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# Lalitha Kala Tharangini

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## **“Raga Laya Prabha” to Amrutha Venkatesh and Ashwin Anand**

Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira awarded “Raga Laya Prabha” to Vocalist Amrutha Venkatesh and Vainika “Ashwin Anand” on 15th June 2014. This award is to commemorate the memory of the Founder-Director, Karnataka Kalashree GV Ranganayakamma and her sister, Founder-Patron and Veena artiste Dr. GV Vijayalakshmi. The award carries a cash prize of rupees Twenty Five Thousand and a citation. Senior Vocalist Vidwan Malladi Suribabu presented the award in front of a large gathering.

The award function was followed by a rare concert of Vidwan Malladi Suribabu, Malladi Sreeramprasad, Malladi Ravikumar accompanied by Vidwan S Varadarajan on violin, Vidwan Mannargudi Eswaran on Mridangam and Paniraj on Ghatam.



## July 2014

Dear Readers,

“Kalavantha 2014” organised by the consortium of ten reputed music institutions (Karnataka Fine Arts Council-KFAC), brought to light the future torchbearers of Karnatak music. The best of the youth selected from across the country, performed for a week in what could be termed as the one and only one of its type. Needless to say, the concept and the actual implementation was a roaring success. While KFAC awarded the best of the talent, the actual winner was KARNATAK MUSIC. Hopefully, KFAC will harvest this success and significantly serve music and its fraternity in the days to come.

Continuing our march towards Saint Thyagaraja's Kshetra kritis, we take you to “Srirangam” this time. Srirangam set of pancharatna kritis occupy a special place among Thyagaraja kshetra kritis. Incidentally river Cauvery is the common link between Srirangam and Thiruvaiyaru where the saint composed the ghana raga pancharatna.

Several historical references point to the fact that all creation is made up of five elements space, air, fire, water and earth. There are five temples dedicated to lord Shiva, each one representing one of the five forms. Muthuswamy Dikshitar has dedicated kritis on each of these deities and the article “Panchalinga Stala Kritis” is an eye opener.

I am sure the evolution of music recording in India by Shri. Vikram Sampath will be interesting to our readers.

Those who attended the 12 year old Ramana's Veena concert were thrilled with his performance. I urge those who missed to visit [live.shaale.com](http://live.shaale.com). Don't miss the review of the said concert in this issue.

Anand S

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**Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira** 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.

**Lalitha Kala Tarangini** 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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# Srirangam Pancharatna Kritis of Sadguru Tyagaraja

Vidushi Bharathi Ramasubban

*vyAsonaigamacarcayA mrdugirAvalmlkajanmAmuniH I*

*vairagyeSuka eva bhaktiviShaye prahlAdaiva svayam II*

Walajahpet Venkataramana Bhagavata, a foremost disciple of Sadguru Tyagaraja Swami, extols his Guru's virtues in this verse. He says his Guru is Vedavyasa incarnate in discussions about the Vedas, Valmiki in his soft speech, Sukadeva in his steadfast dispassion and Prahlada, the greatest *Vishnubhakta*, in his undeterred devotion

Sadguru Tyagaraja has immersed us all in the ocean of music and *Ramabhakti* with his vast array of kritis. Most of us are aware of his famous five gems, the Ghana Raga Pancharatnas. But he has also composed 4 other sets of pancharatnas on the deities of Lalgudi, Srirangam, Kovur and Tiruvottriyur. It is still not entirely clear if these were indeed composed in sets of 5 or at various periods of his life and then compiled for convenience.

