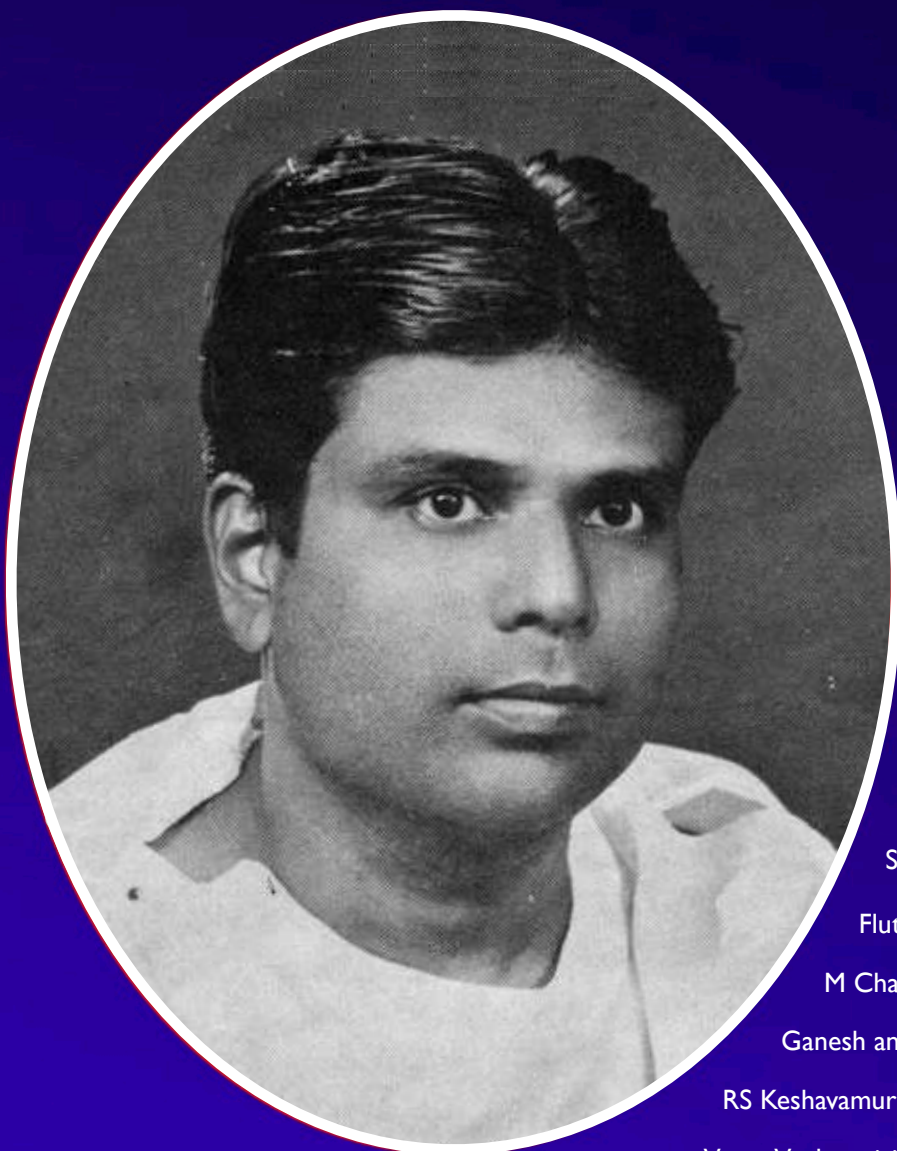


Lalitha Kala Tarangini

Premier Quarterly Music Magazine from
Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira

Volume 2018, Issue 4

December 2018



Parur
Sundaram Iyer

Flute Mali

M Chandrasekaran

Ganesh and Kumaresh

RS Keshavamurthy

Veena Venkatagiriappa

Kalavanta

National Level Karnatak Music Youth Festival 2019

10
organizations
ONE
stage

January 15th to 18th 2019 Time : 5.00 pm to 8.15 pm
January 19th & 20th 2019 Time : 10 am to 1.15 pm

Venue :
The Bangalore Gayana Samaja
K. R. Road, Bengaluru - 560 004

All are welcome

PROGRAMME DETAILS

15-1-2019 Tuesday	1st concert 5.00 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. 2nd concert 6.45 p.m. to 8.15 p.m.	J.Sathya Sriram Rakshith Prasad	Vocal Mandolin	Vignesh Thyagarajan - Violin Thirucheraai Kaushik - Mridanga S.Subhasree - Violin Neti Sasanka Mouli - Mridanga
16-1-2019 Wednesday	1st concert 5.00 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. 2nd concert 6.45 p.m. to 8.15 p.m.	R. Lakshmi priya Aditya Madhavan	Vocal Vocal	Janardhan Srinath - Violin Sriram Srinivasan - Mridanga K.R.Aryadatha - Violin K.S.Ramakrishnan - Mridanga
17-1-2019 Thursday	1st concert 5.00 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. 2nd concert 6.45 p.m. to 8.15 p.m.	Padmashree .S Devulapalli Lakshmi Prachotan	Vocal Vocal	Vishwajith Mattur - Violin K.P.Arjun Sundaram - Mridanga V.Deepika - Violin Ulsoor N.Sagar - Mridanga
18-1-2019 Friday	1st concert 5.00 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. 2nd concert 6.45 p.m. to 8.15 p.m.	Pramukh M.S. Radhika K	Flute Vocal	Parur M.K.Ananthlakshmi - Violin Indhalur Adharsh - Mridanga Srilakshmi - Violin Aravind Srikanth Raja - Mridanga
19-1-2019 Saturday	1st concert 10.00 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. 2nd concert 11.45 a.m. to 1.15 p.m.	K.P. Nandini Madhuri Kaushik B.J	Vocal Vocal	Krithik Koushik - Violin Guruprasadh G - Mridanga Thirucheraai Karthik - Violin Koushik Sridhar - Mridanga
20-1-2018 Sunday	Concert & Kalavanta Award Ceremony 10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.	Vid. Dr. Shertally K. N. Renganatha Sharma Vid B. Raghuram Vid B.C. Manjunath	Vocal Violin Mridanga	

All are Welcome

December 2018

Many Vainikas in the cultural heartland of Mysore contributed and glorified the 'Mysore Bhani' or "Mysore Style" of Veena Playing. We are presenting two such rare gems in this edition as part of our focus on Karnataka musicians. Veena Venkatagiriappa (1887-52) and RS Keshavamurthy (1903-1982) were brought up under different Guru's. While Veena Venkatagiriappa was a disciple of Veena Sheshanna, RS Keshavamurthy was a disciple of Bakshi Subbanna (Veene Subbanna). It is also a fact that both Subbanna and Sheshanna learnt Veena under Dodda Sheshanna who was the father of Bakshi Subbanna. In effect they belong to the same parampara. Both the articles make a very interesting reading and reminds us of how our Vidwans cast their spell across the country in the bygone years.

TS Venugopal and Shylaja, author of many books have provided an excerpt from their recent book on Flute Mali Titled 'Bringi Nadeya Mali'. The article covers the time Mali spent during his time in Bangalore and Mysore and helps us to understand why Mali is considered a genius by the music world without an exception. The article also covers a narration from Himamshu (cultural ambassador of Mysore) where he talks about his experience with Mali having spent many years with him.

In this edition we are also covering two Violin parampara Sundaram Iyer and M Chandrasekaran. CP Chikkanna has covered 3 generations of Sundaram Iyer.

M Chandrasekaran, a jambavaan has played a significant role in the progress of our music for over 7 decades. Though he lost his eye when he was months old, God more than compensated by giving him deep insight into nuances and beauty of our music. He has enriched the music of several stalwarts and doyens and stands tall today. His

thoughts are well articulated by Brindha Manickavasakan a disciple of Vid. Suguna Varadachari.

Ganesh and Kumaresh (called Fiddling Monks) are contemporary violinists who have given a new dimension to the Violin playing. Their journey is astonishing with four generations of performance and having created a niche for themselves in the Indian instrumental music. They have extraordinary techniques and possess highly creative mind. Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira (SRLKM) is recognising their service to our great art form and bestowing them with the title 'Sangitha Vedanta Dhurina' in Feb 2019. The article by Sachi R Sachidananda explores their journey and brings out the efforts that went behind into what they are today. This is a must read for youngsters who want to make a mark.

SRLKM is celebrating its Music festivals Sankranti Music Festival and Spring Music Festival in the months of January and February respectively. The program details are available in the back cover page.

Here is wishing our readers a very Happy New Year 2019 and a happy Shankranti.

Anand S

Contributors - Shylaja and TS Venugopal, Dr. Geetha R Bhat, Vidwan RK Shankar, Sachi R Sachidananda, CP Chikkanna, Varun V Sharma, Brindha Manickavasakan, Brindha Manickavasakan, Neela Ramgopal, Prof. V Amrutha

Photo Courtesy - Personal collection Shri. K Srikantiah (home called Parvathi), Paniraj, The Hindu archives, Personal collection of TS Venugopal, Personal collection of RK Shankar, Personal collection of Prof. V Amrutha.

Visit us online @ www.srlkmandira.org and share your feedback at lkt_srlkm@yahoo.com

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

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Lalitha Kala Tarangini - Inbox

Dear Editor,

Every time I receive a new edition of Lalitha Kala Tarangini I find very interesting, meaningful and educative articles which makes happy reading. It is with great respect when GNB. acknowledges while Chinthalapalli Sri Ramachandra Rao sings with beautiful brighas, he himself succeeds in his music only with gamakas. It is Karnataka's pride that both Sri. Ramachandra Rao and Sri. Venkat Rao have been recognised by the then Maharaja Of Mysore. It is heartening to note such stalwarts were amongst us and Dr. Nagendra Sastry should be congratulated for preserving 800 years of their legacy. It will be highly appreciated if these works are published by the Govt. or any other independent body for the benefit of future generation. Dr. Nagendra Sastry is an asset and pride of Karnataka. Discerning students should take the help of Sri. Nagendra Sastry to get themselves educated...

Dr. Ganesh has beautifully summarised the relationship between the Guru and shishya and how the Guru's sincere affection towards the shishya is very absorbing.

Devendrappa's story tells us how failures are the stepping stones towards success. Each and every article carries a message to all in general and specially to the music fraternity, I congratulate the chief editor for a highly responsible job which is to be emulated by all.

Regards,
Neela Ramgopal

Dear Editor,

ಮಾನ್ಯ ಜಿ.ವಿ.ಕೃಷ್ಣ ಪ್ರಸಾದ್ ಅವರು ಕಳಿಸಿಕೊಟ್ಟ ಲಲಿತ ಕಲಾ ತರಂಗಿಣಿಯ ಎಲ್ಲ ಸಂಚಿಕೆಗಳನ್ನು ಪ್ರೀತಿಯಿಂದ ಓದಿದೆ. ವಿಶಿಷ್ಟ ಆನಂದಾನುಭವ ಉಂಟಾಯಿತು. ಇದು ಸಂಗೀತದ ರಸಲೋಕ. ಪ್ರಾತಃ ಸ್ಮರಣೀಯರೂ ಮೇರುಪ್ರತಿಭೆಗಳೂ ಆದ ಹಿರಿಯ ಸಂಗೀತಗಾರರ ಮೊಗಸಾದ ಪರಿಚಯ ಇಲ್ಲಿದೆ. ಜ್ಞಾನ ಎಂಬುದು ನಮಗೆ ಎಷ್ಟಿದ್ದರೂ ಬೇಕು. ಅದಿಲ್ಲಿ ಯಥೇಚ್ಛವಾಗಿ ದೊರೆಯುತ್ತದೆ. ಒಮ್ಮೆ ಓದಿ ಪಕ್ಕಪಕ್ಕದವ ಪುಸ್ತಕಗಳಲ್ಲ ಇವು. ನಮ್ಮ ಮನೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಇರಲೇಬೇಕಾದ ಅಮೂಲ್ಯ ಆಕರ ಕೈಪಿಡಿಗಳು. ಆಗಾಗ ತೆಗೆದು ಓದಿ ಸಂತೋಷ ಪಡಬೇಕಾದಂಥವು. ಈ ರೀತಿಯ ಸಂಗೀತೋಪಕರಣಗಳನ್ನು ನಿಷ್ಠೆಯಿಂದ ಮತ್ತು ನಿಷ್ಕಾರ್ಥವಾಗಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುತ್ತಿರುವ ಶ್ರೀಯುತರು ಅಭಿನಂದನಾರ್ಹರು.

ಭಾರತೀ, ಕಾಸರಗೋಡು

Dear Editor,

The article on harmonium legend Arunachalappa in the September 2018 issue takes us through memory lanes when Carnatic music concerts included harmonium accompaniment for stalwarts like Mysore T. Chowdiaiah, Veena Doreswami Iyengar, A Subba Rao, M. Balamuralikrishna and others, only because of the genius of Arunachalappa. Perhaps this has not happened before and has not happened after him. In his fingers, the not so suitable instrument could produce continuous notes with raga and bhava at his will.

The article also documents rare photos of Ghatam Bangalore Manjunath, Palani Subramania Pillai, A, Subba Rao and others.

Regards,
KV Gayathri, Bangalore

Dear Editor,

The 4th year special edition of Lalitha Kala Tarangini has offered a rich and varied fare for the readers.

The write-up on Chintalapalli by R Sachidananda has given a fund of information about the great lineage perhaps unknown to the music fraternity especially of the present generation.

The articles on Maharajapuram Santhanam brought back memories of his 'kingly, Supreme music'. The Vidwan literally reigned the Karnatic music firmament like a 'Maharajah' for a few decades.

The article on Harmonium Arunachalappa by his granddaughter has unfolded the story of a genius of a musician in detail. His association with BS Raja Iyengar and anecdotes relating to recording of the evergreen 'Jagadodharana' and

the legends of Carnatic music like Pudukottai, Naina pillai, Alathur etc. are informative and rare!

The pieces on DKP, Devendrappa and Kunnakudi and the write-ups on Sadasiva Brahmendra and Purandara Dasa are fine. The photos of 'Lalitha Kala Suma 2018' in the centre spread too is nicely laid out.

In brief the Sep 2018 issue of Lalitha Kala Tarangini is a Collector's item. Congratulations!

Regards
S Sivaramakrishnan, Chennai

Dear Editor,

Kudos to the editorial team for the special article by Vidvan Vijaya Siva on Doyenne DK Pattammal during her centenary celebrations. I very heartily congratulate and compliment Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira for inviting Nityasri and Vijaya Siva to celebrate Pattammal's centenary celebrations. Pattammal is a legend and her standing in the field of Carnatic music is a mile stone. Despite reaching Himalayan heights, she remained simple, unassuming and with humility. Listeners always looked forward her recitals eagerly.

Her duet with brother DK Jayaraman was a delight with the added attraction of Palghat Mani Iyer's mridangam accompaniment. She broke the male domination of Carnatic music when it was a taboo for females to give public performances in the olden days. She participated in Independence movement by rendering patriot songs in public meetings. She made her debut the same year with flute Mahalingam who was just 8 years old in Madras. She was a great exponent of tough/ complicated Pallavis which was much admired and discussed by scholars. She was very soft spoken and polite and up to the point in her expert opinion and comments on topic of interest during the morning deliberations of the Madras Music Academy's conference in 1970 which I was privileged to attend. Her memory is eternal. Deep pranams to her.

