

**Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira (R)**

(Distinguished Service to Carnatic Music since 1955)

# **Lalitha Kala Tarangini**

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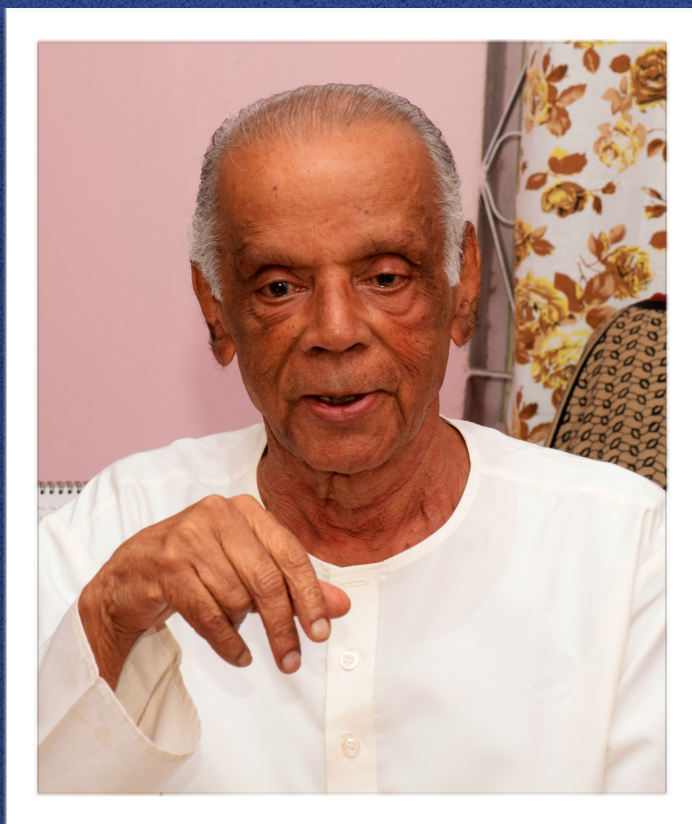
*Padmavathy Ananthagopalan*

# **SRLKM bids tearful adieu to doyen Shri. S Krishnamurthy**

Nonagenarian Ex. Director of AIR, S. Krishnamurthy, grandson of renowned composer Mysore Vasudevacharya, passed away on 5th December at his residence. He was a significant contributor to Lalitha Kala Tarangini and a source of inspiration for us.

Recently he had launched the English version of the Mysore Vasudevacharya's legacy translating the work from original Telugu and Sanskrit to English along with Bangalore Shri. S Shankar.

Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira is ever grateful to him for supporting our cause and we humbly pass on our condolence to his family.





March 2016

Dear Readers,

Veena Vidushi Padmavathy Ananthagopalan is a rare hidden gem whom you will come across only if you are blessed. She comes from the lineage of Sri. Lalgudi Rama Iyer, who was a direct disciple of Saint Thyagaraja. When you visit her, the discussion starts and ends with the Saint and one can actually feel the vibrant power of the Saint at her house.

In today's context, to savour the old tradition, there are very few people we can look up to and Padmavathy Ananthagopalan maami is the foremost. She is a strong believer of Gurukula tradition and is the go to person to learn Veena and there is just no second opinion about it. She has trained thousands of students and she has gone on record saying she is still looking out for an youngster who can imbibe all that she has and she is 81 yrs now!. The discipline and Standard Operating Procedures that she has put around her teaching are unbelievable but I guess that is the only way to attain mastery over this fine art. She seems to be saying 'don't take music lightly'.. it is like a penance. Blessed are her disciples...

This edition features two articles on her, one from Vidhushi Dr. Jayanthi Kumaresh a disciple and niece of her and another by our own senior associate Deepa Ganesh.

I am very glad to share with our readers that Sangita Kala Acharya Neela Ramgopal is bestowed with 'Sangeetha Vedantha Dhureena' for the year 2017. The announcement was made by Honorary Secretary Shri. GV Krishnaprasad during the annual Spring Festival.

The Spring festival of SRLKM draws huge crowd every year and this year was no exception. I have not seen the

kind of crowd in any other venue and the audience seem to have a special affinity towards SRLKM. When Ranjani-Gayatri gave their concert, over 700 people assembled an hour before the concert and nobody got up till the concert got over at 9.30 pm. This is a huge victory for Karnatak music and a pointer to those who say our music is waning. Clearly, it is a result of the sincere effort put in by the Team SRLKM.

While the country is bracing towards Digital India, a related technology brings us 'All India Radio' very close. The release of the 'Raagam' 24/7 Classical Music App is now available on your smart phone (Android as well as iOS) and will travel with you wherever you go. For those travelling abroad, you can carry AIR music on the go. I don't think there can be a more exciting news for the music enthusiasts than this. We have covered an article on this just to bring about the awareness.

The Curtain falls on the Bengaluru Vasanthotsava. Bangalore witnessed record number of concerts at a time of the year when every bush and tree blooms with burst of colour. Over 130 odd concerts/Lec-Dem were part of Spring festival (Vasanthotsava) with the best of the musicians performing during Jan-Feb 2016 at various venues.

SRLKM wishes its readers a very happy Ugadi.

Anand S

Contributors and Photo courtesy:

Dr. Jayanthi Kumaresh, Rajashree Yoganand, Meghana Murthy, Aishwarya Shankar, Sumithra Vasudev, CP Chikkanna, Anagha Yoganand, Deepa Ganesh, Rao R Sharad, Dr. SC Sharma. Photo Courtesy - Vedantha Ramanujam, Paniraj, The Hindu archives, Personal collection of Dr. Jayanthi Kumaresh.

Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira (SRLKM) founded by Shri. G Vedanta Iyengar in the year 1955 is rendering yeomen service in the field of music. In addition to music classes, music concerts are held all through the year. The significant festivals are Sankaranti and Spring music festivals. Mandira also takes pride in conducting music awareness program, music workshops, Lecture demonstrations etc. Entry to all program conducted by the Mandira is free as the aim of the institution is to enable everyone to listen to the best of the music and to propagate Karnatak Classical Music. SRLKM is a Trustee of Karnataka Fine Arts Council (Regd.) which is a consortium of 10 sabhas in Bangalore.

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

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## Contents

- 03 Padmavathy Ananthagopalan
- 06 Sankranthi Festival
- 07 Venkatraman J, Master of Pallavi's

- 08 Guru Suguna Varadachari at 70
- 10 Guru Vedavalli at 80
- 12 Karnataka Kalashree for SRLKM
- 13 From the musical skies of Lalgudi
- 17 PSN Parampara 2016
- 18 OS Thyagarajan at SRLKM
- 19 The Influence of Bhadrachala Ramadas on Saint Thyagaraja
- 24 Reminiscence of N Ramani
- 26 'Prakriti' in Muthuswamy Dikshitar composition
- 28 RK Srikantan Trust awards TN Krishnan

## Lalitha Kala Tarangini - Inbox

Dear sir,

*I am a bit hesitant to write and appreciate you and your work as, the last issue (LKT, Oct. 2015) carried a threadbare dissection of Lathangi temple of Music. If I appreciate you, people will pass a judgement by saying I am biased as I am a beneficiary in the present issue of your magazine. If I don't, it is a serious case of ingratitude. I was pondering over these days "To write or not to write". I thought "To be" is correct for the present, and hence this letter of sincere thanks. I only pray god that this 'temple of music' will maintain and live to propagate our good music, as you wished and for heaven's sake not disturbed by any mucky and envious minds.*

*I have been intently observing the activities of SRLKM from a distant place like Udupi and amazed at the meteoric leap that you have scaled these days. My hearty congratulations for that. Your Quarterly magazine always carries qualitative and eye-catching articles ; the October issue in particular has TMK, TNK-LGJ-MSG, Abhishek, Vittal, Vasudha Ravi and a host of others, presented in an emulative manner. The paper used for the journal and the photos chosen for the purpose along with their appropriate display are worth considering. LKT perhaps is the one which projects its 'search light' on the fecund*

*places where Classical Indian Music is seriously bred and propagated. It is really appreciable that your magazine is crossing the bias of any kind with an urge to 'search' for a genuine work or talent. Thank you for your valuable services.*

V.Aravinda Hebbar,  
Lathangi, Hayagreeva Nagara,  
1<sup>st</sup> Road,  
UDUPI - 576102

### **Lecture Demonstration on Papanasam Sivan compositions 03 April, 2016**

SRLKM under the direction of Vidhushi Neela Ramgopal has organised a Lec-Dem on April 3, Saturday. Gayathri Girish and Radha Bhaskar will deliver the program.

Venue - Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira Auditorium  
Time - 4.30 pm



# Padmavathy Ananthagopalan

Dr. Jayanthi Kumaresh, Disciple of Vid. Padmavathy Ananthagopalan

All of us in Bangalore were glued to the television as the terrifying news of floods in Chennai flashed on the screen with scary visuals of sinking houses, overflowing bridges and news of people drowning. Chennai was totally cut off – no power, no working phone lines and was pretty much an island slowly sinking under all that rain. My worries were about my periamma and Guru Smt. Padmavathy Ananthagopalan amma, who is 80 and is living all by herself in Chennai.

With no way to reach her with the phone and internet being down, I was trying hard to contain my anxiety – how would she manage without power? No lifts to reach her second floor apartment, a UPS that was now powerless, did she have enough candles, water, milk and food?

After a frantic 48 hour wait with no news and connectivity, I finally managed to reach her through a regular cab driver we knew in Chennai. I spoke to

her through his phone and gasped, "Hello Periamma...How are you? I was so worried!!"

She replied in a calm voice, "What's wrong with me? I am absolutely fine, dry and safe! But do you know – so many people are suffering here. I walked up to the nearest temple and volunteered my time by helping them feed about 300 people who had lost their lives belongings due to this flood. There are many wonderful men and women who are cooking and making food packets here. In fact, I'm sponsoring provisions to help with the cooking."

My jaw dropped. She is all of 4ft 6inches and the water levels outside had risen to such a great height. I had a million questions starting with how she waded through the water, who accompanied her but she was very calm and collected and asked me not to worry about her.

And that is her strength. Her ability to look beyond herself, her willpower and her can-do attitude. There is nothing that is impossible in her dictionary. A self-made woman with grit, determination and inner strength, she is the only Veena player in a family replete with Violinists. She made a name for herself in those days when women were not encouraged to perform, traveling around the world and sharing her vast knowledge of music and Veena. This unique lady has so many facets and is surely made of something different, something much stronger than eyes can behold.