The vaggeyakara, sometime in the 1830s, undertook a pilgrimage that spanned from Tirupati to Srirangam/Lalgudi via Madras, Tiruvottriyur and Kovur. Here we shall take a look at his kritis on the presiding deity of *bhuloka vaikuntha* or Sriranga kshetra. This kshetra, with its idyllic setting in the midst of the akhanda Kaveri, fertile green banks and the awe inspiring and massive Ranganatha or Namperumal temple, has evoked many a grand kriti out of several composers (Purandara Dasa's *Ille vaikuntha* and Muttusvami Dikshitar's *Ranganayakam* in Nayaki, to name a few). The 5 kritis composed here are: *cutamu rare* (arabhi), *rajuvedale cutamu rare* (todi), *vinarada na manavi* (devagandhari), *karuna judamaiya* (saranga) and the very popular *o rangasayi* (kambhoji).

It is interesting to note that in several kritis, the saint identifies himself with Vibhishana and Sugriva. This maybe because they all experienced agony at the hands of their respective brothers and found solace and salvation only at the feet of Lord Rama. Tyagaraja Swami's brother Japyesa was materialistic and craved the glory and appreciation of the Tanjore Court. He was everything that his illustrious brother was not. He wanted his brother to sing in praise of the King and win his favour. But Tyagaraja Swami refused to compose about anyone other than his Lord.



The idol of Lord Ranganatha in Srirangam has a special connection to Vibhishana and Sri Tyagaraja draws attention to the *sthalapurana* in the kriti, *Cutamu rare* (Arabhi). In this song he refers to Ranganatha as one

worshipped by Sitapati, Rama (*Sitapati pujadata*). Legend has it that, after the war at Lanka, Vibhishana comes to Ayodhya with Sri Rama for the *pattabhisheka* (coronation) and when it is time for him to return to Lanka, he asks Sri Rama for the idol of Ranganatha which has been worshipped by the Ikshvaku (solar dynasty) kings for several generations. Rama gladly agrees. But the other gods, led by Indra, are uneasy with the idea of this idol being instated in Lanka, the capital city of rakshasas. So they send Lord Ganesha to trick Vibhishana into leaving the idol at the pristine spot of Srirangam, ensconced between two streams of the holy river Kaveri.

The Srirangam pancharatnam is testament to the fact that the saint was familiar with the poetry of the Azhwars. In the Arabhi kriti he invites all young damsels to come along and have a glimpse of Lord Ranganatha. This scenario is very similar to that of Sri Andal in some of her pasurams, in which she

wakes all her young *sakhis* (friends) to go see the Lord. This is also in keeping with the primary tenet of the Bhakti tradition in which all devotees are females and the Lord (*Paramapurusha*) is the only male principal. So Sri Tyagaraja possibly assumes himself to be a *gopika* or *nayika* and summons his other *sakhis* to have darshan of Sri Ranganatha. In fact, he addresses the Lord as *Paramapurusha* in the Saranga kriti, *karuna judamaiya*.

As someone who had made his home in Tiruvaiyyaru (the land of 5 rivers, 5 tributaries of the Kaveri), Sadguru Tyagaraja was mesmerized and well aware of the grandeur of this holy river. Therefore he draws attention to the mother Kaveri in several of his compositions, such as *muripemu galige* in Mukhari (*iduleni malayamarutamuce **gudina kaveri tatamandu***). In the Srirangam pancharatna set, he addresses to the Kaveri in 3 kritis (Devagandhari, Todi and Saranga). In both, *vinarada na manavi* and *karuna judamaiya*, he addresses Sri Ranganatha as Kaveri Ranga, almost as if the Lord draws His identity from the river!

The story goes that Sri Tyagaraja composed songs on the Lord of Rangapuri and sang them as he

came on a procession along the Chitraveethi. The saint was then summoned for a blissful darshan of Sri Ranganatha inside the *garbhagrha* (sanctum sanctorum). In the Todi kriti, *rajuvedale*, he describes the divine form of the Lord, covered in precious ornaments, coming down the Chitraveethi, along the banks of the Kaveri.



When the saint visited the *garbhagrha* of the temple, the Lord was reposed on Ananta Adi Sesha and completely bedecked in garlands of pearls. This is known as the *mutthangi sevai*. The grand kambhoji kriti, *o rangasayi*, is said to have been inspired by this magnificent sight (*mutyalasarula yuramunuganavacciti*). In this kriti he reprimands The Lord saying, 'if you, with Mahalakshmi by your side, think this is vaikuntha on earth and forget us, what is to become of us?'