Regards,
CP Chikkanna, Bangalore

Dear Editor,

I was happy to go through the 4th year special Edition of Lalitha Kala Tarangini which contained life sketches of several veterans of Karnatak Music. Of particular interest was the well researched article on the Chintanapalli lineage, an intimate account of the legend-Harmonium Arunachalappa and Maruti Bhakta B Devendrappa. The present generation may not know much of these veterans belonging to Karnataka who were highly venerated artists of that age. Your magazine serves as a good documentation of these almost forgotten masters. We look forward to more such useful informative articles in your subsequent issues.

Regards,
NS Krishna Murthy, Bangalore



Our Upcoming Programmes

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>26 Jan 2019
Saturday
10 am</p> | <p>Varapada Sree Venkateshwara Temple (Devagiri Temple), Banashankari II Stage, Bangalore
Sri Thyagaraja & Sri Purandaradasa day celebrations in association with Devagiri Sri Venkateshwara Trust at Devagiri Sri Venkateshwara Temple, BSK II Stage.</p> |
| <p>03 Mar 2019
Sunday
4 pm</p> | <p>The Bangalore Gayana Samaja "LALITHA KALA SUMA AWARD" to 60
prestigious cultural institutions of Karnataka, in the presence of His Holiness Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar by Shathavadhani Dr. Ganesh
The award ceremony will begin after a NAGASWARAM recital by Vidwan A. Vijay Karthikeyan and Vidwan Sri V. Prakash Ilayaraja and party from 4.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.</p> |
| <p>07 Apr 2019
Sunday
5.30 pm</p> | <p>SRLKM Auditorium
Revathi Sadhashivam (Veena)
C Cheluvvaraju (Mridangam)
N Gurumurthy (Ghatam)</p> |
| <p>05 May 2019
Saturday
5.30 pm</p> | <p>The Bangalore Gayana Samaja RAGA LAYA PRABHA award function -
The award is to commemorate the memory of the Founder Director Vidushi GV Ranganayakamma and Vidushi GV Neela and Dr. GV Vijayalakshmi with a purse of Rs. 25,000/- and a citation to Aishwarya Vidya Raghunath (Vocal), Bhargavi Venkatram (Vocal), B Vittal Rangan (Violin) and YG Srilatha (Veena). The award will be presented by Sangeetha Kalarathna Vidushi Smt. M.S.Sheela followed by special concert on Mysore composers
MS Sheela (Vocal)
B Vittal Rangan (Violin)
KU Jayachandra Rao (Mridangam)
U.N. Giridhar Udupa (Ghatam)</p> |

An enigma called Mali

Shylaja and Venugopal, Mysore



Young TR Mahalingam

Writing anything about Mali is very challenging. Mali, the man, is so complex, that it is impossible reduce him to words. Mali's music is so complete, that we fall short of words. Anything that one writes remains incomplete. He is a saint, a pervert, the greatest musician that has ever tread this earth, a freak, a maverick, a genius and so much more. But unequivocally he is a musical wizard and flute became a complete instrument in his hands.

Mali was born to Ramaswamy Iyer and Brihadambal couple in Tiruvidadimaradur on 6 November, 1926. He was named after the presiding deity of that village Mahalingaswamy. When he was three, their family shifted to Tiruchinapally. All the siblings were put under the tutelage of the music teacher Jalra Gopal Iyer. As Mahalingam was very weak he was made to learn

vocal, while his brother Gowtam was learning flute. But the boy was attracted to flute and started practicing flute secretly. Gopala Iyer, who came to know of the boy's passion, advised Mali's father to allow his son to practice flute but he was reluctant. When the adamant father heard his son play the Bhairavi ata tala varnam *Viriboni* in three speeds with such ease and facility, he was forced to yield.

His progress was meteoric, as his mind was constantly occupied with music. Once he was playing with the sons of violinist Papa Venkataramaiah on the rooftop of Papa's house. T Jayammal, the mother of great danseuse Balasaraswathi, was teaching the Todi kriti *Kaddanuvariki* to both Bala and Papa. When the children came down, Papa was still practising that composition. Then to everyone's surprise, Mali took his flute; played it beautifully and flawlessly. Within no time he was on the concert platform. Even stalwarts were hesitant to accompany this wee lad, whose music was spectacular. His imagination and musical ideas were extraordinary and his ability to bring his imagination to his fingers and express it through his flute was instantaneous. On the advice of Palakkad Mani Iyer, he was left under the tutelage of Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu for two years.

Mali's genius had stunned both the cognoscenti and the ignoramus. In 1933, Seven year old Mali was playing in the Rasika Ranjani Sabha, Mylapore during the Tyagaraja festival. Musiri Subramanya Iyer and Parur Sundaram Iyer were also there among the audience. When the concert was half way through, both of them left the hall leaving everyone in dismay, only to return with a very expensive silk shawl worth Rs 12 to honour that genius. Once when young Mali was playing, GNB and Semmangudi were present among the audience. While listening to the bril-



Young TR Mahalingam in a concert

liant and soulful music of Mali, GNB perhaps had a feeling that in the days to come he might not have many concerts. He should find an alternate source of income. With this idea in mind GNB told Semmangudi, "I am a graduate and can manage to get a job somewhere, but what about you?" Then Semmangudi seems to have told him that he would return to his village and cultivate his lands.

Some of the senior and highly talented musicians like Palghat Mani Iyer, Palani Subramanya Pillai, Papa Venkataramaiah were always very eager to play with him. Mani Iyer used to say "who else would pose such a challenge to my fingers and my brain?" His close association with Dhanammal's family made his music much more nuanced.

It was unfortunate that this young boy became the lone breadwinner in his family. His father used to take him around like a circus animal on display. There were even days when this tender boy had to play three concerts a day. His childhood and its innocence were lost forever. Nobody knows what might have been going in that little heart! Throughout his life Mali was haunted by a feeling that people were trying to make use and exploit him for their advantage. That

was one of the reasons for his playing truant from his concerts. He never pardoned his father. His anger and resentment was so deep, that in one of his concerts, he spotted his father among the audience and immediately summoned the organisers and asked them to turn away a particular person sitting in the third row, otherwise he wouldn't play. The organisers physically carried that person out of the hall without the least idea that he was Mali's father.

Money was the last thing that he had cared for in his life. In fact he shunned it. Nobody could lure him with money. If he felt that somebody really cared for him and had genuine concern for him he played for them without fail and also played with all his heart. He never absented himself from any of the concerts he had agreed especially with R Elumalai's Purusavakam Academy of Music, Himamshu's 8th Cross Mysore, programme organized by Vishalakshi Swaminathan a committed social worker. In Purusavakam Academy of Music when MK Tyagaraja Bhagavatar could not turn up to a concert due to ill health, Mali played instead of MKT. In a programme organized by Vishalakshi Swaminathan it started raining terribly and there was no mike as the power broke down. But Mali continued to play the full concert. Sometimes



Young TR Mahalingam in a concert with TN Krishnan and Palghat Mani Iyer

he would forego very lucrative concert offers and accept the non-remunerative ones for the sheer joy of playing with people like Palakkad Mani Iyer.

Mali had his own reasons to offer, for his failure to keep up his concert schedules. "Every concert is a process of creation for me. I suffer from the pangs of giving birth while creating each and every note. For each concert I set a mark for my music. On those days, if I feel that my creativity will not come up to that mark, I play truant. Instead of playing music sans creativity, I feel it is better not to play that concert at all."

Mali was terribly unpredictable. Nobody could take him for granted. He taunted people. Many a time pulled the legs of his accompanists. Sometime he would enter into an argument in the midst of a concert itself. He had the ability to trick his accompanists into a mistake. That would keep even the most egoistic among them on their best behaviour. Mali was playing Begada RTP in one of his concerts. TN Krishnan was accompanying him on the violin. He insisted that Krishnan should reproduce the phrases he played in the flute. TNK tried to tell him that it is not possible as those are two different instruments, but Mali would not listen. He had taken up the cudgel against Krishnan. But because of Krishnan's composure, it didn't take an awkward turn. Once he was accompanied by the young Parur MS Gopalakrishnan. Mali wanted

to test him and take pleasure. On that day he only played ragas like Anandabhairavi, Todi, etc. which could not be played with a tinge of Hindustani music and rendered the swaras with intricate laya patterns. Though he did mischiefs like these, he was never jealous of anybody. When his accompanists played well, he would give them his remuneration too. Once it so happened that Vellore Ramabhadran had accompanied him extremely well. Mali gave him all the money he had, only to find that he had no money left even to buy the bus ticket. Then he went to Ramabhadran and requested him to lend him Rs10. He had also written a letter to The Hindu that Parur MS Gopalakrishnan should be awarded Padma Sri. He also wrote a letter to the Music Academy criticising their policy and had advised them to give more opportunities for young artistes and provide them with good accompanists.

He was very sensitive about the ambience while playing a concert. Once his recital was in progress in Rasika Ranjani Sabha in Madras. Mudikondan Venkatarama Iyer and TL Venkatarama Iyer were sitting in the front row and were talking loudly. Mali was disturbed. He asked them, "Is it a flute kutcheri or pecchu (talking) kutcheri?" In spite of it they went on and on. Then Mali played the mangalam and concluded both the concerts.

He was beyond all kinds of meanness and discrimination. Men musicians avoiding women as



This rare photograph, taken at the Tyagaraja Sangita Vidwat Samajam in Mylapore, Madras, shows Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar and Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer accompanying Flute Mali on the violin and mridangam respectively.

accompanists was the unwritten rule in the Carnatic music world. Mali broke it silently. While he was at the peak of his career he always accommodated women violinists like T Rukmini, Mangatayaru and others. T Rukmini and Mangatayaru always spoke very high of Mali's humane attitude and encouragement. He had never irked them on the stage. He made his student N Kesi to accompany him in his concerts. Once when the senior percussionist T Upendran refused to accompany Mali, because T Rukmini was accompanying him; Mali made the organizers serve him a legal notice for breach of contract. Later T Upendran seems to have told that Mali had shattered his male ego.

Why Mali is called the flute wizard, the all-time great flautist? What makes his music so special? What makes his flute so unique? These are the often asked questions? Another great musician TN Seshagopalan says, "Both Mali and TN Rajaratnam Pillai have explored all the possibilities of their respective instruments. In addition to it they have also explored the possibilities of music itself. They have stretched the boundaries of music and expanded its horizon. I don't think if there is anything left to add either to that music or to that instrument." TN Krishnan, who had accompanied Mali for more than forty years told, "After reaching a stage, after playing repeatedly, a Vidwan will mature. Then they will realise that something is lacking in their instrument and playing. Only then they feel that some improvement should be done. This, Mali realised in young age itself."

Mali not only changed the music that emanated from flute, but also redesigned the instrument itself. He made its reed thicker and its bore smaller, so that he could produce a strong and rich tone even in the lower octave. It called for a harder blowing. In fact he could hold his breath for more than 40 seconds. Even after that he did not seem to gasp. He also altered the lipping and fingering techniques that were in vogue. The way he held the flute in his left hand later became famous as 'Parrot's clutch.' He also started using the cross fingering technique. These unprecedented changes made by Mali created the possibility of adopting varieties of gamakas of Carnatic music to flute, which was not possible earlier. He opened innumerable windows for his successors for experimentation. Prior to Mali, the flute music used to be very flat, as it was not possible to produce the microtones, which is the core of the Carnatic music. His flute became the singing flute. "TR Mahalingam vocalised the flute." This was the sole thing, which had given some solace to Mali in his otherwise sad and disturbed life. "The only satisfaction I may have in life about being a musician is that I was able to see that flute can be played to all vocalish details (bhava-s) or even played more than vocal. I was able to see that real Carnatic (in its full form, with all its intricacies) music can be brought into the flute. In no other way I can satisfy myself being called a musician. There it is."

Mali's music – his raga delineation, swara rendering and improvisation (neraval) had wonder-

ful pauses of silences These meaningful pauses made his presentation much more musical, intense, meditative and sometime even plaintive. Those moments created a feeling that even that silence is interspersed with music. His pauses heightened the aesthetics of whatever he played. The way Mali developed a raga was also entirely different from GNB and others. He did not develop it step by step. He would take up certain core phrases of the raga, which expressed the unique personality of the raga. Then slowly, steadily he would build a magnificent edifice. He prioritised aesthetics over grammar. As well-known music critic SV Sheshadri puts it, "His ragas were never ready. He never came with a finished product. Raga would take its shape on stage, before the audience. Each note would slowly become a phrase; those phrases would transform into the raga and transfer the emotions. It is like the creeping caterpillars undergoing a metamorphosis and emerge as beautiful and colourful butterflies." He had a perfect understanding of the personality and uniqueness of every raga. Once he had been to a concert with his friend Ramanatha. The artiste was rendering the raga Anandabhairavi. Mali insisted on leaving the concert hall and did leave. On his way home, he told his friend, "Anandabhairavi is like the waves in the mid ocean. It is never turbulent and chaotic. It is graceful, dignified and elegant." Mali had the greatest admiration to Dhanammal Bani. When his friend Ramakrishnan asked him jokingly, "Why don't you follow it strictly?" In reply Mali seriously told him, "What to do, it is not coming to me (varamate engade)!"

Mali was very good at laya aspects. He was capable of very intricate calculations. In spite of it he knew the place of rhythm in music. He never used to overdo it or engage in unwanted jugglery or acrobatics, which would affect the aesthetics of music. Once, Dwaram Mangatayaru confessed to Mali that she was not very well versed in laya related calculations and requested him to teach her some. Mali told her, "Do you know Terakkoottu? It is a variety of street acrobatics. Why do you need it and why are you interested in it?" Even in his condolence to

Palakkad Mani Iyer, Mali told, "With his extraordinary acumen in laya, Mani Iyer could have done amazing things, but he heightened the aesthetics of the concert with his pleasant and soulful playing."

Mali was very humane. He was always touched by human misery. TNK reminisced about their 1944 Kakinada concert. The Howrah Mail had met with an accident. Mali was deeply disturbed by the pathetic sight of the dead and the wounded. He was so disturbed that he was unable to play the concert on that day and postponed it to the next day. On another occasion Mali sold whatever little he had, to help one of his students who was very sick and needed financial help for treatment.

Mali's versatility is beyond one's imagination. He was an adept at violin playing. He had accompanied Chembai on violin in one of his concerts. He had an excellent command over English language, though his schooling was only up to second standard. He was thorough with Bernard Shaw, Somerset Maugham, Tagore, Kalidasa. He was also very good at Mathematics. That speaks for his hold on laya aspects. His expertise in playing carom would astonish even the professional players. He covered the pawns with double strokes and strike them from rare angles. If he was the opener, then the next person would never get a chance to play. He was good at playing chess. He was a good cook too. Even today, Himamshu remembers the sambar prepared by Mali. He was a cricket freak. If he was not on the stage he would be in the cricket field during his young days. He had formed a team 'Mali XI.' He was equally good at boozing and horse racing!! He used to say "music is my vocation, while racing is my craze."

Mali always eluded any easy assessment. Any writing on Mali is incomplete. So is this article. A genius, a maverick, an enigma,!

(This article is an excerpts from a Kannada book on Mali titled "Bringi Nadeya Mali" by Shylaja and Venugopal, Mysore)

Himamshu reminiscences Mali

*Originally written by Shylaja and TS Venugopal, Mysore
and translated to English by the Editor, Anand S*

As narrated by Shri. Himamshu....