A Guru, she is totally giving and spends most of her waking hours sharing music with her students. A perfectionist, it is her eye for detail that distinguishes her students from the rest. She loses herself while teaching and does not hold back anything from sharing. She wills her disciples to even excel herself, a very rare trait seen among Gurus. Her teaching schedule begins at 5 in the morning and her classes go on late into the evening. Her dedication is the same, whether the student is a beginner or learning a Ragam Tanam Pallavi. Her 60 years of teaching experience manifests itself in the first line she teaches.

A Performer, she has evolved her own original playing style and believes in the Gayaki style of rendition. Her style is very sophisticated with importance to



Sahithya Meettu. It feels like someone is actually singing when one hears her play. Her understanding of the essence of raga is almost spiritual and her music touches the very core in us. She has travelled widely and performed in many continents and can still play a solo 3 hour concert today at the age of 80.

A Curator, she is most passionate about her Veenas and has taken great pains to learn all about the craft of making a Veena and has even experimented on different Veena designs. She has a beautiful collection of rare Veenas and her care in preserving these Veenas is totally unparalleled. She believes that Goddess Kamakshi and the Veena are one and the same and her devotion to both are ultimate.

An Administrator, She is the founder of the Sri Satguru Vidhyalaya in Annanagar, Chennai where she has trained over 3000 students in the last 26 years. Many of her students are performing artistes. The rules of the school are very strict, be it the dress code, the discipline, the syllabus, the exams or the performance. Everything is planned to perfection and no compromise at any level is done in the imparting of music and traditional Values. To provide listening opportunities to the students and music enthusiasts in Annanagar, she helped form The Annanagar Music Circle Trust 25 years ago and today, this Trust offers a monthly concert on a Sunday to suit the convenience of the students, featuring both prominent musicians and young upcoming artists.

Many activities such as the monthly Panchamis with the rendering of Thyagaraja Pancharathnams, the annual Bagula Panchami with a daylong Thyagaraja Aradhana, the Annual School day function or Prizes for the winners in the exams are all conducted in perfect rhythm. She plans every detail personally and each event is done with utmost love and care.

As a person, she is one of a kind. I think God stopped making this model anymore. The energy, drive, determination and single-mindedness, staunch adherence to Indian Values are all so many threads which enhances her personality and makes her one unique person.

She has been an excellent wife to my periappa, Shri. A.S. Ananthagopalan who was 15 years older to her. She has been a great inspiration to all the young musicians in the family with her non compromising attitude and hard work. She is a mother to each and every student of hers and treats each one of them with great love on one side and stern discipline on the other.

The Veena is made out of Jackfruit tree wood and to me, she herself is like the jackfruit. The strict outer persona with the sweet and tender inside - a lady who has seen so many events, emotions, experiences and aspirations in 80 years of her life.

I recall the time when she underwent an eye operation for the retina detachment at Shankar Netralaya in Chennai. I had my Sangeetha Sammelan concert on





the same day that she was discharged from the hospital. I had not reminded her of the concert as I wanted her to focus only on herself.

Those were the days when she would never let me change the Veena strings lest the string would hurt my finger and I could be inconvenienced to play. She would personally re-string my Veena meticulously for every concert of mine. So on this particular day, I sat there at home wondering how to change the Veena strings for the concert. I finally decided to play with the already existing strings even though they were quite worn out from hours of playing.

She was discharged from the hospital at 12 noon and reached home by 1 pm with her eye bandaged. We had got her bed ready for her to rest and she was not supposed to bend. But as she walked into the

house, she said, "Jayanthi, there are only 4 hours left for your concert. C'mon, get the Veena ready, I will change the strings for you."

I said, 'But Periamma, your eye is bandaged and you should not bend down.' She turned my way and replied, "Am I the Guru or are you the Guru?" I watched dumbfounded as this frail lady bent over my Veena and changed the strings for a disciple for whom she has bountiful blessings and love".

How fortunate I am to have a Guru like this and how fortunate are all her disciples and people whose lives she has touched. We pray to God for her long and healthy life just so that in today's world there is still a reference point for someone with a great combination of a will of steel and a heart of gold.

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## Thyagaraja and Purandaradasa Aradana

January 26<sup>th</sup> is celebrated as Republic Day all over India with gaiety. Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira chooses this special day every year to celebrate and pay homage to Sangita Pitamaha of music Santha Purandaradasa and Saint Sri Thyagarajaswamy. The Aradhana celebrations are done under the joint auspices of Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira and Devagiri

Sri Venkateshwara Temple Trust, Banashankari 2<sup>nd</sup> stage in the Divine presence of Lord Venkateshwara.

Senior musicians joined together to sing the pancharatna kritis. The temple premises reverberated with the Ghoshti gaana. Large number of people who had gathered thoroughly enjoyed the event.



# Sankranthi Festival

Rajashree Yoganand



*Vinay Sharva performing with BK Raghu, MT Rajakesari, Guruprasanna*

December is associated with the music season in Chennai and it can be said that January starts the music season in Bangalore much to the delight of all the connoisseurs of music. SRLKM has made it a ritual now to start the new year with the Sankranthi music festival in their open air auditorium. The setting sun, outdoor auditorium and the soulful music creates a perfect ambience for the music festival and for the rasikas to savour the music.

The festival was dedicated to Bharat Ratna MS Subbulakshmi this year and was part of the Bangalore wide Bengaluru Vasanthotsava, a festival of music organised across the city. The concerts were held over 9 days and the best of the talent showcased.

The first day of new year 2016 saw the Trichur brothers (Srikrishna Mohan and Ramkumar Mohan) give a wonderful start to the festival and it was fol-

lowed by Nisha Rajgopal's concert. The other artistes who performed were, Dr. Vijayalakshmi Subramaniam, Kunnakudi M. Balamuralikrishna, Vivek Sadashivam, veena, flute and violin trio played by Shubha Santosh, Vani Manjunath and Prema Vivek, Vinay Sharva, Dr. R. N. Srilatha and on the final day P. Vasanth kumar on the veena.

It must be mentioned that all the artistes sang with aplomb and chose to render a detailed RTP in their concert. A few of them sang the pasurams of Thirupavai as it was the Marghazi season.

Sankranthi music festival has whetted the appetite of the rasikas who now look forward to the Spring festival which will be held in February. Special mention must be made of Smt. Neela Ramgopal who supports the Sankranthi music festival every year.

**Entry to all the concerts of SRLKM is FREE. We do welcome music patrons to come forward and extend financial Contributions/Sponsorships voluntarily and liberally, so that all music lovers can utilise the valuable opportunity to enjoy classical music. These donations carry exemption as per 80G of IT Act, 1961.**



# Venkatraman J, Master of Pallavi's

Meghana Murthy, Disciple of JV Sir

Trichy J. Venkatraman fondly known as “Pallavi” Venkatraman or JV mama, is a well-known name in the field of Carnatic music realm. Being his student for the past 10+ years, I take immense pleasure to pen few words about my guru, J.Venkatraman. Rhythm can be said to be JV sir's musical USP, just as the Alathur Brothers came to be identified with their laya excellence and their hard work in that aspect of music at a time when Madurai Mani Iyer was renowned for his quietude, Chembai for his bright singing and GNB for his innovations. He has put great efforts in perfecting layam. As stated by many Carnatic music connoisseurs, he can effortlessly render the most complicated tight-rope walking in swara permutations. Hence the name “Pallavi Venkatraman”.

Born on 5 July 1934 in Tiruchirapalli, Tamil Nadu, Shri J. Venkatraman hails from a music family. His grandfather Venkataramana Dikshithar played violin and was the first member in the family to get involved with music. Sir received his initial training in Carnatic music from his father K.V. Jayarama Iyengar who was a violin vidwaan. . He was further groomed by Alathur

Venkatesa Iyer and M.A. Venugopalan. Starting music lessons early with his father, sir did not seek employment after passing SSLC and Typewriting Higher. “Appa told me that I would make him happy only if I pursued music full time. I followed his advice even though my mother was against the idea.” recalls sir.

Venkatraman sir had rigorous training through gurukulavasam under Alathur Venkatesa Iyer, Alathur Subbier's father, but extreme poverty caused him setbacks. The legendary mridangam vidwan Palani Subramanya Pillai backed him during this course of period and sir always extends great gratitude to Palani for helping him in his tough times and guide him in understanding the intricacies of laya. Sir recollects Palani heard him sing in Trichy and urged him to apply to perform at The Music Academy. However, Palani sir changed his mind in a flash and said, ‘No need for all that. I'll take care of it.’ This was the turning point of J.Venkatraman sir's life when he marked his foot in The Music Academy and won a tambura as a prize for the best vocalist in his time slot. Though Palani Subramanya Pillai advised sir to move to Madras to further his music career, he could



not leave Trichy owing to the circumstances of his family. Music producer S.V. Parthasarathy helped him to find employment with All India Radio.

Sir has taught music without break often travelling to nearby towns. Today, he has become a veritable globetrotter as a teacher. He disagrees with the notion that expertise in laya can lead to lack of saukhyam in music. On the contrary, he feels good command over layam is in fact essential to saukhyam. "Without a steady gait, won't you fall while walking?" he asks. "Rhythm suffused Palani's whole being, but did he not accompany Madurai Mani Iyer with the ultimate in saukhyam?" For all his expertise in that aspect, JV sir does not confine himself to the imparting of laya-specific knowledge to his students. "I teach them according to their individual aptitude and interests – be it niraval singing, rare kriti-s or ragam-tanam-pallavi."

JV sir's other area of specialisation has been as a composer of tunes, especially for Tiruppugazh and Divya Prabandham. He owes his interest in Tiruppugazh to the example set by his guru, who hero-worshipped Pudukottai Dakshinamurthy Pillai. A devotee of Muruga, Pillai sang Tiruppugazh songs in a

wonderful voice. Venkatesa Iyer instilled the same level of interest in the genre in the Alathur Brothers who could actually give concerts entirely comprising Tiruppugazh verses.