It is fascinating to observe the choice of appropriate words that conjure images of the kshetra before our eyes. Moreover, these are set in apt ragas that invoke the exact emotions that allow us to connect with the vaggeyakara. This combination of sadbhakti and satsangita in this Nadopasaka's kritis is what makes them stand the test of time.

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SRLKM congratulates the following “Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar” awardees instituted by the Sangeeth Natak Akademi, New Delhi.

Gayatri Girish - Karnatak Vocal  
 Ranjani and Gayatri Balasubramanian - Karnatak Vocal  
 Vishaka Hari - Traditional Music (Tamilnadu)  
 BC Manjunath - Karnatak Instrumental (Mrudangam)  
 N Guruprasad - Karnatak Instrumental (Ghatam)  
 Anirudh Athreya - Karnatak Instrumental (Kanjira)

*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 utilize the valuable opportunity to enjoy classical music. These donations carry exemption as per 80G of IT Act, 1961.*

## Kalavantha 2014 - review

*Vidushi's Shakuntala Murthy & Sukanya Narayana*



An innovative endeavour by a group of eminent connoisseurs of music has resulted in the birth of Karnataka Fine Arts Council (KFAC) in Bangalore. There are as many cultural organisations as there are extensions in our ever expanding Bruhat Bengaluru which cater to the needs of the local residents in the field of fine arts and culture. But this is the first time ten such leading and prestigious organisations have come together under a single banner and promise to make KFAC's Kalavanta a national level cultural extravaganza. This eight-day festival (May 18-May 25) held at The Bangalore Gayana Samaja, was inaugurated by Dr. N. S. Krishnamurthy, retired Director of All India Radio, Vidwan Malladi Suribabu and other veteran Musicians who graced the occasion.

Dr. N.S Krishnamurthy was very enthusiastic about this festival and said that the artists, many of whom are working professionals, have great passion towards the art and that KFAC should be lauded for encouraging young talent.

Music lovers can eagerly await the Kalavanta Music Festival every year. Congratulations to KFAC! Their initiative is definitely worth emulating by others. Let many more federations emerge. Our young talents really deserve more encouragement. The invitation by the KFAC to the young artistes to participate in the said festival was a golden opportunity and they utilised it fully and gave their best. The highly appreciative audience turnout, notwithstanding the programs being webcast live, was very encouraging. Two concerts were scheduled everyday each lasting 1.5 hours.

The judges for the concerts were Vidwan Malladi Suribabu, Mridangist Vidwan A.V Anand, N.S Krishnamurthy, reted. Director of AIR, and Vidushi M.S Sheela, all veterans in the field of Karnatak Music. The Judges were all praise for the initiative

taken by the KFAC and gave encouraging words of advice to the performing young artistes.

Kum. Apoorva Krishna a disciple of Smt Lalgudi Srimathi Brahmanandam and Smt. Anuradha Sridhar, received the Kalavanta 2014 award for her excellent violin solo concert. Sri.Vittal Rangan, a student of Vidushi Smt.A Kanyakumari received the best accompanying Violinist Award, while Sri. N.C Bharadwaj, disciple of Mridangam Maestro Vidwan Umayalapuram K. Sivaraman, received the best accompanying Mridangist award.

Curtains came down at the Bangalore Gayana Samaja on Sunday, the 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2014 as the National Youth Festival in Karnatak Music "Kalavanta 2014" concluded with a grand finale concert by youth Icon Vidwan Abhishek Raghuram who was accompanied by HK Venkatram and Arjun Kumar.

