnan - Khanjira



07-01-2019, Monday

TS Pattabhirama Pandit - Vocal
S Varadarajan - Violin
HS Sudhindra - Mridangam
GS Ramanujan - Ghatam



08-01-2019, Tuesday

Rudrapatnam S Ramakanth - Vocal
BK Raghu - Violin
Mannargudi A Eshwaran - Mridangam
S Srishyla - Ghatam



09-01-2019, Wednesday

Bellary M Raghavendra - Vocal
HM Smitha - Violin
Anoor Anantha Krishna Sharma - Mridangam
Raghavendra Prakash - Ghatam



10-01-2019, Thursday

Chandanabala Kalyan - Vocal
Mysore V Srikanth - Violin
HS Sudhindra - Mridangam
UN Giridhar Udupa - Ghatam

Spring Music Festival - Feb 2019

(Venue - Bangalore Gayana Samaja Auditorium, Time - 5.45 pm to 9 pm)



03-02-2019, Sunday

Bombay Jayashri Ramnath - Vocal
HN Bhaskar - Violin
Patri Satish Kumar - Mridangam
BS Purushotham - Khanjira



04-02-2019, Monday

Jugallbandhi - H.K.Venkatram (Violin),
Usad Shahid Parvez Khan (Sitar)
Anoor Anantha Krishna Sharma - Mridangam
Ravindra Yavagal (Tabla)



05-02-2019, Tuesday

Dr: Vidyabhushana - Vocal
Pradesh Acharya - Violin
HS Sudhindra - Mridangam
Trichy K Murali - Ghatam



06-02-2019, Wednesday

Sanjay Subrahmanian - Vocal
S Varadarajan - Violin
Neyveli B Venkatesh - Mridangam
KV Gopalakrishnan - Khanjira
B. Rajashekar - Morsing



07-02-2019, Thursday

A. Amith Nadig (Flute) and Ramana
Balachandran (Veena)
BC Manjunath - Mridangam
G Guruprasanna - Khanjira
Somashekar Jois - Konnagolu



08-02-2019, Friday

S Saketharaman - Vocal
Nagai Sriram - Violin
Neyveli R Narayanan - Mridangam
G Guruprasanna - Khanjira



09-02-2019, Saturday

Ranjani and Gayatri - Vocal duet
L Ramakrishnan - Violin
N Manoj Siva - Mridangam
Anirudh Athreya - Khanjira



10-02-2019, Sunday

Kumarash and Ganesh will be conferred with the title "Sangeetha Vedanta Dhurina" instituted in the name of founder G Vedaanta Iyengar with a cash award of Rs. One Lakh, a Silver medal and a citation, followed by their concert with
Patri Satish Kumar - Mridangam
UN Giridhar Udupa - Ghatam



11-02-2019, Monday

N. Vijaya Siva - Vocal
RK Shriram Kumar - Violin
N Manoj Siva - Mridangam
S Sunil Kumar - Khanjira



12-02-2019, Tuesday

Bharatanayam recital by
Satyanarayana Raju