

# Lalitha Kala Tarangini

Premier Quarterly Music Magazine from  
Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira

Volume 2019, Issue 4

December 2019

Special Edition  
on  
Veena Dhanammal





# Prof. GS Ramanujan honoured

Prof. GS Ramanujan, senior Mridangam and Ghatam exponent from Mysore was conferred the title "Swaralayashrunga" from Suswaralaya College of Music, Bangalore during their 20th Anniversary function on 01 November 2019 at Pathi Sabhangana, NR Colony, Bangalore. Prof. GS Ramanujan is the grandson of our founder Late Sri G Vedanta Iyengar. Senior Mridangist Srimushnam Raja Rao did the honours in the presence of the packed audience.



Left to Right - Kalavathy Avadhooth (who was also honoured), Prof. GS Ramanujan, Vid. Srimushnam Raja Rao, Vid. M Vasudeva Rao, Senior Mridangist of Karnataka and Shri. Subramanya Jois, Sr. Advocate.

## December 2019

Shri. R Rangaramanuja Iyengar, respected musicologist and a teacher says "To HER, Music is no vehicle for solid, sensuous enjoyment, but a medium of communication with the soul". The person is none other than "Veena Dhanamma" (1867–1938) who is the foundation on which our current Karnatic Music stands today. Veena in front of her name signifying her exceptional ability with the instrument and the school (bhani) in her name is a manifestation of the pioneering work she did. She is synonymous with tradition, repertoire, aesthetics, and everything that is our music today. The current edition of Lalitha Kala Tarangini is dedicated to this legend who is an exceptional representation from the Golden Age of Karnatic music. A lot has been written about Veena Dhanamma by experts like Shri. R Rangaramanuja Iyengar, etc. but we at SRLKM consider that our effort is not complete unless such a pioneer is presented in Lalitha Kala Tarangini.

Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira has charted out a 26 days (26 concerts) festival to celebrate 65th years of our service to music. Top ranking musicians and also established musicians knocking at the doors to fame will be performing. Details of the same is available in the centre spread sheet. It is quite possible that a music festival of this magnitude is happening in Bangalore for the first time. As always SRLKM is expecting the rasikas to attend in large numbers and make it a grand success.

Kalaimamani G Harishankar, the wizard on the Kanjira who made his Kanjira do all the talking is a giant whose remembrance day is celebrated by his admirers across the country in February. Current day Kanjira artistes are indebted to him for revolutionising the instrument and he is somebody who gave Kanjira a special place in our music. As a mark of our respect and tribute, we have included a special article on Harishankar ji by a senior mridangam Vidwan KS Kalidas.

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 Karnatic Classical Music.

"Lalitha Kala Tarangini" publication is fostered by Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira, disseminates knowledge in the area of Karnataka 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.

SRLKM in association with AIR, Bangalore is embarking on a unique program that will deal with why does a specific kriti liked by rasikas? What is special about it? How has the kriti evolved over time and the way it is presented today, Are there kritis that are deeply rooted to a specific bhani/style or an individual artist? The unique program will include a talk as well as rendering. It is quite possible something like this is being attempted for the first time. This is planned to be aired soon in the year 2020.

Violin Vidwan TT Srinivasan son of Late Violin Vidwan TS Tatachar shares a very interesting life sketch of Sangita Kalanidhi Rallapalli Ananthakrishna Sharma a doyen from Karnataka. This is a must read for the youngsters.

Lalitha Kala Tarangini has purposefully served its cause for the last 7 years and entering into 2020 which will be our 25<sup>th</sup> edition. We have covered doyens of music from Karnataka and other states apart from technical articles. We keep hearing from knowledgeable readers who consider the magazine worth preserving for posterity. We plan to bring out a special edition for our silver jubilee edition.

I wish our readers a very happy new year 2020.

### Anand S

**Contributors** - CP Chikkanna, Vidwan KS Kalidas, Rajani Arjun Shankar, Vidwan TT Srinivasan, Ravi and Sridhar, Rajashree Yogananda, Anagha Yoganand.

**Photo Courtesy** - Paniraj, The Hindu archives, Personal collection of TT Srinivasan, Personal Collections of Ravi and Sridhar, Personal collections of Late RK Srikantan and their family, Personal collections of GV Krishnaprasad, Collections from Nadasurabhi Cultural Association, The Madras Music Academy achieves.

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### Magazine Committee

Editor - Anand S

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

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Vidwan HS Venugopal, a senior flutist was honoured by M A Narasimhachar Music Foundation on 08th November at Bangalore Gayana Samaja in the august presence of Sri Sri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar

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*Lalitha Kala Tarangini*  
**Inbox**

ಆತ್ಮೀಯರಾದ ಶ್ರೀ ಕೃಷ್ಣಪ್ರಸಾದ್ ಅವರಿಗೆ ವಂದನೆಗಳು. ತಮ್ಮ ಪರಿಕಲ್ಪನೆಯ "ಲಲಿತ ಕಲಾ ತರಂಗಿಣಿ"ಯ ವಿಶೇಷ ಸಂಚಿಕೆಯ ಮುಖಪುಟವು ನಮ್ಮ ನಾಡಿನ ಕಣ್ಣಿಗೆ

ಶ್ರೀ ಜಯಚಾಮರಾಜೇಂದ್ರ ಒಡೆಯರ್ ಅವರ ಭಾವಚಿತ್ರದೊಂದಿಗೆ ಒಂದೇ ವರ್ಷದ ಸಂಚಿಕೆಯ ಆದಿಯಾಗಿ ವಿಜೃಂಭಿಸಿದೆ.

ಒಳಗಿನ ಪುಟಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ರಾಜ್ಯಪಟ್ಟ ಅನಂತಕೃಷ್ಣ ಶರ್ಮ, ವೀಣೆ ರಾಜಾರಾಯರು, ಜಿ.ವಿ.ಕೆ. ಶಾಸ್ತ್ರಿ, ಜಯಚಾಮರಾಜೇಂದ್ರ ಒಡೆಯರ್ ಅವರ ಭಾವಚಿತ್ರಗಳು, ಸ್ವರಮೂರ್ತಿ ವಿ.ಎಸ್. ರಾವ್‌ರೊಡನೆ ಪಿಟೀಲು ಆರ್.ಆರ್. ಕೇಶವಮೂರ್ತಿ, ಮೃದಂಗ ವಿದ್ವಾನ್ ಎಂ.ಎಸ್. ರಾಮಯ್ಯ, ವಿದ್ವಾನ್ ಹೆಚ್.ಪಿ. ರಾಮಾಚಾರ್, ವಿದ್ವಾನ್ ಸೋಸಲೆ ಶೇಷಗಿರಿದಾಸ್ ಇವರ ಜಮಾವಣೆ ನಮ್ಮನ್ನು ಹಿಂದಿನವರ ಸ್ಮರಣೆಗೆ ನಾಂದಿ ಹಾಡಿದೆ.

ಇವೆಲ್ಲದರ ಜೊತೆಜೊತೆಯಲ್ಲಿಯೇ ಶ್ರೀ ರಾಮ ಲಲಿತ ಕಲಾಮಂದಿರದ ರೂವಾರಿ ವೇದಾಂತ ಅಯ್ಯಂಗಾರ್ ರವರ ಸ್ಮರಣೆ ಸಮಯೋಚಿತ, ಸಂದರ್ಭವಾಗಿದೆ. ಸಂಗೀತಲೋಕಕ್ಕೆ ಕಲಶವಿಟ್ಟಂತೆ ಸಂಗೀತ ಸಾಮ್ರಾಜ್ಞಿ ಎಂ.ಎಸ್. ಸುಬ್ಬುಲಕ್ಷ್ಮಿಯವರ ಪುತ್ಥಳಿ ಅನಾವರಣದಿಂದ ಇಡೀ ಸಂಗೀತಲೋಕದ ಜನತೆ ನಿಮಗೆ, ನಿಮ್ಮ ಪರಿಶ್ರಮಕ್ಕೆ ತಲೆಬಾಗಿದೆ.

ಹೆಚ್ಚಿಗೆ ಜಂಜನಲು ನಾನು ಶಕ್ತನಲ್ಲ.

ವಿಶ್ವಾಸಗಳೊಂದಿಗೆ,  
ನಿಮ್ಮವನೇ ಅದ  
(ನಾ. ರಾಜಾರಾವ್)  
ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಾಹಕ ಟ್ರಸ್ಟಿಶ್ರೀ ಹರಿದಾಸ ಪೀಠ,  
ವೀರಭದ್ರನಗರ,  
ಮುಳಬಾಗಿಲು

To Shri. Krishnaprasad,  
It is beautiful, informative and worth preserving.  
Congratulations.

Prof. Mysore V Subramanya

ಸನ್ಮಾನ್ಯ ಶ್ರೀ ಕೃಷ್ಣಪ್ರಸಾದ್ ಅವರಿಗೆ,

ತಮ್ಮ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ಸೆಪ್ಟೆಂಬರ್ ೨೦೧೯ರ ತ್ರೈಮಾಸಿಕ ಸಂಚಿಕೆ "ಲಲಿತ ಕಲಾ ತರಂಗಿಣಿ" ಕೈನೇರಿ ಸಂತೋಷವಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ. ಕಲಾಪೋಷಕರಾಗಿದ್ದ ರಾಜಶ್ರೀ ಶ್ರೀ ಜಯಚಾಮರಾಜೇಂದ್ರ ಒಡೆಯರ್ ಅವರನ್ನು ನೆನಪಿಸುವ ಸಂಚಿಕೆಯಾಗಿ ರಕ್ತಾ ಕವಚದಲ್ಲಿದ್ದ ಅವರ ಭಾವಚಿತ್ರವು ಚಿತ್ತಾಕರ್ಷಕವಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ. ಅವರ ಕುಟುಂಬದ ಹಾಗೂ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಸಭೆಗಳ ಮಹತ್ವದ ಸನ್ನಿವೇಶಗಳ ಭಾವಚಿತ್ರಗಳು ಹಾಗೂ ತತ್ಸಂಬಂಧದ ವಿವರಣೆಗಳು ಉಪಯುಕ್ತವಾದವುಗಳಾಗಿವೆ. ರಕ್ತಾ ಕವಚದೊಳಗಿನ ಸಂಗೀತ ಕಲಾ ಸಾಮ್ರಾಜ್ಞಿ ಡಾ|| ಎಂ.ಎಸ್. ಸುಬ್ಬುಲಕ್ಷ್ಮಿ ರವರ ಶಿಲಾಛಿಮೆ ಅನಾವರಣಗೊಂಡಿರುವ ಭಾವಚಿತ್ರವೂ ಸಹ ಭಾವಪೂರ್ಣವಾಗಿದ್ದು ಪ್ರತ್ಯಕ್ಷ ದರ್ಶನವು ಕಲಾಜಮಾನಿಗಳಿಗೆಲ್ಲ ಸಂತಸದಾಯಕವಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ.



ತಮ್ಮ ಹಿರಿಯರು ನೆಟ್ಟಿರುವ "ಕಲಾ" ಸಸಿಯನ್ನು ನಿಷ್ಠೆ ಹಾಗೂ ಅಜಮಾನದಿಂದ ನೀವೆಲ್ಲರೂ ಹೆಮ್ಮರವಾಗಿ ಬೆಳೆಸಿದ್ದೀರಿ. ತತ್ಪರಿಣಾಮ ಹಿರಿಯ ಮತ್ತು ಕಲಾವಿದರುಗಳಿಗೆ ನೆರಳಾಗಿ ಉಪಯುಕ್ತವಾಗಿ ಪ್ರೋತ್ಸಾಹದಾಯಕವಾಗಿ ಸೇವೆ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುತ್ತಿರುವುದು ಬಹಳ ಶ್ಲಾಘನೀಯವಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ. ದೇವಗಿರಿ ಶ್ರೀ ವೆಂಕಟೇಶ್ವರ ದೇವಸ್ಥಾನದಲ್ಲ ನಡೆಯುವ ಶ್ರೀ ತ್ಯಾಗರಾಜರ ಮತ್ತು ಶ್ರೀ ಪುರಂದರದಾಸರ ಆರಾಧನಾ ಮಹೋತ್ಸವಕ್ಕೆ ಪ್ರತಿ ವರ್ಷವೂ ತಮ್ಮಿಂದ ದೊರಕುತ್ತಿರುವ ಸಹಕಾರವು ಪ್ರಶಂಸಾರ್ಹ. ತಮ್ಮೆಲ್ಲರ ಅನುಭವ ಹಾಗೂ ಆಸಕ್ತಿ ಕಲಾಸೇವೆಯನ್ನು ಅನವರತ ನಡೆದು ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ಕೀರ್ತಿ ವೃದ್ಧಿಸುತ್ತಿರಲೆಂದು ಭಗವಂತನಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಾರ್ಥಿಸುತ್ತೇನೆ.

ತಮ್ಮ ವಿಶ್ವಾಸಿ  
ಟಿ.ಎಸ್. ದತ್ತಾತ್ರೇಯ

To the Editor,

I just finished reading the 2 part article on Dikshitar and Divya Desams by Smt. Rajani Shankar. Excellent and well researched. Please convey my appreciation to the author. The magazine is well produced, elegant and aesthetic.

Regards,

Ravi Narayanan  
Tiruvannamalai  
(Disciple of T Muktha)



Dhrupad maestro Ramakant Gundecha, younger brother of the Gundecha brothers duo passed away on 08 November 2019. He suffered a heart attack while waiting for a train to reach Pune. Team SRLKM passes on condolences to the bereaved family.



## Our Upcoming Programmes

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 05 - 25<br>January 2020<br>5.30 pm       | <b>The Bangalore Gayana Samaja</b><br>Music Festival Concerts at Bengaluru Gayana Samaja  |
| 26 January<br>2020<br>10.30 am           | <b>Varapada Sree Venkateshwara Temple (Devagiri Temple), Banashankari II Stage, Bangalore</b><br>Sri Thyagaraja & Sri Purandaradasa day celebrations in association with Devagiri Sri Venkateshwara Trust at Devagiri Sri Venkateshwara Temple, BSK II Stage. |
| 22 February<br>2020<br>5.30 pm           | <b>The Bangalore Gayana Samaja</b><br>Dushyanth Sridhar - Musical discourse<br>Sub: Prahlada Bhakti Vijayam<br><br><b>Supported by:</b><br>Anahita and Apoorva (Vocal)<br>Vaibhav Ramani (Violin)<br>Akshay Anand (Mridangam)                                 |
| 23 February<br>2020<br>Sunday<br>5.30 pm | <b>The Bangalore Gayana Samaja</b><br>Sanjay Subrahmanian (Vocal)<br>S Varadarajan (Violin)<br>Neyveli B Venkatesh (Mridangam)<br>N Guruprasad (Ghatam)<br>B Rajasekar (Morsing)  |
| 01 March<br>2020<br>Sunday<br>5.30 pm    | <b>SRLKM Auditorium</b><br>Centenary Celebrations of Vidwan Sri Vidwan AV Krishnamachar (Padmasharan) in association with Vidwan S Shankar and his team.  |
| 14 and 15<br>March<br>2020<br>Full Day   | <b>SRLKM Auditorium</b><br>Pallavi Darbar Competition<br>(For more details, visit <a href="http://www.srlkmandira.org">http://www.srlkmandira.org</a> )   |
| 25 March<br>2020<br>Wednesday            | <b>SRLKM Auditorium</b><br>SR Maruthi Prasad and Party  |

# ನಾದ ನವನೀತ

– ಇದು ರಾಗ ರಸ ಸಾಗರ ಅಮೃತ ಮಥನ

ಸಂಗೀತ ತಾಪತ್ರಯ ಪರಿಹಾರಕವಾಗಬಲ್ಲ ಕಲೆ ಎನ್ನುವುದು ಸಂಪ್ರದಾಯ ಸಿದ್ಧವಾದದ್ದು. ಅದರ ಕೇಳೆ ಕೇಳುಗನ ಮನಸ್ಥಿತಿಯನ್ನು ಅವಲಂಬಿಸಿ ಪರಿಣಾಮ ಬೀರಬಲ್ಲದು. ಸಂಗೀತದ ಸಾಧನೆಗೂ ಇದು ಮಾರ್ಗದರ್ಶಿ. ಹೀಗಾಗಿ ಭಾರತೀಯ ಸಂಗೀತದ ಕೇಳೆಯೇ ಒಂದು ಕಲೆ ಎನ್ನುವುದೂ ಅಷ್ಟೇ ಮಹತ್ವದ ಅಂಶ. ಸಂಗೀತದ ಕೇಳೆ ವೈಯಕ್ತಿಕವಾದ ವಿಷಯವಾದರೂ ಸಾಮುದಾಯಿಕವಾಗಿ ಇದಕ್ಕೊಂದು ನಿರ್ದಿಷ್ಟ ಕ್ರಮವನ್ನು ರಸಿಕವೃಂದ ಕಂಡುಕೊಂಡಿದೆ. ಇದರಿಂದಾಗಿಯೇ ಕೃತಿಯೊಂದು ಸಮುದಾಯದಲ್ಲಿ ವಿಶೇಷ ಪ್ರಸಿದ್ಧಿಯನ್ನೂ ಮಹತ್ವವನ್ನೂ ಗಳಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತದೆ. ಇದು ಸಂಗೀತ ರಸ ಗ್ರಹಣಕ್ಕೆ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದ ವಿಷಯ. ಸಂಗೀತದ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿ ಮೊದಲಿಗೆ ಉತ್ತಮ ಕೇಳುಗನೂ ಆಗಬೇಕು. ಆಸಕ್ತ ಕೇಳುಗ ಉತ್ತಮ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಯಾಗಿ ಮಾರ್ಪಡುತ್ತಾನೆ. ಈ ಹಿನ್ನೆಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ರೂಪಿತವಾಗುತ್ತಿರುವ ಸಂಗೀತ ರಸಗ್ರಹಣದ ಒಂದು ವಿನೂತನ ಸಾಪ್ತಾಹಿಕ ರೇಡಿಯೋ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮ, "ನಾದ ನವನೀತ".