The festival saw outstanding young performers some of them are still studying while others are highly qualified and have started their careers. They all have one thing in common i.e. passion for Karnatak Music, that they are pursuing with devotion and dedication. Trained by great musicians these young stars are already shining like diamond in the horizon of Karnatak music. Brief review of the 14 concerts follows;

### **18<sup>th</sup> May, 2014**

*1) Aishwarya Vidya Raghunath-Vocal, Adithi Krishnaprakash-Violin, Akshay Anand-Mridangam*

The KFAC's week long festival of Kalavanta 2014 commenced with the concert by Kum. Aishwarya Vidya Raghunath. She started her spirited performance with a Varna in Shahana followed by Ikanaina in Raga Pushpalathika with a brief ragalapana, neraval and swara prastara. After Seshchalanayakam in Varali, she chose Begade for a detailed exposition followed by Kriti Nadopasana. Adithi gave a good support on the violin and Thani avarthana by Akshay Anand, disciple of Mridanga

Vid. KS Kalidas was greatly appreciated by the knowledgeable audience. Aishwarya concluded her concert with a Padam in Huseni and Purandaradasa's Devaranama Kelano Hari in Raga Suruti.

2) *Kartik Narayan-Vocal, Dileep K.J-Violin, Vineet KH-Mridanga*

Young Kartik Narayan, a disciple of Rajkumar Bharathi, has a pleasing voice. He started with Saveri Varna 'Sarasuda' followed by Purandaradasa's Sathatha Gananatha in Mohana. Saint Tyagaraja's Kriti Bagayanayya had a superb rendition of Raga Chandrajyothi and interesting kalpana swaras. Both Dileep on the violin and Vineeth on the Mridanga gave excellent support. After Sarasijanabhasodari in Naga Gandhari, Kartik took up Shankarabharanam for the main piece Sarojadalanetri of Sri Shyama Sastry. Thani avarthana by Vineeth, a disciple of Patri Satish Kumar was very well received. The concert ended with a delectable Tillana in Raga Sindhubhairavi.

### **19<sup>th</sup> May, 2014**

1) Apoorva Krishna-Violin, N.C. Bharadwaj-Mridanga (both won awards for their performance)

Kum. Apoorva received the First Kalavanta 2014 award, for the Best Main Artist for her solo violin performance and Sri. N.C. Bharadwaj who accompanied her on the Mridanga received the best Mridanga accompaniment award. Together they presented a very scholarly and enjoyable performance.

Apoorva began her solo violin concert with Charukeshi Varnam of Violin Maestro Lalgudi Jayaraman. A flashy glimpse of Charukeshi raga before opening the Varna itself, revealed her potential and her flawless bowing and fingering technique. She strictly adhered to the tradition while playing both the ragas and kritis in the correct kaalapramana, bringing out the ragabhava and clarity of the sahitya in the instrument. Her Neraval and swaras were crisp and neat. She played Ninnu cheppa kaarana in Mandari Raga, Ksheera sagara shayana in Devagandhari and a quick Neekela in Devamanohari before a detailed Bilahari raga for Sri Balasubramanya of

Muthuswamy Dikshitar. Young N.C. Bharadwaj, was excellent both while following kritis and playing Thani avarthana. Apoorva concluded her concert with Karnaranjani Thillana of Lalgudi Jayaraman which elicited a great round of applause.

2) *N J Nandini-Vocal, R.Rahul-Violin, Sumesh Narayan-Mridanga*

Kum. NJ Nandini of Thiruvananthapuram (granddaughter of Vechur Harihara Subramanya Iyer and disciple of Parassala Ponnammal), with her excellent well trained voice began her scholarly concert with Thygaraja's Kriti Evarani in Devamrithavarshini, a janya of Kharaharapriya with panchama varjya in Arohana and vakra prayoga Ni Dha Ni Sa. Another Vilamba kala Kriti in Mayamalavagoula "Merusamana" with Neraval and brisk Swaras, she proved her control over laya and mastery over the technique of swarakalpana rendering. She next presented Swati Tirunal's Padavarnam "Suma Sayaka" in Vilamba Roopaka Tala, which has ragamalika Ethugade swaras. Sharavanabhava in Pashupathipriya raga of Muthaiah Bhagavathar was a fast number. Her detailed Poorvikalyani Raga was followed by Ninnuvina of Sri Shyama Sastry in Mishra chapu tala. Neraval and Swaras were really enjoyable. Rahul (disciple of Vidwan M Chandrasekaran) on the Violin and Sumesh Narayan (disciple of Vidwan Bhaktavatsalam) on the Mridanga gave able support. Sagara shayana Vibho in Bageshri, Panimathi in Ahiri and Tillana in raga Tillong were concluding pieces.