J Venkatraman was never behind accumulating accolades and awards. For his service in the field of music, Shri J. Venkatraman has been honoured by a number of music institutions in southern India. He is the recipient of titles including the Sangeetha Sreshta conferred by the Narada Gana Sabha, Chennai, and the Sangeetha Samrat bestowed by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Coimbatore; Gold Medal for Best Pallavi concert from Music Academy Chennai, Mridangam Maestro Palani Subramanya Pillai Award, 'Sangeetha Chintamani', Sangeet Natak Akademi Award. He was also awarded with "Sangeetha Kala Acharya" from The Music Academy in 2012.

Asked about his any unfulfilled desire, he says "I would like to learn many more songs and tune at least 300 Tiruppugazh songs. And I would love to die teaching. What better way to go!" with a smile lighting his eyes.

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## Guru Suguna Varadachari at 70

Aishwarya Shankar, Senior Disciple of Suguna Varadachari and a Research Scholar

Suguna Mami (as fondly called by all), was felicitated on the occasion of her 70th birthday by her Shishyas on January 26, 2016 in Raga Sudha Hall. Initially she was not willing to have a grand felicitation and said that she will feel happy if her students benefit in gaining knowledge about music in any way, that would serve the purpose of celebrating her birthday. So, we thought of approaching eminent stalwarts and request them to give lecture demonstrations on various topics relating to music exclusively for Suguna mami's students in her house.

We all were fortunate enough that Late Smt. Suguna Purushottaman (a close friend of our guru) agreed to start this celebration despite her serious health issues on January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Infact that happened to be her last programme, which will be cherished

forever by Suguna Varadachari and her disciples. Further, we had more lec-dems by Shri.K.S. Kalidas, Shri. R.K.Shriramkumar, Smt. R.S. Jayalakshmi, Smt. Shyamala Vinod, Smt. Shyamala Venkateswaran, Shri Vaithilingam & Kotilingam, Smt. R. Vedavalli and Shri. P.S. Narayanaswamy throughout the year. All these vidwans and vidushis were kind enough to share their knowledge, experience and tips with us for our beneficial cause.

The grand finale on January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016 will remain fresh and intact in all our memories as we were honoured by eminent guests of honour – DR. N. Ramanthan, Dr. Pappu Venugopala Rao, Cleveland Shri V.V. Sundaram and Sangita Kalanidhis Bombay Sisters Smt. C. Saroja & Lalitha, who readily agreed to preside over the function.



We started the evening with a prayer sung by Mridulika Bharatkumar (Suguna Mami's Grand Daughter) followed by a small musical tribute to all the Parama Guru's of our beloved Guru. The lists of songs were 'Enta Ninne', a pada varanam in Kamas of Subarama Dikshitar as a tribute to Musiri Subramanya Iyer, *Nada Tanumanisham* in Chittaranjani (as a janya of Jhankaradhwani and not as a janya of Kharaharapriya) of Thyagaraja as a tribute to Smt. Ranganayaki Parthasarathy (from whom Suguna Mami learnt the Tillaisthanam Paathaantaram of Thyagaraja), *Elateliya* in Darbaar of Thyagaraja as a tribute to Calcutta S. Krishnamurthy, *Neemata lemayura*(Javali) in Purvikalyani with a misram version instead of Adi Tala as a tribute to Jayamma and finally a *Ragamalika Tillana* in Simhanandana Tala of Suguna Purushottaman as a tribute to her. After this, a small Audio Visual Presentation based on the musical journey of our Guru was shown to the audience.

Later we were delighted to hear extraordinary felicitation speeches by all the chief guests. Dr N Ramanathan spoke about our Guru's great service in the University Of Madras as a faculty, Dr Pappu Venu-gopala Rao spoke about our Guru's teaching in The Music Academy for the advanced school of music and had presented a sanskrit verse in praise of our

acharya composed by himself, Cleveland Shri V.V.Sundaram spoke about our Guru's greatness in teaching the overseas children for the Sustaining Samapradaya scheme organised in Cleveland Music Festival and finally Bombay Sisters proudly highlighted the association of our guru with the famous Musiri School Bani. The finale was concluded with a video of Suguna Purushottaman who had left a message for our Guru to be shown to her during this function.

The way in which this felicitation function became a grand success was a very emotional and heart touching moment for all of us. Suguna mami has been very kind, broad minded and selfless in passing all her gems that she gained from her masters to us in a very easy manner. Indeed the identity of being a disciple of our Guru Smt. Suguna Varadachari is truly a bliss for each and every student. The almighty should continue to shower his blessings on us to make more such felicitations possible for our Guru, who is simply unassuming in all aspects.



# Guru Vedavalli at 80

Sumithra Vasudev, Senior disciple of Guru Vedavalli

It was a grand occasion for the students of Smt.R.Vedavalli, as they came together to celebrate the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of their revered and dear Guru. When the event relates to an important day in the life of a legendary personality like Smt.Vedavalli it is appropriate that the celebration brings to fore the achievements and contribution to the field by the veteran. This is what formed the core idea behind the function 'Nivedanam' held on 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2015 at Sivagami Petachi Auditorium, Chennai. Nivedanam comprised of three segments, 'Gita rasa', 'Nada rasa', and 'Kirti rasa', depicting the musical genius and the inspiring persona of Smt. Vedavalli in three different perspectives.

With a spirit and enthusiasm, inspite of the heavy rain that day, the function began with a prayer on Goddess Sharada ('Sharade', Devagandhari, Adi, Papanasam Sivan). The first segment 'Gita rasa', showcased select songs from thematic programs and productions conceived, directed and presented by Smt.Vedavalli at various occasions in the course of her illustrious career spanning over seven decades now. It included a variety of themes from Utsava sampradaya kirtana-s of Tyagaraja (this is one of her most popular thematic renditions), Gurguha vibhakti kirtana-s of Muthuswami Dikshitar, Vacana-s of Basa-

vanna, to Azhvar pasuram-s and rhymes for kids set to Carnatic raga-s! The rendition was anchored by her senior disciple Dr.Sumathi Krishnan who explained the significance of each item that was presented. The rendition of the 72 Melaragamalika (fifth chakra) of Sri Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan by all the disciples (nearly 18 of them were on stage) was noteworthy. This part of the function emphasized a rare combination of versatility, within the boundary of classicism in Smt.Vedavalli's musical creations. The rendition was ably supported by Smt. R. Ramani and Sri.Ashwin Anand (also students of Smt.Vedavalli) on the veena, Umayalpuram Sri. Mali on the mridangam and Sri. B.S.Purushottaman on the kanjira.

'Nada rasa' was a short audio visual presentation that highlighted the manodharma music of Smt.Vedavalli. Some rare and interesting photographs were put up in the slideshow. Short audio clips of mainly tanam and niraval renditions of Smt. Vedavalli were played. Sumithra Vasudev, senior disciple of Smt.Vedavalli explained that these audios were just glimpses of the rich creativity of her Guru, whose music embodies the fine balance of adherence to the structural limitations of the manodharma forms while exploring and expanding their melodic boundaries without compromising on the aesthetic experience.







The final segment 'Kirti rasa' saw dignitaries Sri.N.-Murali, Sri. Ramnarayan, Smt.Aruna Sairam and Smt.Bombay Jayashree coming together on the dais to felicitate and speak about the veteran musician. Sri. Murali spoke about the long association that the Music Academy has with Smt.Vedavalli and how in different roles like teaching in the Teachers' College, being a part of the Experts' Committee, as Director of the Advanced School of Carnatic Music, she has been a part of the growth of the institution. Sri. Ramnarayan spoke about her writings for Sruti magazine and how they reflected the depth of her musical training and knowledge. Smt. Aruna Sairam shared her own experience, and said that Smt.Vedavalli was a funds of knowledge on anything related to classical music and was also ready to give away her knowledge which was a very great thing. Smt. Bombay Jayashree also spoke about how Smt.Vedavalli was an exemplar for any student of classical music. This was followed by a couple of students sharing their intimate experiences with the inimitable Guru. Smt.

Sushruti Santhanam, daughter and disciple of Smt.Vedavalli, who anchored this segment of the event emphasized how each student was looked upon as another family member. This was probably one reason why many of Smt.Vedavalli's students had landed that day from different parts of India and the world, to participate in the event and relive some of the cherished moments with their Guru on such a special occasion. Aparna Devi, a disciple from the US, Catherine from France and Prashant Prasad from Mumbai spoke on behalf of all disciples and Smt. Sumithra Vasudev presented a musical offering of a pallavi composed by her on Smt.Vedavalli in the raga Lathangi and in the Simhanandana tala. With Smt. Vedavalli, modest but moved, offering all her glory at the feet of her Gurus the meaningful event ended well with vote of thanks by Smt. Shivapriya Krishnan. Smt. Indira Subramaniam, another of Smt. Vedavalli's disciples, beautifully strung together the whole event with her graceful and dignified interludes.

## SRLKM hosts young talent from Udupi



Young talents from Udupi, Kum.Archana and Kum. Samanvi (vocal duet) and Kum. Gargi N. Shabaray (vocal) will be featured by SRLKM on 24th April 2016. The youngsters are disciples of Shri.Aravinda Hebbar and Vasantalaxmi Hebbar (Parents of Ranjani Hebbar who is no more with us). The youngsters are also receiving advanced training from Chitravina N Ravikiran.

Venue - Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira

Time - 24 April 2016, 5.30 pm (Two concerts of 1.5 hrs each)

# Karnataka Kalashree for SRLKM

Rajashree Yoganand

“Karnataka Kalashree” is the highest honour bestowed by the Karnataka Sangeetha Nritya Academy to honour those who have excelled in the field of music and dance. There were 18 distinguished artistes chosen to receive the award this year. “Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira” was the only one selected in the institution category to receive the award for its commitment to the field of music by its exemplary work of 60 years of propagating music and continuing to do so.

Karnataka Sangeetha Nritya Academy had arranged an excellent award function on the evening of 19th December 2015 at Ravindra Kalakshetra, Bangalore. The awardees were welcomed traditionally and taken in a procession with the nagaswaram playing from the Town Hall to Ravindra Kalakshetra. They were received and welcomed by the Chairman of the Academy Vidushi Smt. Gangamma Keshavamurthy and the Registrar Sri T.G. Narasimha Murthy and other Academy members. Bangalore Mayor Sri Manjunatha Reddy was also present on the occasion.