ಅನುಭವೀ ಸಂಗೀತಾಸಕ್ತರು ಮತ್ತು ವಿದ್ವಜ್ಞನರು ತಮ್ಮ ಆಯ್ಕೆಯ ಹಾಡುಗಳಲ್ಲಿನ ರಸಘಟ್ಟಗಳನ್ನು, ಆಸ್ವಾದ ಬಿಂದುಗಳನ್ನು ತಮ್ಮ ನೆನಪಿನ ಬುತ್ತಿಯಿಂದ ಬಿಚ್ಚಿ ಸಮಾನಾಸಕ್ತ ಕೇಳುಗರಿಗೆ ಉಣಬಡಿಸುವುದೇ ಈ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮದ ಪೂರಣ. ಕೃತಿಯೊಂದು ತಮಗೆ ಏಕೆ ಮೆಚ್ಚಿತು. ಅದರಲ್ಲಿ ತಾವು ಕಂಡುಕೊಂಡ ವಿಶೇಷತೆಗಳೇನು, ಕಾಲಾಂತರದಲ್ಲಿ ಆ ಕೃತಿಯ ರೂಪ ಬದಲಾಗಿದೆಯೇ? ಹೌದಾದರೆ ಹೇಗೆ? ಕೃತಿಯೊಂದು ಕಲಾವಿದನೊಬ್ಬನ ಶೈಲಿಯನ್ನು ಸ್ಫುಟೀಕರಿಸಿರುವುದು ಹೇಗೆ? – ಈ ಎಲ್ಲ ವಿಷಯಗಳೂ ಈ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮದಲ್ಲಿ ಚರ್ಚಿತವಾಗಲಿ ಎನ್ನುವುದು ಈ ಸರಣಿಯ ಮುಖ್ಯ ಉದ್ದೇಶ.

ಇಷ್ಟರಲ್ಲಿಯೇ "ಅಮೃತವರ್ಷಿಣಿ" ಸಂಗೀತ ವಾಹಿನಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಾಯೋಜಿತ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮವಾಗಿ ಮೂಡಿಬರಲಿರುವ "ನಾದ ನವನೀತ", ಶ್ರೀ ರಾಮ ಲಲಿತ ಕಲಾ ಮಂದಿರದ ಹೆಮ್ಮೆಯ ನಿರ್ಮಾಣ.

ಈ ಪ್ರಾಯೋಜಿತ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮವು ಸುಮಾರು 6 ತಿಂಗಳು ಅಮೃತ ವರ್ಷಿಣಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಸಾರವಾಗುತ್ತಿದ್ದು ಶ್ರೀ ಶ್ರೀ ಶ್ರೀ ಯತಿರಾಜ ನಾರಾಯಣ ರಾಮಾನುಜ ಜೇಯರ್ ಅವರ ಆಶೀರ್ವಚನದೊಂದಿಗೆ ಪ್ರಾರಂಭವಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಆಲ್ ಇಂಡಿಯಾ ರೇಡಿಯೋ ಎಫ್.ಎಂ. ಅಮೃತವರ್ಷಿಣಿ ಸಹಕಾರದೊಂದಿಗೆ ಈ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮವು ಪ್ರಸಾರವಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ.

"ನಾದ ನವನೀತ" – ಇದು ರಾಗರಸಸಾಗರ ಅಮೃತ ಮಥನ.



# Navaratri at SRLKM

S Anand, Editor

Under the able direction of Sangita Kala Acharya Neela Ramgopal, a Special Musical Ensemble was organised by SRLKM to celebrate Navaratri on 06th October (Durgashtami) at JSS School auditorium, Banashankari II Stage. Who is who of young musicians of Bangalore were assembled and they gave a harmonious concert. "AMMA Mother, the Supreme Goddess" was the concept against which the kritis were selected and rendered. Senior Vainika Geetha Ramanand graced the occasion as chief guest.

It is not often that so many youngsters are brought together and guided to perform synchronously as though they have learnt from one single Guru. The participants included VOCAL - Sriram Shastry, Dileep Simha, Vivek Sadashivam, Mahesh Narayan, YG Srilatha, Anagha Yoganand Anjali Sriram, Usha Jois, VEENA - Rakshitha Ramesh, FLUTE - G Ravikiran, VIOLIN - Achyutha Rao, Vaibhav Ramani, Pooja Sridhar, Mridangam - Nikshith Puttur, GHATA - N Phanindra, KANJIRA - Sunad Anoor, COMMENTARY - Sumana Kukke and Ranjani Ramaprasad.

Over a period of two and half hours, the team presented five composers in five languages that included Keerthanas, Devaranamas and Abhang.

## The List:

- 1) *parashakti jananee, Hamsanandhi, Aadi Tala, Papanasam Sivan*
- 2) *dehi tava pada, Aadi Tala, Sahana, Saint Thyagaraja*
- 3) *shri matrubhutam, Misra Chapu, Kannada, Muthuswami Dikshitar*
- 4) *mayamma yanine, Aadi Tala, Ahiri, Shyama Shastri*
- 5) *nanu brovamani cheppu, Misra Chapu, Kalyani, Badrachala Ramadasu*
- 6) *Thonru nigazhndadanaittu, Bhairavi, Aadi Tala, (Tisra gati), Subramania Bharati*
- 7) *maganendadisidalu yashode, Aadi Tala, Ragamalika, Purandaradasaru*
- 8) *Abhang, Santa Eka Nathar, Eka Tala*
- 9) *manikkam katti, Aadi Tala (Tisra gati) Ragamalika, Periyalwar thirumozhi (Divya Prabandham)*
- 10) *Nottu swara, Sankarabarana, Aadi Tala, Muthuswami Dikshitar*
- 11) *Tillana, Aadi Tala, Maand, Lalgudi Jayaraman*

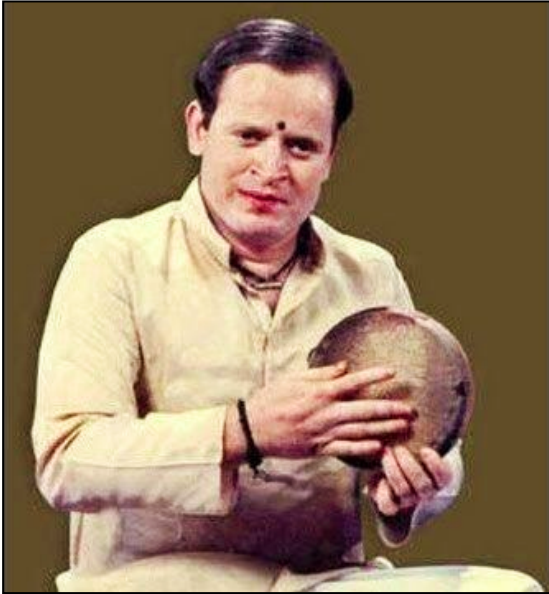
Prog.YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/gcZjdyIOq4>



# G Harishankar, the Kanjira wizard

Vidwan KS Kalidas, Chennai

(Republished from article 'Kalaimamani G Harishankar ...the peerless Phenomenon of Kanjira')



Palani M Subramania Pillai was the last great Mridangam and Kanjira vidwan, although he accorded priority to the former. He passed away in 1962 and since then the great tradition of the Kanjira which was first put on the concert stage by the legendary Manpoondia Pillai of Pudukkottai suffered a decline.

Harishankar had his initial training under Ramanathapuram Shri. CS Murugaboopathy a great mridangam Vidwan belonging to Pudukkottai School. On another side also, Harishankar can be said to be a descendant of the Pudukkottai school as his father (who never became a concert artist) studied under one Ramaiah Pillai, a direct disciple of Manpoondia Pillai. Later Harishankar spent a few years with Palghat Mani Iyer, the most eminent vidwan of the Thanjavur school, when he was teaching in the Rishi Valley

school in Andhra Pradesh. Thus Harishankar had two streams of influence. The Pudukkottai and Thanjavur School.

Hari, as he was affectionately called by all his colleagues was brilliant right from the beginning. It was the late MLV who discovered him first and played the role of his mentor. Under her benign patronage he flowered. MLV used to smilingly encourage his tani with mridanga vidwans such as Thanjavur Krishnamurthy Rao, Mannargudi Eswaran, Tiruvarur Bhaktavatsalam and later with the great Palghat Mani Iyer himself. Hari's handling of the one sided instrument with limited tonal qualities had to be experienced to be believed. His speed over the instrument, without sacrificing clarity even to the tiniest extent took one's breath away. Top mridangam artists were extra alert when Hari was playing the Kanjira in a concert with them. This in spite of the fact that Hari never tried to steal the limelight or tried to show-off. If the mridangam artist played a round of 3 minutes in a tani avartanam, Hari restricted his response to only 2 minutes, but within this period, created as good or better impression on the audience. Great artist like Pt. Ravishankar had such a high opinion of Hari that he gave many opportunities to him to share the stage with tabla maestros like Ustad Zakir Hussain. In each such programme, Hari held his own. Similarly he was in hot demand for special laya ensembles with top mridangam and other artists and his participation made the programmes gain in stature and prestige.

Hari used to visit Manpoondia Pillai's shrine in Pudukkottai each year without fail on the day of Gurupooja which falls a day ahead of the Thya-



garaja Aradhana at Tiruvaiyaru. For the Kumbabishekam of the temple in 1996, he donated a handsome sum of Rs. 10,000. He also encouraged many of his disciples to attend the gurupooja at Pudukkottai. In fact barely two weeks before he expired, he was present at the Gurupooja, although physically very weak. He had health problems during a major part of his concert career but his artistry never suffered because of it.

Hari has been solely responsible for the rejuvenation of Kanjira in Tamil Nadu and apart from

gifted disciples such as N Amrit of Bangalore, even others such as BS Purushothaman of Chennai have derived inspiration from him. That today there are at least a dozen very competent young Kanjira artists is in a great measure due to the stature given to the instrument by Harishankar.

I had a very warm personal relationship with Hari and have been fortunate to have played a few concerts with him. It is said that God takes away those closest to him at a very young age and it certainly is true of Hari.

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*Saxophone wizard and one who introduced Saxophone into Carnatic music Kadri Gopalnath left for his heavenly abode on Friday, October 11, 2019. He was originally a Nagaswaram Vidwan but caught the passion for Saxophone after listening to a concert of Saxophone played by Mysore Palace band set when he was only 15 years. The Saxophone was played by Lakshmi Narasimhaiah from whom Kadri learnt the techniques of Saxophone for 5 years. Later It was TV Gopalakrishnan who moulded him to become one of the top performing artists in the country. None other than Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer has hailed Kadri and called him Carnatic Music Genius.*

*He has collaborated with world renowned Jazz artistes and western composers and cut multiple albums. He traveled all round the globe and presented concerts that includes Royal Albert Hall in London.*

*Kadri Gopalnath was presented with the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for Carnatic Music by the President Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam. Among many other awards, he was awarded "Karnataka Kalashree" by Karnataka Sangeeta Nritya Academy, Padma Sri by Govt. of India, Tamil Nadu State Award 'Kalaimamani' and 'Samagana Mathanga National Award' from Bharatiya Samagana Sabha, Bangalore.*

*As a mark of respect to the doyen, we at SRLKM pass on our condolences to the bereaved family. We remember humbly a great performance he gave for SRLKM way back in 2008 along with A Kanyakumari to the accompaniment of Patri Satish Kumar on Mridangam, N Amrith on Kanjira and Rajashekar on Morsing.*



# HH Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar Centenary year Program

Anagha Yoganand, Bangalore



A concert was organised at SRLKM to celebrate the centenary year of HH Sri Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar, Maharaja of Mysore. Dr. Sukanya Prabhakar was accompanied by HK Narasimha Murthy (Violin), GS Ramanujan (Mridangam) and VS Ramesh (Morsing) gave a scintillating concert.

Dr. Sukanya Prabhakar gave a captivating introduction on Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar covering his rich heritage and contributions. During the course, she explained the compositional beauty of his works, drawing parallels with the trinity of Carnatic music - with respect to the lyrics being similar to Sri Muthuswami Dikshitar since both of them were Sri Vidya upasakas, the rhythm and tala of his compositions to Sri Shyama Shastri, the musical structure and framework of his compositions to Saint Tyagara-

ja. He is also said to have not employed the use of chaapu talas in his compositions and is known for the usage of uncommon and innovative ragas for each of his compositions.

## The List

(All Kritis are Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar composition except the varna)

- 1) *Srima Chamundeswari, Hamsanandhi, Aadi Tala, Veena Venkatagiriappa* (depicting greatness of the king)
- 2) *Gan Ganapate namaste, Tishra Triputa, Durvanki Raga*
- 3) *Vandeham sada sharada, Hamsanantani (Mayamalavagowla janya) with Kalpana swaras*
- 4) *Hatakeshvaram bhajeham, Hatakambari, Rupaka*
- 5) *Sri Ranganatha pahimam, Kalyanavasantham, Misra Jampe,*
- 6) *Kamalambike, Naata, Khanda Jampe, Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar (Like Saint Thyagaraja pancharatna, this kriti incorporates multiple charanams but on a smaller scale).*
- 7) *Sri Rajarajeshwari, Lalitha with Raga, Neraval and Kalpana swara followed by Tani Avarthanam. This kriti incorporates a few of the lyrical intricacies that are seen in the navavarana compositions of Muttuswami Dikshitar*
- 8) *Shiva Shiva Shiva bho, Nadanamakriya, Misra Jampe*
- 9) *Kayo Shri Gowri, Palace anthem*



# Veena Dhanammal - Saraswati Incarnate

*Ravi and Sridhar, Tiruvannamalai  
(Disciples of T Muktha, grand-daughter of Dhanammal)*

It was 1937. It was a Friday evening. There were about thirty rasikas in that small hall. Amongst them were three youngsters who had only recently begun visiting that house a couple of years earlier. It was not a concert they were going to attend. It was, the youngsters and the others knew, the weekly meditation, the weekly worship, the weekly sangeetha upasana, that was going to happen.

The old lady, by then almost totally blind, was seated across from her sparse audience that included her four daughters and 13 grandchildren. Her Veena was placed on her lap by one of her daughters. She began playing. There was pin drop silence. For, not even a whisper was tolerated by the highly moody woman. As she went on to play and simultaneously sing, the rasikas gathered not just gaped in wonder. Rather, by the time she came to the main piece of her recital, she had taken her listeners on a journey through the secret depths of Nada Brahman. The rasikas had lost themselves within their own souls. She asked one of the youngsters, "Raja, c'mon, tell me what you want. It is Sahana isn't it?" and she played and sang a sloka in that sublime raga. As she finished her Nadopasana, one youngster whispered to another one, "C'mon, say something. Something special in appreciation. Something that others may not have told her before". The youngster told the 70 year old lady, "Amma, you are Goddess Saraswati incarnate. In fact, you have nothing to learn from Saraswati. Maybe she has something to learn from you"

That was the ultimate tribute man could pay to her, to Veena Dhanammal. People who knew her, who heard her sing and play on the Veena,

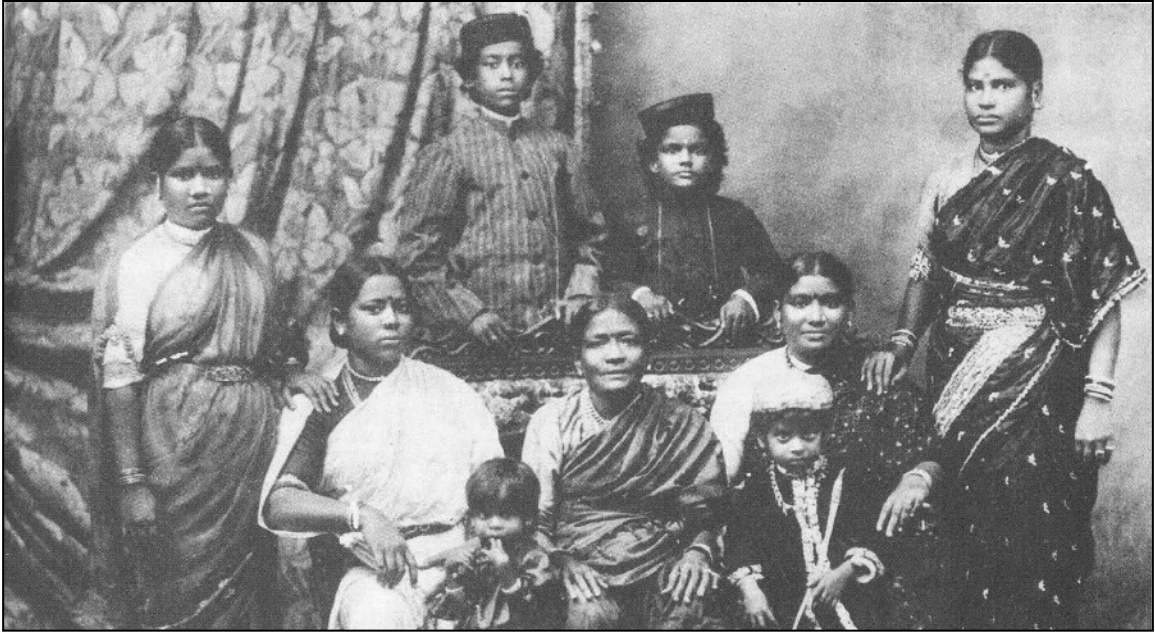
revered her as Saraswati Herself. In her times, she was held in high esteem by great composers, by great musicians, by the music loving cognoscenti. Many were the stalwart musicians who sat at her feet in order to imbibe at least a bit of her vast repertoire. She had many disciples, including her four formidable daughters and her four equally illustrious grand-daughters who carried her legacy admirably through the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But, she won no titles or awards, nor cared for them. She was content with pursuing her music as an offering to the Muse. What exactly was the reason for Veena Dhanammal being considered the Queen Bee of Carnatic music even now, more than 80 years after she passed away? What was the reason for a particular style of music being christened as the Dhanammal bhani? Let us find out.