It was 1975/76 and I was meeting with SP Natarajan at Bangalore AIR hoping to fix up a concert of Mali. His initial reaction was 'you have not called me for a concert so far' I said 'you can always join up with Mali once it is finalised.

Mali was living in his Sadashivanagar house those days and SP Natarajan took me in his scooter. Mali immediately agreed for the concert but asked me to come back and meet him in couple of days. It was for the 'Chowdiah Memorial Committee' not the 8th Cross, VV Mohalla Ganesha festival. When I met Mali again, Mali informed me that it will be his solo concert and helps me further to fix up the accompaniment.

Many in Mysore did not expect Mali to give a performance based on a request from me but Mali not only gave an excellent concert at 'Maharajas College Hall' but also gave a nice speech. Subsequently a chamber concert was also held at Maharaja's and our relationship never looked back. Subsequently Mali performed at least 7-8 concert in Mysore including the one for 8th Cross, VV Moholla. Mali and I were very intimate and my relationship continued till his end.

Mali was a man of fluctuating moods. He used to talk a lot about music when he was in good mood. He never bothered about money which was his last priority. He had the habit of going to horse race often and I had to accompany him several times. He had a good relationship with Shakuntala Devi they used to solve quite a few mathematical puzzles. He used to challenge Shakuntala Devi and win many a challenge and in return she had to take him to race course in her car. Mali also had a great relationship with

Karnataka Ex-Police commissioner AR Nizamuddin.

In 1984 former Chief Minister of Karnataka Ramakrishna Hegde requested him for a concert but he did not oblige. Once he was in Mysore for 20 days staying at Shri. Rameshwari Varma's house while he had broken his hand. Few people thought of cancelling that concert and prompted Mali to cancel the concert but Mali never wavered and was firm on performing.

Mali never cancelled a concert nor was there any delay in starting the concert when the concert was fixed up through me. One of Mali's concert was in Mysore Palace with the accompaniment of M Chandrasekaran on violin and Tanjavur Upendran on Mridangam. In spite of several obstacles to enter the palace, he gave a wonderful three plus hours concert. AIR Director General made an announcement through a circular that Mali can play in any AIR stations of India and for any amount of time, that will be recorded and broadcast and that he will be remunerated four times the normal remuneration.

A Program was fixed at the Mysore AIR station and Mali called me a day before the recording. Mali was not happy with the flute and he asked me to go to Shri. Shivaramayya, a Guru of BN Suresh and a close friend of Mali in Bangalore and bring his flute. It was 4 pm when I set out to his task and by the time I returned back with the flute it was midnight but to my surprise Mali had fixed his flute and had dipped it in water in preparation for the next day performance. Hindsight I think had I not ventured to get the flute of Shri. Shivaramayya, Mali would have refused to perform. There have been occasions where Mali broke the flute the day previous to



TR Mahalingam greeting Ex-CM Ramakrishna Hegde with Himamshu in the background and SV Narayanaswamy Rao of Sri Rama Seva Mandali, Chamaraajpet on far right

performance especially if he was not in a mood to perform and escape.

Karnataka Ex-Chief Minister Sri. Ramakrishna Hegde had the highest of respect for Mali. On many occasions, he wrote personal letters to Mali without bothering to have it done through his secretary. He was recommended for Padma Bhushan but Mali flatly refused. He was more than willing to accept an award from Karnataka State government than a Padma Bhushan. Ramakrishna Hegde was ready to give him Balabrooi guest house and did make efforts through his cultural secretary Shri. Chiranjivi Singh. Had Mali lived longer, he would have occupied Balabrooi guest house.

I requested, Mali to perform for a marriage concert in the family of B Jayamma (Ex MLC) with the accompaniment of Tatachar, Yella Venkateshwara Rao and Ramachar. Subsequently Mali also performed for a chamber concert at the house of KH Srinivas Ex-Minister that was attended by Ex-CM D Devaraj Urs.

He was a simple man and was very particular about being on time. He used to take on those who compromised on keeping up the schedules. He would never accept concerts with those who had poor principles. There were occasions where he cancelled his concert and walked away just because the organisers were late by few minutes. He used to write for The Hindu paper regularly and went out of his way to ex-

press his unhappiness over not conferring Padma Shri to MS Gopalakrishnan in The Hindu. He had the ability to identify talent and support the young artistes. He used to help those in need and especially the upcoming artistes.

Once Mali broke his hand and I took him to Bowring hospital. There were patients everywhere and looking at the plight of the patients, Mali decided to return back home without taking the treatment. He went to Chennai and unfortunately had a fall again and aggravated it further but this time took treatment at the Vijaya hospital in Chennai. He was still recouping but still gave an excellent concert at Mysore Palace having a pillow to support his hands. I had to bring him from Bangalore in a car and we reserved the back seat completely for him to lie down that time. He was brought to Mysore 15 days before the program and was made to stay at the house of Rameshwari Varma.

Mali had few friends. Shri. Madhuranath used to visit him often. BM Sundar Rao used to meet him and also take care of him very well. The common elements were always I and one Srinivasan who used to stay with him for long hours. Ever so many recollection but I really feel my life is fulfilled staying and being with Mali.

(Himamshu is a cultural ambassador in Mysore. He organises music concerts at 8th Cross, VV Mohalla, Mysore during Ganesha festival that is very famous and attracts huge gathering)

Reinventing NadOpasana to enhance and Transform lives

Dr. Geetha R Bhat

Composer-Shri Tyagaraja Swami, Raga-Kalyana Vasantha,Thala-Rupaka

nAdalOludai brahmAnandamandavE manasA
svAdu phalaprada sapta svara rAga nicaya sahita

Gist - O My Mind! Attain Supreme bliss by being immersed in the nAda, consisting of seven svara and the multitude of rAga....

Sri Tyagaraja Swamy has written innumerable krithis emphasising the miraculous powers of the elements of music and perhaps the concept of God as 'Nadabrahma' i.e., embodiment of musical sound is very significantly accentuated in most of his krithis. The ancient system of Nada Yoga, which dates back to the time of Tantras, has acknowledged the impact of music on body and mind and put into practice the vibrations emanating from sounds to uplift one's level of consciousness. Another verse equally often-quoted is attributed to Lord Narayana Himself: "Naaham vasaami Vaikunthe na yogi hridaye ravau Madbhaktaah yatra gaayanti tatra tishthami Naarada". This shloka comes in conversation between Lord Vishnu and Sage Narada .At the advent of Kaliyuga, it is believed, that the Lord Supreme was asked by Sage Narada, of the simplest Sadhana which will help the ordinary people realize the Lord Supreme easily. To dispel doubts, the Lord himself pronounced that in Kaliyuga he would not reside in Vaikuntha, the celestial abode, or in the Sun or in the hearts of great Yogis, but would stand in attention wherever his devotees do sing his name.

Stimulating the energy centres or chakras of the body through the resonance of sound or saptaswaras is the essence of 'Nadayoga'. It is the ancient spiritual art and science of inner

transformation and self realisation through the usage of sound and tone. Naada or musical sound is produced with systematic vibrations. Enhanced vibration of seven major chakras keeps the mind and body in good health. It increases concentration, memory, makes the mind disciplined and spiritual. The simplest form of Nada yoga's prayoga is through our sarali varise where each note is recited with perfect shruthi and an Om. This could be rendered in different ragas as well. Although researchers are only beginning to understand how words and other forms of vibration affect consciousness and either heal or harm us, depending on intention and usage, yet this is an area of knowledge that mystics have known about and studied for more than a millennium. The ancient Rishis, Seers, and Yogis of India have developed intricate, complex mantras that play upon the effectiveness of sound for enhancing consciousness and inducing healing of the mind, body and spirit. As rightly said by Sage Patanjali "Yogas chitta vritti nirodhaha" and surely one of the easiest ways of controlling the fluctuations of the mind is through the practice of "Nada Yoga" or "Nad-Anusandana".

Today, the concepts of "Nada Yoga" have reinvented in the form of Music therapy and are successfully being used as an alternative therapy to suit a wide variety of benefits to Individuals with special needs, neurological impairments; to address psychological distress and situational anxiety in terminally ill and Alzheimer's patients. While listening to good music stimulates the Central Nervous System, vocal exercises control the breathing and keep the lungs in good health. Research emphasizes on the effective stimulation of the left and the right brain through various elements of music such as

pitch, tone, timbre, melody, rhythm etc. Because listening and performing music stimulates almost every area of your brain, and almost all of our sensory systems, its positive influence on cognitive functions is immense. The Cognitive Neuroscience of Music further emphasizes that music is processed in many regions of the brain simultaneously and when making music, the sensory cortex, auditory cortex, hippocampus, visual cortex, cerebellum, amygdala, prefrontal cortex, and motor cortex are all firing at once and this relates to the multi-sensory experience of making music because each of these sensory systems is tied into a specific part of the brain. The multi-sensory experience of music further enhances the cognitive development. The tactile learning system is involved by touching the instrument and by feeling the sound impulse vibrations that are created. A child's auditory and visual systems are engaged by listening to the sound and by watching their arm movement as it connects with the instrument. Cortexes involved when playing music are: sensory, auditory, visual, motor, and prefrontal, as well as the cerebellum and the amygdala. Recently researchers in Finland revealed how just the act of listening to music activates "wide networks in the brain, including areas responsible for motor actions, emotions, and creativity." In the study published in the journal, *Neuro Image*, "music employs large-scale neural networks," including the limbic area of the brain which is associated with emotion.

For social interaction within a small or large group, music is an invaluable tool. Children learn how to take turns, how to listen and respond to another person, and completely participate in an activity. These actions are often an incredible relief for children who have otherwise been unable to contribute to the task. Music changes lives because it has the power to remove physical and verbal barriers as well as introduce behavioral improvements. These fundamental achievements strengthen the self-awareness and confidence of special needs students and give them effective resources for communicating with others and interacting with the world around them.

Classical music with its complex structure of form, shruthi, laya, raga, thala and with the fragrance of the ragas pervading through emotions or rasas can do wonders with children with special needs; for each of these elements can be broken into their own individual patterns and frameworks within the massive construction of Classical music. The combination of rasas with a true understanding of a raga's unique melodic patterning is the process through which music really becomes a method of transformation. For many, music exists to express emotions. Music stimulates both psychological mood and physiological changes including heart rate and breathing. Music can thus help in various anxiety disorders.

Over the last few decades, there has been a substantial increase in the research concerning music therapy and its impact on physical and emotional health. However, many parents, musicians and educators are unaware of the startling improvement that both music therapy and music education can have on the lives of children with special needs. In fact, regardless of the special need, music has the ability to totally transform lives for the better, because it effortlessly generates a safe learning environment. Very often, children with special needs have disabilities to communicate due to either sensory issues, physical deformities, emotional issues or mere frustration of their inability to use words. With special needs students, breaking down the barriers of speech through music offers a sense of understanding. Moreover, with use of specific music for special needs children, it offers an effective way to develop verbal skills. Being able to effectively communicate and interact with others also gives children a healthy, positive outlet for their feelings. Percussion instruments can be a boon to all non-verbal special children.

Music is a model of plasticity because of the multiple systems and the unique effects. Music training has wide ranging effects in many capacities related to perception, performance, and language with increases in brain efficiency and fewer neuronal units needed to encode information. Training affects brain structures more strongly as a child. When the training begins

before age seven, neural systems are created that last a lifetime. Adult training also causes permanent changes in brain structure, but to a lesser degree. Even in old age these changes can be made in weeks of practice. Playing an instrument is highly complex using different higher order cognitive functions where changes can occur in days, weeks and years. It is for this reason, music can be used as a successful mode of intervention in cases of trauma and progressive brain disorders like multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.

Today, we appreciate music in many ways- a biological need, an astounding art form that allows us to feel and experience a multitude of sensations, an extraordinary vehicle for enhancing intelligence and emotional balance and of course a way to connect and unite people all over the world. Most of us are completely aware of the enormous benefits of music. Yet, how many of us can dedicate a part of us towards the physical, psychological, emotional and social development of an individual. While some might still question though, does music really

make a difference, and if so, has it been proven through research? The answer, of course, is a resounding, yes! Whether we base music intervention on a belief system or a scientific system, Music surely helps... for unless you believe in a capsule, nothing actually works...

"Music therapy, to me, is music performance without the ego. It's not about entertainment as much as its about empathising. If you can use music to slip past the pain and gather insight into the workings of someone else's mind, you can begin to fix a problem".

Jodi Picoult- Author of best-selling book "Sing you Home"

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 Ganesh and Vidwan Kumaresh
(Felicitation - 10th February, 2019 at The Bangalore Gayana Samaja)

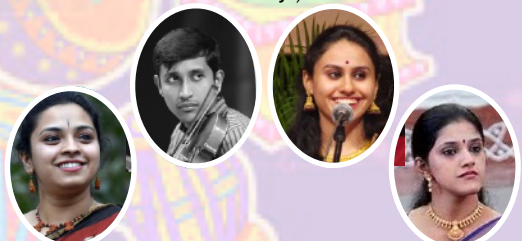


Raga Laya Prabha

(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

Aishwarya Vidya Raghunath (Vocal), Bhargavi Venkatram (Vocal), B Vittal Rangan (Violin), YG Srilatha (Veena)
(Felicitation - 05 May, 2019 at The Bangalore Gayana Samaja)



Vainika Praveena, Mysore Asthana Vidwan RS Keshavamurthy

Vidwan RK Shankar, Bangalore

Sri. Veena Subbanna and Sri. Veena Seshanna are accomplished musicians and have earned great fame in the world of music. Sri. Rudrapatna Subbaraya Keshavamurthy was one of the dedicated and favourite students of Veena Subbanna, who had traits of Gandharva clan and was a connoisseur of music and arts. Keshavamurthy had immense faith in his Guru and regarded him as the royal umbrella (Swethaha Chatra) of guidance and protection that could help him realise his dreams in music. The guru also believed in the principle that 'Achievement could only be through meticulous hard work leading to renowned fame; 'Nothing is impossi-

ble to conquer' was his dictum, and he used to say" if only all follow this principle, the word 'Impossible' will vanish ('Asadhyam tava kim vada?')

Keshavamurthy was born on March 4th 1903 in Belur, Karnataka, to parents Sri. Rudrapatna Subbaraya and Smt. Puttakayya and he was named after the famous God of Belur, Sri. Chennakeshava. Sri. Subbaraya belonged to a family of Veena musicians spanning over 24 generations and was a music teacher in a local school.





RS Keshavamurthy performing in presence of Jayachamaraja Wadiyar, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and S Nijaliggappa

Keshavamurthy was more interested in music than in academic education, and he could only study up to Matriculation. He got his initial training in music from his father. Once there was a family function held in Rudrapatna, where in keshavamurthy's paternal uncle, a famous Mysore asthana vidwan Veene Venkatarammaya was also present. The young boy happened to play Veena before his uncle. Venkatarammaya was happy to listen and offered him to come to Mysore for higher training under him.

Braving the opposition from his parents at home, he made up his mind and went on foot to Mysore all along to meet his uncle. But to his great surprise, Venkatarammaya disappointed the boy. Keshavamurthy took courage and challenged his uncle by telling him in a firm and determined voice that he would learn music at Mysore and would one day become astana Vidwan. With a pranam to uncle, he went away.