### **20<sup>th</sup> May, 2014**

1) *Vivek Sadashivam-Vocal, Adithya M.P-Violin, Trichy Arvind-Mridanga*

Sami Ninne in Sree Raga gave a good start to Vivek's Concert. He continued with Ekadantam of Muthuswamy Dikshitar in Khanda Chapu Tala and Sri. Thyagaraja's Vadera in Pantuvarali with raga and swara. Samana Rahithe in Raga Saranga Tarangini, a fine composition of GNB was very well rendered and well received. His rendering of Thodi which was the main attraction of the concert, with a Lalgudi Pancharatna Kriti Gathi Neevani (Saint Thyagaraja's composition) was very scholarly

rendered with a mature Neraval and Kalpana Swaras. Thani avarthana by Arvind was excellent. Adithya gave a very good support on the Violin. He concluded his concert with Kandena Govindana in Mishra Maand.

2) *Sriranjani Santhagopalan-Vocal, Rajiv M-Violin, Arjun Ganesh-Mrindanga*

Kum. Sriranjani daughter and disciple of Vidwan Neyveli Santhanagopalan gave a highly energetic and delectable performance. After the Saveri Varna, she rendered a brilliant Saraswathi Manohari Raga for the Thyagaraja's composition Enthavedukondhu Raghava. She enhanced the beauty of the Kriti by swaras with excellent ease and creativity. After a pleasing Hemavathi Raga she rendered Sri Kanthimathim of Muthuswamy Dikshitar. Paridanamicchithe in Bilahari was rendered in a very fast tempo which did not match with the spirit of the kriti. Dhanyasi was dealt with in an elaborate manner bringing out the ragabhava in all its hues. Meenalochana of Sri. Shyama Sastry was an excellent choice and she did full justice to the kriti by adding perfect Neraval and Kalpana Swara Patterns. At such a young age, she has attained the perfection of a great performer. She was ably supported on the Violin by Rajiv M (disciple of Vidushi Kanyakumari) and on the Mridanga by Arjun Ganesh (disciple of Pungulam Sri Sabesha Iyer and Pungulam Sri Subramanyam).

## **21<sup>st</sup> May, 2014**

1) *M.B.Ramya-Veena, Vinod Shyam-Mrindanga*

Kum. Ramya, a disciple of Vid. Padmavathy, started with a Varnam in Raga Vasantha followed by Purandaradasa's Jaya jaya in Raga Nata. After a brief Pantuvarali Raga, she presented Appa rama bhakti with neat Neraval and Swaras. Muthuswamy Dikshitar's Sree Lakshmi Varaham in Abhogi preceded the main Shankarabharanam Raga Alapana. Her technique of playing Veena was sounding as good as vocal. The Kriti Enduku peddala of Thyagaraja was good with Neraval and Swaras. Vinod Shyam, son and disciple of Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma gave an excellent support to the Veena which requires very soft strokes. His Thani was very well appreciated by the audience.

Ramya concluded the concert with a Tillana in Kamach and Thiruppugal.