## HER ANCESTRY

Dhanam's ancestors can be traced to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, at the earliest. After the Nayak rule had faded away giving way to Maratha rule in Thanjavur, we are able to lay our eyes on Pappammal, a dancer at Maharaja Sarabhoji's (1776-1832) court. Pappammal's daughter Rukmani was also a dancer at Sarabhoji's and his son Sivaji's (1832-1855) court. It is of Rukmani's daughter Kamakshi that we get a few more details and from whom a glorious chapter in the history of Carnatic music begins.

## KAMAKSHI (BORN 1827)

Kamakshi too was a dancer at Sivaji's court. Besides learning Sadir or Chinna Melam as it was called then, from her mother Rukmani, Kamakshi learnt the technicalities and nuances of dance from Bharatam Ganapati Sastri, an uncle of the famous composer Patnam Subra-



Standing from left: Jayammal, T Sundararajan (son of Rajalakshmi), T Sankaran (son of Lakshmiratnam), Kamakshi. Sitting from left: Rajalakshmi, DHANAMMAL, Lakshmiratnam. Standing between Rajalakshmi and Dhanammal is the child T Brinda. standing between Dhanammal and Lakshmiratnam is TVijayakrishnan (elder brother of Brinda-Muktha).

Photo taken - 1918.

manya Iyer. Besides, Kamakshi had the great fortune of studying music under Subbaraya Sastri, the son of one of the mighty Trinity of Carnatic music, Shyama Sastri. She also learnt from the composers the Anayya brothers.

With the death of Shivaji, the patronage for music and dance declined in Thanjavur court. The period of terminal decline of the performing arts in Thanjavur had begun. Hundreds of Devadasis and their families had to migrate to greener pastures in search of livelihood. Many of them chose the then emerging music centre of Madras. Kamakshi and her family relocated to Madras and began living there in the George Town area like many others of their ilk.

In Madras, she found patronage for her art, besides support from the famous Buchi Babu family of the city. In course of time Kamakshi had a son Appakannu and a daughter whom she named Sundara. The latter was born in the year 1847. Sundara also learnt from Subbaraya Sastri and later from his son Annasami Sastri, apart from her own mother.

### DHANAMMAL'S TUTELAGE

In course of time Sundara gave birth to two daughters, Dhanam and Rupavati. Dhanammal was born in May 1868. Both were taught music

by their grandmother Kamakshi as well as by mother Sundara. In addition, Dhanam and Rupavati were sent to Sathanur Panchanada Iyer who was an expert in Muthuswami Dikshitar kritis. Panchanada Iyer had learnt Dikshitar compositions from Shuddha Maddhalam Thambiyappan who was one of the senior most disciples of Dikshitar himself. Dhanam thus had the opportunity of learning Dikshitar kritis in their pristine pure form without any dilution. During this period, Dhanam's classmates who learnt simultaneously from Panchanada Iyer were Tirupamburam Natarajasundaram Pillai, who was to later shine as one of the foremost Nagaswaram exponents and Tirukkodikaval Krishna Iyer, the great violinist and maternal uncle of Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer. Dhanam learnt around 200 compositions of Dikshitar. She was already imbibing the great compositions of Shyama Sastri and his son Subbaraya Sastri from her mother Sundara and grandmother Kamakshi as also Anayya kritis from both of them.

There is a thrilling story regarding a composition of Subbaraya Sastri. His son Annasami Sastri taught his father's Todi masterpiece, "Nannu Brochutaku" to Sundara. In the Pallavi, there occurs the line, "mayamma kamakshamma..." In later years, Annasami Sastri would ask Sundara

to sing this song repeatedly. And when Sundara sang those lines beautifully, Annasami Sastri would respond emotionally, “Yes, yes, your mother is that Kamakshamma”, referring to Sundara’s mother as also to Goddess Kamakshi, so sublime would be Sundara’s rendition.

Subbaraya Sastri and Annasami Sastri, whilst singing Shyama Sastri’s compositions as well as those of Subbaraya Sastri himself would simultaneously sing the chitteswara and its corresponding sahitya in kritis where these occur. That is, while Subbaraya Sastri sang the swaras, Annasami Sastri would sing the corresponding sahitya in the Anupallavi of the song and vice versa in the Charanam. Annasami Sastri recommended this particular aspect of singing to Kamakshi and her daughter Sundara who carried forward the tradition. In later years and decades, Dhanam and her sister Rupavati and Dhanam’s daughters and grand-daughters would continue to sing the chitteswara-sahitya passages simultaneously. Jodi singing was a tradition in Dhanam’s family.

Some time in her, Dhanam’s, teens mother Sundara decided that Dhanam should learn the Veena. A teacher by name Azagiyasingarayya was found and Dhanam learnt the Veena from him for a few years. In course of time she attained wholesome proficiency in the instrument. Her knowledge of the Veena helped Dhanam to explore the sublime depths of the compositions of the Trinity and Subbaraya Sastri. Her singing too acquired a transcendent depth that was not to be heard from others in those days.

It was at Buchi Babu’s home in Mylapore that Dhanam met the blind musician Balakrishna Das, aka Baldas. He was staying at Buchi Babu’s house for a few years. He was an authority on Kshetrajna’s padams. Dhanam learnt hundreds of padams from Baldas. He would eagerly await Dhanam’s arrival, so fond of her was he. She would grasp the nuances of his teaching in no time, mostly even as he taught a line the first time. Baldas referred to Dhanam as ‘Aggipetta’, meaning matchbox. The allusion was to Dhanam’s lightning grasp of any musical phrase, even very tough ones. Baldas, though he was

blind, would somehow know, when Dhanam arrived at Buchi Babu’s residence that she had come and would exclaim, “Ochinda Aggipetta?”, meaning ‘have you come’. Such was the bond between the teacher and his brilliant disciple.

When Dhanam was in her twenties, in the 1890s, she came into contact with Tiruvottiyur Thyagayyar, the son of Veena Kuppayyar who was a direct disciple of Thyagaraja. She learnt a lot of Thyagaraja kritis from Thyagayyar. Thus it was that Dhanam could claim complete authenticity for her versions of the kritis of the Trinity.

Having learnt from gurus who traced their immediate lineage to the mighty Trinity themselves, and having learnt the soulful padams of Kshetrajna, along with her knowledge of and proficiency on the Veena, Dhanam’s music acquired a rare sheen, a rare sublimity.

## HER MUSIC

The compositions of the Carnatic music Trinity are considered to be the ultimate authority in raga music as well as in the beauty of their sahitya. Dhanam, with her vast, erudite and deep learning, combined the voice and the Veena to bring forth the true beauties and depths imbedded in the ragas and compositions. Her voice complemented her Veena and vice versa. She did not sing or play niraval or swaras. She confined herself to playing alapanas and kritis. Testimonies of the prominent rasikas of those times tell us that her singing of kritis and padams were themselves wholesome and ethereal and that they did not require the props of neraval expansion or kalpana swaras. In about five minutes of alapana Dhanam could plumb the very depths of any raga. Her renditions were marked by brevity, rather than expansiveness, by sweetness rather than technical cleverness, by the sublimity of gamakas rather than rapid fire brigas. The compositions of the Trinity and those other great masters that she had internalised within the inner recesses of her soul played out perfectly in her voice and instrument. Soolamangalam Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar, the foremost Harikatha exponent has this to say about Dhanammal in his book on a few musicians, in which Dhanammal is the only



woman musician featured: “She sings only the sahitya, but I have never experienced this quality of music from any other vidwan, even though they indulge in lengthy alapanas, niraval and swaras.”

Being closely, ancestrally tagged to Shyama Sastri and to his son Subbaraya Sastri, Dhanam was at her subliminal best in singing/playing their compositions. Thus, a rare ‘Parvati Ninnu’ in Kal-gada or a ‘Neelayadakshi’ in Paras of the father would resonate as deeply as ‘Marivere Gati’ or a ‘Pahisri Girirajasute’, both in Ananda Bhairavi. The myriad sanagtis of ‘Ninne Namminanu’ in Todi would find their ultimate satisfaction in being enunciated by her. Dhanam and her descendants can unhesitatingly be credited with bringing into circulation the exquisite compositions of the son, Subbaraya Sastri. Subbaraya was the only human in history to have learnt from all the three members of the Trinity. Early on in his life, Shyama Sastri had sent his son to Tiruvaiyaru in order to imbibe the works of that great Rama bhakta. When Muthuswami Dikshitar came to Thanjavur in order to teach the Quartette, it was on the same street, Mela Veedhi, where Shyama Sastri lived, that he lived for four years. Thus it was that Subbaraya Sastri learnt from Dikshitar too. Subbaraya Sastri had distilled into his 15 compositions the essence of all the three of them. Who else was competent enough to bring out the chiselled beauty of the kritis of the one who had had the grace of the three mighty Avatara Purushas? Wasn’t Dhanam the grand-daughter of Subbaraya Sastri’s favourite disciple Kamakshi? ‘Ema Ninne’ in Mukhari, ‘Ninnu Sevinchina’ in Yadukulakambhoji, ‘Venkatasaila Vihara’ in Hamir Kalyani, ‘Nannu Brochutaku’ in Todi and ‘Janani Ninuvina’ in Reetigaula, were a few of Subbaraya Sastri’s kritis that Dhanam brought to the music world. This was admirably carried on by her descendants too.

The works of Thyagaraja which Dhanam had learnt from Tiruvottiyur Thyagayyar acquired a new dimension when Dhanam sang and played them. Apart from kritis like ‘Rama Nee Samanamevaru’ in Karaharapriya, ‘Tanayuni Brova’ in Bhairavi, ‘Manasu Swadheenamaina’ in Sankarabharanam, and ‘Sukhi Evaro’ in Kanada,

Dhanam took particular delight in singing some rare kritis of Thyagaraja like ‘Mummoorthulu’ and ‘E Papamu’ in Atana, ‘Maragata Manivarna’ in Varali, ‘Buddhi Radu’ in Sankarabharanam etc.

It was Muthuswami Dikshitar that Dhanam felt most at home with. Probably because he also was a vainika/vocalist like her as he has revealed in his Bhariavi masterpiece ‘Balagopala’ (vainika gAyaka guruguha). Also, her connection with Dikshitar was much closer too, what with her guru Sathanur Panchanada Iyer being just once removed from being his direct disciple. The great composer’s majestic sweeps and glides, his exquisite jaru and vali gamakas captivated her. ‘Balagopala’ was her favourite. So were ‘Akshayalinga Vibho’ and ‘Dakshinamurte’ in Sankarabharanam, ‘Meenakshi Memudam’ in Gamakakriya, the Navagraha kritis and much, much more. Dhanam took particular delight in singing and playing Dikshitar’s Vegavauhini masterpiece ‘Veenapustaka Dharinim’. It was she and her descendants who were known and identified with this sublime work of Dikshitar. No wonder that, not just her family members but great rasikas too revered Dhanam herself as Saraswati Veenapustaka Dharini. Many Dikshitar compositions in vogue today owe their popularity to their propagation by Dhanam. These include ‘Chetasri’ in Dwijavanti, ‘Sri Matrubhutam’ in Kannada, ‘Mamava Pattabhirama’ in Manirangu, ‘Mamava Meenakshi’ in Varali, ‘Hastivadanaya’ in Navaroj, not to speak of the Navagraha kritis.

Not that Dhanam ignored other composers. She sang the kritis of Anayya who had taught her grandmother Kamakshi, she sang Gopalakrishna Bharati compositions like ‘Enneramum’ in Devagandhari, ‘Vazhi Maraithirukkude’ in Natakurinji, ‘Satre Vilagi Irum Pillai’ in Purvikalyani, ‘Varugalamo’ in Manji etc. These compositions were to be made world famous by Dhanam’s grand-daughter T Balasaraswati in the decades to come through her ethereal abhinaya.

Dhanam’s name was synonymous with padams. She sang the padams in a much slower pace than was the vogue then. Most of the padams, especially those of Kshetrajna were set in Tripu-ta tala. She thus ensured that the raga in which

the padam was set revealed itself in full splendour. All the contours of a particular raga were explored to the maximum by Dhanam. The special gamakas of a particular raga found their rightful place in her padam renditions. Not that these were absent in her singing or playing of those ragas in the kritis of the Trinity. But, the deliberate slow pace in which she sang/played the padams ensured that not even a tiny, yet beautiful nuance of the raga was lost. Though she sang padams in the major ragas like Kalyani, Sankarabharanam, Kambhoji, Todi, Bhairavi, Begada etc., Dhanam explored the huge potential that ragas like Mukhari, Mohanam, Surati, Pantuvarali, Atana, Sahana, etc. had to offer. Why, even Nadanamakriya and Punnagavarali, which have limited potential, took on myriad proportions in her hands. The padam genre was what the cognoscenti considered as the cream of Dhanam's music. Dhanam also sang and played a lot of Tamil padams composed by Ghanam Krishna Iyer and Vaideeswarankoil Subbaramayyar. As with Gopalakrishna Bharati's compositions, Kshetrajna's as well as the Tamil padams would be danced to international acclaim by Balasaraswati, while the padams acquired additional sheen at the hands of Bala's mother Jayammal, who was Dhanam's third daughter and at the hands of Dhanam's other two granddaughters T Brinda and T Muktha who were vocalists and who never ended their concerts without a couple of padams and javalis.

Javalis, are like padams, expressions of madhura bhakti, nevertheless, a little more explicit in their sentiments, in their expressions of lascivious attachment to the lover. In keeping with the underlying ethos of the sahitya, the music that embodies the javalis is somewhat light, sparkling and in madhyama kala in its manner of construction. These javalis offer a perfect foil to the heavy padams and serve to act as fitting finales in a concert. Dhanam had the great fortune of having many javalis of Dharmapuri Subaarayar composed at her home itself. On this, a little later.

Dhanam's sloka renditions were also eagerly looked forward to by her rasikas. She almost always at her Friday sessions concluded her

recital with a Sanskrit sloka like 'Agre Kritva' or the Navarasa sloka extolling Lord Rama. This would be followed by Dikshitar's Manirangu classic 'Mamava Pattabhirama'. The rasikas would, at the end of it all, realise that they had been in the presence of something really great, something truly profound, something that elevated their soul, their very being. Not for nothing that even those who were elder to her called her and referred to her affectionately and respectfully as Dhanammal.

### HER NAVARATRI DURBAR

Navaratri, which is celebrated throughout India as a festival of worship to the Mother Goddess held a special place in Dhanammal's life. She was virtually a Queen in those nine days. All those nine days, she would have a small pandal of fragrant flowers put up in her upstairs hall at her home. In the evening at around 6 p.m., she would dress up in a simple but tasteful saree. She would apply attar to her fingers as also to the strings of her Veena. With the choicest agarbathies emitting fragrant smoke, the whole hall would resemble a Raja's durbar. Dhanammal would sit under the bower and softly stroking the strings of her Veena, she would begin her worship of the Goddess. In the last ten years of her life Dhanammal had completely lost her vision. Yet, she knew who all had graced her durbar. Most of them were her lifelong admirers who knew that they were witness to a phenomenon like no other in the art world in that part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Dhanammal tolerated no disturbance while she was engaged in her sangeetha nivedana. Not even a mild cough could escape any listener's mouth. None was allowed to even keep talam. This strict discipline and the resultant admonition by her, were the code to be broken by anyone, were taken in the right spirit by her rasikas. Once, the scholar-musician Jalatarangam Ramanayya Chetty who was one of Dhanammal's benefactors, was so taken up by her playing of a song that he inadvertently began keeping the beat to her hearing. Dhanammal stopped playing. Ramanayya Chetty begged forgiveness, saying, "Dhanam I am the culprit. I am sorry." Quick came the admonition, "I am an old

lady, the vadyam is Veena. If even the knowledgeable scratch like a bandicoot, what am I to do"? Another day, towards the end of Dhanammal's life. Keertanacharya CR Srinivasa Iyengar quietly got up after Dhanammal had sung a javali. He had his 8 p.m. tram, which was the last one, to catch in order to return to his home at Mylapore. Just then Dhanammal began the sloka 'Agre Kritva'. C.R., extremely fond of this sloka, sat down. In the process, his betel leaves packet dropped to the ground. It was just a soft sound to others, but to the old lady's extremely sensitive ears it was a big thud. "Sorry Dhanam", said C.R. "Ah, it is Keerthanacharya, isn't it? It must be late for your last tram. Why don't you leave?" admonished Dhanammal. Such was the extreme sensitivity that Dhanammal possessed and also demanded of her listeners.

#### HER INTERACTION WITH COMPOSERS

In her time, Dhanammal had the opportunity of coming into contact with many composers. Among the most important of them was Patnam Subramanya Iyer. He had settled in Madras in order to teach the Salem sisters. That was why the prefix 'Patnam', (meaning city, which was how Madras was referred to), to his name. Patnam became friends with Dhanammal and began teaching her eldest daughter Rajalakshmi. This was how many compositions of Patnam entered the repertoire of the Dhanammal family. In later years her grand-daughters T Brinda and T Muktha would popularise many of Patnam's compositions.