Young Keshavamurthy, while wandering on the streets of Mysore, he chanced to meet a relative, Rayappa. knowing the details from him, Rayappa helped him to meet Veena Bhakshi Subbanna. keshavamurthy fell at his feet and sought his blessings for learning Veena under him. With the blessings of Goddess Sharada, keshavamurthy was accepted by Bhakshi Subbanna as his Student under gurukula training. Subbanna readily offered him to go to his house

everyday and learn music, accordingly keshavamurthy sincerely went there daily learnt Veena intently and was also helping out Subbanna's wife by running small house old errands. He made good use of the massive collection of books in the library there and played songs on his Veena by referring to them extensively. Thus went on his music practice and service to the guru for several years, as a result of which he emerged out as the Veena Vidwan Keshavamurthy. He developed his own style of music rendering. Keshavamurthy's dedicated efforts and the mystifying forms of beautifying his rendition with his various skills and elegant elaboration earned him a lot of applause.

Around the same time in 1929, Bidaram Krishnappa had constructed a Sri Rama temple with funds collected from his country-wide tour. Keshavamurthy was honoured to give the very first performance in the temple hall, where many prominent musicians and community stalwarts had gathered. Keshavamurthy left them all spell bound and speechless with his magnificent performance that left an indelible impression in the guests. His guru Subbanna felt very proud of his disciple and lamented that Sri. Sheshanna should have been alive then to hear this music.

Thus started the career of Keshavamurthy and his devoted service at the feet of Goddess

Saraswathi, and went on to progress increasingly in the ascending order, with the blessings of his Guru and the Goddess. He got several opportunities to perform in the royal courts of many kings and won their accolades, awards and rewards.

At the time when technical support to accentuate and modulate sound was unavailable, Keshavamurthy researched and created the instrument Veena with 24 strings and mastered it. Besides Veena, he was also well versed in other musical instruments like violin, flute, jala tarang, Piano, and Baala Kokila.

Keshavamurthy had excelled in the skill of Taana. He used to play 6 ½ octaves with ease. He was also interested in Hindustani music. He had the guidance of Hindustani maestro Abdul Kareem Khan for a while.

He earned the title of Ashthana Vidwan in January of 1935 in the court of king Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar who was impressed by his Veena recitals.

Keshavamurthy travelled nation-wide and delighted the people with the reverberations of the sound of his Veena. Renowned poet Rabindranath Tagore who was mesmerised by his performance invited to accompany him on a world tour and to stay in Shantiniketan. Keshavamurthy refused the offer politely as his orthodoxy came in the way. In a similar way when in 1957 the Chief Minister of Karnataka, Sri. Kengal Hanumanthaiah expressed desire to send him to UNESCO, Keshavamurthy declined it for the same reason.

In the year 1940, he showed interest in a proposal that came to him for learning Western music and graduated in distinction from London Trinity college of music, by staying in India only.

Smt. Sarojini Naidu, nightingale of India arranged a concert of Keshavamurthy in the presence of Mahatma Gandhi to which he readily agreed. Gandhiji had plans to leave for London to attend a round table conference the next day. Therefore there was a brief recital in the presence of dignitaries at Mumbai Birla Bhavan. Gandhiji wanted to listen Veena inside the hall.

He asked keshavamurthy to play the Veena without light. Keshavamurthy gladly agreed and started playing, which went on for nearly 2 hours. Gandhiji was completely absorbed in the excellent music undisturbed. Keshavamurthy was inspired by this gesture which prompted him to give the best performance. Gandhiji said, "Mr. Keshavamurthy your Veena playing took me to heaven. Me being a poor person, I intend to gift a khadi carpet woven by my own hands as a mark of appreciation. I entreat you to accept it". Keshavamurthy was thrilled with this unique praise and happily accepted the gift.

He gave innumerable concerts before the public. His music stirred the souls of matadipatis, residents, great Vidwans and nawabs. All were impressed by his profound in-depth knowledge of music. Hyderabad Nizam was so impressed listening to his Veena playing, he presented his own British Emblem Gold Medal to Keshavamurthy.

Guru Bhakshi Subbanna, three days before his death, had arranged keshavamurthy's concert in the presence of musicians and rasikas. At the conclusion of the concert he called keshavamurthy and gave him his own Kanaka rajatha akhanda Veena, and blessed his disciple profusely. He urged him to pursue earnestly the nadopasana non stop in his entire life and also further it through his family members.

Guru bhakti of Keshavamurthy was expressive, while Bhakshi Subbanna breathed his last on the lap of his dear disciple.

Keshavamurthy was performing guru aradhana every year in memory and respect of his Guru.

Keshavamurthy was always eager to give benefit performances for worthy social causes. One such was a benefit show at Bangalore town hall to raise fund for Sankethi Student hostel in the year 1958.

During that concert, Vid. TR Mahalingam, the famous Flute maestro happened to hear the Veena recital from outside the town hall. He was so enthused and being unable to control his passion for that nice rendering, entered the



RS Keshavamurthy addressing Karnataka Gana Kala Parishat conference with GVK Rao, Former Chief Secretary on his left.

hall and stayed till end of the programme. He expressed his satisfaction and heaped huge praise on Veena playing Techniques of Keshavamurthy.

Keshavamurthy has given many performances in Rama Seva Mandali in Chamarajpet. Keshavamurthy got honoured by Karnataka Sangeetha Academy in 1962.

Keshavamurthy was awarded the title of 'Vainika Praveena', to acknowledge his manifold talent, by Sri. Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar in 1967, during Dasara celebrations on Vijayadashami and was decorated with the Gandaberunda medal. He chaired the forum of musicians organised by Gaana Kalaa Parishat in 1971 and was honoured the 'Gaana Kalaa Bhushana' award, accompanied with gold pendant. In 1978, Vishaakha Sangeetha Academy honoured him with the title 'Sangeetha Kalaa Saagara'.

He was married to Smt. Venkatalakshamma with whom he completed fifty years of conjugal life, passing through the ups and downs of life and became the father of eleven accomplished sons.

Like his Guru, Keshavamurthy had unlimited love for his disciples. Obviously, he loved his disciples more than his own children. Vidwan HS Krishnamurthy, who was the author of book 'Sangeetha Shastra Jnana Prachodini' was his

favourite student. Scientist Dr. Raja Rammana & his sister learnt Veena playing from Keshavamurthy. All his eleven sons love music dearly. His eldest son, Sri. RK Srinivasa Murthy was one of the famous Veena artiste of the country. His second son, Sri. RK Suryanarayana spread his Guru Keshavamurthy's name and tradition world-wide.

The other sons named Sri. RK Raghavan, Sri. RK Shankar, Sri. RK Prakash and Sri. RK Padmanabha are well known Veena artistes. Sri. RK Chandrashekar was well known violin player. Sri. RK Prasanna Kumar is well known artiste playing mridanga as well as being a vocalist.

Smt. Geetha Shyam Prakash, one of the disciple of keshavamurthy, has served as Veena artiste in Bangalore AIR.

On Dec 17th 1982, Veena maestro Keshavamurthy who never suffered from any illness, met with an accident and passed away. Our salutations to this great person who has upheld the excellent tradition of Veena.

GV Krishnaprasad felicitated

Anand S, Editor

Karnataka Ganakala Parishat was established by musicians of Karnataka to honour fellow musicians who have done excellent service in the field of music for over half a century. This esteemed organisation is led by one of the most leading personality in the field of Carnatic Music in Karnataka, who is doing outstanding work in the field of music Vidwan RK Padmanabha. Being the president of Parishat, he has successfully conducted the several music conferences. The institution conducts conferences at different part of Karnataka every year.

They conducted their '49th Annual Senior and 31st Youth Music conference' in Bangalore from

31st Oct - 4th Nov 2018 at NR Colony Rama Mandira. The festival attracted large gathering, on all days.

This year music festival included unique lecture demonstrations and concerts by upcoming and veteran musicians. As part of the festival the institution recognised many musicians who have contributed significantly to the cause of music in Karnataka.

GV Krishnaprasad, Hon. Secretary, Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira was felicitated with 'Vidhwath Sadas Award' on 04 November 2018. It carries a citation, and a Saraswathi Statue.

2nd From Left to Right: RK Padmanabha (President Karnataka Ganakala Parishat), Justice MN Venkatachaliah, GV Krishnaprasad, Prof. Mysore V Subramanya, Dr. AH Rama Rao, TS Rama



A Novel Carnatic Paradigm: The Music of Ganesh Kumaresh

Sachi R Sachidananda, Bangalore

Now is the season of Margazhi, known for cool breezes, lovely flowers and fruits, harvest celebrations and, of course, music. How fitting that we tune in to the musical experience in this season, when all Nature seems to be getting into a meditative, soulful mood!

If one is so musically inclined, one can simply close one's eyes and soar into infinite musical space. Naada is the source of all sound, and is the same as Brahman in our Hindu conception. Man resorts to words for communication, but his very being resonates with music, for that matter, wordless music. That is the reason why we say music is beyond all race, language and cultural differences.

Vidwans Ganesh Kumaresh, known for "Ragapravaham", have been performing from early 70's. For the past 45 years, they have been playing only Carnatic music, and in a way only they can. Their violin duets have invariably featured robust percussion also, mridangam,

Tavil, Ghatam, Khanjira, even western rock percussion and keyboards. Although they use pick-ups, there is always a happy balance of sound between violins and percussion, without excessive electronic reverb.

Ganesh's and Kumaresh's synchrony and mutual musical enhancements are simply bewitching. They play incredibly fast passages, and can play as well reposeful, weighty alapanas in core Carnatic ragas like Kalyani, Begada, and Todi, as well as splendid Ragam-Tanam-Pallavis.

A typical Ganesh Kumaresh concert begins with a familiar song, goes on to their own compositions, and in a daring way, they ask the audience to define the scale of the raga for the RTP, choosing which Ri, Ga, Ma, Dha and Ni should be in the scale. With the Sa and Pa, the raga takes shape. Therefore you get to hear really exotic impromptu RTPs in ragas like Hatakambari, Dhatuvardhini, and so on. Their own compositions, named as Ragapravaham, are





Ganesh and Kumaresh performing with Anantha R Krishnan on Mridangam

pristinely Carnatic, composed like great kritis, but without the wordy devotional sahitya we see in Carnatic kritis.

Three lines to describe this novel Carnatic paradigm of Vid. Ganesh Kumaresh would be:

1. A pristine Carnatic idiom, exploring the full scope of the instrument, violin,
2. Own swara compositions called Ragapravaham, and
3. Riveting on-stage dynamics.

This Carnatic paradigm is beautifully showcased in an Idea Jalsa upload on YouTube. The impact Ganesh Kumaresh make on the discerning audience within a few minutes after they take the stage is something to be watched.

Vid. Ganesh lives in the USA nowadays, whereas Vid. Kumaresh lives in south Bengaluru, in a beautiful apartment on the tenth floor overlooking a sea of tree tops. They deal with constant international travel for duet performances as easily as they traverse the five octaves on their violins.

Ganesh teaches at university level, runs his own school, and collaborates with many musicians internationally, apart from his busy calendar of duets with Kumaresh.

Ganesh Kumaresh performed in WOMEX 2013 in Cardiff in the UK. WOMEX – the World Music Expo – is the most international music meeting in the world and the biggest conference of the global music scene, featuring a trade fair, talks, films and a showcase festival. Over 2,700 professionals (including 300 performing artists) come together every

October from more than 90 countries. WOMEX 2013 introduced Ganesh Kumaresh with these words:

“Although steeped in the classical tradition, the brothers' approach is a universal one, allowing for conversations with jazz and western classical music as well as occasional experiments in electronica. They have performed around the world as a duo and in collaborations with artists such as Zakir Hussain, John McLaughlin, Trilok Gurtu, Debashish Bhattacharya and Scottish jazz-combo Trio AAB.”

Ganesh and Kumaresh state that they just do what they enjoy, and not focus on how to conform to others' expectations. “We should enjoy not only making music, but the process, the journey we are on. Everything, including hardships. When musicians surrender to their music, everything falls into a real harmony.”

Ganesh and Kumaresh have consciously created a style of musical presentation that attracts young audiences. When the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, MGR, recognised them at a tender age, and they shared honours with veterans like Maharajapuram Santhanam and MS Gopalakrishnan, they embarked on a bold voyage. That was also a point in time in 80's-90's when vocal music and song-laden concerts were edging out instrumental concerts. There were initiatives like YACM and SPIC-Macay to draw students and youth to concerts, but as Chennai audiences patronised the more sahitya-laden vocal music, the patronage for pure instrumental music was in decline. In this



Ganesh and Kumaresh with 'Academy of Music Chowdiah Award'

scenario, the novel paradigm of Ganesh Kumaresh's music was definitely like a breath of fresh air.

There is a recent YouTube upload called "Flights of Anjaneya". Kumaresh has done what perhaps nobody has ever done in Carnatic music before...create a breathless improvisation of swaras in several ragas, in a cascade of melodic and metrical beauty, with incredible speed and complexity. His playing has been filmed with 3 cameras whilst the entire piece is played in one-go. Those familiar with Paganini's "Caprice" will appreciate how he has raised the bar in terms of compositional creativity and violin playing within a perfectly Carnatic idiom.

Similarly, when I heard Ganesh's very recent album, "Gruha-Home", I discovered a masterpiece of improvisation in Reetigowla (with Patri Satish Kumar on the mridangam). Both Hindustani and Carnatic instrumentalists will marvel at his presentation of Reetigowla which defies description.

Many years ago, while they were in Calcutta for a performance in the Sri Ramachandra Mission, Kumaresh composed a Tamil song in the raga Saranga, "Kan kalangude, manam urugude, nadamana unnai naLum ennuL kaana...". Its English translation is as follows:

Hey Nada (Musical sound)

*To see you every second, every minute , every hour
Inside me as a universal experience
My eyes well up and my heart melts.*

*You are
Beyond physical boundaries
Beyond meaning
Beyond light and
Beyond darkness*

*And to perceive you as
The embodiment of sound and blessing
My eyes well up and my heart melts.*

*Many people have sung in praise of you
Many people have walked in search of you
In doing you so - they have managed to divide you
as system, language, region...*

*You are beyond separation
You are beyond unison
You are the one and
You are the many*

*You are the beginning and you are the end -
To see you inside me as that,
My eyes well up and my heart melts*

*- fiddling monk
Kumaresh Rajagopalan*



These words capture the musical ethos of Ganesh Kumaresh. “Music is not just what the lyrics say, not what the raga is, or tala is. Music is all this and beyond that - the sound wave that resonates in everyone of us. The way to enjoy the experience is to immerse in that sound, not try to know it. When we apply knowledge to it, it limits the experience.”

Early Years

Ganesh Kumaresh’s father, Sri. Rajagopalan, taught them music. Sri. Thrippunithura S Rajagopalan is an accomplished violinist, who learnt from his elder brother and then Prof. TN Krishnan’s father, Vid. Narayana Iyer. He has accompanied all stalwarts from Papanasam Sivan to MDR, KVN, TRS and so on.

Many generations ago, Ganesh Kumaresh’s great-great-grand father Vid. Harihara Bhagavatar migrated to Thrippunithura in Kerala from the village of Valadi on the banks of Cauvery next to Lalgudi. He had been invited by the Cochin Maharaja to go there and codify Kathakali music. He taught music and violin to many disciples, and perhaps he started the parampara that has given so many stalwart violinists from that region to Carnatic music.