2) *Vinay Sharva-Vocal, Kartik- Violin, BS Prashanth-Mrindanga*

Vinay Sharva, a disciple of Vid. S.Shankar and Vid. Nedanuri Krishnamurthy, opened the concert with a Saveri Varna. A brief Raga of Begada was a prelude to Muthuswamy Dikshitar Vallabha Nayakasya. A majestic kriti Brovavamma in Manji Raga of Sri. Shyama Sastry was rendered in a mature manner. Devagandhari Kriti of Saint Thyagaraja Naamoralagimpa followed this before he took up a detailed rendering of Raga Thodi for the Kriti Kaddanuvuriki. He presented a wonderful elaboration on the Neraval along with profound set of swaras. Kartik, son of well known Violinist Mysore Nagaraj, on the Violin proved his mettle by providing excellent accompaniment and his rendering of Thodi Raga was very good. BS Prashanth, a disciple of Patri Satish Kumar, gave very good support on the Mrindanga.

## **22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2014**

1) *Herambha & Hemantha-Flute, Dinesh Kumar-Violin, Sunil Subramanya-Mrindanga*

Twin wonder, Hemantha and Herambha gave a melodious flute recital starting with Varna Sarasuda in Saveri. The Ethugade Swaras were rendered in two speeds of Thrishra Gathi also. Their tonal purity and their demonstration of different gamakas while playing even fast phrases proved beyond doubt, their mastery over their instruments. Rama nee pai in Kedara was followed by a nice Poorvikalyani raga alapana for the kriti Gnanamosagarada. Dinesh Kumar's rendering of Raga and swara kalpana on the violin made the concert more enjoyable. Shankarabharana was the highlight of the concert. They chose the Kriti Enduku peddala of Saint Thyagaraja in Adi Tala Vilamba Kala. With very good manodharma, fine blowing technique and a good grip over the laya intricacies, the young artistes are sure to scale new heights in the field of music. The audience thoroughly enjoyed the concert and also the thani played by Sunil Subramanya (disciple of Arjun Kumar).

Purandhara Dasa's Jagadoddarana was the concluding piece.

2) *Shradda Mohan-Vocal, Sindhu Suchetan- Violin, Kishore R-Mridanga*

Shradda opened her concert with a Mandari Varna Vanajaksha. Sogasuga mridanga Talamu in Sriranjani Raga had a neat round of Kalpana Swaras with excellent support from Sindhu on the Violin. The next was Meenalochana of Sri. Shyama Sastry in Dhanyasi with Neraval and Swara. Shankarabharana was the main raga and the Kriti Shankaracharyam was full of emotional appeal. after a great Thani by R. Kishore, Shradda concluded her concert with a Tamil song in Sindhu Bhairavi on Lord Muruga.

### **23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2014.**

1) *Ashwathanarayana-Vocal, Vittal Rangan-Violin, Akshay Ram-Mridanga*

Ashwathanarayana, a disciple of Vid. late K.V Narayana Swamy is presently under the tutelage of Vid. Padma Narayanaswamy. He chose Chalamela Varna in Natakuranji raga. His voice and style of singing had the stamp of veteran musician K.V.N. The Kritis Nadasudarasam in Aarabhi, Devadeva Jagadeeshwara in Poorvi Kalyani and Sarasija Nabha sodari in Naga Gandhari were presented neatly. Despite a sore throat he did full justice to the raga Kharaharapriya and presented Papanasam Sivan's Kriti Srinivasa Tava Charanam in all its glory. Vittal Rangan, an accomplished disciple of Vid. A Kanyakumari who provided excellent accompaniment on Violin was chosen for the Kalavanta 2014 award for the best violin accompaniment. Akshay Ram, a disciple of Sri. Umayalapuram Sivaraman, provided excellent support on Mridanga. He concluded the concert with a Thiruppavai in Raga Behag.