Tiruvottiyur Thyagayyar was another composer who befriended Dhanammal. In later years, as he was aging, Thyagayyar would lean on a heavy stick and walk the distance from his Muthialpet house in George town to Dhanam's home on Ramakrishnan street in the same area. After a game of dice with her eldest daughter Rajalakshmi, he would implore Dhanammal. "Dhanam look. I have composed this varnam in Sahana (or Surati or Yadukulakambhoji...). The laya aspects have been taken care of by Kandappa (a Nityacharya, and descendant of the Tanjore Quartette, later to become Balasaraswati's guru). You polish the varnam and make it fit for rendition." Thus it was that Dhanammal sang

and played the varnam to perfection. If today Tiruvottiyur Thyagayyar's varnams are popular and in league with those of his father Veena Kuppayyar, it is in no small measure due to the strenuous efforts put by Dhanammal in shaping and polishing them. Thyagayyar, as noted earlier, also taught Dhanammal a number of Thyagaraja kritis which he had learnt from his father who was a direct disciple of the great composer himself.

Dharmapuri Subbarayar is now famous for his javalis. But how many people know that many of his javalis were composed at Dhanammal's home and were shaped and polished by the great lady herself? Subbarayar would stay for months together in Madras and would visit Dhanammal frequently. Invariably on these visits, he would compose a javali and Dhanammal would play and sing them and make them fit for rendition. Subbarayar dedicated two of his javalis to Dhanammal herself. 'Smarasundaranguni Sariyevvare' in Paras is in direct praise of Dhanammal. A poignant story lies behind his Chenchurutti javali, 'Sakhi Prana'.

Subbarayar had to go to his home town once for an important personal work. He promised Dhanammal that he would return soon. But he got delayed by almost 6 months. Meanwhile Dhanammal's own house on Nattu Pillayar Koil street in Georgetown came up for auction to pay off her debts because she was a spendthrift and was not in the habit of saving for a rainy day. Dhanammal and her daughters had to take shelter with different patrons. That was when she stayed in Jalatarangam Ramanayya Chetty's home. Dharmapuri Subbarayar, when he returned, came to know of the happenings and felt extreme remorse. He met Dhanammal at Ramanayya Chetty's house. The reunion was poignant. Having undergone the pangs of partition of ancestral property himself recently on his trip to Dharmapuri, he had no means of helping her. Subbarayar told Dhanammal, "Dhanam, I have nothing to give you. But I am presenting you this gem". But it is a rough gem and it is you who have to polish it." So saying, Subbarayar then and there composed the javali 'Sakhi Prana' in Chenchurutti and dedicated it to



her. The javali speaks of the promise the lover makes to his beloved, saying that he will return to her soon, but since he is not able to for reasons beyond his control, he feels remorse and pours out his feelings to her. This javali is, unusually for that genre, a work of pathos and the raga acts as a perfect foil to that sentiment. When T Brinda and T Muktha and T Balasaraswati, Dhanammal's three grand-daughters sang this javali, it would be invested with a rare sublimity.

### HER DISCIPLES

Dhanammal did not have a large number of disciples. She taught her four daughters as well as her four grand-daughters. Apart from these, she taught Veena to a few ladies. Madurai Shanmukavadivu, mother of MS Subbulakshmi was one of those who learnt from her. ML Vasanthakumari's mother Madras Lalithangi learnt vocal music from Dhanammal. Another 5 or 6 ladies learnt the Veena, among whom was Savitri Rajan, daughter of the famous Madras physician Dr. Seethapathi. Savitri Rajan was not a professional Vainika but she was much respected in the music circles and she was instrumental in starting the Carnatic music archive centre, Sampradaya in Madras in the 1980s. Two important personalities who learned Veena from Dhanammal were the Maharani Regent of Travancore Sethu Parvati Bayi and a Congress party leader and freedom fighter Rukmini Lakshmi pathi, later to become the Tamil Nadu health minister in K Kamaraj's cabinet.

There were however, many vidwans who came to learn from Dhanammal. Among the earliest was Bidaram Krishnappa of Mysore. He learnt a few kritis from her. Ariyakkudi Ramanuja Iyengar learnt a lot of pieces from Dhanammal. It is said that Ariyakkudi's fast paced, briga oriented music gave way to a more sedate madhyamakala, gamaka oriented music after his tutelage with Dhanammal. Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer, Musiri Subramania Iyer, Alathur Venkatesa Iyer (father of one of the Alathur brothers, Sivasubramanya Iyer), Parur Sundaram Iyer (father of violinists MS Anantharaman and MS Gopalakrishnan), Kanchipuram Naina Pillai, Chittoor Subramanya Pillai, Coimbatore Thayee and many

others at one time or the other learnt from Dhanammal in order to enrich their repertoire.

### HER HINDUSTANI CONNECTION

Dhanammal was very fond of Hindustani music. Early on in her life, Dhanammal's name had spread far and wide among the cognoscenti of this country as she had sung and played at various Raja Durbars including Mysore, Travancore, Vizianagaram, Baroda, etc. The koel of Calcutta, as Gauhar Jaan was known had heard about Dhanammal and when she visited Madras sometime in 1920, she called on her. Gauhar Jaan instantly took a liking to Dhanammal's music and became her rasika. Dhanammal in turn, was much captivated by Gauhar Jaan's voice and the effortless ease with which she could traverse all the three octaves. Dhanammal threw an expensive party for Gauhar Jaan at the Harrisons, which later became the Connemara hotel. The party reportedly cost Dhanammal the then whopping sum of Rs.1000/. This was in 1920. At Gauhar Jaan's request, Dhanammal taught her Thyagaraja's Surati kriti '*Bhajana Parula*'.

The great Hindustani music maestro and founder of the famous Kirana gharana Abdul Karim Khan had heard about Dhanammal and when he visited Madras, made his acquaintance with her and listened to her music with awed admiration. Dhanammal too loved Khan's music. Once Dhanammal played and sang for the then sitar maestro Nawab Ali Khan who had come to Madras on a visit. After listening to Dhanammal, he gifted her a sum of Rs. 116. Dhanammal promptly sent for Abdul Karim Khan who was then staying in the Triplicane area in Madras, asked him to sing, which he happily did until the wee hours of the morning. At the end of Khan's singing, Dhanammal gifted the Rs. 116 to Khan. She also taught Abdul Karim Khan Thyagaraja's Surati kriti '*Bhajana Parula*' and '*Rama Nee Samanamevaru*' in Kara-harapriya.

### HER LIFESTYLE

Dhanammal never believed in talking about music. When someone told her that at the newly established Music Academy, they were conducting lecture demonstrations and speaking, she

humorously remarked, “Oh, they are talking music is it?” Similarly, she believed and set store only by rote learning, in the traditional gurusishya method. She shunned and never approved of notations, not even writing down of the sahitya. Once when a great musician wanted to learn from her, he began writing down the notation after she taught him the first line of a song. “Swamy what are you doing”, she asked him. “Notating the song”, replied the musician. “Keep that aside. Is that paper going to sing or that pencil going to sing?” If it is you who are going to sing, then concentrate on what I am teaching”. The lesson went home, and all went well after that. Her descendants, her daughters and grand-daughters too maintained those strict standards.

Dhanammal lived life to the fullest. Her tastes in food and her tamboola were epicurean. She loved to taste a handful of ghee before her rasam. She herself would personally choose her betel leaves and the aromatic spices that went with it. Jarda had to come from Lucknow. Veena artists usually used oil for the strings, but Dhanammal used attar to smoothen her fingers as well as her Veena strings. She was a lavish entertainer too. She didn't bother about whether she had money for the morrow. The family had to put up with her quirks. But, in turn they were the inheritors of a glorious tradition that went back at least 2 centuries before her.

### CERTAIN INCIDENTS

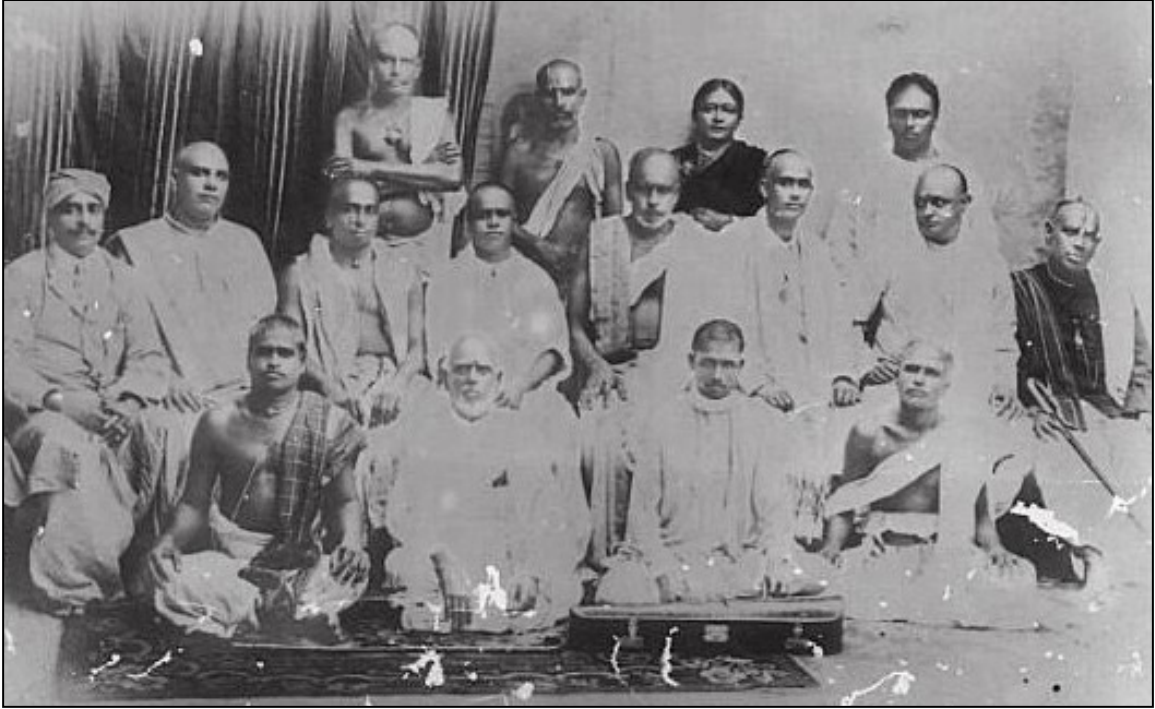
Sarabha Sastri was one of the earliest known flautists in this country. Though he lived only for 32 years, from 1870 to 1902, he had become famous for his bhava laden playing. He was totally blind too. Once, in 1898, Dhanammal and her daughters, when they visited Thanjavur, went to the residence of Narayanaswamy Appa, recognised as the Godfather of the mridangam. The reason? Sarabha Sastri was to play there. Whilst Sastri paused for a few minutes after playing three or four kritis, a voice butted in, “A brief exposition of Bhairavi please. Long since ‘Koluvaiyunnade’ was heard.” The quick tempered Sarabhi Sastri, who could not see who had had the audacity to ask him to play this or that, asked in a challenging tone, “Who is that?”.

Narayanaswamy Appa replied, “Who else but our Dhanam?” A highly pleased Sastri is believed to have plunged into Bhairavi as never before and played an evocative ‘Koluvaiyunnade’, Thyagaraja's masterpiece. Dhanammal's second daughter Lakshmiratnam who was just 10 years old then would often recollect the incident in later years whenever she heard a Bhairavi.

Once, Dhanammal was visiting Tiruvananthapuram. She was put up at the Vainika, Kalyanakrishna Bhagavathar's house. After settling Dhanammal in her room the Bhagavathar took leave of her in order to visit the Padmanabhaswamy temple for his daily darshan. Hardly had he stepped out of his home than he heard the strains of the Veena emerging from Dhanammal's room. The Bhagavathar stopped there, not able to proceed further. After Dhanammal finished playing a kriti, the Bhagavathar entered his house. Dhanammal, with surprise enquired of him as to how he could return so soon after his temple worship. The Bhagavathar replied, “I needn't go to the temple. I finished my worship of the Lord here.”

Once, Dhanammal while visiting Srivilliputhur went to the famous temple of Andal there. Forgetting herself in the divine atmosphere, she went on playing an elaborate Madhyamavati. The time for the noon worship was now passing by. The Jeer of the temple and other worshippers were standing in the sanctum. Dhanammal finished her Madhyamavati and realised that she had delayed the noon service to the Goddess. She apologised profusely. The Jeer told her, “Why, it doesn't matter. You have performed the noon worship yourself with your divine music. What more is necessary?”

AK Ramachandra Iyer was a prominent businessman of Madras. He was also the founder of the Rasika Ranjani Sabha in the city. He also owned the Midland theatre on General Patter's road. AKR once, in the 1930s organised a grand Nagaswara festival at the Midland theatre. All the great Nagaswaram vidvans were to perform at that festival. These included the Tiruveezhimizhalai brothers, the Tiruppamburam brothers, Kuzhikkarai Pichayappa, Sembon-



*Veena Dhanammal with Musicians and Music Patrons (Picture taken 1911) - From collection of Shri. BM Sundaram, courtesy of Josepha Cormack Viswanathan*

*Front Row from left : Unknown, Pazhamaneri Swaminatha Iyer, Unknown, Budalur*

*Middle Row seated on chair from left : Munuswamy Naidu, Tiruppayanam Panchapakesha Sastri, Thanjavur Nagaraja Bhagavathar, Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Iyer, Tirukodikaval Krishna Iyer, Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavathar, Fiddle Govindaswamy Pillai, Tacchur Chinna Singaracharyulu*

*Back Row from left : Unknown Taval Vidwan, Unknown, Veena Dhanammal, Kumbakonam Azhaganambi Pillai*

narkoil brothers, Veerusami Pillai and the great TN Rajaratnam Pillai himself. On the day Rajaratnam was to perform, Dhanammal wanting to attend his concert found that there was no one to take her to the venue. She herself came out of her house, engaged a rickshaw and went to General Patter's road. TNR's fame had spread far and wide by then, as a result of which, huge crowds spilled on to GP road that leads to Mount Road. Dhanammal had to alight from her rickshaw a little distance away and walk the rest of the distance to Midland theatre. She was almost totally blind then. Feeling her way through the vast crowd, Dhanammal somehow made it inside the theatre. Espying her standing at a distance, TNR arranged for her to be brought and seated in the front row. On that day, it is said, TNR didn't play for the masses but for Dhanammal. Such was the regard Dhanammal had for TNR who was more than 30 years her junior. TNR, of course, worshipped Dhanammal.

It was 1938. About ten days before she passed away, TNR visited Dhanammal at her home. She

asked him to play and herself strummed the tambura for TNR. TNR began playing a raga. Dhanammal asked him, "Thambi (younger brother), what ragam is this?" "Amma, this is Vachaspati", replied the Nagaswaram genius. "Oh, is that so, I know nothing about such ragas. Can you play some raga like Bhairavi or Kambhoji that I can also understand?" asked the mischievous Dhanammal. TNR gave his all on that day to the Kambhoji that he played for her. Till his end TNR would keep mentioning this incident to his friends and admirers, saying that, with 'his Amma', meaning Dhanammal, none could get away with singing or playing non-serious stuff.

Malaikottai Govindasamy Pillai, the violin maestro who lived in Trichy was one of the staunchest admirers of Dhanammal. She also had high regard for him and used to say of him, "One can sing, play any instrument. But it is very difficult to be a knowledgeable and a true rasika. In rasikatva, there is none who can surpass our Malaikottai Thambi".





**Sitting left to right :** T Brinda (grand-daughter), Kamakshi (fourth daughter), Rajalakshmi (eldest daughter), DHANAMMAL, Lakshmiratnam (second daughter), Jayammal (third daughter), T Muktha (grand-daughter)

**Standing between Rajalakshmi and Jayammal is** Dattadri, son of Sundararajan.

**Standing behind from Left :** Kodandaraman (Brinda-Muktha's younger brother), Srinivasan (Balasaraswati's elder brother), Sundararajan (Rajalakshmi's son and Dhanammal's eldest grandson), Meenakshi Sundararajan, T Balasaraswati, T Abhiramasundari, T Sankaran (son of Lakshmiratnam, writer, AIR official), T Vijayakrishnan (Brinda-Muktha's elder brother and AIR official)

**Standing back row :** Govardhan (Brinda-Muktha's younger brother), Sivaraman (Sundararajan's son), Varadan (Balasaraswati's younger brother).

**Squatting: from left:** T.Viswanathan, Bhagyalakshmi (Sundararajan's daughter), T.Ranganathan, Kalpakambal (Sundararajan's daughter), Vasudevan (Sundararajan's son).

Photo taken in 1936 at the Saraswati Stores compound, opposite the then non-existent LIC building on Mount Road Madras. Photographer was G.Kumaravel who later set up G.K.Vale photo studio opposite to this venue and next to the LIC building.

It was the beginning of 1931. The Malaikottai maestro was already ill. His favourite disciple Papa Venkataramiah was attending to his needs. Pillai was also teaching Papa whenever he could. One day it was the raga Gaula. Both guru and student tuned their instruments. Pillai began playing a few bars of Gaula on his violin. After a minute he stopped and told a stunned Papa, "How can I play Gaula properly? Go to Dhanammal." Another day, it was to be Subbaraya Sastri's Hamir Kalyani masterpiece, 'Venkatasaila Vihara'. After playing the first line of the Pallavi Pillai told Papa, "Hands off this great kriti of Subbaraya Sastri. It is Dhanammal's property". Months later, Pillai breathed his last. Once the obsequies were over, Papa went to Madras, to Dhanammal's home. After mutual

pleasantries and expression of her condolences she asked Papa what had brought him to her home. Papa replied that he wanted to learn from her. "Absolutely no objection. I'll teach you. We shall begin now itself. But first, learn to play a bit of Gaula," said Dhanammal. Papa was dumbfounded. A few days later, Dhanammal asked Papa whether he had learnt 'Venkatasaila Vihara' and offered to teach him that song. Again a dumbfounded Papa could only wonder at the ethereal connection between Dhanammal and his guru the maestro of Malaikottai.