They were three children, Ganesh (b. 1965), Kumaresh (b. 1967), and their kid sister. She was very talented in music, but when she saw the grind the boys were going through, she said, “Appa, this is not for me. Let Ganesh Kumaresh do it.” We can therefore conjecture what they were going through!

“Our father taught us to practise, practise, and practise till we get it perfect. Practice has the same effect as Nama Japa. It confers a high level

of proficiency. At first, we may make mistakes. No problem. As we practise more and more, we discover the little mistakes and small anuswaras which need to be perfected for each raga. We get to that level only by incessant practice. Once our father asked us to practise a simple set of notes from Jaganmohini raga, try out infinite combinations, just the lower half of the scale, for a few hours. It was terribly boring. Now we see why we did that and how it has got us to where we are.”

Arriving in Chennai-1975

Sri. Rajagopalan had a transferable job in LIC and then GIC. They moved from Kanpur where Ganesh Kumaresh were born, to Delhi, then Mumbai, and finally Chennai. They were in Chennai for over 25 years.

They rented a house close to the school, PS High School North in Chennai, so that the boys could go and come back without wasting time. The father made them practise for 3 hours every morning from 4:30 am from the time they were 9 and 7. They stopped practice only when they heard the first school bell, quickly finished breakfast by the second bell, and rushed to school in time for the third bell. They would come back from school by 4 PM, and their father would return from office to be with Ganesh Kumaresh, and to resume the practice. This went on for several years.

Their father made Ganesh Kumaresh practise many songs, varnams in four speeds, Darini Telisukonti in super speed, and so on. Ganesh Kumaresh worked hard to gain absolute control over the instrument. They were also



Left to Right - Ganesh, Bhanumathy Rajagopalan, TS Rajagopalan (Carrying Meena), Kumaresh, Sri Kuttalam Vishwanatha Iyer

encouraged to find their individual personalities in music.

Kumaresh recalls an incident. They were learning Srikrishnam Bhaja Manasa in Todi. Those were Chennai's anti-Hindi and anti-Sanskrit years. When their father asked them to learn the sahitya, Kumaresh asked, "Why? We have learnt the melody of the song. Why learn the words, after we have learnt the music, the swara and gamaka structure of the song?"

To this, their father replied, "You are learning somebody's composition and hence learn to respect what it is and understand the idea behind the composition ... You can do all that you want to do if you are able to do something substantial in the art form.. now just shut up and play !"

May be that incident was beginning of their journey towards Ragapravaham.

Kumaresh also states that he considers Ganesh as his Guru. "He is the one who taught me the taste of music. He is creatively and musically very farsighted. I consider him to be a one-of-a-kind Naada Yogi. My brother Ganesh taught me this aspect of relating to music in a systematic way."

Ganesh Kumaresh began performing when Ganesh was seven, and Kumaresh, five. Their father used to travel with them till their teens. He would plan the concerts. Travel those days was hard, lugging the violins, pick ups and speakers and so on.

People loved to see two chubby boys play Carnatic violin duets. Ganesh Kumaresh's popularity rose fast. Once they were performing on Appar Swamy Koil Street in Mylapore. At the end of the concert, an ordinary rasika, definitely not a privileged type, took out a five rupee note and gave it to them with his blessing, saying that was all the money he had on him. At once others started taking out and giving the boys money! Really unusual. The brothers received some 1200 rupees that day, and with it the family bought their first television set!

A couple of years later, Ganesh Kumaresh had gone to Thiruchendur Murugan temple for a performance. Next day, with ample time before the evening train back, they sat down to practise. They were playing the Dikshitar kriti "Mahishasura Mardini" in Gaula. Ganesh Kumaresh's father had made a rule that they should practise only in private, and not where any public could listen in.



Ganesh and Kumaresh at their first concert in Chennai - 6 Dec 75

While they were practising, they saw an old man selling Elantha Pazham standing near the window of the room and listening to their practice. At once they stopped playing, and sat down with their favourite books, Alistair Maclean novels. After some time there was a knock on the door. That same fruit vendor peeped in, and said, "Thambi, why did you stop playing? That Gaula was going on so well!"

Kumaresh recalls that incident, and says, "Goosebumps. That's why I say music is universal, and no community or section of society has a monopoly."

Talking of accompaniment, Kumaresh says, "I have never accompanied other artistes, except my brother...and may be twice, vocalists TVG Mama and Sri. TNS. I don't like the word accompaniment. It is always a collective, collaborative presentation. Our success is as much due to the other great artistes who have shared the stage with us."

"The violin has in fact shaped the way Carnatic music is, today. If Lalgudi or MSG had not played on the violin with those yesteryear greats, the music of those greats would not have been the same. If Chowdiah ji had not played the violin the way he did, fearless and flamboyant, Carnatic music would not be what it is today."

Ganesh Kumaresh switched to the five stringed violins about 20 years ago, as it expands the range, with a full octave more.

A great Taval vidwan, Sri. Valangaiman Shanmugasundaram Pillai (who had accompanied the legendary maestro Karaikurichi Arunachalam), accompanied them very early in their career. He was the father-in-law of Mridangam maestro Sri. Tanjavur Upendran. Playing with typical Carnatic percussion like mridangam, Ghatam, Khanjira, tabla, and playing with western drums, keyboards etc. are to them both interesting but different experiences. Their music becomes different in those two performances.

Ganesh and Kumaresh have also developed a structured way to master the violin technique. This was not available before. Just as English is taught, with the alphabet, parts of speech, grammar, syntax...one can and should do the same on the violin. Then one can get a very good control and understanding of the instrument and learn to optimise the potential of both the instrument and oneself. Ganesh Kumaresh's sense of freedom also comes from breaking out of the confined 'reproduce vocal music' mode.

The brothers' two individual interpretations of the same music would be different. The technique may be the same. But the way each interprets the music will be different. That's how their compositions are also developed affording maximum scope for individual expressions and collaborations at the same time.

After practising for several years intensely together, nowadays, there are constraints of living on opposite sides of the globe, schedules and travels. But the brothers are able to perform directly on stage without any rehearsals. In fact, on Dec.1, 2018, like every year, they performed in Chennai Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, converging from Bengaluru and USA just a few hours before.

The idea of Ragapravaham is to explore the full range of musical possibilities, the dynamic of the two violins, the raga melodic, all laya elements and the five octaves. Improvisational parts are added on the spot, but the piece is essentially a composition.

Ganesh Kumaresh have collaborated with several generations of Carnatic percussionists. There was also once a very interesting collaboration of Ganesh Kumaresh with Dr M. Balamuralikrishna. It so happened that Vasantham TV - a network based out of Singapore, wanted to do a special programme with a different contour and they approached Ganesh Kumaresh. Ganesh did some research and came upon the idea of connecting ancient Tamil Pann with Carnatic ragas. Pann is the Tamil equivalent of current-day Ragas. Ganesh spent a lot of time with Tamil scholars who were well versed in the subject. He also came up with the idea of requesting the legend Dr. Balamuralikrishna to be a part of the programme, along with Sri. Palanivel on Thavil and Sri. TH Vinayakram on Ghatam.

Dr. BMK asked Ganesh Kumaresh what they wanted to play. They shared with him their musical idea, based on Thakessi, a Pann close to Kambhoji Ragam. He said, Ok, we will work on it, you go ahead and play. He went away after a perfunctory sound check, and the five artistes got onstage directly for the live show. Kumaresh recalls what an enthralling experience it was, and how the redoubtable Dr. BMK did wonders around their musical piece.

Listeners have also welcomed another collaboration – between Kumaresh and his famous musician wife, Veenai Jayanthi. Their concerts are called Strings Attached, and they weave a new kind of magic between the Veena and the violin, somewhat like a ballet between a peacock and a swan.

Sahitya-Swara-Naada

In the course of a typical Carnatic kriti or song, essentially there is just one bhava – Bhakti. But in the raga alapana and during swara kalpana, so many dimensions of mood and melody open up, and during swaras, the mathematics, the laya dynamics, all come into play. That is the full scope of Carnatic music, the world of Naada.

Ganesh Kumaresh explain how the Carnatic system is so great, we should be open to its infinite possibilities. Shadjam is the reference and source of all other six notes. We have no

set frequency positions for the swaras in a composition like in the western system. You choose your Shadjam, and the rest follow. What a completely evolved and perfected musical system!

In their album, Aksharam. Ganesh and Kumaresh have played around the concept of numbers, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. The mantras like panchakshari, shadakshari, and so on. The 8-matra piece is a beautiful Purandaradasa song Hari Narayana in Begada, tuned by them. Ample proof that they can work with sahitya and make magic. The navakshara piece is a wonderful Ragam Tanam Pallavi in “Navaratna Behag”.

Finally Kumaresh reveals his latest project, to try and set all the glorious shlokas of Saundarya Lahari and other works of the Adi Shankara, into Kirtana format. The first one is due for release on You Tube.

After listening to their music, and talking to Ganesh Kumaresh, one gets the clear impression that their Carnatic paradigm is both authentic and original. The traditional temple architecture provides different spaces leading up to the sanctum sanctorum, like the Ranga Mantapa for traditional performances, and the Dhyana Mantapa for meditation. The traditional song-based Carnatic concert takes us to the Ranga Mantapa. Ganesh Kumaresh’s Ragapravaham takes us closer to the Dhyana Mantapa, leading up to experiencing pure Naada.

The Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira is conferring the title of “**Sangitha Vedanta Dhurina**” on Ganesh and Kumaresh in the Spring Festival of 2019.

Parur Sundaram Iyer

CP Chikkanna, Bangalore

The origin of violin is South India. According to many research scholars and historians, there are numerous sculptures and paintings in a number of South Indian Temples, where the early shape and size of this wonderful instrument could be seen even today.

Noted musicologist and scholar late Prof. SK Ramachandra Rao has mentioned the sculpture of a woman playing violin in standing posture in the Temple of Agasthyeshwara in Tirumakudalu, the birth place of Mysore T Chowdaiah. Similar idols playing violin could be seen in Chidambaram and other Temples of historic importance and fame. In several scriptures, there is mention of Dhanurveena, Ravana Hastha, Kumara Veena etc. which provide sufficient evidence of the existence of earlier version of violin in South India. Noted violinist Lalgudi Jayaraman has opined that violin is one version of yaal found in South Indian Temples. In a lecture/picture demonstration during the annual music conference under the aegis of Indian fine arts society, Madras in 1979 about the origin and development of violin and its importance in Indian music that include Carnatic, Hindustani, folk music etc, he traced the origin of violin starting from the simple eka taara instrument consisting of a covered coconut shell on which a bridge was fixed to pass an alloy wire tied to a key to adjust the tension and it was supported by a small bamboo stick of one forearm's length. This had undergone several improvements/developments over period of time finally reaching the present size and shape. According to some scholars this instrument in the later period went to Europe via Afghanistan and Persia.

It was the younger brother of Muthuswamy Dikshitar, Baluswamy Dikshitar was responsible for introducing violin to Carnatic music as an accompanying instrument. A number of leg-

endary violinists like Travancore Asthana Vidvan (In the court of Maharaja Swathi Thirunal) Vadi-velu who was the youngest of the famed Tanjore Quartet (Natyacharyas), Thirukodikaval Krishna Iyer, Malaikotai(Trichy) Govindaswamy pillai, Dwaram Venkataswamy Naidu, Mysore T.Chowdaiah, Parur Sundaram Iyer and his illustrious sons, TN Krishnan besides Lalgudi family etc. have immensely contributed and elevated the status of violin.

Parur is a taluk head quarters in Palghat district of Kerala, where Sundaram Iyer was born in 1891. He was orphaned at a very young age and was brought up by his maternal uncle. When he was six years old, he was taken to Travancore Asthana Vidvan Ramaswamy Bhagavathar and his son Narayana Bhagavathar under gurukula to fulfil his ambition of learning violin. The later one is the father in law of noted mridanga player Dr.TK Murthy. Another noted Vidwan Thiruvallangadu Sundaresa Iyer was Sundaram Iyer's colleague and one year junior. Famed composer Papanasam Sivan too stayed at Trivandrum and was receiving lessons from another famed composer Neelakanta Sivan. Both Sundaram Iyer and Papanasam Sivan were great friends and received food and shelter from Sri. Padhmanabha Swamy Temple. Sundaram Iyer stayed in Trivandrum until 1908.

A delegation of foreign musicians along with some Hindustani musicians paid a visit to the Royal Court. Sundaram Iyer was ordered by his guru to play and introduce the nuances/highlights of Carnatic music to the guests. Immensely pleased with his play, the manager of the Hindustani musicians Sait Govindadas purchased a steamer ticket to Sundaram Iyer to Bombay with a recommendation letter to his friend and noted musician Pandit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar who was running Gandharva Vidyalaya. Sundaram Iyer was appointed to teach South



Sundar Iyer with his family members. To his right is MS Gopalakrishnan and to the left is MS Anantharaman

Indian music at the Vidyalaya. He learnt to play the Sarangi, Harmonium, Dilruba, Sitar, Tabla etc. and taught the students the schematic arrangement of 72 melakarta ragas, its derivatives etc. He and Paluskar became great friends and stayed in the same room. It was Parur Sundaram Iyer who introduced violin to Hindustani music by accompanying Paluskar in his recitals. Sundaram Iyer returned to Madras in 1922 and joined University of Madras teaching both Carnatic and Hindustani systems and later became a professor. After deeply studying the playing of various instruments of Hindustani music, he was for a common style of Indian music. He was very broad minded that he never distinguished between North Indian and South Indian styles and strongly advocated for merging both the styles to evolve a new style that resulted in the emergence of Parur Style.

In 1923, Sundaram Iyer bought a house at Appar Swamy Koil Street in Mylapore, Madras and named it Sangita Vilas. It was an Agrahara where a number of musicians like Dandapani Desikar, Tiger Varadachariar, Musiri Subramanya Iyer etc. stayed. During the Tamil month of Purattasi, there used to be concerts in Sundaram Iyer's house. Later he added first floor to his house to accommodate his enlarged family. Their distant neighbour was noted singer young Sirkazhi Govindarajan who was practicing on the terrace of his land lord's house.

Sundaram Iyer and Musiri Subramanya Iyer attended Veena Dhanammal's classes in the city and wrote down notations of the songs like Navagraha and Kamalamamba Navavarna kritis that they learnt. On these visits, young MS Anantharaman too went along with his father.

Noted composer Koteeswara Iyer too was visiting Sundaram Iyer and taught MS Anantharaman his melakarta songs while Mylapore Gowri Ammal taught Bharatanatyam songs to Sundaram Iyer's daughters. All these musicians would gather in the house of justice TL Venkatarama Iyer on Sannidhi street in Mylapore to discuss music theory and to practice. In 1929, they established Thyagaraja Vidvath Samajam with Muthiah Bhagavathar as president and Sundaram Iyer as secretary besides Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer, Mannargudi Sambhasiva Iyer etc as members. During every month's panchami, music concerts by eminent Vidwans were arranged in the house of Umayalapuram Venkatarama Iyer at Adams Street. Sundaram Iyer prepared Vadamala to decorate the portrait of Lord Rama. For musicians the entry fee was four Annas and for non musicians it was eight Annas. Non members too could attend these concerts but they were not entitled for vada prasada.

Singer Alamelu Jayaraman made a hefty donation to these events. During margazhi months, these musicians along with Papanasam Sivan and others would go round all the four mada streets surrounding Kapaleeswarar Temple in Mylapore singing unchavriti bajans early in the mornings. They collected groceries and other food items for mass feeding during Thyagaraja Aradhana celebrations. Every day one of the residents of the area arranged lunch to these musicians participating in Bajans.