The event began with a cultural programme by the members of the Sangeetha Nritya Academy. The awards were presented by Ubhayagana Vidushi Dr. Shyamala G. Bhawe, former Chairperson, Karnataka Sangeetha Nritya Academy and Sri K.A. Dayananda, Director, Department of Kannada and Culture, Sri Y.K. Muddukrishna, Former Director of the Department of Kannada and Culture was also present in the award function. The Chief guests appreciated the work turned out by the present Chairman and other members of the academy. 'Mahati' a book containing the bio-data of all the awardees was released by Sri K.A. Dayananda.

Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira feels humbled and grateful to receive the honour. Mandira will continue to work harder and will work towards the cause of music with the added responsibility and with a lot of zeal.





# From the musical skies of Lalgudi

Deepa Ganesh, Senior Associate of LKT

A 100 years ago or before, what was a musician's life like? It certainly is not anyone's guess, though it could well be. You are now left with a handful of musicians who can give you a picture of what the life and times of music and musician in that era was. There are also well-researched books by music historians that opens up this world to us, in meticulous detail. Yet, they remain broad brush strokes. Music, after all, breathes through the spirit of a musician – it cannot merely be a piece of historical data nor a period in time. Padmavathy Ananthagopalan, one of the greatest living Veena maestros, is an embodiment of time that was, and by virtue of living in the present, she also carries in her time that is, only as a continuation of her music.

The 83-year-old Veena legend takes me straight into her puja room – “Pay your respect to Tyagaraja,” she guides me through the many Veenas lying in the drawing room – on the settee, on the pyol. “That’s

my guru, S. Balachander,” she points to the huge photograph on the left wall of her puja room. We then move on to the photograph of her father Lalgudi Gopala Iyer; there are few fresh petals lying before the photograph and hardened red kumkum dabbed on the forehead. “This is *appa*. He was everything to me. Quite a mad family we are,” she looks at me with a twinkle in her eye, drawing her pallu close over her shoulders. “All that our life had was our violins and veena,” she adds. Beside it is her mother's photograph. “She lived to be a 100. A very pious woman. Always thinking of God. She never went to a doctor, did not take an injection all her life.” Without even giving time to react, her sparrow like figure breezes into the adjoining room, the Veena room. Padmavathy maami has 35 Veenas, coming from various time periods in her life. “My life breath,” she says, running her fingers over them. There's more in the front room, to where she dashes next. Between the two rooms is her dining room – it is stacked with



wooden shelves on both sides and in them are plastic boxes, one piled over the other. "Your tools?" I ask on a surmise. Her face lights up. "How did you know?" she asks, and excited by this guess, in the next few moments we are sitting in the middle of her drawing room with files, wood scrapers, strings, screws, plectrums, fevicol etc. Padmavathy maami is busy explaining the antecedents of them all.

Within the first few moments you know what forms Padmavathy maami's physical and emotional world. As you try to get the details from her, it begins to get difficult. Not because memory disobeys her but simply because art for her is more supreme than the actual details from life itself. She keeps going back to the dynamics -- raga Kalyani, simhanandana tala, her students etc. Adamantly, I keep going back to her home in Lalgudi -- a home that produced the violin legend Jayaraman, the doyenne of Veena Padmavathy, and top notch violinists like Rajalakshmi and Shri-mathi. It is a stream of consciousness conversation, but the outcome is interesting -- it maps her life and music, subtly contouring the ebbs and tides of her life.

"Even as wild imagination, the kind of life that we led would be shocking to your generation," she tells me. Her father Gopala Iyer lived and

breathed music. It was a 24 hour pursuit. The life that he passed on to his children was no different. "Even from my very early years, I remember that in every room of our house someone was practicing music, all through the day. If anyone could match my father's sadhana it was my brother Jayaraman. I cannot remember doing anything different either. All the time I was with music -- either learning from my father, or practicing." Gopala Iyer would wake up his children at 3 a.m, and as Padmavathy maami remembers, "If we didn't respond to him and get out of our beds, the rest of the day he would not speak a word to us. Now education is different. But I think he was right. Other kinds of learning may come easily, but I don't think there is an easier route to music. There was no question of writing down at all, he would say, and it was supposed to go straight into our heads." There's a well-documented story from the pages of history. Back in the Fifties, the great musician and musicologist Mudikondan Venkatarama Iyer asked if Lalgudi Jayaraman could play with him for the tough Simhanandana tala pallavi of 128 aksharas. As always, father Gopala Iyer's permission was sought, and he gave a go ahead. A week later Venkatarama Iyer sent word for a rehearsal.



*With Shri. Ananthagopalan during 80th birthday celebration*





"Can I go for rehearsal?" father was asked. For two minutes, he did not utter a word. "If you are a child born to me, you should play on stage without rehearsals." Gopala Iyer expected a very high level of competence and involvement from his children. In this concert at Music Academy in 1952, Jayaraman and Palani Subramanya Pillai accompanied the stalwart, and it was Jayaraman who impressed the legends gathered to listen to the concert.

Gopala Iyer was a versatile musician. Not only the violin, he could also play other instruments. This was something that Maami inherited too. She could play several instruments – flute, nadaswaram, the western guitar. Nadaswaram was something that caught her fancy as a little girl. "To our temple festivals in Lalgudi, my father used to invite Rajarathnam Pillai to play the nadaswaram. We used to be asked to follow him in the procession and were asked to keep beat for the tani avarthana. It used to be very difficult. My father's keen eyes would never miss a mistake that we made." Back home, Maami used to practice the instrument. It was so loud that she had to stuff dhotis into it. "One day, my father asked me to stop. He said it requires a lot of stamina and I was too petite to handle it." Gopala Iyer was a successful horticulturist, and could effortlessly outwit his opponents in games like carrom, chess and card playing. He could make beautiful dolls for the Navarathri Kolu. He was very good at tailoring and art work. "He made the best Jahangirs, perfect in taste and shape. Every single bone of my father was artistic," Maami recalls. Gopala Iyer wrote compositions in rare, unused ragas like Uthari, Sudha Tharangini, Velavali, Gandharva Manohari, Bhuvana Mohini, Sindhu Kriya, Megha Ranjani and Niranjani.

During their early music years, there were occasions when all the sisters practiced together. "Initially, we played exactly what our father asked us to. But a few years into music, we formed our opinions. We argued and discussed it too. But as we were all separated due to the natural course of life, each of us developed a distinct approach to our music," she explains. "To assume that you know is arrogance. This is something that my father told us always. He used to say that music is divine, creativity is god's gift, dedication is human effort. All these three elements must come together."

How did she come to learn the veena? "My paternal aunt told my father that since everyone was playing the violin at home, I should shift to the Veena. My father agreed, and from then on Veena became my life.

Everything in the family revolved around Gopala Iyer. He was a disciplinarian and short tempered too. Savitri, his wife, had no say in any matter and neither did the children. But this did not matter to any of them considering that he was such an enlightened soul. Savitri, maami's mother, was a good singer. She mostly took care of the house, the children, followed instructions laid down by husband and mother-in-law, never overstepping her role. She used to sing the songs composed by her mother in law, but within the four walls of her home. The children did not have the permission to go anywhere and Savitri too, was never sent out of the house. "My mother never went to any marriage or function etc. You will not believe that my grandparents lived in the neighbouring village, we never went there. When they came, we would spend some

time with them and got back to our music lessons. My father simply did not allow for all this – he used to say it is a waste of time. Music was a 24-hour regimen! We did not even go to Srirangam! Even now, I have never visited Ooty or Mahabalipuram living in Chennai. Music took over my life and nothing else had meaning. How do we meditate? We switch off to everything else, isn't it?"

A home teacher was appointed for all the children and he taught them Sanskrit, English, Tamil and other subjects. "After his *sandhyavandane*, we four would stand before him and recite 'Guru Brahma Guru Vishnu', prostrate and then begin our lessons. My mother prepared food for him which we would serve. It was an elaborate ritual," she remembers.

When Padmavathy maami was 15 years old, she got married. She had no clue till they broke the news to her. Her husband was her father's student, so it was entirely her father's decision. Even her mother Savitri was not consulted on such matters. With marriage, music took a back seat. For three years, she lost connection with her music. Married into a huge joint family with many power centres, there was a general dissent about Padmavathy maami practicing music. "No opposition was possible. Not even for my husband." After three years, the couple was asked to move out.

"I was a great admirer of S. Balachander," she says. "Even if I had just Rs. 2 on me I would somehow manage to go to his kutchery, however far it was. I used to make hand-painted greetings and post it to him expressing my views on his music. Once, at a kutchery, I met him. He asked me to come to his house, and on listening to me, he became my guide."

Having come from a traditional school like Lalgudi what was it to deal with a self-styled guru? "I was very sure from the beginning what I should take from him. Inherently, I don't follow anyone. I have developed my own idiom. What I really learnt from him is technique. I was very selective about what I wanted. I had shaped my music on the vocal style," Padmavathy maami, says with absolute clarity. Nothing except the Veena excited her. No diamonds, no silks – she never spent money on any of them. "Except violin and veena there is nothing else in my home. Whenever I went abroad on concert

tours, I would shop only for my veena. In Germany I used to buy sandpaper and kilos of strings. That quality was simply not available in India." It is indeed a matter of great surprise how Padmavathy maami mastered the craft of veena making. She has designed a veena that can be packed into a backpack. How did she learn this? "I don't know. I never went through any formal course. Back in Lalgudi, I had seen Nate-sachary do it..." she goes back to explain how she changed the way in which strings were fixed and altered the placing of frets.

In the 1950s Padmavathy maami requested the Kanchi seer to initiate her into Sri Vidya Upasana. He refused and instead advised her to pursue the Veena in depth. "Beyond my veena and Goddess Kamakshi nothing exists for me."

On the suggestion of S. Balachander, 25 years ago, Padmavathy maami taught at the Singapore Fine Arts Society as professor of music for eight years, and on her return set up the Sri Satguru Sangita Vidyalaya. She has not only been training students but also conducts concerts and gives away annual awards.

But one question remains – why did she not call herself Lalgudi Padmavathy like the rest of the family? Probably because she didn't play the violin. Perhaps because she wanted to earn a pride of place without leaning on anything, not even family name.

As she autographs her books *Shadjam* and *Rishabam* and *Abhyasa Manjari*, Padmavathy maami extracts a promise. "Everytime you come to Chennai will you stay with me?" I say 'yes'. "Why is the popularity of the Veena declining, I feel worried," she adds.