Tiger Varadachariar became an admirer and friend of Dhanammal just about three years before she died. Their admiration and affection was mutual. Dhanammal invited Tiger to give a

concert at her grandson T Sankaran's marriage in 1937. That night Tiger was to entrain for Chidambaram. He was to take charge as Principal of the Music College of Annamalai University the next day. Though his voice was coarse that day, Tiger's music was at its best. After the concert, he complained to the host, "Dhanammal, why did you ask me to sing, look at my voice today." "Kalkandu", said Dhanammal, referring to his music as sugar candy and gave Tiger a silver bowl full of that delicacy.

Tiruppamburam Natarajasundaram Pillai who had studied Dikshitar kritis with Sathanur Panchanada Iyer along with Dhanammal came to Madras in 1936 in order to get his book 'Dikshitar Keerthanai Prakaashikai' published. One day he came to Dhanammal's house asking, "Dhanam, do you remember me?" They were meeting after more than 30 years. Nevertheless, Dhanammal immediately recognised him. In the course of the conversation Natarajasundaram Pillai asked Dhanammal whether she remembered what they had learnt from 'our Sathanur Ayya' and whether she would sing with him one of the kritis that they had learnt from their guru. Yes, replied Dhanammal. Both the doyens sang together a kriti and found even to their amazement that over all those years, none of them had changed even one swaram or even anuswaram. It was perfect, as their guru, their 'Sathanur Ayya' had taught them. That was her hallmark, never changing, adding or deleting from what she had learnt from impeccable sources. The hallmark that she bequeathed to her descendants, a quality Brinda, Muktha and Balasaraswati too pursued throughout their lives.

SY Krishnaswamy, who later became a top ranking ICS officer was an avid rasika of Dhanammal as well as of Tiger Varadachariar. SYK has described the music of both his favourites in his book, 'Musings of a Mediocre Man'. He says, "Tiger's music resembled a rose garden where the rows of fragrant roses extended upto the horizon. Such was his unbounded imagination, his manodharma. Dhanammal plucked all those roses and made a perfume from them and pre-

sented it to us." That was in essence the most apt description of Dhanammal's music.

Almost a year before Dhanammal passed away happened the incident which is described in the beginning of this article. The then young TT Krishnamachari said to his friend SY Krishnaswamy, later to become a top ranking ICS officer after an exquisite musical offering by Dhanammal. "C'mon, say something. Something special in appreciation. Something that others may not have told her before". SYK told the 70 year old lady, "Amma, you are Goddess Saraswati incarnate. In fact, you have nothing to learn from Saraswati. Maybe she has something to learn from you".

For the last six months of her life, Dhanammal stayed with her third daughter Jayammal, mother of T Balasaraswati at their Egmore home. It was there that Dhanammal passed away on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1938. Hours before she left the world, she told her daughters and grand-daughters who had gathered around her, "I have no attachment towards anything. I don't regret that I am going to die. I only regret that I will be leaving my Veena behind." The woman whose name was prefixed by the name of the instrument she played and worshipped for more than five decades left behind her Veena, never to be played by anyone else. The Veena is now preserved at Dhanammal's grand-daughter T Balasaraswati's home in Madras.

She was a mere musician, but she left behind a horde of descendants who would carry her legacy forward, her daughters, grand-daughters and grandsons. Her four daughters Rajalakshmi, Lakshmiratnam, Jayamma and Kamakshi were themselves well known vocalists of their time. Jayammal, besides singing for her famous daughter T Balasaraswati's dance, was also adept at playing the dolak. Kamakshi was a violinist too. Kamakshi's two daughters T Brinda and T Muktha had their gurukulavasam with Kanchipuram Naina Pillai. They also studied under their grandmother Dhanammal and aunt Lakshmiratnam. They were leading vocalists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, performing for more than 60 years. Their sister Abhiramasundari studied the violin

under Papa Venkataramaiah and accompanied her sisters' vocal music for more than 25 years besides playing for many other musicians. Jayammal's daughter T Balasaraswati went on to become a world famous Bharatanatyam dancer, besides being an accomplished singer herself. Her younger brother T Ranganathan learnt the mridangam from Palani Subramania Pillai and has accompanied many stalwart musicians, besides his sister's dance and his cousins' vocal music. Another younger brother of Bala, T Viswanathan learnt the flute from Tirupamburam Swaminatha Pillai and besides accompanying his sister's dance performances, was a leading flute player. He also was the head of the ethno-music department at Wesleyan University, USA for many years. T Brinda's daughter Vegavahini is also an accomplished vocalist and teacher. All these descendants of Dhanammal taught innumerable disciples throughout their life and help spread the Dhanammal bhani far and wide.

Yes, Dhanammal left behind a bhani that would be known by her name, a bhani that would be-

come famous for its strictest adherence to traditional values in music, a bhani that would become famous for the extensive repertoire of great music that it holds in its bosom. A bhani that would test the calibre of the most intelligent and the most gifted of musicians, a bhani that gave its fortunate rasikas not just enjoyment but a subliminal experience to cherish and hold close to their heart.

*(M Ravindra Narayanan and P Sridharan are devotees of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. Midway in their lives they gave up their professional lives, settled down in Tiruvannamalai and began serving Sri Ramanasramam. They are disciples of Smt. T Muktha, the illustrious grand-daughter of Veena Dhanammal and learnt music from her for ten years. They have written articles for 'Sruti' magazine as also for the now defunct website sangeetham.com. They have also written articles for Sri Ramanasramam's magazine 'The Mountain Path'.*

*They can be contacted at: muktamma@gmail.com. Follow them at Ravi Sridhar <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100007746821510> )*

## Pallavi Sammela

In yet another attempt to serve the field of karnatak music, SRLKM is conducting a Pallavi Sammela (Competition) on 14 and 15 March 2020.

The important features of the competition are explained below with a set of rules and regulations. Candidates desirous of competing should register their names by filling the enclosed application form, which can be down loaded from our website [www.srlkmandira.org](http://www.srlkmandira.org).

Candidates will be short listed for selection.

Candidates have to send a CD (only mp3 format - for screening purpose) on which the selection is based. One RTP is to be rendered (vocal) with tambura support only. An audio recording of yours along with the duly filled application has to be sent by singing one Ragam, Tanam and Pallavi (one of the three choices for

the competition) not exceeding 30 minutes to [srlkmandira@gmail.com](mailto:srlkmandira@gmail.com) (by post, in person or email). The organisation is not responsible for any delay or loss of forms by post, email or courier.

The shortlisted candidates will be informed of the selection.

Date: Saturday 14-3-2020 & Sunday 15-3-2020

Time: Session-(1) 9:30 am to 12:30 pm

LUNCH:01:00 to 1:30

Session-(2) 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm

Venue: Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira

9th Main Road, Banashankari 2nd Stage, Near Banashankari 2nd Stage Post Office, Bangalore - 560070, Mobile: 77609-07939

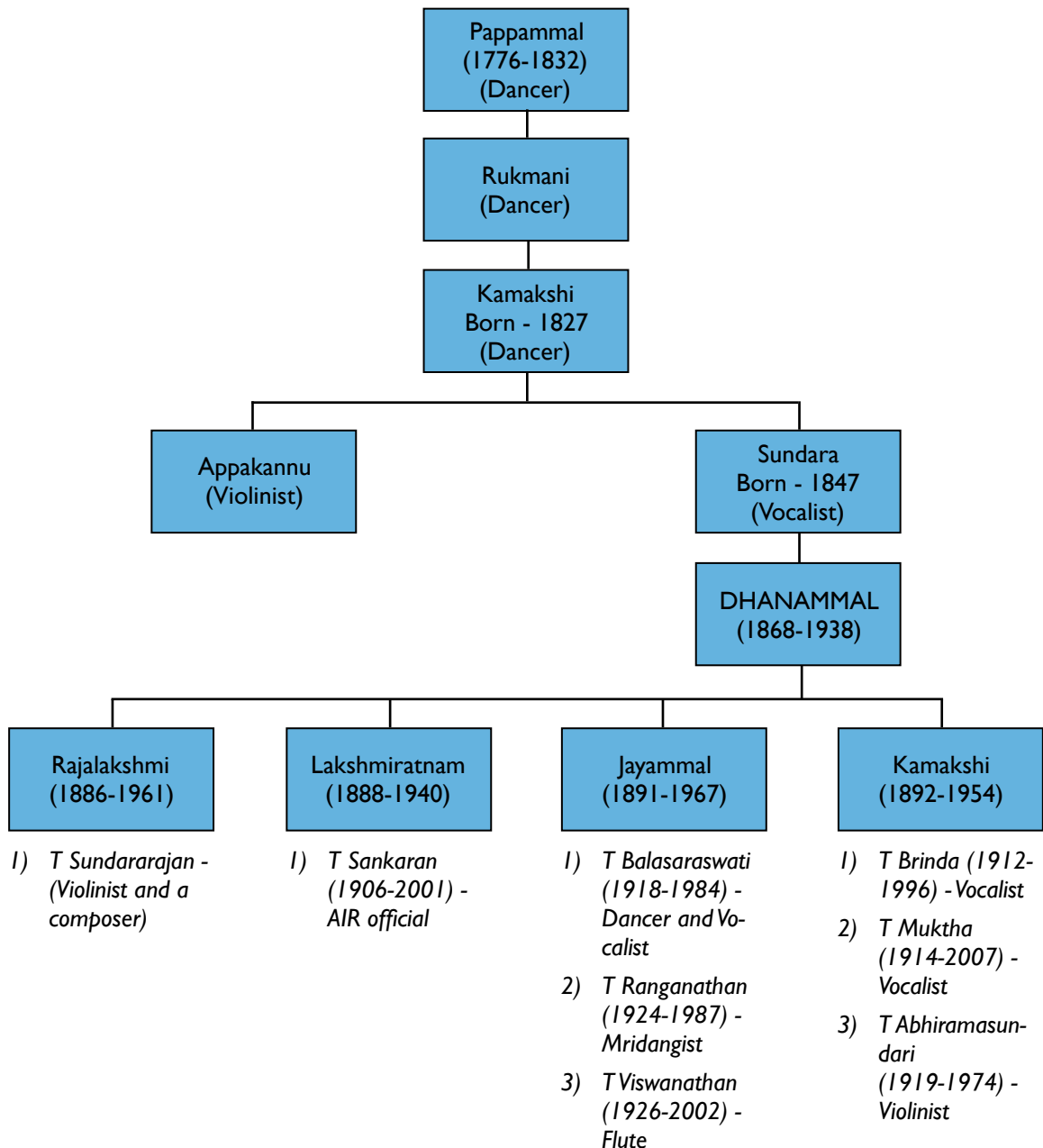
The last date for submitting the application form is 20-1-2020

The entire contest may be Web cast.

Prizes will be awarded on 07-5-2020 at Gayana Samaja, Bangalore, at 5:30pm.

# Veena Dhanammal - Family Tree

*Ravi and Sridhar, Tiruvannamalai  
(Disciples of T Muktha, grand-daughter of Dhanammal)*







# Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira (Regd.)

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

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

65<sup>th</sup> Year Karnatak Classical Music Concerts

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

Venue : The Bangalore Gayana Samaja, Time : 05.45 - 09.00 pm., ALL ARE WELCOME.



**05-01-2020, Sunday**

Bombay Jayashri (Vocal), HN Bhaskar (Violin), Patri Satishkumar - Mridangam BS Purushotham (Kanjira)



**11-01-2020, Saturday**

Amritha Venkatesh (Vocal), L Ramakrishnan (Violin), BS Prashanth (Mridangam), Bhagyalakshmi M Krishna (Morsing)

**17-01-2020, Friday**  
**Laya Lavanya**

Concept and direction by Anoor Anantha Krishna Sharma



**23-01-2020, Thursday**

Heramba & Hemantha (Flute Duet), BK Raghu (Violin), Akshay Anand (Mridangam), Sukanya Ramgopal (Ghatam)



**06-01-2020, Monday**

S Shankar (Vocal), HN Bhaskar (Violin), Dr. Yella Venkateshwara Rao, (Mridangam), Ranganatha Chakravarthy (Ghatam)



**12-01-2020, Sunday**

Mysore M Nagaraj and Dr. Manjunath (Violin Duet), Dr. Umayalpuram K Sivaraman (Mridangam), UN Giridhar Udupa (Ghatam)

**18-01-2020, Saturday**

Ranjani & Gayathri (Vocal Duet), Charumathi Raghuraman (Violin), Delhi Sairam (Mridangam), Chandrasekara Sharma (Ghatam)



**24-01-2020, Friday**  
**(Purandaradasa Jayanthi)**

Sudha Raghunathan (Vocal), Embar Kannan (Violin), Patri Satish Kumar (Mridangam), R Raman (Morsing)



**07-01-2020, Tuesday**

Aishwarya Vidya Raghunath (Vocal), RK Shriramkumar (Violin), K Arun Prakash (Mridangam)



**13-01-2020, Monday**

Sriranjani Santhanagopalan (Vocal), B Ananthakrishnan - Violin, Patri Satishkumar - Mridangam

**19-01-2020, Sunday**

Malladi Brothers (Shreeramprasad and Ravi Kumar) will be conferred with the title "Sangeetha Vedanta Dhurina" instituted in the name of founder G Vedanta Iyengar with a cash award of Rs. One Lakh each, a Silver medal and a citation, followed by their concert with Embar Kannan (Violin) Dr. Trichy Sankaran (Mridangam) KV Gopalakrishnan (Kanjira)



**25-01-2020, Saturday**

N Vijaya Siva (Vocal) RK Shriramkumar (Violin) N Manoj Siva (Mridangam) S Krishna (Ghatam)



**08-01-2020, Wednesday**

RK Padmanabha and Pandith Nagaraj Rao Hawaldar (Jugalbandhi), Omkarnath Hawaldar (Vocal Support), CN Chandrashekar (Violin), C Cheluvaraju (Mridangam), Sameer Hawaldar (Harmonium), Kedarnath Hawaldar - Tabla



**14-01-2020, Tuesday**

K Bharath Sundar (Vocal), Charulatha Ramanujam (Violin), Arjun Kumar (Mridangam), GS Ramanujam (Ghatam)

**20-01-2020, Monday**

D Balakrishna and V Vamshidhar (Veena and Flute), Bangalore V Praveen (Mridangam), Raghavendra Prakash (Ghatam)



**22-02-2020, Saturday**

Dushyanth Sridhar - Musical discourse Sub: Prahlada Bhakti Vijayam Supported by: Anahita and Apoorva (Vocal) Vaibhav Ramani (Violin) Akshay Anand (Mridangam)



**09-01-2020, Thursday**

Dr. Shertalai KN Ranganatha Sharma (Vocal), HK Venkatram (Violin), Tumkur Ravishankar (Mridangam), Bharadwaj Sathavalli (Morsing)



**15-01-2020, Wednesday**  
**(Sadguru Thyagaraja Jayanthi)**

Abhishek Raghuram (Vocal), Vittal Ramamurthy (Violin), NC Bharadwaj (Mridangam), Guruprasanna (Kanjira)

**21-01-2020, Tuesday**

Dr. TS Sathyavathi (Vocal), HM Smitha (Violin), KU Jayachandra Rao (Mridangam), ASN Swamy (Kanjira)



**23-02-2020, Sunday**

Sanjay Subrahmanian (Vocal), S Varadarajan (Violin), Neyveli B Venkatesh (Mridangam), N Guruprasad (Ghatam), B Rajasekar (Morsing)



**10-01-2020, Friday**

Dr. Suma Sudhindra (Veena), Kalpana Venkat (Violin), BC Manjunath (Mridangam), SN Narayanamurthy (Ghatam)



**16-01-2020, Thursday**

Ramakrishnan Murthy (Vocal), Vittal Rangan (Violin), KU Jayachandra Rao (Mridangam), UN Giridhar Udupa (Ghatam)

**22-01-2020, Wednesday**

Sikkil Gurucharan (Vocal), Mathur R Srinidhi (Violin), HS Sudhindra (Mridangam), Phaneendra Bhaskar (Ghatam)



**14 and 15-03-2020**  
**Saturday and Sunday**

Pallavi Sammela (Two full day event) at SRLKM Auditorium

**Pallavi**  
**Sammela**

# Himamshu reminiscences Kadri

*S Anand, Editor, Bangalore*



“It was 1974 or 75 when the music world didn’t know much about Kadri Gopalanath and he gave an excellent concert for the SPVGM Trust at Mysore” said CR Himamshu. ‘He performed to the accompaniment of Mysore Manjunath on violin who was a small boy then and Tumkur Bhadrachar (father of Tumkur Ravishankar) on the mridangam. It was after this that Kadri joined up with TV Gopalakrishnan and rose to great heights. TV Gopalakrishnan gave him an excellent coaching and encouraged him profusely by having him perform in front of masters at that time. My association with Kadri span over four decades and our relationship remained same over the period he was transformed from an unknown musician to a world class artiste’ added Himamshu.

‘Probably it is only in SPVGM Trust that we have had him play with the top ranking accompaniments be it Umayalpuram Sivaraman, TV Gopalakrishnan, Thiruvurur Bhaktavatsalam, KV

Prasad, M Chandrasekaran, A Kanyakumari etc. Even Akkarai Subhalakshmi was experimented along with him in our festival. It was a ritual for him to come and perform for SPVGM Trust every year and he would in advance, consult me and plan a ‘Pallavi’ for the concert’.

‘I will never forget an extraordinary concert he gave for us with the accompaniment of M Chandrasekaran on Violin and Thiruvurur Bhaktavatsalam on Mridangam. The Bairavi swarajathi he presented will be with me all my life. M Chandrasekaran was so inspired that he stopped playing at one point and gave rich tributes to Kadri. I have preserved a recording of the same still and enjoy every now and then. He has probably performed over 35 concerts for SPVGM Trust and all the concerts were houseful. He earned a lot of friends and rasikas during his time. In all this, Kadri never bothered about remuneration for his concert and accepted whatever we offered him.’ says Himamshu.