In the evenings concerts were arranged by eminent musicians. In the absence of frequent bus and other modes of transport, music lovers and musicians from distant places attended these concerts by cycling/walking, engaging hand pulled or cycle rickshaws. Those days were highly peaceful, full of happiness and there was conducive atmosphere prevailing everywhere to

study Sanskrit, Vedas, music, dance and other fine arts and activities recounted Sundaram Iyer during my short visit to his house in the early 1970's to engage his son MS Anantharaman's violin accompaniment for a concert at Bangalore.

Sundaram Iyer stayed with his elder son MS Anantharaman in the ground floor and his second son MS Gopalakrishnan occupied the first floor with his family. I was privileged to attend the violin trio of Sundaram Iyer, MS Anantharaman and MS Gopalakrishnan at Bangalore City Town Hall in the late 1950's arranged by late MS Natarajan who was running Neel Kamal Kala Mandir in Gandhinagar, Bangalore. He is the husband of noted Kathak dancer Mrs. Maya Rao.

Sundaram Iyer commanded highest respects from both the North and South Indian musicians. He regularly accompanied noted performers Madurai Pushpavanam, Musiri Subramanya Iyer, Muthiah Bhagavathar, Chembai Vaidyanatha Iyer, Mudikondan Venkaarama Iyer besides harikatha and solo with his sons. All the Hindustani musicians during their concert engagements in Madras visited Sundaram Iyer and performed in his house for him and his invitees.

During one such visit, MS Gopalakrishnan provided violin accompaniment to Sitar maestro Pandit Ravishankar.

Sitting from L to R - Parur Sundaram Iyer, Omkarnath Thakur, Standing L to R - Kothamangalam Subbu, Vinjamuri Varadaraja Iyengar, MS Anantharaman



Sundaram Iyer's life was simple living and high thinking. He was never after luxury and lead a simple life. He lost his wife Bhagirathi Ammal during his middle age and he was both father and mother to his children. He married off his daughters when they were young and saw to that their life was comfortable. He was highly disciplined and very orthodox that he sported traditional tuft and generous application of Vibhuthi stripes on his forehead and saw to that his both sons emulated him. He never allowed his sons to have a mirror and a comb to dress their hair. After school hours, his sons were not allowed to play or any sort of entertainment unlike other children of their age. He used to lock the room and ensured that his sons practiced regularly. His daughters too were trained in music and violin. Eldest of them headed the South Indian women orchestra and performed in Bombay's Opera house in 1934 when Anantharaman was 10 year old.

MS Anantharaman was a BA graduate in mathematics and a diploma holder in German and attained proficiency in the Veena also. When his father was a professor in Government College of music in Madras, he too attended classes under his father and later joined as a faculty of violin and retired as professor in 1983. TN Krishnan, KV Narayanaswamy, Vedavalli, etc were the other staff at the college. He started performing at a very tender age in his father's solo recitals and later became top class accompanist to leading performers like KB Sundarambal, MS Subbulakshmi, DK Pattammal, Sirkazhi Govindarajan, Radha Jayalakshmi, Sikkil sisters etc. KB Sundarambal was a highly popular vocalist whose concerts drew vast audience. In a concert at Jaffna in the then Ceylon (Sri Lanka) she sang for six hours non stop from 10 pm to 4 am and won thunderous applause.

MS Anantharaman was A top violinist in both Carnatic and Hindustani styles and participated in numerous National Programme of music, Radio Sangitha Sammelan, for National archives and extensively toured abroad. After retiring from Government College at Madras he taught in many universities in USA.



MS Anantharaman with his family members (MA Sundaresan and MA Krishnaswamy seated in the front row)

Like his father, MS Anantharaman too was highly orthodox and very simple and unassuming person. He was never a show man not bothered about his attire or wearing golden jewellery while playing in concerts. He too lost his wife in 1970's when she was in her mid thirties like his father. He used to wake up around 4 am and ensured that his children received school lessons and music practice. He prepared breakfast and lunch for them and after sending them off to school and college, he went to teach in Government College. His elder daughter Bhagirathi is a doctorate in South Indian music and head of the department of music in a Queen Mary's College in Madras. His elder son MA Sundaresan discontinued CA studies and joined the lucrative job of staff artist in AIR at Pondicherry and later shifted to Madras. His younger brother MA Krishnaswamy is a M. Com and staff artist in Madras AIR. Both the brothers with their father gave several violin trio concerts and later violin quartet by including Sundaresan's son MS Ananthakrishnan. MS Anantharaman has also performed Violin separate (7 persons with his children, grand children and disciple in the ripe old age of 90 for TTD Devasthanam.

After the death of Sundaram Iyer in mid 1970's, MS Anantharaman started Parur Sundaram Iyer memorial trust to impart music to students. He highly respected his profession and gave full hearted accompaniment irrespective of the fact whether the performer is top ranking or a novice. He was highly accommodative in his concert matters, soft spoken, adjustable in nature, never passed judgement over others nor spoke ill of them. He and his contemporary violinist Lalgudi Jayaraman were great friends and admirers of each other. He was born for music, lived for music and attained mukthi aged 94 last February.

Any write-up or mention about Parur Sundaram Iyer is incomplete without mentioning about his universally famed younger son MS Gopalakrishnan (MSG) and his accomplishments as a violinist par excellence. He dominated the entire music world as a colossus by his artistry of playing violin. He was the eighth issue and second son of Sundaram Iyer. He was born in 1931 and attained high degree of proficiency in playing the violin at a very tender age.

When he was a teen ager, Pandit Omkarnath Takur visited Sundaram Iyer at Madras. During formal introduction MS Gopalakrishnan played before the guest. Deeply impressed by the lad's talent, Omkarnath Takur took MS Gopalakrishnan with him to Mumbai as his accompanist and to several concert tours abroad. His bond of attachment was so high that he always addressed/referred to MSG as my Madras son.

In 1952, Musiri Subramania Iyer had arranged a concert Thirupampuram Swaminatha Pillai Flute with MS Gopalakrishnan on Violin in honour of Yehudi Menuhin. After the concert was over Yehudi Menuhim hugged MS Gopalakrishnan and said 'I have not heard such violin in all my travels! How superbly this young Indian is playing our instrument!'

During his 70 years of violin career, MS Gopalakrishnan has accompanied almost all the top leading performers of both Carnatic and Hindustani music, besides thousands of duets and trio concerts in Carnatic and Hindustani styles. He was in such a great demand that the



Parur Sundaram Iyer with MS Gopalakrishnan

organisers were obliged to fix-up his engagement much early before the main performer was finalised several months in advance! He developed deep interest in western music also and regularly practiced it to adopt in his solo concerts. During the second music conference under the aegis of Karnataka Ganakala Parishath, Bangalore in 1970, he played the Bhairavi Varna "Viriboni" only on G string in three speeds and astonished every one!

He excelled in shruthi bedha with precision. A record number of awards, accolades and rewards were showered on him. Some of them are Padhmabhushan, Kalaimaamani, Asthana Vidwan of several Temples and Mutts, Sangeetha Kalanidhi, Sangeetha Kala Shikamani etc. He was

a regular invitee in all the major musical events in India and abroad besides numerous National programmes, seminars, demonstrations etc. These achievements speak for themselves his attainments which no other contemporary musician has ever achieved.

His daughter Narmada is a doctorate in music and violin staff artist in AIR Chennai. Prof TN Krishnan, Lalgudi Jayaraman and MS Gopalakrishnan are hailed as Trimurtis of violin.

MS Gopalakrishnan passed away on January 3, 2013 and the rich Parur legacy is being carried forward by Sundaram Iyer's grand and great grand children with aplomb.

Senior journalist and a music patron A Ishwarayya of Udupi, South Canara passed away on 30 Dec 2018. He was a pioneer in spreading and bringing music awareness to the people of South Canara. He was the president of 'Raga Dhana', an organisation for music, culture and art based in Udupi. He was also the editor in Chief of the music magazine.

Team SRLKM passes on our heartfelt condolences to bereaved family and pray god to rest his soul in peace.

- Editor



Vishaka Hari enthralls audience

Varun V Sharma

Vishaka Hari enthralled the packed audience at Mangala Mantapa (NMKRV college) performing under the aegis of Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira for their grand 2000th concert. Her articulation of interconnection between “THE TRINITY” - Muthuswamy Dikshitar, Tyagaraja, Shama Sastry and Sri Purandaradasa” had the audience spellbound. It was as though the statement was made right at the start when she sang a blissful Uga bhoga, ‘*santhathi aahudu ramayanava kelalu*’ and *paraku madade parambarisi*, in Saveri of Purandara and combined them (with different talas) with ‘*para sakti manupa rada*’ (Thyagaraja) ‘*sri rajagopala*’ (Dikshitar), and ‘*shankari shankuru*’ (Shyama Sastri) as though they were all a single kriti just to show harmony between saint composers.

Purandaradasa employed the raga Mayamalavagowla as the initial scale for music lessons and included swaravalis, janti swaras, alankaras, lakshana geetas, prabandhas, ugabhogas, daatu varase, geeta, sooladis and kritis

and he composed an estimated 475000 kritis. We owe our music to the father of music Purandaradasa (*Karnataka Sangeetha Pitamaha*) whose systems of teaching (*Shishkhana pad-dhathi*) is commonly used for teaching Karnatak music.

Over the course of the discourse, Vishaka Hari provides pointers to connect Purandaradasa to the trinity.

Thyagaraja’s mother taught him Purandaradasa’s devaranama as a child. In ‘Prahlada Bhakti Vijayam’ Thyagaraja salutes Rama, Vishvasena, Vani Saraswathi, Narada and Purandaradasa and invokes them all as his Gurus. Also Thyagaraja in his kriti ‘*narada guru swami*’ (Darbar) addresses Narada as his Guru. Vishaka Hari goes on to say ‘since Purandaradasa is an avatara of Narada, Thyagaraja considers Purandaradasa as his Guru’. She further provides similarities in their compositions ‘*smarane sukhavu*’ (Purandara) and ‘*smarane sukhamu*’, (Thyagaraja) ‘*dwaitavu sukava*’ (Purandara) and ‘*dwaitamu sukama*’ (Thyagaraja)

Vishaka Hari performing with Charulatha Ramanujam, HS Sudhindra and Sukanya Ramgopal



etc. Thyagaraja asks a question 'which graha gives the anugraha for me?' he concludes 'it is the anugraha of Rama' that is needed and not the navagrahas. Vishaka Hari goes on to say these thoughts may have been originated from Purandaradasa kriti '*sakala graha bala nine*' (Atana). She follows up this with a rendering of the kriti '*sakala graha bala nine*' with a nice swara phrases.

While rendering '*naneke badavanu*' (Behag), she cites how the '*dhaatu maatu samyuktha alankara*' in the phrase '*shrinidhe*' (Sa Ni Da Ma) is utilised by other composers like Shyama Sastri in his swarajati compositions.

Vishaka Hari follows this up with a nice '*adad-della olite ayitu*' (Panthuvarali) after providing an excellent sketch of Purandaradasa life.

Suladi sapta talas, a set of 7 talas each of which is associated with 5 jatis forms 35 talas is a contribution from Purandaradasa. Muthuswami Dikshitar adopted these talas in his compositions including the Navagraha kritis. Excellent rendering of '*suryamurttey namostute*' in the raga Sowrashtram follows that adopts one of the 35 tala (Chatusra Jati Dhruva tala). Incidentally the greatness of Dikshitar comes out in this composition. This kriti on Sun God belongs to raga Sowrashtram, a janya of Suryakantham (representing Sun) and is one of the raga in the Agni chakra (representing heat or energy) and the tala selected is Dhruva (stationary) conveying Sun is always a stationary object.

Vishaka Hari goes on to articulate the life sketch of Muthuswamy Dikshitar and renders the Chaturdasa Ragamalika that he (Dikshitar) composed and offered to lord Kasi Viswanatha. A nice Thani avarthanam by HS Sudhindra and Sukanya Ramgopal follows the ragamalika.

Vishaka Hari narrates an anecdotal reference on the genius of Shyama Shastri highlighting the face off with Bobbili Keshavayya at the Tanjavur asthanam. She was largely successful in recreating the situation where Shyama Sastry humbly overcomes the challenge. She also demonstrates Simhanandana Tala (128 aksharas, 18 Angas) and some flourishes of tanam as part of this.

Vishaka Hari concluded her performance with the Pancharatna Kriti of Thyagaraja '*jagadanandakaraka*'

Finally, Sri Thyagaraja's musical genius, his swarajana, and sahitya jnana was shown by singing one of his Pancharatna's '*jagadananda karaka*' with elegance and grandeur. She goes on to enumerate Thyagaraja's swaragnana, Sangeethagnana, Weaving of Sangathis especially highlighting the adjective in the charanam '*purana purusha nrvaratmaja*' translating to ashtottaram on splitting.

On the whole it was an enjoyable evening and the packed audience got their time worth.

Shri. Ramgopal, the best half of Sangita Kala Acharya Neela Ramgopal reached the heavenly abode on 27 Dec 2018. He was the strength behind Neela mami and was instrumental in supporting Neela mami in many a difficult times. SRLKM and my own association with him span over two decades and I personally have enjoyed many concerts in his company. To him GN Sir and Madurai Mani Iyer were the only musicians a sentiment that I also carry. Our association and time we spent with him will remain forever with us.

Team SRLKM passes on our condolences to the bereaved family and pray god to rest his soul in peace.

- Editor



The Humble yet grand M Chandrasekaran

Brindha Manickavasakan

Dr. Chandrasekaran Mohan, born in 1937, Calcutta, is a musician par excellence. An extraordinary violin and vocal artist, he is truly a source of inspiration to everyone. Commenting on his age, he laughed “They say my age is 81, but I feel like I am thirty!” Chandru mama, as he is fondly called, was extremely easy to talk to and his enthusiasm was infectious, sparkling throughout the conversation.

We began our conversation with all the usual questions. On the commencement of his musical journey, he said “We were first in Kanpur, and I learnt to play Hindustani music on the Harmonium there. My mother was a violin artist. She is my only Guru for learning Violin”

he continued proudly, “She first taught me vocal music for five years, after which she saw my interest in playing the violin. I used to keenly observe her when she played the violin. I started learning the instrument at the age of seven. My only challenge was bowing. My bow would keep sliding down. Other than that, I used to be able to play everything as taught without any difficulty.”

His father passed away in 1945, and then the family moved to Madras. “My mother mainly wanted us to shift here because of the learning, concert playing and listening predominantly happening here, and the extent of it” he said. He played his first concert at the age of 11,





TK Rangachari performing with M Chandrasekaran and Trichy Sankaran

March 5th, 1949, in the Thyagaraja Vidwath Samajam, Mylapore.

"I started playing at AIR, Madras, in 1949, I won the music competition at Music Academy in 1950, and in 1951 I played for Vidwan GNB for the first time at my aunt's wedding. In 1952 I started playing for flute Mali, Maharajapuram Vishvanatha Iyer, and many other artists. I still remember the large crowds we used to have at the temple those days. It used to overflow with rasikas. The crowd you see today is nothing in comparison to that", mama reminisced. When asked about his experience accompanying GNB for the first time, he said "I was so young, so I had no fear, no tension." (bursting into laughter)

Mama started teaching at the age of 11, helping his mother in the school she founded. "My mother insisted that anything that was taught had to be taught in vocal first, and only then on the violin. It was probably time consuming, yes, but she was very particular about that. The reason is that violin playing must reflect vocal singing," he said firmly. Mama is a well versed vocalist too. After learning from his mother, he also learnt vocal music from Mannargudi Sambasiva Bhagavathar, Kumbakonam Viswanatha Iyer, T Jayammal, Vidyala Narasimhulu Naidu and some other vidwans.