I get ready to leave. "How can I send you away without playing anything for you?" She sets up her Veena and begins to play Kalyani. "Tell me what you want to listen," she says next, leaving me more embarrassed. Her music is just as rich and as soulful as ever. She sings and explains how in her style the Veena must be able to evoke the lyrics itself. As I listen to her, I ask myself – why did the music world make little of Padmavathy maami's genius. She is as bright a star as her brother Lalgudi Jayaraman himself. But are there simple answers?

Serving music is part of Padmavathy maami's hospitality. For long time to come, her passion and simplicity will burn bright in my heart.



# PSN Parampara 2016

S Anand, Editor



In an unique music festival PSN Parampara 2016, three generations of Sangitha Kala Acharya, PS Narayanaswamy were lined up to perform. Vedanth Ramanujam J a Chartered Accountant by profession, single handedly pulled off this excep-

tional event. The concerts were held at the Arkay Convention Centre, Mylapore, Chennai and was packed to full capacity all the days.

Bhishma Pitamaha of music, PSN sir has trained over 100 odd shishyas of which 26 performed in this festival. The festival was envisaged to be a unique way to honour the revered Guru by showcasing the Vidwath and talent of his Shishyas. Current day jambavans like Abhishek Raghuram gave the much needed glitter to the festival. The central idea here is to bring the Guru to the concert and the Shishya will perform in front of the Guru with all the respect and devotion.

Vedanth Ramanujam learned mridangam from Shri. Kumbakonam Rajappa Iyer but his profession did not allow him to be active on concert circuit. He also learnt vocal from Shri. Chingleput Ranganathan and Dr. S Ramanathan.

He was inspired by a similar festival where combinations like Semmangudi mama and PSN, PSN and CR Vaidyanathan, CR Vaidyanathan and his student constituting four generations, performed at Narada Gana Sabha long back. While that was the starting point, the concept of bringing the Guru and Shishyas together and conducting the concert in front of the Guru was ignited by Gayathri Venkataraghavan. Later on Sowmya and Gayathri Girish suggested the name 'Parampara' that remains to be the brand for now.

Parampara has plans to do similar festivals in future that may include KVN Parampara, Suguna Varadachari Parampara, Lalgudi Parampara etc. in the days to come.

PSN Sir, Shri.VV Sundaram and Shri. Madurai GS Mani with the PSN Parampara



# OS Thyagarajan at SRLKM

Anagha Yoganand, Sr. Student of Vid. GV Neela

Sri Rama Lalita Kala Mandira and Dr. D. Premachandra Sagar Centre for Performing Arts held a concert of Vidwan O.S Thyagarajan on 8<sup>th</sup> of November, 2015, on account of the birth centenary celebrations of M.S Subbulakshmi. Sri Tyagarajan was ably accompanied on the violin by Vidwan B.K. Raghu on the violin, Vidwan Dr. K. Ashok on the mridangam and Vidwan G. Omkar Rao on the ghatam.

The concert began with the rendition of 'Vallabha Nayakasya' in the raga Begada, a composition of Mutuswami Dikshitar. A quick swaraprastara followed the kriti which was skilfully responded to by the violinist B.K.Raghu. 'Rara mayinti daka', a composition of Saint Tyagaraja in the ragam Asaveri was sung next. This was then succeeded by another of Saint Tyagaraja's composition, 'guruleka etuvanti' in the ragam gowrimanohari, with a spirited rendition of neraval and swaraprastara at 'tatvabhodana jesi Kaapadu tyagarajaptudagu'. The kriti that followed next was in the ragam Kalyani. 'birana Varaalichi Brovumu', a popular composition of Sri Shyama Shastri was presented beautifully capturing the essence of the ragam, the neraval and swaraprastara at 'shyama Krishna sodari gowri parameshwari girija'. The main piece that was presented was 'Rama nee samaanamevaru' a compo-

sition in the ragam Kharaharapriya by Saint Tyagaraja. The raga alapana that preceded the kriti was expertly handled by both the vocalist and the violinist. This was followed by swaraprastaram and neraval.

The composition that followed next was 'Vinaradana' of saint Tyagaraja in the ragam Devagandhari. Soon, the hall was filled with the familiar, mellifluous strains of the ragam kapi, the lilting melodies enthralling the audience. 'inta sowkhyamani', another composition of Saint Tyagaraja was then presented after the kapi raga alapana. This was later succeeded by 'Daachukovalena' in the ragam Todi. Sri O.S Tyagarajan performed shruti bhedam for the same, yielding the ragam Mohana. The splendid rhythm of the tani, proficiently played by both Vidwan Dr. K Ashok and Vidwan G. Omkar Rao was pleasing to the ear.

The next piece was a javali in the ragam Khamas 'Marubari talalenura'. The concert ended with a fast paced rendition of saint Tyagaraja's 'Naadupai palikeru' in the ragam madhyamavati. O.S Tyagarajan's concert was indeed a delightful experience for all the rasikas who were present.



# The Influence of Bhadrachala Ramadas on Saint Thyagaraja

Rao R Sharath, Disciple of Vidwan M Balamuralikrishna

The life of Bhaktha Ramadas has been the subject-matter for Harikathas and devotional dramas. They are the mainstay when we hear songs of Bhadrachala Ramadas. His songs find a place in Bhajans too, “*Jaya Janaki Ramana*” in the raga Naata is invariably sung in Bhajans as a “Thodaya mangalam”. Studies two decades ago produced an authoritative edition of “*Ramadasu Keerthanalu*”, compiled by the great Vainika Manchala Jagannatha Rao.

## CONTEMPORARIES

Historical evidences available show that Vaggeyakaras Tallapaka Annamacharya [1424-1502 AD] and Purandaradas [1484-1564 AD] were contemporaries. Then came Kshetrappa [1600-1660] who poured eternal life into “*Pada Sahitya*” and Bhadrachala Ramadas [1620-1687], a great devotee of Sri Rama and a Vaggeyakara were contemporaries.

Ramadasa was the only son of Kancharla Linganna, Mantri of Kondapalli Village, and Kamamba. He was christened Gopanna. But his devotion to Rama from childhood earned him the “*Ramadasa*”. It is said that Bhaktha Kabirdas preached him the “*Ramataraka mantra*” and he wrote “*Dasarathi Sathakam*”, in which each poem ends with the words, “*Dasarathi Karunapayonidhi*”.

When Ramadasa was an official in the Tehsil of Bhadrachalam, Ramadasa utilised the contents of the Khajana for the construction of a mantapa and gopura for the temple of Sri Rama in Bhadrachalam, and for making ornaments for the deities. In his Keerthana in Kamboji “*Ikshvaku kula thilaka*” he says;

*“Chuttu prakaramulu sompuga eheyisthi  
gopura mantapatukuduruga kattisthi”*

He made ornaments, emerald padakam for Bharatha, Pearl padakam for Lakshmana, Gold padakam for Seeta. For using the sarkar (government) money, he was sentenced to imprisonment and after 12 years of his incarceration, it is stated that Rama-Lakshmana came in the guise of ordinary mortals, paid the amount due to the government and got Ramadasa released. It was on this occasion Ramadasa sang the beautiful composition:

*“Emayya Rama Brahmendradulaku  
naina nee maya deliya vasamaa”*

It is said that Ramadasa composed most of his soul stirring songs when he was in Jail. After learning that Lord Rama himself had come to clear the debt of Ramadasa, Thanisha begged for forgiveness from Ramadasa.

## PLACE AS A VAGGEYAKARA

Although songs of Ramadas do not figure much in musical performances as those of Thyagaraja, Dikshitar or Shyama Shastri, Ramadasa has a significant place among the composers of the pre Thyagaraja era. His compositions not only found an important place in bhajans, as those of Narayana Theertha, Mahakavi Venkatasubbier, Meera and Kabirdas, but also inspired future composers.

There is no doubt that compositions of Ramadasa exerted considerable influence on Thyagaraja. In the opera, Prahallada Bhaktha Vijayamu, Thyagaraja pays obeisance to Ramadasa in the Kanda padyam.

*Kaliyugamuna vara Bhadra  
Chalamuna nelakonna Rama-  
Chandrani pada bhakutla  
Kella varudanandagi velasina  
Sree Rama Dasu vinuthintu madin*

The reference to “*Ramadasu*” in the Thyagaraja krithi “*Kaligiyuntekada*” in Keeravani might be to Anjaneya or Bhadrachala Ramadas. But it appears that Thyagaraja’s mother sang to him in his childhood the songs of Bhadrachala Ramdas, and their influence accounted for the Saint’s devotion to Rama (Rama Bhakti), his dislike of mundane pleasures, as well as the nectar-like flow of Bhakti Bhava in his krithis. Ramadas’s influence on Thyagaraja could broadly be dealt with under the following four headings.

- 1) Ramabhakthi (devotion to Sree Rama)
- 2) Krithi rachana (manner of composition)
- 3) Usage of similar words
- 4) Portrayal of similar bhava





### Devotion to Sri Rama

Bhakti marga, the path of devotion as enunciated in the Bhagavadgita, is the main theme of the compositions of Ramadas as well as Thyagaraja. Although Thyagaraja composed kritis on deities like Vishnu, Siva, Amba, the majority of them were in praise of Sri Rama, his Ishta Devata (eg “Vadera Daivamu Manasa” in Pantuvarali). It is interesting to note that, in “Prahlada Bhakta Vijayam”, Sreeman Narayana gives darshan to Prahlada as Sree Seetha Rama.

### Krithi Rachane

It is a well-known fact that the “Keerthana” form was in vogue much earlier than the “Krithi” composition. It was perhaps Thyagaraja who gave definite shape to the “Krithi” form as finely enunciated in his “Sogasuga mrigdangta Talamu” in Raga Sriranjini. Ramadas compositions were mainly “Keethana”; still he could be deemed as the forerunner of “Krithi” form as illustrated by the following compositions.

1. *Tharaka mantram korina Dorikenu-Dhanyasai-Adi*
2. *Rama Na manavini Chekonuma Daiva lalama Paraku seyakura-Asaveri-Chapu*
3. *Rama needaya raduga-Sahana-Tripura*
4. *Emayya Rama-Kambhoji Jhampa*
5. *Innikalgi Meerooramunna Nenevarivada nouda Rama-Kalyani-Adi*

The above mentioned beautiful compositions give ample scope for Sangathis and also neralval. In his Ustava Sampradaya Keerthanas and Divya nama

Samkeerthanas, Thyagaraja followed the footsteps of his forerunners. Ramadas and Purandaradasa.