‘One fine day Ronu Majumdar called me and said he wanted to perform along with Kadri as desired by Kadri and said he had no other conditions. The concert was a grand success. Subsequently, I developed excellent relations with Ronu Majumdar and he has been continuously performing for us with various artistes like Mysore Manjunath, Chitraveena Ravikiran etc. My last concert of Kadri was when he gave an excellent concert along with A Kanyakumari and Vijay Natesan on mridangam during a function when Govt. of Karnataka unveiled a statue of Ramakrishna Paramahansa in Mysore’ said Himamshu who was heartbroken at the sad demise of Kadri.

He concludes, ‘I went to Mangalore and paid my respects. He will be forever etched in my memory. I pray for his soul to rest in peace’.



# Gayathri Venkataraghavan at SRLKM

Anagha Yoganand, Bangalore

On 22nd September, Smt. Vid. Gayathri Venkataraghavan presented a concert in the Mandira premise. This concert was a tribute to the music legend Dr. MS Subbulakshmi. She was accompanied by Vid. HM Smitha on the violin, Vid. Dr K Ashok on the mridangam and Vid. Guruprasanna on the Khanjari.

## The List:

- 1) Mate malayadvaja, Kamas, Aadi Tala, Muthaiah Bhagavathar
- 2) Shri mahaganapathi, Gowla, Misra Chapu, Muthuswamy Dikshitar
- 3) Kshira sagara sayana, Mayamalavagowla, Chaturasra Dhruva, Jayachamarajendra Wadaiyar
- 4) Parama purusa nirupamana, Shanmukhapriya, Aadi Tala, Annammacharya
- 5) Narayana ninna namada, Sudda Dhanyasi, Khanda Chapu, Purandaradasa
- 6) Sobillu saptaswara, Jaganmohini, Rupaka Tala, Saint Thyagaraja

- 7) Sarojadala netri, Sankarabharanam, Aadi Tala, Shyama Sastri
- 8) Tani Avarthanam
- 9) Hemavathi Ragam, Thanam, Pallavi (Khanda Jampai, Khanda Nadai) - ninne nammiti neeve gati neeraja nayana hare krishna
- 10) Bare panduranga, Abhang, Santh Tukaram
- 11) Naneke badavanu, Behag, Khanda Chapu, Purandaradasa
- 12) Jagadoddarana, Kapi, Aadi Tala, Purandaradasa
- 13) Rama bhaja rama bhaja, Hindolam, Khanda Chapu, Gurunanak Shabad
- 14) Katrinile varum geetham (From the movie 'Meera')
- 15) Mangalam

It was an extraordinary evening and the audience were fully soaked in memory of MS Amma. It was a fitting tribute to a legend by Gayathri Venkataraghavan.



# Eminent Guru nonagenarian RK Srikantan

*CP Chikkanna, Bangalore*

The importance of a teacher in shaping the future and destiny of a student have been repeatedly stressed by various Carnatic music composers. "Guruvina gulaama naaguvatanaka" of Saint Purandaradasa, "Gurulekha etuvanti" by Thyagaraja, "Srinaathaadi Guruguho jayathi" and "Maanasa Guruguha rupam" by Muthuswamy Dikshithar could be quoted extensively as examples. Many stalwarts of Carnatic music like Tiger Varadachariar, Musiri Subramania Iyer, Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, GN Balasubramaniam, etc excelled as eminent teachers apart from being top ranking performers of the past. The late Bidaram Krishnappa, his prime disciple Mysore T Chowdaiah, Veena Venkatagiriappa and his

disciple Mysore Doreswamy Iyengar and RK Srikantan etc. from Karnataka rendered invaluable service in training many disciples as top ranking performers.

Hailing from Rudrapatna in Hassan district of Karnataka, RK Srikantan received his early training from his father Krishna Shastry and elder brother RK Venkatarama Shastry, noted violinist and prominent disciple of T Chowdiah and was an arts graduate of Mysore University. He joined AIR soon after its inauguration at Mysore as staff artist and later settled down in Bangalore after AIR was shifted along with his illustrious colleagues Veena Doreswamy Iyengar, MS Selvapullai Iyengar, Veena Venkata Subba Rao etc.

*RK Srikantan with his son RS Ramakantha (Photo courtesy The Hindu)*







*RK Srikantan performing with Lalgudi Jayaraman on Violin and Vellore Ramabadran on Mridangam on 26 October 1978*

His services at Bangalore Studio of All India Radio are invaluable. He was the main teacher in music lesson over the Radio classes "Gaana Vihara" and set hundreds of compositions of different composers to music including numerous songs of Purandaradasa and many Haridasas. He excelled in the presentation of Kannada compositions with clear cut diction, full of bhava embellishing the lyrics with his own style. Songs like "Karuniso Ranga", "Raagi Thandhira Bhikshake", etc. became highly popular and received universal acclaim.

Ever since I developed the hobby of listening to Carnatic music, I was very eager to learn the basics and improve my knowledge to relish music more seriously and was searching for a good source. When I expressed this desire with my great friend, noted Mridangam maestro Guruvayur Dorai, he directed me to approach RK Srikantan and that he would strongly recommend me to him. In the late 1960's, I very hesitatingly with lot of fear, met him in his house and formally introduced myself. He told me that nothing prevented me from approaching him directly instead of being recommended by our friend Guruvayur Dorai and inquired the area of my interest and the topics I wanted to learn. As I was in my early twenties, he suggested that my voice may not be suitable to learn the vocal exercises and permitted me to attend

his music classes as an observer and grasp as much as possible from his teachings. He taught me for over two years, the theory of Carnatic music like the basic seven swaras, their classification, Ragalakshanas of major ragas, their derivatives, suladi saptha talas, their various branches and nadais, important events, the life and contributions of great maestros of the past. He recommended me to read music books authored by Prof. Sambamurthy and spiritual heritage of Thyagaraja etc. These classes were free of any charges as I was not earning anything at that time. Even after I was employed, he refused any fees and expressed his happiness that all that he taught me helped an ordinary listener to appreciate and moulded me as a profile writer and reviewing music concerts in major English and Kannada news papers.

I wanted to reciprocate this gesture of Srikantan in a befitting manner and was waiting for an opportunity. I discussed this with my friend and the music critic late V Bhaskar who was reviewing for Deccan Herald in the pseudo name "Ravi". We along with great patron late Shri. V Krishnan, the founder of Sri Parthasarathy Gaana Sabha and Saraswathi Gaana Sabha chalked out a grand event to felicitate RK Srikantan in a befitting and memorable manner. I approached each and every student of Srikantan for their support who were very happy to



*Shri. BN Garudachar felicitating RK Srikantan (26th October 1978)*

help the function in numerous ways. A few lady students opted out from our function for their own reasons and abstained at the function. They arranged a separate function later it was learnt to honour their guru. We invited doyen Semangudi Srinivasa Iyer to felicitate RK Srikantan, Justice ES Venkataramiah as the chief guest, Violin maestro Lalgudi Jayaraman, Mridangam vidwan Vellore Ramabhadran, Veena vidwan M Cheluvarya swamy (father of late Veena C Krishna Murthy) as guest speakers. Two special write-ups in leading Kannada magazines of that period Prajamatha and Sudha published special articles on RK Srikantan, one authored by me and the other written by HS Krishna Swamy Iyengar (HSK) of Mysore highlighting the contributions of RK Srikantan.

In my write-up for Prajamatha, we discussed various issues concerning music. The late music critic BVK Shastry had expressed his resentment over non Kannada musicians hailing from Tamil Nadu choosing the compositions of Kannada composers Purandaradasa and Kanakadasa for commercial recordings when there were so many stalwarts in this state who were ignored by the recording company (HMV) in the leading Kannada daily Prajavani. RK Srikantan dismissed this resentment and added that the composi-

tions of these Haridasas are universally adorable and appreciated for their message. Any one promoting and propagating these songs/compositions should be hailed and appreciated. No composer has made a "will" about who should promote and propagate his compositions. In fact many songs of Saint Thyagaraja were published and propagated by musicians from Tamil Nadu. Such statements are uncalled for and do not deserve replies he averred.

Answering my queries with regard to the need of new compositions and their place in the music sphere when there is an ocean of unexplored compositions of musical Trinity, Swathi Thirunal, besides many Haridasas and others, Srikantan felt that this trend should be welcomed as music is a river in flow and not a stagnated pond. The creativity of these composers should be appreciated and they provide a change in the monotony to make listening an enjoyable experience to listeners.

When I drew his attention to the feeling that vast commercialisation of Carnatic music is losing its importance and public patronage, he quipped "tell me which is not commercial?". We musicians are professionals and are depending upon it for our livelihood. Is it ever possible for



Vidwan Lalgudi Jayaraman honouring RK Srikantan (26th October 1978)

any musicians to perform accepting only the travel expenses? We too have a family and they are dependent on us. The concert opportunities are not frequent and we are compelled to teach to make both ends meet. Only a very few celebrity musicians are well off and not all musicians. A musician has to apply for monthly pension before the government pledging his honour and self respect visiting the concerned officials umpteen number of times for this pittance.

When I sought his reaction to the importance of music reviews in news papers, he said such reviews are aimed at self promotion of the reviewers and no longer helps budding musicians in any manner. Now a days these reviews are in the form of a summary/list of songs and ragas with full usage of adjectives to win the goodwill of the concerned performers. He recounted an interesting anecdote about a review of GNB's recital at Mysore by BVK Shastry in Deccan Herald that upset GNB a lot and almost brought the friendship between the two to an end. In his concert, due to vagaries of monsoon weather, GNB's pitch (shruthi) was affected. This was the main comment of Shastry's review and reached GNB who was at that time music producer of Madras Station of All India Radio.

After his customary Sri Ramanavami concert at Bidaram Krishnappa Hall at Mysore, GNB expressed his displeasure to his friend and host Shri. Puttu Rao about this adverse comment and in turn Shri. Puttu Rao spoke to Shastry and

*RK Srikantan was decorated with a 50 Grams gold chain by Lalgudi Jayaraman sponsored by his disciples as a token of gratitude*

patched up both. Subsequently Shastry met GNB at Madras and personally apologised for his writing.

Just three days before the function, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer conveyed to us his indisposition and regret to felicitate RK Srikantan on Doctor's advice to rest. The previous day of the function, Justice ES Venkataramiah suffered a heart attack and was hospitalised and as a convenor, I was in great embarrassment to fix-up the chief guest and dignitaries as a substitute at the nick of the moment. Veena Vidvan the late RK Suryanarayana took me to his friend and the then police commissioner late BN Garudachar who was a great connoisseur of music who readily accepted to felicitate RK Srikantan. On the day of the function, noted Harikatha Vidwan the late Gururajulu Naidu who was passing by the Institute of Engineers auditorium, after seeing the banner graced the occasion and added colour to the event by his speech packed with humour sending roar of laughter in the largely attended function.

In my welcome address, I listed out the contributions of Srikantan to Carnatic music as a teacher, as a tunesmith setting music to several songs, as a performer of repute and requested the gathering to adopt and pass a resolution requesting both the State and Central Government to confer suitable honours which has eluded RK Srikantan all these days who never went after them or sought recommendation for honours. In his reply, Lalgudi Jayaraman eulogised the service of Rudrapatnam musicians including that of RK Venkatarama Shastry, and his younger brothers and promised to take up our request for national recognition to RK Srikantan with the concerned authorities.

Replying to the felicitations, RK Srikantan traversed at length the strict traditional way of his

father imparting not only music but also disciplined life, rigorous practice to perfection the subjects of studies, respecting our ancient arts and tradition. He recalled with gratitude the encouragement and blessings of Mysore T Chowdaiah. He was deeply disappointed that fate denied him the opportunity of performing to his violin accompaniment. Once, after his Radio concert at Bangalore AIR, Chowdaiah invited Srikantan to perform in a festival concert arranged by the sons of flute Palladam Sanjeeva Rao in connection with Purandaradasa Aradhana at Coimbatore to his violin accompaniment. One week before that concert, Chowdaiah passed away.

The same year, RK Srikantan was conferred the coveted Central Sangeet Natak Akademi award by the President of India followed by Karnataka State award. From then onwards, he was rained with numerous awards like T Chowdaiah national award, Karnataka Government's "Asthana Vidvan" with Rs. 5 lakhs cash, Sangeetha kalanidhi by the Madras Music Academy, visiting

honorary professor by numerous universities in United States etc.

As he aged more and more, his music also ripened like a delicious mango and his concerts were in great demand everywhere. Due to physical discomfort, he used to be seated on a chair and performed with youthful exuberance. Fortune favoured him rather belatedly. Age never affected his enthusiasm or interest in music even at the ripe age of 90 years, he never sought retirement and was giving concerts assisted by son RS Ramakantha to the astonishment of all which is a great record to this day! At that age, he never lost memory, practice and teaching. In his long innings, he has trained countless number of students who are all well placed in music field and society. RK Srikantan passed away after leading a purposeful life of 96 years and the legacy left behind by him is being continued by his son RS Ramakantha.

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Special edition of *Lalitha Kala Tarangini* on 'HH Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar' was released by Bombay Jayashree Ramnath during the SPVGMC Trust Ganesha Festival at VV Mohalla, Mysore. Left to Right - CR Himamshu, Secretary SPVGMC Trust, GV Krishnaprasad, Hon. Secretary Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira, Bombay Jayashree Ramnath, Shri. KV Murthy, Patron SPVGMC Trust, M Jagannath Sheno, President SPVGMC Trust.





# Thevaaram

*Rajani Arjun Shankar, Chennai*

## Thevaaram – An Introduction

Thevaaram is the collective name given to the devotional compositions of the three Saivaite saints Thirugnanasambandar, Tirunaavukkarasar and Sundaramurti (in short, known as Sambandhar, Appar and Sundarar). The first two lived in the Seventh Century CE and the third, in the Eighth. They feature among the sixty-three Naayanmars, who are well-known as the devotees of Shiva collectively worshipped in temples.

## The Composers

The stories of these three saints are very popular and charming. Sambandhar, as a young child of three, accompanied his father to the temple tank and when the latter disappeared momentarily in the waters, the child was in tears. Shiva and Parvati who reside in the temple, appeared before him. Parvati fed him her milk and in an instant he was endowed with supreme knowledge and poetry. When the father arose from the waters and asked him who gave him milk, the child, pointing to the Vimana of the Lord, sang the first verse of the Thevaaram “*thODu-daiya seviyan*”, as a reply to his father. “Is it not Him, who rides a bull, wears a pure crescent moon and smears Himself with ash, who has stolen my heart?” The father realised that he was witnessing a miracle.

Appar, although born in a Saivite family, became a Jain monk of great renown. His sister, a saintly lady herself, prayed to Shiva that her brother be brought back to the fold. To grant her prayer, Shiva gave him a disease which resulted in unbearable abdominal pain. Thinking he may die, he came to visit his sister, who gave him the marks of a Saivite and took him to the Thiruvathigai Shiva temple. There, he composed verses on Shiva and his affliction vanished. He became an

ardent devotee, visiting many temples, performing Seva by cleaning and weeding in those temples and composing wonderful verses.

Sundarar was, before his earthly sojourn, a resident of Kailasa. A momentary lapse there required him to spend a lifetime on earth. As promised to him, Shiva came to his wedding, proved with a document that had his grandfather’s signature, that Sundarar was his slave. The bewildered “slave” followed his master, who walked and disappeared into the sanctum of Tiruvennainallur temple. Sundarar, elated and touched, started composing verses in His praise. Shiva later gave him the privilege of being His friend, and hence in his verses we find the kind of liberty a friend can take.

## Some general features

Thevaaram verses are in the form of Pathikams (decads) of ten verses each. In Sambandhar’s Pathikams, we find an eleventh verse which is in the form of a Phalashruti. It contains his Mudra encompassing his name, the name of his birthplace, the place where this work was composed and the benefits accruing to those who recite or sing it. Sundarar also places a Mudra with one of his many names and titles, and pronounces the benefits of singing the verses. Appar does not have a Mudra, although his decads can be identified by the fact that he always refers to Ravana lifting the Kailasa mountain in the last verse.

All three composers have travelled to many temples and composed on the Lord in those temples. There are about 275 such places. While they are almost fully in South India, there are two of them in Sri Lanka, and four of them are Himalayan shrines. The South India’s temples encompass Gokarnam, Srisailem and Kalahasti. It is believed that the saint-poets did not physical-

ly travel to the far-flung ones, and saw them with their Divya-drshti (divine vision.)

About two or three centuries after their time, the Chola kings created grants for Thevaaram to be sung ritualistically in many temples, as an integral part of the worship. The singers are called Odhuvars and they undergo many years of training to learn several hundred verses from the Thevaaram, in the appropriate melodic form. Like many other social traditions, this system too had its upheavals in the last few centuries, but many of the major temples still have Odhuvars among their staff and one can hear the sonorous singing of the inspired verses during the day, especially during the evening Pujas.

### **Thevaaram in the larger philosophical context**

Thevaaram verses embrace the tenets of the Vedas. The Lord is described in them variously as the embodiment of the Vedas, the teacher of Vedas and one delighting in listening to the Vedas, Sama Veda in particular. The purpose of the birth of Sambandhar is described as “vEda neRi thazhaittOnga, migu saivatthurai viLanga” (Such that the way of the Vedas would flourish and (within that,) the worship of Shiva in particular would prosper). The first two of the Thevaaram composers also had a missionary role in re-establishing Saivism by stemming the growth of Buddhism and Jainism which were widespread then. We find evidence of such a position in their verses and also in the accounts of their lives.

Saiva Siddhanta is the philosophy that proclaims Shiva as supreme. Thevaaram is therefore an integral part of Saiva Siddhanta. Saiva Siddhanta Maths play a large role in beautiful publications of the Thevaaram and in running Paathashaalas, where young children are trained in Thevaaram singing and can go on to become Odhuvars. Many followers of Advaita, who accept various forms of God as supreme, also give a lot of prominence to Thevaaram and include its singing and reading in their worship.