Concert experiences

From then on began a saga of concerts accompanying numerous artists, such as TK Ran-

gachari, KV Narayanaswamy, TN Sheshagopalan, TV Shankaranarayanan, Madurai Somasundaram, Dr. M Balamuralikrishna, Trichur V Ramachandran. While mentioning Madurai Somu's name, he stopped to say "I still remember how Somu's concerts used to go on for hours and hours. He would sing easily for 6 hours! We have been greatly inspired by such artists." Playing for so many veteran artists, combined with his uncompromising practice and hard work, Chandru mama developed a unique style of playing – one that is brimming with melody, intellect and adventure. V Ramesh Kumar, one of his students, exclaimed that "Mama used to be so busy that someone would be ready with a new luggage to pick him up from one railway station to go the other, for the next concert's travel."

Mama then went on to speak about some instances that are forever etched in his mind. "One very interesting incident comes to mind. This was during flute Mali's concert in 1952. He had played two speeds in *Viriboni* (Bhairavi Ata tala varnam) and started the third speed, indicating me to take over. The pace for the first speed itself was pretty fast. So you can imagine how third speed would have been. I played it. There was a thunder of applause from the audience. It really cheered me up and heartened my mother who was also sitting there." smiled mama. "T K Rangachari also greatly encouraged me. I remember two concerts in 1965 – one in

Delhi and the other in Coimbatore where he appreciated my playing. In Delhi, he sang swarams for Kadanakutuhalam (at Aghamegha in Raghuvamsasudha). In the Rama navami concert at Coimbatore, he praised my ragam in Narayani.” Another incident mama fondly recalled is how Sri Rajaratnam Pillai appreciated him after a recital. “He came to me and said that – ‘this hand that played Kadanakutuhalam today, is going to play all over the world to the utmost joy of every rasika’”.

Speaking of other memorable events, he continued “Once, for a lecture demonstration at Music Academy I sang a pallavi, taught to me by my Guru Mahavidvan Vidyala Narasimhulu Naidu, which was in a complicated talam. It was catusra rupakam, with each beat having 9 counts. One cycle of the talam would take hours (he laughs). This was the year that Palghat Sri Mani Iyer was awarded the Sangeeta Kalanidhi. After presenting the pallavi, Mani Iyer asked me to sing the same pallavi with the talam alone put in 3rd speed. I was able to do it and still remember the applause I got that day. It was a very special moment to make my Guru proud.”

Solos, duets and jugalbandis

Chandru mama played solo concerts as well, from the year 1952. “There is no separate practice that I did for my solo playing. Practice is

common for any form of playing. One should be able to exhibit their vidwat whether it is playing solo or accompanying someone. I feel it is more challenging to play as pakkavadyam than solo. We need to follow like a shadow and also grasp and respond quickly to the main artist. It is important that we understand the difference in approach when playing a solo versus accompanying an artist.” he said.

Chandru mama has played many Violin duet concerts with his students, G Bharathi (who is also his daughter), Madurai Balasubramanian, Jayaprasad and Rahul. He has also played a glorious duet series with TN Krishnan between 1971- 1974. “We had just one session of practice together, before the very first duet concert for Nadopasana. After that, all concerts were performed directly on stage without any rehearsal. Great vidwans would come to attend the concerts and we always had a big number of rasikas who followed these concerts.” he recalled. There were hugely successful benefit performances in Canada, 1984, where he performed along with his daughter G Bharathi, in aid of the Canadian National Association for the Blind.

Chandru mama has also played jugalbandi concerts with MS Gopalakrishnan and Prabhashankar Gaikwad – shehnai. “I love Hindustani music, especially Hindustani instrumental; for

Duet concert of M Chandrasekaran with TN Krishnan with Tanjavur Upendran and Sivaraman on Mridangam





M Chandrasekaran with Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowships and Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards-2011

example, Pandit Ravishankar (sitar), Pandit Bismillah Khan (Shehnai).” A very unique experience during one such collaboration was when he had played a one hour concert with Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu as part of an akhandam. “As soon as our concert was over, I remember how everyone suggested that the akhandam should end with our concert and not go on further as their listening experience was so fulfilling. We were extremely moved”, reminisced mama.

Sri M Chandrasekaran has taught many students including R Rahul, Bharathi (his daughter), V Ramesh Kumar, and Desamangalam Varadarajan. He is also a spectacular composer – he has composed many varnams and kirtanams. He was also a guest faculty member of Palghat Music College. He started a trust in memory of his mother, called “Charubala Mohan Trust” through which musicians are honoured, and concerts are held regularly.

According to mama, when asked about what is important to keep in mind when practicing art, he said “We must never forget our roots. Every small step we took to get to where we are now, every person who has contributed to our growth – we must never forget them. And no matter where we see good, we should imbibe it. There is good everywhere and we should learn to appreciate and learn that irrespective of the source.”

Awards and Recognition

Chandru mama has won several awards and titles to his credit, to mention a few- he won the prestigious Sangeet Natak Academy award (in 1986) and Ratna Sadasyata (Akademi Fellow) award in 2012, from the Government of India. He was awarded the Sangeeta Kalanidhi title from the Music Academy, Chennai, in 2005. He was given the title “Sangeetha Ratnakara” by the Bhairavi Fine Arts Society, during the Cleveland Thyagaraja Festival. He has received the “Yagnaraman Living Legend Award” from Krishna Gana Sabha.

Having spent some time with Chandru mama, I was awe-struck by his insanely beautiful view of life and art. He is so positive and is never short of a kind word – especially when it comes to appreciating other artists. He stands as an example of how one must dream, chase dreams persistently, and not wait for results. He lives in the moment, relishing the moment. He laughs with all his heart. He teaches us that vision is to do with the power of the mind. His spirit of joy, his charm and grace in handling life is something to be experienced. He is most willing to learn new things to this day, as enthusiastic as ever. He triumphs as a wonderful human being, rising as a phenomenal artist. For him, music is a way of life, and it is beyond any worldly power. As Dr. M Balamuralikrishna once said about him, “His sight was through his fingers, those fingers had pristine vision”.

Vasudeva Vaibhavam

Sangeetha Kala Acharya Neela Ramgopal



Mysore Vasudevacharya is a great composer and a pride of Karnataka. He is known as 'Abhinava Thyagaraja' which is a title inspired by Thyagaraja himself. The format he composed in was also on the lines of Thyagaraja's composition, with Pallavi, Anupallavi and Charanam. The last portion of the Charanam will be similar to Anupallavi's tune. He used to add Chittaswarams after the Anupallavi. He dedicated his songs as a prayer to Lord Vasudeva asking him to protect him. Though his mother tongue was Kannada, he has composed in only Telugu. He was well versed in Sanskrit and Telugu and said it was a blessing from Thyagaraja and that it was easier to express himself while composing in Telugu. He considered his insight into Telugu as a gift from Thyagaraja (Thyagaraja biksha).

In Brochevarevarura, a Khamas piece which is very famous, he has introduced a Kakali Nishadam to add beauty to the Ragam which is a speciality. Subsequently, GNB was responsible to popularise this Kriti.

During one of GNB's concerts Mysore T Chowdaiah was playing violin. At that time Mysore Vasudevacharya entered the concert hall. Noticing this Chowdaiah started playing Khamas and GNB quickly grasping it, started singing *Brochevarevarura*. At the end of the concert he embraced GNB and said, I composed the song but never knew it was so beautiful and nice until I heard you sing it so well.

Words used in his kriti from Thyagaraja's compositions

- 1 Brochevarevaru - Thyagaraja - Sriranjani - Brochevarevare
- 2 Vidajala karunala vala - Thyagaraja - atana - Elnee Dhaya radhu
- 3 Parakelanayya - Thyagaraja - saveri- para sakthi nannu
- 4 pogoti - Thyagaraja - Varali - Bhavasannutha
- 5 Chinthadirchi - Thyagaraja - Darbar - Narada Guruswami
- 6 Seethapathey - Thyagaraja - Kamas - Seethapathey
- 7 manamu ledha - Thyagaraja - Hamirkalyani - manamu ledha
- 9 Vathamajarchitha - Thyagaraja - Vasantha - seethapathey

(We are starting a new series where in we will have senior musicians sharing the greatness of Mysore Vasudevacharya composition. Through this, we hope to bring the essence of the doyen's compositions to Rasikas/readers)

Lalitha Kala Suma - Music Institutions

Sri Rama Lalitha Kala mandira is honouring musical organisations in Karnataka with the title “LALITHA KALA SUMA” who have made valuable contribution to the society in propagating Karnatak music through their institutions. The title includes a citation and a cash award of Rs. 10,000. The honours are in memory of chief founders Karnataka Kalashree GV Ranganayakamma, Vid.GV Neela and Chief Patron Dr.GV Vijayalakshmi. The 60 institution to be honoured are as below;

Propagating music through Sabhas and Music Institutions

1. Bangalore Gayana Samaja
2. Malleshwaram Sangeetha Sabha Trust
3. Karnataka College of Percussion
4. Sri Krishna Sangeetha Sabha
5. Karnataka Ganakala Parishath
6. Ayyanar College of Music
7. Vijaya College of Music
8. Bangalore Lalitha Kala Parishath
9. Nadajyothi Sangeetha Sabha Trust
10. Sri Tyagaraja Ganasabha Trust, Bangalore
11. Percussive Arts Centre
12. Swaramurthy V.N.Rao Memorial Trust
13. BTM Cultural Academy
14. D. Subbaramaiah Fine Arts Trust
15. Nadasurabhi Cultural Association
16. Ananya GML Cultural Academy
17. Indiranagar Sangeetha Sabha
18. Tarangini Arts Foundation
19. Vijayanagar Sangeetha Sabha Trust
20. M.E.S. Kalavedi
21. Nadaranjani Sangeetha Sabha
22. Balaji Sangeetha Vidyalaya
23. Girinagar Sangeetha Sabha
24. Sri Tyagarajasangeetha Sabha Charitable Trust, Mysore
25. Ganabharathi, Mysore
26. Veena Doreswamy Iyengar Memorial Trust
27. Ragasudhalaya Charitable Trust
28. Suswaralaya College of Music
29. Dr. RK Srikantan Trust
30. R.T. Nagar Cultural Association
31. Sangeetha Sambhrama
32. Sri Guruvayurappan Bhajan Samaj Trust
33. Bharateeya Samagana Sabha
34. Ranjani Fine Arts
35. Vishesha Fine Arts
36. MA Narasimhachar Music Foundation

37. Samagana sangeetha Sabha, Sahakaranagar
38. Ragadhana, Udupi
39. Sangeetha Krupa Kuteera
40. JSS Sangeetha Sabha, Mysore
41. Sangeetha Bharathi School of Music, Parkala, Udupi
42. Sangeetha Parishath, Mangalore
43. The Kalapremi Foundation

Propagating music through Sri Rama Navami and other festivals

1. Sree Ramaseva Mandali, Chamarajpet
2. Sree Sheshadripuram Ramaseva Samithi
3. Sri Narasimharaja Colony Srirama Mandira Trust
4. Sri Vidyaganapathi Seva Sangha, Shimoga
5. Sri Rama Mandali, 9th Block, Jayanagar
6. Malleshwaram Srirama Mandira
7. Sri Purandaradasara Aradhana Samithi Trust, Mulabagil
8. Sri Karanji Sree Rama Seva Samithi Trust
9. Vyalikaval Extension Association, Rama Temple
10. Bhakti Bharathi Prathishtana
11. Sri Ramanuja Kalakshetra, Yathiraj Mutt
12. Devagiri Venkateshwara Temple
13. Sree Jayaramaseva Mandali, 8th Block, Jayanagar
14. Sree Pattabhirama Seva Mandali, Jayanagar
15. Sri Purandaradasa Memorial Trust, Bangalore
16. Yoga Teacher of SRLKM (AMITA MADHU)
17. Yoga Teacher of SRLKM (LATHA MURTHY)

Veena Venkatagiriappa

*Originally written by Prof.V Amrutha (daughter of Veena Venkatagiriappa)
and Translated to English by Anand S, Editor*

It was an old temple and the stage was overlooking the main entrance and there was a huge gathering of music connoisseurs and senior musicians. A young boy was playing 'shri daksinamurtim' of Muthuswamy Dikshitar on Veena. In the middle suddenly an elderly person threw a wooden stick and it hit the young boy on his knee. The person who threw the stick was Veena Chikkasubbarayaru (Chikka Subba Rao) and the boy was none other than Venkatagiriappa. The reason for the sudden angry outburst was because the boy used an unwanted gamaka prayoga in the Sankarabarana. Veena Chikka Subba Rao, Guru of Venkatagiriappa never had any inhibition and would show his anger anywhere be it house or musical gathering. Venkatagiriappa underwent rigorous train-

ing under Veena Chikka Subba Rao under the most adverse conditions.

Venkatagiriappa was born in Heggadadevanakote in Mysore district and did not get to see his father. His mother Narasamma moved her family and joined her brother Veena Chikka Subba Rao and he was very happy to provide shelter to the young Venkatagiriappa. Chikka Subba Rao did not have children and was always involved in prayers and teaching students. Subbajar, Daasajetti, HP Krishnachar, Venkatesh Iyengar, MS Narasimhamurthy and M Cheluvayaswamy were his prominent disciples. The whole house was dedicated to teaching students. He used to sing Thyagaraja and Dikshitar kritis before commencing the morning pooja rituals.



Chikka Subba Rao brought up Venkatagiriappa as though he was his own son and Venkatagiriappa also found his father in Chikka Subba Rao. He taught him over one thousand keerthanas and gave away everything he had including his assets and properties. Venkatagiriappa had the complete blessings of Chikka Subba Rao.

Chikka Subba Rao and Veena Sheshanna were very intimate and had a very good relationship. Veena Sheshanna would never be satisfied with his composition unless it was heard by Chikka Subba Rao and it made him happy. Chikka Subba Rao forgot about himself when Veena Sheshanna used to render detailed Kedaragowla Raga and Thana. His music was sublime and many a occasion, he gave away valuable ornaments as a mark of his appreciation.

Though Venkatagiriappa had learned a lot from Chikka Subba Rao, he was completely attracted to manodharma, beautiful playing style, and naadha of Veena Sheshanna, and wished that he could learn from Veena Sheshanna. A well wisher of Venkatagiriappa advised him that he should go to one of Veena Sheshanna's friend's house in Deviramanni Agrahara where Veena Sheshanna used to visit often and he had a chance of getting noticed. It was also a routine that Veena Sheshanna used to perform at their house.

It was a hot summer day and Venkatagiriappa reached the house only to see a lady saying Veena Sheshanna is not expected to come that day but said 'you may want to wait'. Poor Venkatagiriappa waited for 2 hours and suddenly Veena Sheshanna showed up. Sheshanna was very angry to see a boy waiting for him as his intention was to rest and relax there. He fired at the boy asking 'what was he doing there? And what does he want? The lady intervened immediately and asked Sheshanna to cool down and requested Sheshanna to teach the boy for his sincerity. Sheshanna cooled down as he was offered some sweets and badam milk.