### Similarity in use of words

Both Ramadas and Thyagaraja chose mainly Vyavaharika Telugu in their compositions to make them appealing and easily understandable, although, in some of the compositions of Thyagaraja, we notice a more subtle and refined way of expression of ideas. There is however a striking similarity in the words and expressions used in the compositions by both. Some examples are cited below:

### Ramdas-Devagandhari-Adi Pallavi:

*Rama Rama Seetha Rama Rama Rama Rama Sita Rama ||*

Charanam

*Ch 1. Thappunencha boku nee goppatanamu chelladu ne neppudu nine nammiti thappaka nanu raksh||nchumu || Rama ||*

*Ch 2. Nammiti gaka na chettemounu nee kripa leka mimmu ne vedendaka mee sommainanu paraka ||*

### Thagaraja – Sankarabharanam –Adi

*Pallavi: Rama Seetha Rama Rama-Rama Seetha Rama Rama || Rama ||*

Charanam

*Ch 1. Thappu lenna bothe maaku goppathanamu raadu, maa yappa dayajesi kandla gappukoni paalimpave !*

Rama ||

Ch 2. Daapuleka Nenu needu-  
Prapu korukonti gaani  
Repu maapanuchu dova-  
Joopaga radayya brova||  
Rama ||

\* \* \*

### Ramadas – Poorvikalyani -Tripura

Pallavi:Ananda mananda mayenu sree janaki  
Rama smaranamu cheyaga needu ||  
Ananda ||

Charanam

Ch 1. Parama Sraddha kaligenu durita  
Jalamu lella tholagenu ||  
Ananda ||

Ch.4. Poorvakrithamu kanabadenu parama  
Pavanamaina sree hari seva galige nedu ||  
Ananda ||

Ch.7. Ramabhaktula chera kalgitimi itara  
Kamamu lellanu veeda galgitimi ||  
Ananda ||

Ch.8. Parabhamala paini branti tolagenu memu  
Parula doshamu lenna morulannu neduradumu ||  
Ananda ||

### Thyagaraja – Bhairavi – Adi

Pallavi:Ananda mananda mayenu Brahma – Ananda ||  
Charanam

Ch 3. papamulaku bhaya manditi hrith thapamu  
lella jala jesiti rama nee padamu  
luramuna numchi Poojinchitini ||  
Ananda ||

Ch 4. Kaliki aasalu rosinaramu. ee kaliki brathuku nama  
saramu itlu paliki paliki tholagi poye vieharamu || ananda  
||

\* \* \*

In the song, “Endu daaginado” in varali, Ramadas entertains. “O Rama, where are you hiding you who heard the entreaties of Gajendra, Draupadi and Dharmaraja and went to their rescue?” similarly Thyagaraja in “Endu daaginado” in Todi, asks “O Rama where are you hiding you, who is a Bhakta poshaka and went to the succour of Prahlada and Sugreeva?”

Again, “Rama! Naa moralakimpavemaya” in Aarabhi, Ramadas sings in suppliant mood;” why don’t you

listen to my prayer, O Rama who earned eternal fame in this world by giving “abhaya” to a stone? Thyagaraja sings in Devagandhari belonging to the same melakarta as Aarabhi “Naa moralakimpavemi sree Rama” “O Rama, who blessed Sugreeva and Vibheeshana, why do you fail to listen to my supplication?”

### Import and Meaning

Ramadas and Thyagaraja stand apart from most other famous vaggeyakaras in one important respect. While the other vaggeyakaras sang about the form and characteristics of god in their compositions. Ramadas and Thyagaraja have explained morals, Upanishadic truths, essence of the Gita, etc. Thyagaraja’s compositions teach us the essence of the vedas, Puranas, Upanishads and the Gita, and hence great musicians have hailed them as Thyagopanishad.

While Ramadas sings that the sweetness of Rama nama excels that of the sweetest essence of delicious fruits, butter etc. Thyagaraja sings of the mental peace and happiness (sukham) derived from Rama nama, which is much more than that derived from water by a thirsty man, from immense treasure by persons afflicted by poverty, from panchabhakshya paramananna by a hungry person and from even nectar by those in distress. Thyagaraja goes a step further; he says that the chanting of Rama nama gives more happiness than the manasa pooja or chintaa of Sree Rama!

### Ramadasa-Poorvi Kalyani-Jhampa

O Rama Neenamamemi ruchira Sree Rama neenamamemi ruchira || O Rama ||

Ch.1. Kadalee karjoodradi phatamula kathikamou kammani nee nama memiruchira || O Rama ||

Ch.2. Nava rasamula kanna navaneethamulakante nadhikamau nee nama memiruchira || O Rama ||

Ch.3. Vasu jamboodraksha phala rasamula kante Adhikamau nee nama memiruchira || O Rama ||

### Thyagaraja-Saurashtra-Adi

Melu Melu Rama nama sukhamee dharalo manaa I phala lochana valmeekadi balanilajadulu saksigha || Melu ||

Ch.1. Nindu dahamu konna manujulaku neeru dagina sukhambu kante chanda daridrya manujulakudhana bhanda mabbina sukhambu kante || melu ||

Ch.2. Thaapamu Sairinchani janula kamrita Vapi yabbina  
sukhambu kante dari dapu leka bhayamandu velala  
dhairamy kalgu sukhambu kante || melu ||

Ch.3. Aakali velala panchabhakshya para manna mab-  
bina sukhambu kante sree rkarudau sree ramuni mana-  
suna chinthinchu sukhambu kante || melu ||

### Similarity in Experience

Thanks to the grace of Sri Seetha rama, Ramadas is freed from bondage and he goes to Bhadravari and has darshan of the lord. In ecstasy, he pours out in Mechabhoul raga “Kanti maa ramulanu kanugonti nenu” similarly Thyagaraja sang the krithi “kanugontini, sreeramuni nedu” in Bilahari, when he had darshan of the pooja vigrahas, after they were found in the river bed.

In the kriti, “Sree Ramula divya nama smarana,” in saveri, Ramadas deplores the futility of a bath in the ganga or japa, thapa etc., whereas what is required is Rama dhyana, without “ahamkara”. The same ideas is echoed in the Thyagaraja krithi, “Manasu swaad-heenamaina ya ghanuniki mari mantra tantramu lela” in Sankarabharanam. The same bhava is expounded in another krithi of Thyagaraja in Dhanyasi “Dhyaname varamaina ganga snaname manasa rama” in which Thyagaraja asks; how, could one wash off one’s sins of deceiving others by bathing again and again in the Ganga?

In “Narayana yana raada,” in Nadanamakriya Ramadasa observes that even living the life of a samasari (family life) one can attain salvation. It is madness to wander away in forests for this purpose. Thyagaraja brings out the same idea in the krithi in Saveri “Samsarulaithe nemayya, sikhinpincha vathamsu deduta nundaga”.

By reason of their implicit faith in god, both were free from fear of Navagrahas.

### Ramadas – Yadukulakambhoji

“Graha gathulaku Veruva bonnu maaku galadu  
Daivanugraha balamu”.

### Thyagaraja – Revagupti

“Grahabela memi Sree Ramanugraha Balame Balamu”

Their views on attaining moksha too were similar. If man believes in man and not god, how can he free himself from the mortal coils? So goes their kritis:

### Ramadas – Janjooti

Pallavi

Narahari nammaka narulanu nammite

Narajanma meederuna, O, Manasa | ( Narahari)

Ch.1. Kallundaga mokallatho nadichite  
Kaisiki Povachchuna, O, Manasa!  
Neellundaga nummi neellanu mringithe  
Nindu dahanamu teeramu  
O, Manasa ! Narahari ||

Ch.2. Komma yundaga koyya bommanu kalasithe  
Korika konasaguna O, Manasa  
amma yundaga Peddamma nadigithe  
Arthamu Chekooruna O, Manasa! ( Narahari)

Ch.3. Annamundaga gulla sunnamu thinte  
Aakali vetha teeruna O, Manasa !  
Kannelundaga chitra kannela galasina  
Kamapu Vyatha teeruna O, Manasa ( Narahari)

### Thyagaraja – Madhyamavathi – Chapu

Pallavi

Nalina lochana neevugaka nanyula namma  
narajanma meederuna ||

Ch.1. Konga vanti dhyanam chesthe thana  
Korika konasaguna donga magani  
Bhakthi meera nammite manchi  
Dova joopa nerchina  
Ganga loni odanu nammi bhava  
Sagaramu daala vachchuna  
Nanganachula sarananuta  
Chetaya nangudu  
Jnanopadesamu cheyuna ||

Ch.2. Parama vandhyaku palu perugu bosithe chanti  
Palu kaluga nerchuna nera dhanamula dayadula  
Kichchite nenarumala kaluguna eruvu vesi oosara bhoomi  
Vilite emaina phaliyinchuna varamaina peru kalugu  
hangaraviki  
Vandana monarinchite brovanerchuna || Nalina ||

In these two songs both Ramadasa and Thyagaraja emphasise their point of citing vivid examples:-

### Ramadas

1. When you have legs, can you reach Kashi by walking with your knees?
2. When Lakshmi is there, can you obtain riches by praying in Peddamma i.e. Jyesthadevi?
3. Will your desire be fulfilled by union with a picture of a lady or a doll made up of wood?

### Thyagaraja

1. Can you obtain your wish by doing false japa like a crane?



2. Can you find the right path by placing your faith in a thief?
3. Can a barren woman secrete milk even if fed with milk and curds
4. If you surrender to women, will kama give you wisdom or granopadesam?

## CONCLUSION

A careful comparison between the compositions of Bhadrachala Ramadas and Thyagaraja may reveal several more instances of similarities in the use of words and in ideas. With my limited knowledge, I

have only detailed some instances just to prove the influence of Ramadas on Thyagaraja. I hope that Sangeeta vidwans and literary pandits will make a deeper study and write a treatise on the influence of Ramadas on the vaggeyakaras who came after him.

*(Rao R Sharath learnt music from his aunt Vidushi Shantha S Rao and then Sri Rajkumar Bharathi. He is currently a disciple of legend M Balamuralikrishna. A lot of these thoughts have emanated from the legend which were compiled and published as a paper)*

## Raagam - 24 hour Music App from AIR

The All India Radio (AIR), on 26<sup>th</sup> Jan 2016 launched 'Raagam', a 24-hour satellite channel dedicated to classical music lovers. The channel has been made available across geographic locations, while its headquarters is in Bengaluru.