### **Thevaaram's place in the Carnatic Music platform**

Thevaaram was always meant to be sung. The Pathikams are assigned Panns just as Kritis of Carnatic Music composers are given Ragas. A Pann is equivalent to a Raga. Every Pann corresponds to a modern day Raga. There are some sections of Thevaaram that do not have Panns and instead have a Yappu (poetic metre). These are indeed traditionally sung in certain Panns, but they do lend themselves to be sung in a variety of newer Ragas.

The composers of Thevaaram are widely venerated and it is no surprise that many Carnatic musicians have taken verses from it, and rendered it on stage. The legendary singer and composer Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan was devoted to Thevaaram and singing it was a part of his daily Puja. It is said that people used to throng the street just to hear him sing these verses.

In more recent times, Sri Madurai Mani Iyer often used to sing the verse “vEyuRu tOLi pan-gan”, by Sambandhar, a benediction that proclaims that the nine planets shall cause only good to the devotees. Appar's “vAnanai”, a lovely praise of the Lord of Tiruvannamalai, has been popularly sung in Keeravani by Sri KV Narayanaswamy and others. Two verses in the decad have been arranged as Pallavi, Anupallavi and Charanam. Smt MS Subbulakshmi also has rendered many verses such as Appar's “soRRu-Nai vEdiyan” in Gandharapanchamam Pann (Kedara Gaula) and Sundarar's “azhukku mei koNDu” in Takkesi Pann (Kambhoji) and Sambandhar's “siRaiyArum maDakkiLiye”, which is sung in the Pazhantakkaragam Pann (Suddha Saveri). The last mentioned song is in the Nayaki Bhava where a young girl talks to her pet parrot, beseeching it to say the names of Shiva. This and other verses have also been used in dance programmes by eminent dancers.

Sri MM Dandapani Desikar requires special mention here, as a person who straddled the worlds of Carnatic Music and Thevaaram with ease. His renderings of Thevaaram are remembered for their authenticity and Bhava. During his tenure at the Annamalai University, he has

brought out books with the notations of Thevaaram as well as Divyaprabandham. Dr S Ramanathan has done research and given lecture-demonstrations on Thevaaram.

Among the Carnatic musicians and rasikas, opinion is divided as to whether it is important to stick to the Panns (and their equivalent Ragas) when rendering Thevaaram on the Carnatic stage, or whether it is allowed and even necessary to use a wider range of Ragas.

### The contents of Thevaaram:

We find the following themes very often in the verses

- Shiva always being in the company of Parvati and Her grace and beauty
- The form of Shiva – the various flowers (Konrai, Datura etc.) and leaves (Vilva, Vanni etc.) and other adornments (the moon, serpents, skin and ash) found in His vast matted locks and body
- Shiva's heroic deeds like the Tripuravijaya, Gajasamhara and His dances

- The noble qualities of His devotees, how they gather to adore Him and the many benefits they get
- The music and dance that fill the temples, with details of the various instruments being played
- The natural beauty surrounding the temples with elaborate descriptions of flora and fauna, the trees and forests that fill the towns, the clouds that gather above these trees, the birds and animals that inhabit these wooded areas, the rivers that flank the temple towns and the riches they bring

Going over the long list of specific plants, trees and birds named in them would be an interesting exercise.

Some useful links to read the verses and listen to them sung

<http://thevaaram.org/>

<https://shaivam.org/audio-gallery/>

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Shri. GV Krishnaprasad, Secretary Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira was honoured by SPVGMCTrust Mysore on 10 September 2019. Left to Right - CR Himamshu, Secretary SPVGMCTrust, Bombay Jayashree Ramnath, GV Krishnaprasad, Secretary, Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira, Shri. KV Murthy, Patron SPVGMCTrust, standing behind Shri. GV Krishnaprasad is Shri. M Jagannath Shenoi, President SPVGMCTrust



# Veena Dhanammal

*Senior Mridangam Vidwan KS Kalidas as told to  
Madhuri Kaushik, Vocalist and disciple of Vidhushis Ranjani and Gayathri*

From time to time, we have in various fields epoch makers who offer the public new insight in their respective fields. In the case of carnatic music composers, Purandaradasa, Tyagaraja, Dikshithar and Syama Shastry and among musicians, Veena Dhanammal can be characterised as epoch makers. This is not to say that composers and musicians did not exist before or during their time, but the trend and direction espoused by these personages was unique and special.

Till the advent of the Trinity and for some decades thereafter, music was the exclusive property of a community in each of the southern provinces and indeed the whole of India. It is said that for thousands of years, the kings used to send their heirs to the leaders of this community to learn many art forms, aesthetics and ethics.

Coming to Thanjavur, Veena Dhanammal holds a special place in laying foundations of what has come to become the soul and ethos of Carnatic music. Thanjavur had various cultural impacts such as Tamil, Telugu and Marathi, and Dhanammal was able to integrate into her music all the best aspects of these cultures. None questioned her wisdom or her musical interpretation of kruthis, javalis, padams, etc.

Dhanammal came into the field when music was patronised only by princes of principalities, rich landlords and businessmen, but lived to see the birth of sabhas when the general public could assemble and listen to music for a small subscription. She herself did not participate in the sabha concerts but did perform in chamber concerts in her home as well as in her patrons' and a few darbars. A weekly concert in her house was attended by her intimate circle of

admirers and Vidwans such as Ariyakkudi, Musiri and Semmangudi. Semmangudi has famously said that what Dhanammal played on the Veena was MUSIC whereas what he and his fraternity did were mere KUTCHERIs.

There are many events and anecdotes about Dhanammal that I have gathered from T Sankaran and T Viswanathan (her grandsons), MN Kandasamy (Palani Subramania Pillai's senior disciple) and Pudukottai Ranganayaki Ammal (a lady mridangam artist and disciple of Pudukottai Dakshinamurthy Pillai). I shall share a few.

Not only the entire family of Dhanammal but many upcoming musicians used to stay for a considerable length of time with the rich businessman (and great connoisseur) Jalatharangam Ramanaiah Chettiar who was also a good friend of the great Kancheepuram Naina Pillai. Infact his house came to be known as Chetty Chattram. Ramanaiah Chettiar was a treasure trove of Tyagaraja kruthis, many of which even Naina Pillai and Dhanammal learnt from him. Dhanammal's grand daughter Balasaraswati learnt Bharatanatyam from Kandappa Nattuvanar who, besides dance, was a great laya vidwan, and mridangam maestro Palani Subramania Pillai who was a teenager then would share many ideas with him. Once Sri Palani played a vinyasam in Misra Jhampai talam with various combinations of 5s and Dhanammal was hearing it from another room. When Kandappa Nattuvanar who had gone away on some personal work returned, Dhanammal told him "Kandappa, innikku namma Pazhani 'anna' vaasichade nee miss pannitte; ponadhu pochu. Inime kadaikadhu" meaning, "Kandappa, you have missed the playing of pazhani 'anna'; that playing is gone, you



can never get it back". She used to call the teenager Pazhani, 'anna' or elder brother in jest. She also seems to have said "kaiye pakkanumna Ramdas Raovai paar; vaasippa kekkanumna Subramaniathai kelu"- If you want to see the dexterity of hands, look at (Thanjavur) Ramadas Rao; If you want to see the vidwat hear (Pazhani) Subramaniam.

Dhanam sent her talented granddaughters Brinda and Muktha to Naina Pillai for their musical training. While Brinda learnt directly from the master, Muktha, who always accompanied her learnt by osmosis, through her elder sister.

While dhanammal bani was known for shruthi and laya purity, she did not lavish too much attention on the latter; it was therefore something of an irony that she sent Brinda and Muktha to the laya wizard Naina Pillai.

Dhanammal's favourites among musicians were TN Rajarathinam Pillai, Pudukottai Thambi (Dakshinamurthy Pillai) and Malaikkottai Thambi (Govindaswamy Pillai). Incidentally Govindaswamy Pillai's disciple Papa KS Venkataramaiah taught violin to Abhiramasundari, sister of Brinda and Muktha and Pazhani Subramania Pillai taught T Ranganathan, their cousin, mridangam.

Musician, musicologist and biographer, Ranga Ramanuja Iyengar literally worshipped Dhanammal, whom he described as an avatar of Saraswati Devi. In fact, he had her image installed in his house. Similar is the case with Malaikkottai Govindaswamy Pillai who would

get into a reverie about Dhanammal while teaching his disciple (Papa) KS Venkataramaiah.

An admirer and patron of Dhanammal was Dharmapuri Subbarayar, the master of javalis. It is said that the javalis 'Smara Sundaranguni' in Paras and 'Sakhi Prana' in Senchurutti were composed in praise of her.

Dhanammal was not enthused about discussion and analysis of music in theoretical terms. She is reported to have sarcastically told a musician "innikku Academyil sangeetham patri pesa poralam, poi kelu"- "They are going to TALK about music in the Music Academy. Go and Listen".

Some twenty records of Dhanammal playing Veena are available but the limited time (3 minutes) and the primitive recording do not reveal the greatness of the person or her vidwath.

<b>Dr. Mysore V Doreswamy Iyengar Centenary Celebrations</b> <b>11th August 2019 to 11th August 2020</b>		
<b>Veena Competitions!!! 25th &amp; 26th January 2020</b>		
<b>Attractive Prize Money!!!</b> <b>Juniors (upto 15years)</b> 1st Prize - Rs 15000 2nd Prize - Rs 10000 <b>Seniors (16-30years)</b> 1st Prize - Rs 25000 2nd Prize - Rs 20000	<b>Competition Format</b> <b>Junior</b> - Send List of 5 Kruthis of different composers & raga. Play for 10minutes as per judges choice from your list <b>Senior</b> - Concert format 30Min. Send 3 sets, each comprising Varna, Kruthi & Devaranama/Tillana/Javali. Judges will decide 1 set for your performance	<b>Apply by 31st December 2019</b> e-mail with name, age proof and song list to <a href="mailto:vd.veenacompetition@gmail.com">vd.veenacompetition@gmail.com</a> Postal Fans: Post To Veena Doreswamy Iyengar Memorial Trust, 51, 4th Main, Malleswaram (W) Bengaluru - 560055
<b>Competition Venue:</b> Ananya Sabhangana 91/2, 4th Main, Malleswaram Bengaluru - 560003		<b>For queries contact</b> Lakshmi Vivek - 9480518218 or 080-23313842



Lalitha Kala Tarangini - Dec 2019

Tambura artist Sripada Rao passed away on 07 November 2019. He breathed his last after supporting a concert of Vinay Sharva at Chowdiah hall. He served music for over six decades and was one of the most committed artist. His involvement was so profound that he would sing along with the main artist involuntarily. He was recognised by SRLKM with the title "Lalitha Kala Suma" in 2018. He will be missed by the musicians and the rasikas of Karnataka. We convey our sincere condolence to the bereaved family.

# Life of Rallapalli Ananthakrishna Sharma

*Original article written by Violin Vidwan TT Srinivasan  
son of Violin Vidwan. TS Tatachar (Late), Bangalore  
(Translation credit Rajashree Yoganand)*



There are many mahatmas in India who have lived their life as a penance and have contributed culturally, spiritually and given moral values to the society. These great people might not be in our midst, but they have shown us the light and gifted us a rich legacy to lead a life with elevated thoughts and actions.

If there exists - in our food, thoughts, moral standards, likes, dislikes, sense of clothing and many more aspects that make up life - something special, distinct and disciplined while having its own beauty, then that is called culture. Culture is not just education or knowledge.

Also, If there is equanimity in life on various topics, subjects, goals or targets and tolerance to various religions that is culture. A person might know many languages, may have read many books and know literature and fine arts. Yet, if he is ignorant of culture, he cannot be called a culturally enriched person. Hence culture is that which always looks at upliftment of people and always thinks of what is good for the society.

Rallapalli Ananthakrishna Sharma is an example of how a person can contribute to the society, enriching it culturally as well as through his immense scholarly knowledge.

Rallapalli Ananthakrishna Sharma was born in Rallapalli which is in Andhra Pradesh's Ananthpur district on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1893. Karnamadakala Krishnamacharya was his father. He was a very scholarly person having mastery over Sanskrit and Telugu languages. His mother was Alamelu Mangamma. His father was his first teacher. His mother had a large repertoire of songs in Sanskrit, Tamil, Kannada and Telugu. She was also his first music teacher.

## Childhood and Education

Rallapalli was a very desolate village with no facilities to even have a school. Schooling happened in his house along with his brothers and sisters with his father being the teacher. Krishnamacharya was a great scholar in Sanskrit and Telugu. Under his father's guidance Sharma blossomed. His father had taught him Champu Ramayana before he was eight years. By the time he was twelve years, he knew Ramayana Sangraha, Kalidasa's Raghuvamsha, Champu

bharatha, Vishwagunadarsha and other books in Sanskrit literature and many works of literature in Telugu. Ananthakrishna Sharma had deep appreciation for his father for being an outstanding teacher. According to him, his father had perfected the art of teaching which could easily be understood and learnt by the pupils and did not discriminate in giving away his knowledge.

### **His Second Guru**

In order to see that his son received higher education, his father brought him to Mysore. Anantha Krishna Sharma was about thirteen years and the year was 1905. Mysore was the capital of Karnataka in those days. It was the seat for literature, music and other fine arts under the rule of the Kings of Mysore. Krishnamacharya left his son at a relative's place and returned to Rallapalli. Very soon he was turned out of the house and Ananthakrishna Sharma was on the streets without any money and not knowing anyone else in Mysore. Dejected and with a heavy heart, he started walking with nowhere to go. He was also determined not to return to his native place before fulfilling his wish of acquiring knowledge. He met an old lady on the road who took pity on him and resolved to help him although she herself was in a very poor financial condition. She said "do not worry my child, please come with me let us see what the will of God is". She took him to Parakala mutt Swamiji where she was employed to do menial jobs and made sure that he was given both food and a place to stay.

Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakala Mutt is a centuries old famous mutt of the Sri Vaishnava community. The head of the mutt at that time was Sri Krishna Brahmatantra Swatantra Parakala Maha Desikan who was the 31<sup>st</sup> Yati of the mutt. He was an erudite scholar and had many scholarly literature writings on various topics. He was also an expert orator who could explain the innermost meanings in literary works.

Ananthakrishna Sharma was very fortunate to have found shelter under such a holy person. Swamiji not only accepted him as his disciple but also gave him Vaishnava Diksha and was ini-

tiated into Samashrayana mahamantropadesha. Swamiji became his second guru. He was standing on the portals of knowledge which was now open to him. Swamiji was very proud of his pupil who was intelligent and very quick at grasping. He was taught literature every afternoon. Swamiji would explain Sanskrit dramas and touch upon the high points in them. This went on for 6 years. Swamiji's eyesight was becoming dim by this time and he took the help of his pupil to finish the book "Alankara maniharamu". This work helped him a lot in the understanding of the book as well as with the insight needed in understanding literature in general.

### **Third Guru**

Rama Shastry was a scholar from Chamaraja Nagar. Swamiji and he were literary friends and together the two titanic scholars would discuss various topics which was a sight to behold and experience. Ananthakrishna Sharma was very impressed by the literary genius of Rama Shastry and nurtured an ambition to study under him. He was fortunate enough and got the chance to study Shakuntala, Uttara Rama Charitre, Anargha Raghava, Mudra Rakshasa and Bana's Kadambari under him.

According to Sharma, Rama Shastry's rendition of Sanskrit prose and poetry was one of a kind without any parallel. He had mastered the art of explaining and delivering the meaning very effectively. Sharma has vivid memories of the serene calm and composed environment which would prevail when he had to teach.

### **Last guru of Sharma**

Sharma could not continue studying Telugu literature under his father due to change of place. At this time, Cattamanchi Ramalinga Reddy also known as CR Reddy took the responsibility of encouraging and reviving Telugu literature. Hence he became Sharma's fourth and last guru. Reddy was also the teacher at Maharaja College in Mysore. The proximity to CR Reddy opened many vistas to Sharma. They used to regularly meet and spend time to discuss Telugu Literature and poetry. Sharma feels eternally grateful



*Shri. Rallapalli Ananthakrishna Sharma being honoured at The Madras Music Academy in the year 1974 when he presided over the annual conference and awarded the title 'Sangeetha Kalanidhi'*

to CR Reddy for influencing him immensely in Telugu literature.

### **In search of a guru in music**

Ananthakrishna Sharma got introduced to literature from his father, but it was his mother from whom he got introduced to music lessons. Hence, his parents became his first gurus. Music and literature are like two sides of the same coin. In the same way, his parents were like his eyes - one eye for literature and the other eye for music. His mother taught him and his sister Yadugiri many songs in Sanskrit, Kannada, Telugu and Tamil. They used to sing these everyday in the evening at the Anjaneya Temple near their place. After coming to Mysore, though he was able to pursue literature due to the help of Parakala Mutt Swamiji, his music took a back seat for some time. It was at this time that Mysore was becoming the seat for classical music. Mysore had musical geniuses like Veene Sheshanna, Veene Subbanna, Bidaram Krishnappa, Mysore Vasudevacharya and Chikka Rama Rayaru. Sharma would regularly attend all the concerts but was hesitant to approach anyone to learn.

Once during the birthday celebration of Maharaja Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar in the year 1909, as was the custom, there was a felicitation function held by the King to honour Rajaguru (swamiji of Parakala mutt) and in return would receive words of blessings or benediction from the guru. Swamiji was received and seated at the Amba Vilasa Thotti. During the paada puja to the guru there used to be the customary playing of the veena. It was Bidaram Krishnappa who was playing on the veena. Sharma was standing next his guru holding the chamara and was spell bound by his music. He decided to approach him for his music lessons. He was sixteen years of age by then.