Sheshanna taught young Venkatagiriappa Kana-da raga Tillana that he had composed recently. Venkatagiriappa was spellbound by the naadha

and plucking of the strings. The experience remained forever in his life and he used to share this experience with Veena V Doraiswamy Iyengar every now and again in his long teaching stint with him later in his life.

Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar (4 June 1884 – 3 August 1940) had not heard of Venkatagiriappa and so one day he was invited to perform at the Khas Palace. Boy prepared with utmost sincerity and gave a very impressive concert. The king in order the test the boy did not show any emotion and appreciation. The boy was eagerly looking for a reciprocation from the king, but that did not come all through the concert. He was disappointed and was wondering how to get an assessment of his performance. The King was highly impressed with the naadha, natural instincts, style, grace and bliss in his playing. To test his patience, the King gave a Rs. 2 to the boy and said 'this is your remuneration for today'.

After returning back home the youngster gave the Rs. 2 to his uncle Chikka Subba Rao and said that was his remuneration. Chikka Subba Rao knowing the vagaries of Kings behaviour was not perturbed and thought the King may be trying to test the youngster. Five minutes later, an employee of the Kings court showed up to say that the King was extremely happy with Venkatagiriappa's performance and announces that Venkatagiriappa had passed the test and that the King was extremely happy. The next day as a token of appreciation, King hands over Rs. 300 to Venkatagiriappa and Rs. 250 to Chikka Subba Rao and in addition Chikka Subba Rao was made the chief Vidwan of the court. Venkatagiriappa never looked back from here. He inculcated utmost respect for the King, who was his friend, father and a guide. Ever since, Venkatagiriappa used to perform pooja and archana at Kote Varahaswamy Temple on behalf of the King regularly.

Venkatagiriappa in the mean time was an advanced musician and was a passionate student of Veena Sheshanna. He had imbibed the gamut of manodharma, Raga alapana, Thanam, and Pallavi, etc. The Mysore style of Veena playing



During Dasara festival: Standing front row - from left Mysore Vasudevachar, Veena Subbanna, Veena Venkatagiriappa

was complete and he used to produce astounding naadha from the Veena. At times, Sheshanna used to say "Venkatagiri, your hands are very pure and pristine and you have grasped the trick of playing Veena completely. You will be a great Vidwan in the days to come".

Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar who heard him wrote a letter saying Venkatagiriappa's style and tonal quality is supreme. Another senior musician of Mysore Titte Krishna Iyengar used to say "our Venkatagiriappa has imbibed the complete essence of Veena Sheshanna and nobody has come this close". Many people listening to Venkatagiriappa's concert used to express "today I felt like I was listening to Veena Sheshanna"

Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar was not only a patron of Karnatak Music but also Hindustani, Western and Fusion music. Venkatagiriappa was asked to direct the Orchestra consisting of the various western instrument. He was made the head of Palace Karnataka Band. He helped the king in notating several kritis into English. Venkatagiriappa discharged all these responsibilities with the highest of the dedication. King was proud of the work done by him and paid him handsomely. After the departure of Sheshanna and Subbanna, Venkatagiriappa was asked to head the Palace Orchestra that consisted of Titte Krishna Iyengar, Chikka Rama Rao, Veena Shivaramaiah, B Devendrappa, Be-

lakavadi Srinivasa Iyengar, Venkatesha Iyengar etc.

World renowned scholar Rabindranath Tagore was a guest of the King and fell sick and had sleeping disorder. Venkatagiriappa performed at the quarters where Tagore stayed. Highly sensitive natured Tagore was mesmerised and induced into a deep sleep. Venkatagiriappa was so engrossed in his playing that he realised Tagore was in his deep sleep only later.

The King was very keen on the education of girls and the Mysore Maharani High School was dedicated to girl students. Venkatagiriappa was appointed to teach music to the students. Venkatagiriappa had to take the morning duty at the Palace and afternoon duty at the school. He taught students with lots of commitment keeping best of the principles in mind. While he never bothered about the syllabus, what he thought was always much more than what the curriculum demanded. The school head madam and other teachers were jealous of Venkatagiriappa and wanted to fix him. During a routine inspection by the authorities, Venkatagiriappa was not informed of the schedule and the inspectors were beforehand informed that things were not going right with Venkatagiriappa.

Venkatagiriappa was engrossed in teaching the students when the inspectors appeared and he did not go out of his duty to please them other



At the Madras Music Academy Conference: From Right - Vasudevacharya, Veena Venkatagiriappa, Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar (with the garland), Narasimharaja Wadiyar (with the garland)

than courteously welcoming them. He asked his students to play Veena thinking that is the essence of the visit of the inspectors. The inspectors cut him short and straight away asked him to show the syllabus and Notes of lessons. Venkatagiriappa confessed he did not know about that and said that he is only performing the duty assigned by the King and discharging to the best of his abilities. He added that the inspectors are free to bring the syllabus and compare with what he had taught the students.

When Inspectors verified what was covered with the syllabus, it turned out that Venkatagiriappa had taught 6 varnams in place of prescribed 4 Vanam, 30 complex kritis in place of prescribed 15 simple kritis. The inspectors were so happy that they gave away whatever money they had with them to the students and said "if all teachers were to be like Venkatagiriappa, anything can be conquered".

Travancore King was a descendent of Swathi Tirunal and had deep knowledge of our music and a wonderful taste for music. Maharani Sethu Parvathi Bayi was an accomplished Veena Vidhushi, a connoisseur and a promoter of music. In 1940 Venkatagiriappa received an invitation to perform at the court of Travancore King. A day before his performance at the court, he also gave a 3 hour concert at the house of Diwan Sir. CP Ramaswami Iyer.

At the court, the hall was full with noted musicians, music connoisseurs and senior people. Venkatagiriappa started his concert with a Sankarabarana varna in Ata Tala composed by Maharaja Swathi Thirunal. After 3-4 kritis, he took up Kalyani for detailed raga elaboration and followed up with the ragamalika Thanam in Ghana ragas Nattai, Gowlai, Arabhi, Kedara and Sri. His manodharma was comparable to continuous waves hitting the shore. He had acquired a high level of proficiency in Ghana raga thanam. The clarity of the swara, tonal quality, the raga bhava captivated everybody in the hall. Maharani Sethu Parvathi Bayi was spellbound and her eyes were moist. She asked that Venkatagiriappa stop his performance for some time. She brought 3-4 silver plates full of flowers and poured it on Venkatagiriappa from head to toe as well as offered it to the Veena. She picked up 2-3 flowers from the Veena and put it on her head. She then paid obeisance to Venkatagiriappa with all the devotion and asked him to continue. After playing a Pallavi in Kalyani he concludes the concert with a Tillana of Veena Sheshanna. The King and Maharani applauded Venkatagiriappa and gifted him generously with jewelleries studded with precious stones and cash. On a request from the King and Maharani, Venkatagiriappa composed the state song for Travancore.

Venkatagiriappa used to perform for Kanchi Swamiji every year and revered Swamiji wanted



Left to Right - Muthaiah Bhagavathar, Venkatesh Iyengar (father of Veena Doraiswamy Iyengar), Venkatagiriappa

to bestow him with honour and a title but unfortunately the Swamiji fell sick. Swamiji requested Bidaram Krishnappa to host a concert of Venkatagiriappa at Bidaram Krishnappa Rama Mandira and give away the honours on behalf of him. There were about two hundred people and Venkatagiriappa's left and right hand did magic in the concert and filled the room with melody. He started the concert with Poorvikalyani Vanam of Sheshanna and played an elaborate 'cani todi teve' in Harikamboji taught by Sheshanna. He played a Pallavi in Khamas 'raghuvaranee' with Raga and Thana and concludes the concert with the Tillana of Sheshanna in Jhinjoti (Senchuruti). Bidaram Krishnappa was overwhelmed by the Veena and had tears in his eyes. To him it was Veena Sheshanna himself playing and he exclaimed 'I had decided not to host any Veena concert in this hall after Sheshanna but I have changed my views. In future anybody who plays Veena in this hall will have to do so only after remembering you'

In 1938, Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar was the president of The Madras Music Academy annual session and Venkatagiriappa was invited to demonstrate the Mysore bhani or style. Venkatagiriappa performed many kritis belonging to Mysore greats and also demonstrated how the western techniques can be adapted to our music for improvisation. The audience were amazed and speechless to something they had not expected. It was as though they were transported to a new world. Venkatagiriappa was able to exploit the capability of his instrument and used his technical ability to create a new paradigm and had given birth to "Mysore Bhani or Style" to the people of Madras.

Venkatagiriappa was invited to the national level music conference in Mumbai for which he had taken RN Doraiswamy along with him. The conference was attended by doyens like Parur Sundaram Iyer, Faiyaz Khan, MS Subbalakshmi and the conference included all forms of music, including Vocal, Veena, Sitar, Bansuri, Shahnayi, Shehnai, Sarod, Sarangi, Violin. Venkatagiriappa's concert was well attended by Bismillah Khan, Omkarnath Thakur, Allauddin Khan, MS Subbulakshmi and her husband Sadasivam. MS Subbulakshmi and Sadasivam saluted Venkatagiriappa after the concert. Venkatagiriappa was awarded a big golden medal for excelling in the conference.

The King used to be a patron for many a doyens of music and Harikesanallur Muthaiah Bhagavathar visited Mysore and gave a concert. Venkatagiriappa along with Bidaram Krishnappa prevailed on the King to recognise his Vidwath. Venkatagiriappa voluntarily gave his house to Bhagavathar and helped him to stay in Mysore till King provided a permanent residence. It was again Venkatagiriappa who helped Bhagavathar and connected him with a Kannada and Sanskrit scholar when Bhagavathar was asked to compose the Chamudeshwari Ashtotara kritis considering Bhagavathar did not know Kannada.

Titte Krishna Iyengar was a scholarly musician and a vocalist and used to play Veena once in a while. King ordered a concert with Chikka



Centre palms folded Veena Venkatagiriappa, slight behind RN Doraiswamy, behind black top Swaramurthy VN Rao, Left of Venkatagiriappa is Devendrappa, Right of Venkatagiriappa is Darbar Bakshi, Behind Venkatagiriappa to his right is Veene Doraiswamy Iyengar

Rama Rao, Shivarudhrappa on Violin, Venkatesha Devar on Mridangam and Titte Krishna Iyengar and Veene Shivaramaiah on Veena. Titte Krishna Iyengar made a small mistake during the swara-prastaram that was not taken well by the King and he called for Venkatagiriappa after the concert. The king wanted to know if Titte Krishna Iyengar was not practicing enough. In return Venkatagiriappa said “my dear King, Titte Krishna Iyengar is a very big scholar and he is a vocalist of the highest order. It is not fair to pin point mistakes when he is playing Veena”. He also goes on to convince Titte Krishna Iyengar who was ready to resign and walk away from the King and throws Titte Krishna Iyengar’s resignation letter to the dust bin.

Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar was very proud of Venkatagiriappa as he was continuing the work of Sheshanna and bringing laurels to the King. He was bestowed with ‘Vainika Praveena’ title along with a diamond studded arm bracelet containing an engraving of ‘Gandaberunda’ and a gold medal in 1936. Jayachamaraja Wadiyar bestowed him with the title ‘Sangeeta Visharade’ along with a bracelet and a gold medal along with Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Dwaram Venkataswamy Naidu, Titte Krishna Iyengar, all of whom had highest of the regard for Venkatagiriappa. The International Society for Contemporary Music, Indian Section recognised Venkatagiriappa and made him the Vice-President.

As a guru Venkatagiriappa was like a ‘kalpavruksha’ supporting many disciples. He took care of

them as though they are his children. Among his noted disciples are Janardhana Iyengar, Venkatesh Iyengar (father of Veena Doraiswamy Iyengar), Dr. MNN Murthy, N Krishnamurthy, N Keshavayya, Cheluvarya Swamy, Doraiswamy Iyengar, Ranganayaki Parthasarathi, RN Doraiswamy, C Krishnamurthy, V Deshikachar, Rajalakshmi Tirunarayanan etc.

Towards the fag end of his life he faced many challenges. He composed two kritis one in Gowlipantu and other in Shubhapanthuvarali on Sri Raghavendra Swamy when He (Sri Raghavendra Swamy) came in his dream and rendered the kritis. The untimely death of his son Prasanna Srinivasa, took a toll on his health. He lost his entire wealth as he was giving away too many charities.

His prominent disciple Mysore V Doraiswamy Iyengar must be credited with spending most of his time with Venkatagiriappa in those days. He used to play Veena for Venkatagiriappa in the evening hours. Despite ill health, at times Venkatagiriappa used to come up with new sangatis and guide V Doraiswamy Iyengar. He used to sleep only due to the Veena of Doraiswamy Iyengar many times. Venkatagiriappa used to reminiscence Sheshanna and cry profusely. One must appreciate the ‘Guru Seve’ of Doraiswamy Iyengar in those days playing for his guru 3-5 hours every day and go back to his house late in the night.

Venkatagiriappa breathed his last on 30 January, 1952.

GV Krishnaprasad honoured

Shri. GV Krishnaprasad, Hon. Secretary, Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira was honoured by Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar Swamiji with a citation on Sunday 9th December 2018. The citation carries an inscription in Swamiji's own handwriting blessing Shri. GV Krishnaprasad.



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Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira (Regd.)

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

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30th Year Karnatak 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)

Spring Music Festival - Feb 2019

(Venue - Bangalore Gayana Samaja Auditorium, Time - 5.45 pm to 9 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 Shiriram Kumar - Violin
K Arun Prakash - Mridangam



04-01-2019, Friday

Dr: Nityashri Mahadevan - Vocal
MA Krishnaswamy - Violin
Neyveli Skanda Subramanian - Mridangam
S Srishtya - Ghatam



05-01-2019, Saturday

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



06-01-2019, Sunday

Malladi Brothers (Sreeramprasad and Ravikumar) - Vocal
Embar Kannan - Violin
Dr. Trichy Sankaran - Mridangam
KV Gopalakrishnan - Khanjira



07-01-2019, Monday

TS Patabhikrama Pandit - Vocal
SVaradarajan - Violin
HS Sudhindra - Mridangam
GS Ramanujan - Ghatam



08-01-2019, Tuesday

Rudrapatnam S Ramakanth - Vocal
BK Raghu - Violin
R Sankaranarayanan - Mridangam
S Srishtya - 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



03-02-2019, Sunday

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



04-02-2019, Monday

Jugalbandhi - HK Venkatram (Violin),
Ustad Shahid Parvez Khan (Sitar)
Anoor Anantha Krishna Sharma - Mridangam
Ravindra Yavagal (Tabla)



05-02-2019, Tuesday

Dr: Vidya Bhushana - 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 Marjunath - Mridangam
G Guruprasanna - Khanjira
Somashekar Jois - Konnagolu



08-02-2019, Friday

S Sakeetharaman - Vocal
HK Venkatram - 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

Kumaresh and Ganesh will be conferred with the title "Sangeetha Vedanta Dhurina" instituted in the name of founder G Vedanta Jyengar 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 Shiriram Kumar - Violin
N Manoj Siva - Mridangam
S Sunil Kumar - Khanjira



12-02-2019, Tuesday

Bharatanatyam recital
by Satyanarayana Raju

Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira welcomes one and all