The channel was opened to public domain. While it would be made available in the Android, iOS and Windows platforms as a mobile application-'All India Radio Live'- it will also be beamed through the Digital Terrestrial Channel (DTT) of Doordarshan with an aerial radius of 70 km in Bengaluru. Web streaming will be done on the [www.airbengaluru.Com](http://www.airbengaluru.Com) website.

Raagam will have time bands for archival assets, senior living musicians, budding artistes, approved by

AIR besides having interpretation of classical music by musicologists. F Sheheryar, Director General, All India Radio said Raagam has been made available in the app form to ensure that geographic boundaries are no barrier to music.

While New Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, Dharwad, Bhopal and Lucknow centres would have Hindustani classical music, those in Thiruvananthapuram, Trichy, Thrissur, Hyderabad and Vijayavada centres would have Carnatic classical music.

The one-minute signature tune of 'Raagam' is composed by Vidwan Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma.

*(Courtesy - Deccan Herald and Photo by Dr. N Raghu)*



Prasanna Bharati Chairman Dr. A. Suryaprakash, Sudha Murthy, Infosys Foundation and Dr. K. Radhakrishnan seen during the launch of Raagam

# Reminiscence of N Ramani

CP Chikkanna

The death of noted flautist Dr. N Ramani after prolonged illness has saddened his admirers. His death has brought nostalgic memories of my association with him for over 40 years. After the death of his Guru TR Mahalingam, he carried Mali's baton and was the unquestioned and unconquered monarch of flute. The instrument was enslaved by him and attained special status owing to his artistry of playing.

I first heard his flute recital during the silver jubilee celebrations of Bangalore Sree Rama Seva Mandali in 1963. I was a student then and attended Karnatak music concert as a hobby and I was in a nascent stage with regard to the basics of music. It was a flute duet with the late Dindigal SP Natarajan. Both of them are the protégées of TR Mahalingam.

Amongst them Natarajan was the senior and staff artiste in Bangalore Station of AIR. They were accompanied by AV Krishnamachari on the violin, CS Murugaboopathy on the Mridangam, KS Manjunath on Ghatam and HP Ramachari on Kanjira. It was a full bench concert. The duet evoked a mixed reaction from the audience, but still remains green in my memory.

The next time I heard Ramani's flute was in the famed Violin, Venu and Veena concert floated by legendary Lalgudi Jayaraman along with Trivandrum R Venkataraman on Veena in the early 1970's. Until then Ramani was almost in hibernation. Although the Violin, Venu and Veena concert was later broken, it definitely played an important role and helped Ramani set his foot deep in the Karnatak music and build up an illustrious career.

Noted mridangam vidwan Guruvayur Dorai introduced me to Ramani in Madras in 1973 during the music festival in December. It was my first contact/acquaintance with him that lasted for over 40 years. Some of my friends requested me to arrange Sikkil Sister's flute duet during the Vinayaka festival. Since the sisters were not willing to perform with local accompanists, Ramani was the next best choice.

When I contacted him over phone and requested him to perform, he readily agreed and did not ask or demand remuneration or put any condition. It was in Venkataramana Swamy Temple in Balepet. He was accompanied by S Seshagiri Rao on Violin, Late S Prakash on Mridangam and HP Ramachari on Kanjira. He was paid Rs. 500 that included his travel and hos-



pitality expenses. He never bothered to check the fees and quietly accepted without a word. He was staying in Malleswaram New Krishna Bhavan. After the concert noted Pallavi Maestro Chandrappa and the then Music critic Bhaskar (Ravi) came to meet him. We had dinner together.

That particular concert opened the flood gates of his long stint in Karnataka for over 30 years. Unmindful of monetary matters, he wholly grabbed the numerous concert invitations, be them in major or minor organisation/festivals/sabhas and private functions. He was not averse to new combinations and experiments. He never stuck to tradition and explored new avenues to reach commoners.

Since his sahapati SP Natarajan passed away in mid 1970's, another noted player T Viswanathan migrated to USA and the huge cost of hosting Sikkil sisters duet who always preferred to accept concerts with their team of accompaniment only, have all helped Ramani to establish himself as a leading performer.

For my sister's marriage in 1979, Ramani volunteered to perform. Due to the insistence of our common friend Mr. Bhaskar, noted Vainika RK Surya Narayana was included to the accompaniment of Guruvayur Dorai and KS Manjunath on Ghatam.

Both of them played with verve and never tried to dominate. Their duet lasted nearly 50 concerts and dissolved later due to some misunderstandings.

In the mid 1980, he played during the Sri Rama Navami festival at Shimoga arranged by me. I casually suggested whether he could have his son's flute accompaniment in the place of Violin, he readily agreed and brought his son Thyagarajan. AV Anand and Bangalore K Venkatram played double mridangam. This experiment was hailed by one and all. In one of the numerous flute concerts under the aegis of Sri Rama Seva Mangali, Bangalore, he presented concert in the company of his son and grand son. There was a perfect unison and no shrills and their understanding was highly appreciated.

In the early 1990, he began employing bass flute which are larger in length than the conventional 2 1/2 kattai flutes for playing lower octaves (Mandhara Sancharas) for raga alapana which added to the melody and created special effect.

When his Guru TR Mahalingam was staying in a rented house in Bangalore Sadashiv Nagar, Ramani came to meet him when ever he visited Bangalore. Another devoted disciple of TR Mahalingam was

Photographer Sunder. He was at the service of Mali 24 hours. Another Visitor was noted Mridangist late Tanjore Upendran. Mali's friend circle was large and senior bureaucrats, rich businessmen etc..

During Sree Rama Navami Music festival, NMH in Visveshapuram hosted the musicians performing at Sree Rama Seva Mandali that included Ramani. Several times Mali would go there to meet his friends and disciples and also for a card session with them! On one such meetings, I usually asked Mahalingam whether he had heard Sharaba Shastri's flute (Blind flutist). His flute sounded like Harmonium was Maali's reply. When asked about Palladam Sanjeeva Rao's, he said his Ragalapana was highly astonishing. During our long association, Ramani never passed any caustic remarks about other musicians even when provoked.

From 1990 onwards Ramani became more intense and highly serious in his profession. He became highly reserve and began to avoid his old friends in Bangalore for several years for strange reasons. He was almost inaccessible and his flute concerts in and around Bangalore declined rapidly. He used to visit Bangalore on teaching mission.

He was a great devotee of Saint Thyagaraja and rarely missed the aradhana festival. About the return of Unchavruhi Procession, it was his privilege to render the Bairavi piece 'Chetulara Shringaramu' preceding the goshti Ghana of Pancharatna kritis. Except during the aradhana, this piece is not heard in concerts and I am unable to break the mystery and reason behind this untouchability despite seeking clarification from numerous magazines/writings.

Ramani in the later stages became a great devotee of Ayyappa. During the Thyagaraja festival, many times he appeared in traditional yaatri's attire wearing the japamala barefooted. He was a regular participant in Thyagaraja festival in Cleveland, USA.

Awards and rewards were showered upon him by individuals, admirers, organisations and the government.

In the early 80's, he was presented with a Ponnadai (precious golden cloth) and gold plated silver flute by his friends under the aegis of Sri Parthasarathy Swamy Sabha, Bangalore. He was a Sangitha Kalanidhi, Padma Awardee, central Sangitha Natak Academy awardee, Kalaimamani etc. Blood relative of Sikkil sisters and a far relative of TR Mahalingam. Ramani emulated Mali in all respects/all walks of life on and off the stage.



# ‘Prakriti’ in Muthuswamy Dikshitar composition

Dr. SC Sharma, Academician and Musicologist

**Sri Muttuswami Dikshitar** is considered as one of the effulgent and ever-present star in the world of Karnatic classical music. It is analysed that he has composed over 400-500 compositions which are in Sanskrit. During his life time Sri Dikshitar travelled the length and breadth of the country and visited almost all the pilgrim places and in order to preserve the age old temple tradition, antiquity of the presiding deity, heritage, history of the place, customs, rituals, ancient trees, etc., has composed kritis and paid tribute to the respective deity.

## Uniqueness in adoration of ‘Nature’ or ‘Nisarga’/ ‘Prakruti’ in his kritis:

If we observe the kritis of Sri Muttuswami Dikshitar, it appears that he was greatly influenced by the natural powers viz., Fire, Wind, Water, Earth, Ether, Mind (Manas), Ego (Ahankara), the guardians of cardinal direction points of the world, viz., Indra, Yama, Agni, Vayu, Varuna, Kubera, Niruti and Eeshana, the supernatural powers, planets and the invisible ‘Cosmic Energy’, its mysticness and power combined in it, the representing demi-gods and the ultimate power or ‘Maha Prajna’ and its miracles over universe, the astonishing powers of ‘Prakruti-Purusha’, its encapsulated philosophies, its influence over human body, mind and intellect, etc., are found.

In his ‘Navagraha Kritis’ viz., (सूर्य मूर्ते सुंदर छायाधिपते) ‘Soorya Moorte Sundara Chaayadhipate’, in Saurashtra raga, Chaturasra jaati Dhruva tala, (चंद्रं भज मानस) ‘Chandram Bhajamaanasa’ in Asaavari raga, Chaturashra jaati Mathya tala, (अंगारकं आश्रयाम्यहं) ‘Angaarakam Ashrayaamyaham’ in Surati raga, Roopaka tala, (बुधमाश्रयामि सततं) ‘Budhamaashrayaami Satatam’ in Naatakuranji raga, Mishra jaati Jhampe tala, (बृहस्पति तारापते) ‘Bruhaspati Taarapate’ in Athana raga, Tisra jaati, Triputa tala, (श्रीशुक्र भगवंतं) ‘Sri Shukra Bhagavantam’ in Pharaju raga, Chaturasra jaati, Ata tala, (दिवाकर तनुजं) ‘Divakara Tanujam’ in Yadukula Kambhoji raga, Chaturasra jaati Eka tala, (स्मराम्यहं सदा राहुं) ‘Smaraamyaham sadaa Raahum’ in Rama Manohari or

Ramapriya raga, Roopaka tala, (महाशूरं केतुमुखं) ‘Ma-haashooram Ketumakham’ in Shanmukha Priya raga, Roopaka tala, the demi-gods which represents the planets are idiomised and are dedicated.