2) *Manda Prathyusha Shruthi Ravali-Vocal, S.N.Smitha-Violin, B.S.Raghavan-Mridanga*

Shruthi Ravali of Vizag trained by her mother Vid. Sudha Rani, began her concert with a composition of Swathi Tirunal in Vakulabharanam. She continued with Vasudevacharya's famous kriti Ra Ra Rajeevalochana and Sri. Thyagaraja's Sogasu juda tharama in Kannada goulda. She rendered Niroshtha raga for the kriti Raja Rajaaradheethe (composed

by Muthiah Bhagavathar) consisting of only 4 vikriti swaras Ri Ga Dha and Ni and panchama varjya. It was a good attempt by her as singing such ragas is not easy like walking on a firm ground, but like a tight rope walk in the air, that requires lot of balancing. The raga does not give any scope for detailed exposition. So, the different phrases tend to get repeated. Smitha's violin was commendable. Mamava Meenakshi in Varali was chosen for the detailed exposition. B.S Raghavan, a disciple of Patri Sathish Kumar, gave good support for the entire concert and also presented a fine Thani in Mishra Chapu Tala. A Javali in Kapi raga was the concluding piece.

### **24<sup>th</sup> May, 2014**

1) *Soumya Sridhar-Vocal, Sangeetha-Violin, Adamya-Mridanga*

Sowmya Sridhar from Hyderabad started with Saint Thyagaraja's Kriti Sri Raghukula in Hamsadhwani. Endowed with a very sweet voice, she sang Maaravairi ramani in Nasika bhushani Raga a nice composition of Saint Thyagaraja. After Emaninne in Mukhari, a composition of Sri. Subbaraya Sastry in Vilamba kala, a quick Nee Paadame Gathi of GNB in Nalinakanthi followed. Purandaradasa's Keertane Palisemma in Sriranjani was enjoyable. For the detailed raga Shubhapanthuvrali was chosen. The Kriti Ennal Oorake a composition of Saint Thyagaraja in Mishra Chapu Tala with Neraval and Swaras was very neatly presented. Sangeetha, a disciple of H.K Narasimha Murthy and Adamya, a disciple of Umayalapuram Sivaraman, provided good support on the Violin and Mridanga respectively. The concert concluded with Purandaradasa's Keertane Maanaheenarige in raga Sahana.

2) *Priyanka Prakash-Vocal, Pappu Gnanadev-Vocal, L. Subramanyam-Mridanga*

The concluding concert of Kalavanta 2014 was by Priyanka Prakash, a student of Kala Acharya Smt. Neela Ramagopal. She started with Kalyani Varna Vanajakshi followed by Aragimpave in Todi a composition of Saint Thyagaraja. She sang Muthuswamy Dikshitar's Veena bheri in raga Aabheri with shuddha daivata as per the old school of thought. She elaborately sang Shanmukhapriya

raga for the Kriti Vaddane vaaru. Pappu Gnanadev's violin performance was excellent. She also sang in detail the raga Kedara goulda for the Kriti Saragunapalimpa with neraval and swaras. Thani by L. Subramanyam, a disciple of Vidwan KS Kalidas was very good. She concluded with a fine Devaranama of Kanakadasa in Bageshri Raga.

To conclude, the entire music programme conducted by KFAC was a resounding success,

benefiting both the artistes and the audience. While this is first of its kind, Organisers will do well to retrospect and raise the standard higher next time around. Quite a few varnas, kritis were a repetition that could have been easily avoided.

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## **Pazhani Shri Subramaniya Pillai**

*The Pole star of Laya Universe*

*Many artistes choose art to add to their glory.*

*Only through a very few artistes ART chooses to express its own glory.*

*Pazhani Subramaniya Pillai is one such rare expression of ART.*

**Friday, 4th July 2014, 6 pm**

(Indian Institute of World Culture, BP Wadia Raod, Basavanagudi, Bangalore)



DVD Titled Pazhani Shri Subramaniya Pillai : Pole star of laya Universe will be released on 4th July at Indian Institute of World Culture. The DVD will also be screened as part of the release. The DVD analyses the mastery of the Mridangam legend over laya. It unfurls the story through his thani avarthanam as well as performance as accompaniment for masters like GNB, Ariyakudi, Madurai Mani Iyer, Semmangudi etc. His own disciples like Vid. Trichy Sankaran, Vid. KS Kalidas, grand disciples, veteran musicians and scholars like Vid. Vedavalli, Vid. BM Sundaram etc. narrate with awe the sublime beauty and inimitable majesty of this master craftsman.