He first started to learn from Krishnappa's guru Mysore Karigiri Rayaru till varna and later on was taught by Bidaram Krishnappa till his death in 1931.

### **Bidaram Krishnappa**

Bidaram Krishnappa was born in a village called 'Nandavalike' in south Karnataka. His parents were Smt. Saraswathi Bai and Vishwanathayya. His father was a theatre artist. The then Maharaja of Mysore Mummadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar liked his plays very much and invited him to

Mysore. He was made to stay in a guest house called 'bidara'. Hence Krishnappa got the name Bidaram Krishnappa. Due to ill health, his father found it difficult to run the family and there was financial constraints. Krishnappa was a devotee of Anjaneya and he started singing dasara pada in front of the Kote Anjaneya temple which was in the palace premises. The devotees would give him some money as a token of their appreciation. He gave his mother all the money he earned this way. As Krishnappa had a rich voice, he was put under the guidance of Karur Ramaswamy to learn classical music. Later, he underwent training under Giribhatta Thimayya, Karigiri Rao, and veene Sheshanna. Impressed by his melodious voice, both Chamaraja Wadiyar and Krishnaraja Wadiyar gave him the title 'Gaana Visharada' and in 1908 honoured him by gifting gold coins. Bidaram Krishnappa used all of this money to build the Sri Rama Mandira and was responsible to popularise Carnatic music. He had many disciples and made sure that they were well taught. T Chowdaiah, Bengaluru Nagarathnamma, Rallapalli Ananthakrishna Sharma were his famous disciples. His disciple Nagarathnamma was responsible for building Saint Thyagaraja Swami Samadhi in Thiruvaiyaru.

Rallapalli Ananthakrishna Sharma held his guru in very high esteem and his reflections about his guru stems from this utmost respect for him. According to him the sadhana or penance done by his guru to reach perfection in naada and kaala which are the basis of music is immense. He could easily sing in three octaves with gamaka shuddha, clear pronunciation, singing with understanding the meaning of the kriti and his mastery over raga and taala. He never thought music was for pleasure. He never looked down or humiliated his co-artists. He never competed with anyone nor could anyone win a competition with him.

Only an outstanding guru could tell his pupils "you do not have to imitate me while singing. I can teach you keertanas, the theories of singing and the do's and don'ts about singing. However, each individual is different with respect to his voice and manodharma. By God's grace you may be bestowed with a better voice, better kalpana

shakthi and more intelligence than me. You should cross the threshold of what has been taught by me. You must sing to satisfy your soul or atma trupti."

He had the sublime satisfaction of building the Sri Rama Mandira with the money he earned and completed his life's journey.

Rallapalli once asked his guru to teach him the keertana 'Dhyaname' which his guru had sung in front of the king during the durbar. His guru willingly taught him the kriti. Later when Sharma tried to sing kriti, it was not possible for him to sing the kriti the same way as his guru sang. He questioned his guru the reason for this, to which his guru laughed and said "swara laya shuddhi cannot be obtained in a day. You should sing it every day. Your singing depends on your sadhana". Rallapalli Ananthakrishna Sharma says that the keertana was understood by his mind but he could not put forth the same vocally. That kind of perfection could only be got if one did sadhana like his guru.

While he was learning under his guru Sharma had the opportunity to interact with Vainika shikamani Sheshanna. Both of them were friends with a lot of affection towards each other. Hence it was easy for Krishnappa's disciples to approach Veene Sheshanna. Sharma was so much in awe of Sheshanna's talent and his personality that he accepted him as his maanasika guru. Both Krishnappa and Sheshanna considered Sharma to be a highly educated scholar and both had high regards for him.

What Ananthakrishna Sharma has to say about literature and music is like a beacon to the students of literature and music. "To expand the literary knowledge it is very important to read more and more books. For music it is important to listen as much as possible without which one will not be able to expand the horizon of this learning. In the region of Mysore, Veene Sheshanna and Mysore Vasudevacharya are the front runners for their outstanding scholarly music. I can even say that Sheshanna comes first. I have been fortunate to listen to both their kutcheris a number of times and gained from it. Veene Sheshanna can be called a 'naada yogi'.





*Shri. Rallapalli Ananthakrishna Sharma supporting his daughter Smt. Harini Srinivasan at the The Madras Music Academy in the year 1974 in one of the academic sessions*

Veena is his lifeline. It is the personification of Goddess Saraswathi for him. He never considered it as an instrument that he had mastered. According to him we play the Veena depending on the sadhana and the time we have invested in it, but will not be able to play to the full potential of what Veena truly deserves. He kept repeating it many times. Veene Sheshanna did not need anyone to tell him to play on the Veena. One could consider themselves blessed if they could hear and enjoy his playing. He would be so engrossed playing the veena shedding tears of joy listening to the naada from his veena.

Sharma continued to be in touch with the mutt even while he was learning music. He was into shastra abhyasa and saahitya abhyasa. For him music and literature were means to express his inner-self.

### **Personality of Rallapalli Ananthakrishna Sharma**

Rallapalli Ananthakrishna Sharma had a pleasant demeanour, a reflection of having led a meaningful life. He was a Sri Vaishnava and was always immaculately dressed. He held himself in great dignity. It was not just in music and literature but throughout his life he strode the 'Raja mar-ga', never succumbing to any kind of desires,

money or success. There was something regal about him.

Many a scholar in literature and music would come to him to have their doubts clarified. He believed that music was divine and hence he had no intentions to gain financially from singing it. He always shared his repertoire of keertanas when someone needed it or was humble enough to ask if he did not know a particular keertana or varna. Once he heard a beggar singing Thyagaraja Swamy's kriti 'naadasudha rasambilanu'. This kriti was not familiar at that point of time and he did not know it. He invited the beggar inside with a lot of respect and made him sing the kriti and learnt it by writing it down. The next day, he went over to Muthiah Bhagavathar's place and sang it beautifully for him. Bhagavathar was so much taken in by the kriti that he taught the kriti to all his pupils.

To Sharma knowledge was something that had to be gained by not wasting even a second. Just like the granary that gets filled by putting grain by grain so was it in the case of knowledge to him.

He would always have a word of encouragement to young artistes and listen to them as well as that of great musicians. (Sharma's wholesome personality can be pictured when one

reads his Abhinandana Grantha “Anantha Ragam”).

Though he spoke Telugu, he was familiar with Andhra, Karnataka and Tamil regions. He had a special affinity towards Karnataka and to Mysore Mallige (jasmine), Mysore betel leaf, Rasapuri and Badami mangoes, Nanjanagud Rasabale (banana) and Mysore agarbathis. He was full of praise for Kannadigas for their hospitality and felt that everyone could learn from them.

He was a Savyasachi both in the field of music and literature.

### **Occupation**

Rallapalli Ananthakrishna Sharma was like a cultural ambassador from Andhra Pradesh in Karnataka. He was a scholar who had studied exhaustively in Sanskrit, Telugu and music. Hence it was difficult to differentiate his vritthi (occupation) and pravrutthi (vocation). It can be said that music and literature was the above said both. First in literature, he served as a Telugu scholar, second his music and third the research work that he undertook for Tirupati's Sri Venkateshwara Oriental Research Institute. A brief about all the three is given below.

### **Telugu scholar**

Rallapalli Anantha Krishna Sharma had received very good education in Sanskrit and Telugu from his father. With his mastery and immense knowledge of Telugu literature, he used to give scholarly lectures on ancient poets of Telugu and their works, about the Rajadharma of Vijayanagara kings and the society at that period of time, on many plays and about music as an art. He had published several articles which were a reflection of his mastery on the subject, analysing the matter with aesthetic impressions. He could recite Tikkanna Somayaji's Mahabharatha very well. He got acquainted with the principal of Maharaja College CR Reddy who was very appreciative of his scholarly prowess. He offered him the job of a Telugu teacher in the college. When Sharma declined the offer saying that he did not have a degree, Reddy replied saying that he was giving him the degree

and invited him to accept the offer. He served as a Telugu Pandit in the college till 1949 i.e. for 37 years.

### **Music as a profession**

It is said of Ananthakrishna Sharma that he was famous as a literary giant in Andhra Pradesh where as for Kannadigas he was well known as a musician. He was a savya sachi for having extraordinary knowledge and skills both in music and literature. It is interesting how attuned Sharma was to music in his life. Sharma could not make name as a performing musician though he was well versed in all aspects of it. His singing had been limited to only a few artistes and connoisseurs of music who had heard him and his reputation as a singer was readily acknowledged by them. There can be two main reasons for this. First, the word of honour he had given to his guru Bidaram Krishnappa. Before accepting him as his pupil Krishnappa had laid down the condition that he would not use music for financial gains or make a career out of it. It looks like the guru felt that for Sharma, being a highly talented and prolific scholar, it would not be right for him to compete with students who only had music to look-forward to as their career. He upheld his promise to his guru till the very end.

Once Sharma visited the house of Muthiah Bhagavathar wherein Bhagavathar said “you will be singing in the palace during the sabha session of Maharaja. I have spoken to the king and he has accepted my request. When can I arrange your kutcheri?” but, Sharma declined the offer and said “ I am indebted to you for your affection. I am sorry, I will not be able to sing”. Sharma never gave the reason to Bhagavathar for he did not want to make public his promise to his guru. Years later, he had confided the same only to his eldest daughter.

The second reason, during the first world war time he had contracted influenza and suffered from it for a long time. It had also affected his throat. He later regained his voice after years of medication, but he never went back on the promise made to his guru. Many knew his outstanding singing prowess. They would visit

Sharma at his place only to listen and enjoy his singing. They would make him sing their favourite raga or kriti. Vice Chancellor NS Subbarayaru had a soft corner for Kshetragna's pada. It was said that no one could sing Kshetragna Pada so sweetly and with feeling as Ananthakrishna Sharma. His involvement while singing Jayadeva's Ashtapadi or Kanakadasa or Purandaradasa keertana was total.

Sharma was also proficient in playing the flute and violin. His aim in life was to serve music and would only sing for self satisfaction and not as a means to make money. His daily routine involved reading books, going over the keertanas and teaching his pupils for many hours.

### **Sri Venkateshwara Oriental Research Institute, Tirupathi**

Rallapalli Ananthakrishna Sharma retired after serving 37 years as a Telugu Pandit in Mysore Maharaja College. He was invited by the Tirupati temple to head the Sanskrit department of Oriental Research Institute.

With his love for literature and music, Sharma was given the task to bring to light and publish Annamacharya kritis which had been etched in copper plates and preserved in the Temple store house. He brought out the ninth (1952), tenth (1952) and the eleventh volume (1955) for publication. He also notated the swaras for 108 keertanas of Annamacharya and published two volumes of it. This made it easier to sing Annamacharya kritis. He made sure, to the extent possible that he did not deviate from the original ragas given to the kritis by Anna-

macharya. He was once again requested and was responsible for bringing out nineteenth and twentieth volumes of Annamacharya kritis in 1965 though he had retired by then. Later, Sharma's help was once again sought by Gowri Peddi Rama Subba Sharma while publishing the twenty second volume in 1975.

### **Awards**

For his selfless service towards literature, for his reviews, for poetry, for his writings on music, as a vaggeyakara, Sharma was recipient of many many prestigious awards and titles. It was natural that he was awarded the title "Sangita Kalanidhi" the highest honour in music by The Madras Music Academy in 1974.

Rallapalli Ananthakrishna Sharma led a very disciplined life and dedicated his life in service of music and literature. His passing away was very sublime given that the management of Tirupathi Devasthanam had come to Bangalore to felicitate him and offer the prasadam of the Lord in recognition of his outstanding service to the temple.

Sharma left for his heavenly abode a few hours after receiving the honour and prasadam from the temple.

Sharma would always view that in order for the country to become strong and grow in stature and to live with ethics, all negativity must be removed. The way we speak, walk, think must have the influence of any skilled craft. Then the whole life will be harmonious. That is the sign of culture and the means to worship Goddess Saraswathi.



Team SRLKM congratulates Vidwan Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma on being appointed chairman of the Karnataka Sangeetha Nrutya Academy. The appointment will be a boon for the art form and artistes of Karnataka. I am sure with the talent and knowledge he has, he will take our cultural heritage to a new peak. We wish him the very best in his new endeavour.

- The Editor

# Karnataka Sangeetha Mathematics Workshop

*Meera Sundar, Chennai*



The World Konnakol Academy led by Vidwan Somashekar Jois organised a unique

workshop on 17th November - Karnataka Sangeetha Mathematics by Vidwan Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma (affectionately known as Shivu Sir in the music circle). This workshop, meant for melodic artistes, sold out very quickly and was over capacity. This is no surprise since Shivu sir, apart from being a Mridanga maestro, is also an accomplished singer and composer. He is one of those rare artistes with the amazing ability and vision to translate laya ideas into aesthetic raga expressions. The workshop peppered with humour and anecdotes will remain etched in our memories.

Exercises for grip on Laya and 'Tha Dhi Gi Na Thom' expansion : Shivu sir started the session with several exercises to get a firm grip on Laya.

We then moved on to 'Tha Dhi Gi Na Thom' expansion by applying 4-3-2-1 kaarvais to all variations of tha dhi gi na thom (5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10). Once we got the thathakara, we immediately translated these into Swara patterns. Here, Shivu sir insisted that we maintain the aesthetic of the chosen raga and choose the swaras accordingly. We sang swara endings in ragas like Kalyani, Pantuvarali, Kharaharapriya and in all common talas. Soon, thrishra, thrishra mel kaala, chaturasra + thrishra also were calculated and sung with ease. Shivu sir made the mathematics so simple to understand, and this continued even when we learnt more complex topics.

Samam to eduppu calculation for korvai: We moved to calculations for korvai or muktaya. Here again, big and daunting numbers were made very simple to approach. We learnt some formulae to quickly calculate a muktaya pattern for any given eduppu (take-off point). Patterns with kaarve and muktayas with multiple nadais





were also taught. We also took up challenging eduppus like 'Manasuna' (Pakkala nilabadi).

Layam patterns in Neraval: This was a highlight of the workshop. 'Sama gaana vinodhini' from Saroja Dala nethri was the chosen line for neraval. Shivu sir sang so many mathematical variations on alternating words and he brought them all together towards the end. It was a double delight for us; to listen to the master sing glorious neraval and also have an understanding of his thought process.

Koraippu and Poruttham: Shivu sir concluded with the topics of koraippu and poruttham. He mentioned that these topics require some pre-meditation and a lot of practice before they can

be rendered in a flow. He also answered questions on Thani avarthana and having a mutual understanding between artistes. He stressed on the importance of regular sadhana and always approaching calculations with raaga bhaava in mind.

For all of us melodic artistes, this workshop was a boon. From his decades of experience, Shivu sir gave us a crystallised version of Karnataka Sangeetha Mathematics. We all look forward to applying these amazing ideas in our daily practice and concert performances.

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Sangita Kala Acharya Neela Ramgopal was conferred the title "Sangeeta Vidyanidhi" in presence of revered Suttur Seer Sri. Shivarathri Deshikendra Swamiji and Solale's Sri Vyasaraaja Mutt Seer Sri 1008 Sri. Vidyashreesha Theertha Sripadaru by the JSS Sangeetha Sabha during their 26th Music Conference on 06 December 2019. CT Ravi, Minister for Kannada and Culture, Government of Karnataka, Mysore GN Naganmani Srinath and KV Murthy, President, JSS Sangeetha Sabha were present during the function,





# Kalavathy Avadhooth honoured

Kalavathy Avadhooth, senior vocalist from Bangalore was conferred the title "Swaralayarathna" from Suswaralaya College of Music, Bangalore during their 20th Anniversary function on 01 November 2019 at Pathi Sabhangana, NR Colony, Bangalore. Senior vocalist Padma Gurudutt did the honours in the presence of the packed audience.



Left to Right - Padma Gurudutt, Kalavathy Avadhooth, Prof. GS Ramanujan (who was also honoured), and Srimushnam Raja Rao

# **Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira**

## **Founders Day Celebrations - 2020**

**07 May, 2020**

**Raga Laya Prabha Award Function**

Thursday, 5.30 pm

Venue: The Bangalore Gayana Samaja

The award function will be held in the presence of Sri Sri Sri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar and Dr. TS Sathyavathy will be the Chief Guest.

Raga Laya Prabha Award will be presented to Smt. Anjali Sriram, Dr. SV Sahana, Heramba and Hemantha, Apoorva Krishna and A Rajesh. The Award function will be followed by the Veena Concert by Dr. SV Sahana accompanied on Mridanga by A Rajesh and Anoor Sunad on Khanjira.

**08 May, 2020**

Friday, 5.30 pm

Venue: The Bangalore Gayana Samaja

Kunnakudi M Balamurali Krishna (Vocal), HK Venkatram (Violin), KU Jayachandra Rao (Mridanga), Prof. GS Ramanujan (Ghatam)

**09 May, 2020**

Saturday,

5.30 to 7.00 pm

Venue: The Bangalore Gayana Samaja

Anagha Yoganand (Vocal), Achyutha Rao (Violin), BS Prashanth (Mridanga), BS Raghunandan (Ghatam)

7.30 to 8.45 pm

Vishnu Venkatesh (Mandolin), Arjun Dinkar (Violin), Nikshith Puttur (Mridangam), NS Krishna Prasad (Ghatam).

**10 May, 2020**

**Sangeetha Vedantha Dhurina Award Function**

Sunday, 5.30 pm at The Bangalore Gayana Samaja

Sangeetha Kala Rathna Vid. Sri AV Anand will be conferred with the title, "Sangeetha Vedantha Dhurina" instituted in the name of visionary founder, G. Vedantha Iyengar with a cash award of Rs. 1,00,000, a Silver Medal and a Citation. The Award function will be followed by a music concert by

OS Thyagarajan (Vocal), HK Narasimha Murthy (Violin), AV Anand (Mridanga), N Amruth (Khanjira)