## Shiva or Rudra, symbolizing the principle of ‘Purusha’ in ‘Nature’ (Nisarga/Prakruti):

In his ‘Panchabhootasthala Linga’ kritis and ‘Panchalinga’ Kritis, though they are attributed to Lord Shiva and his various incarnations, the inner soul of these kritis, are connected with the aspects and principles originating from ‘Nature’ (Prakruti), as in (आनंदनटन प्रकाशं) ‘Anandanatana Prakasham’ (Kedara raga, Misra chapu tala) for **Chidambaram**, (श्रीकाळहस्तीश) ‘Sri Kalahasthisha’ (Husaini raga, Jhampu or Khanda Chapu tala), for **Sri Kalahasti**, (अरुणाचल नाथं), ‘Arunachala Naatham’ (Saranga raga, Roopaka tala), for **Tiruvannamalai**, (चिंतय माकंद मूलकंदं) ‘Chintaya Makanda Moolakandam’ (Bhairavi raga, Roopaka tala), for **Kanchipuram**, (जंबूपते) ‘Jam-boopate’ (Yamunaa Kalyani raga, Tisra Eka tala), for **Tiruvanaikaval**, are attributed to Ether, Air, Fire, Earth, Water respectively.

Also in his ‘Panchalinga’ kritis viz., (सदाचले श्वरं भावयेहं) for ‘Sadaachaleshwaram Bhavayeham’, (Bhoopala raga), (हाटकेश्वर संरक्षमाम्) for ‘Hatakeshwara Samrakshamam’ (Bilahari raga, Misra Eka tala), (श्रीवलमीक लिंगं चिंतये शिवार्थांगं) for ‘Sri Valmika Lingam Chintaye Shivarthangam’ (Kambhoji raga, Ata tala), (आनंदेश्वरेण संरक्षितोहं) for ‘Anandeshwarena Samrakshitoham’ (Ananda Bhairavi raga, Misra Eka tala), (सिद्धेश्वराय नमस्ते) for ‘Siddeshwaraya Namaste’ (Nee-lambari raga, Misra Eka tala).

Also in 8 kritis on ‘Bruhadeshwara’ of Tanjavoor, 6 kritis on ‘Nataraja’ of Chidambaram, although involves ‘Shiva’ and his incarnations, they are dedicated to the principles of ‘Purusha’ and in fact ‘Shiva’ is also called as ‘Manoniyaamaka’ the ‘Controller of Mind’.

### Lord Ganapati representing or symbolizing the principle of 'Ether':

During his extensive wandering to pilgrim places viz., Madhurai, Tiruchchi, Mayavaram, Tiruvarur, Kerala, Vaideeshwara Koil, Kanchi, Mooladhara Ganapati, Tiruvalanchuzhi, etc., Dikshitar was deeply moved and influenced by the beauty of the art, architecture, environment, of these places and composed 26 kritis on Vinayaka, who is considered as the 'Abhimani Devata' for Ether. Perhaps, no other vaggeyakara has composed kritis on Lord Vigneshwara as Sri Muttuswami Dikshithar.

### Devi or 'Prakruti' principle in his kritis:

Sri Muttuswami Dikshithar, apart from worshipping 'Purusha' principle in his kritis, he has also eulogized the respective female consort or 'Devi' of the presiding deity, which represents 'Prakruti' principle in the Nature, viz., 13 kritis on Bruhadeshwari of Tanjavor, one kriti on Shiva-Kameshwari of Chidambaram, 4 kritis on Kashi Vishalakshi or Annapoorna Devi, 5 kritis on Balambika, 6 kritis on Lakshmi, 9 kritis on Saraswathi, 'Nagaikaronam' on Parvati, 1 kriti on Mangalamba, 'Madhuramba Vibhakti' kritis on Madhurai Meenakshi, 15 kritis on Kanchi Kamakshi, 11 kritis called 'Kamalamba Navavarna', etc.,.

### About 'Guha' or Kumaraswamy:

Sri Muttuswami Dikshithar, has considered and revered Lord Kumaraswamy as his 'Guru' who bestowed him the knowledge of music as a boon and as a gratitude Dikshithar made his first composition (श्रीनाथादि गुरुगुहो) 'Srinathadi Guruguho' in Mayamalava Gowla raga by dedicating the same to his 'Guru' and later for all his compositions he mentioned 'Guru Guha' as 'Ankita', a mark of identification specified in poetic and musical compositions. He has composed a bunch of compositions (comprising 9 and 22 kritis) called 'Guru Guha' kritis as a mark of respect to Lord Shanmukha. Here the most important aspect is that Lord Guha or Shanmukha is considered as 'Abhimani Devate' for 'Pruthvi' tatva or the Earth.

Once when Dikshithar was travelling to attend the marriage function of his brother, on the way he passed through a village and found that villagers were distressed without rain. Deeply moved by their plight, he sang (आनंदामृत वर्षिणि) 'Anandaamruta Varshini' in Amrutavarshini raga and created incessant rainfall. It is said that, later, on the request of the King of Ettiyapura, he stopped the rain by singing

(स्तंभय स्तंभय) 'Stambaya Stambaya' composition. This shows that he has unique control over the 'Nature'.

In another incident, it is said that when he went for a temple at Kivalur and found that the temple was closed. Then he immediately sang (अक्षय लिंग विभो) 'Akshaya Linga Vibho' in Shankarabharana raga and the doors of the temple opened on its own. The above instances will throw a light on how he was inclined to worship of 'Nature' and has gained mastery over 'Nisarga' or 'Prakruti' through 'Nadopasana'.

If we analyse his compositions, it is very clear and evident that Sri Muttuswami Dikshithar was an ardent believer of staunch 'Nadopasana' theory and firmly opined that by practicing music with devotion, the 'Abhimani Devathas' representing the 'Nature', viz., Shiva, Parvathi, Ganapathi, Skanda, Naarayana, Krishna, Lakshmi-Saraswathi, Ambika, etc., would be fascinated and consent to the devotee, since the mystic sound 'Pranava Nada' is the essence of Veda and basic for music. His compositions are filled with the qualities of devotion, detachment, rituals of homa-japa which takes one to the deep meditation and trance or self-absorption.

For all the above reasons, undoubtedly and emphatically it may be stated that Sri Muttuswami Dikshithar was worshipper of 'Nature' and by the mystic powers possessed, he has sound knowledge of all subtle micro and macro enigmas that are manifested in the 'Nature' and as a Vaggeyakara he engrossed absolute oneness with the powers of 'Nature' and expressed them in his own unique style.

### His life and journey in the world of music:

Born on 24<sup>th</sup> March 1775 at Tiruvarur, as first son of Sri Ramaswami Dikshitar and Smt. Subbamma, a Vadama Brahmin family, belonging to Kashyapa gotra and Apastambha sootra. Got basic education in vedas, music and Sanskrit literature from his father and gradually became well versed in Poetry (Kavya), Grammar (Vyakarana), Playright (Nataka), Science of Rehtorics (Alankara), methods of conducting rituals and incantation of hymns (Tantra-Matra) etc., and got married at the age of 18 and family migrated to 'Manali' (मणालि). Seeing his disinterest in material life, to enthruse him another marriage was performed to him by elders. Later, he met Chidambara Yogi, got baptized and mastery over spell after 5 years of stoic perserverance and penance and also learnt Northern style of music and returned to South. Once at Tiruttani, he was blessed by Lord Shanmukha which

commenced his journey in music and its compositions as Vaggeyakara.

#### **Other specialities in his compositions:**

Most of his kritis are in Sanskrit as he has erudition over Sanskrit. In most of his kritis, he has explained in detail the influence of principle of deity over respective demi-god, rituals and its methods by using principle mantras, about nine chakras, about Adhivatas, and its mysticism etc., and the practitioner of these will derive divine knowledge on his own experience.

Blending the name of the raga in his compositions reveals his genius master work. For example in (सरस्वति छायातरंगिणि) 'Saraswati Chayatarangini' the

name of the 'Chayatarangini' raga, in (वेगवाहिनि आश्रये) 'Vegavahini Ashraye' the name of 'Vegavahini' raga, in (पंचभूत किराणावली) 'Panchabhoota Kiranavalim' the name of 'Kiranavalim', etc.,. Also in his compositions one can find the usage of (गोपुच्छयति) 'Gopucchayati' and (श्रोत्रोवाहयति) 'Shroetrovahayati' forms and rare ragas.

This 'Nada Brahma' and 'Nada Jyoti' who worshipped the 'Nature' by music, left this world on 21<sup>st</sup> October 1835 at Ettiyapura, at the age of 60, while he was singing one of his kriti (मीनलो चनी पाशमोचनि) 'Meenalochani Pashamochani' and went to the path of eternity through the penance of music.

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## **RK Srikantan Trust awards Prof.TN Krishnan**

Vidwan RK Srikantan Trust celebrated the 21st Annual Sankranti Music Festival, commemorating the 96th birth anniversary of Padmabhushana Sangeetha Kalanidhi Vidwan Dr. RK Srikantan.

The function was inaugurated by Hon'ble Justice Dr. N Kumar in the holy presence of Sri Sri Yadugiri Yati-raja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar and Sri Sri Vidyabhinava Shankara Bharathi Maha Swamiji.

The award "SRIKANTA SHANKARA" was conferred to Padmabhushana Sangeetha Kalanidhi Prof. T N Krishnan and Ganakala Bhushana Vidwan TAS Mani. And the award "SHAANKARAADVAITA TAT-VAGNA" was conferred to Vedabrahma Sri Gangadhara Shastri.





## **SRLKM awarded 'Karnataka Kalashree'**

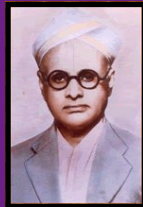
Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira Honorary Secretary Shri. GV Krishnaprasad received the 'Karnataka Kalashree' award from Ubhaya Gaana Vidhushi Smt. Shyamala G Bhave, on 19th December 2015.

Karnataka Sangeetha Nrithya Academy chose SRLKM in the institution category for its uninterrupted service to the cause of music for over 60 yrs and propagating music leaps and bounds.



*Shri. GV Krishnaprasad receiving the Karnataka Kalashree award from Vidhushi Shyamala G Bhave*





SRLKM awards  
Sanjay  
Subrahmanyam  
with  
'Sangeetha  
Vedantha Dhureena'