Shri. KS Kalidas, direct disciple of the legend is providing this DVD as a samarpanam to his puja guru with humility and devotion. A retired engineer from Indian Railway Services Shri. KS Kalidas is on a mission to spread the glorious bhani of his guru and the legend Palani.

## **Awards and Recognitions**

Over the years, several artistes and rasikas have instituted endowments with “**Sri Krishna Gana Sabha**”, **Chennai** for propagating and encouraging young talent in fine arts. Following artistes from Bangalore are the noteworthy winners for excellence during 58th Gokulashtami Sangeetha Utsavam held during 2013 (Awards announced recently).

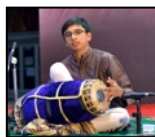
### **Priyanka C Prakash**

Sri. DK Jayaraman award for Vocal



### **Akshay Anand**

Sri. Gopalachari's Endowment award for Mridanga



### **Sunad Aanoor**

Sri TA Harihara Sharma Endowment award for Kanjari



# Child talent Ramana's scintillating Veena performance

Vidushi Amrutha Venkatesh



A packed house at SRLKM witnessed a wonderful Veena concert by Sri Ramana Balachandra. It was hard to imagine that this nice a Naada can

emanate from a boy so young. His sweet announcements of every composition and even the ragas that he would be playing in the Ragamalika of the Pallavi were very endearing.

He seems to follow the Gayaki style of Veena playing..

He started with the Kaanada Ata Thala Varnam Neranammithi and followed with Mutthuswamy Dikshitar Ganapati Kriti "Siddhivinayakam" in Chamaram (announced as Shanmukhapriya). He played Kalpana Swaras at "Prasiddha Gana Nayakam". This followed with a Kriti of Saint Tyagaraja, "Kripa Joochutaku" in Chayatarangini". A short Anandabhairavi Alapana was followed by Sri. Syama Shastri's kriti "O Jagadamba". Anandamrithakarshini in Amrutavarshini came as a refreshing filler. A majestic Thodi, a Raga that is normally not elaborated on the Veena for fear of the innumerable gamakas was handled by Ramana

with great ease and poise ."Dasharathe", a Tyagaraja Kriti was the sub-main for the evening. After a brisk Anupamagunabudhi Ramana chose Keeravani for the Raga Thana and Pallavi. A good mix of melodious, light and heavy Ragas like Madhuvanthi, Begada, Chandrakauns, Kedaragowla and Saranga were presented in the Thana And swaras He also sang the Pallavi which had the lyrics "Govinda Alarmel Mangai Manaala Vaa, Thiruvenkata naatha" set to Khanda Jati Triputa Thala. Chetan Murthy on the Mridanga was very encouraging of Ramana's playing and contributed his mite to the success of the concert.

After a very encouraging speech by Sri G.V Krishnaprasad where he urged all the Sabhas to take notice of a prodigious talent like this, Ramana concluded his concert with Baro Krishnayya and Sri Lalgudi Jayaraman's Yamuna Kalyani Tillana.

The full house at the venue and the number of people watching the webcast of the concert on live.shaale.com bore testimony to the fact that a good Veena concert does have many takers. Those of you who missed it please make sure you watch the concert at <http://new.livestream.com/shaalelive/06apr2014>

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## CHANGING SOUNDSCAPES History and evolution of audio Recording in india

### Credits

Conceived by **R.T. Chari**

Research, Script & Narration by **Vikram Sampath**

Photos Courtesy **Vikram Sampath & Kushal Gopalka**

Sponsored by **TAG Corporation**

Executed by **Compuprint**

**1857** : The earliest known device for recording sound was the Phonograph. For the first time, human beings were able to see 'sound pictures' of one's voice. These were Mechanical recording and reproduction techniques.



**1877** : The 'Wizard of Menlo Park', American inventor **Thomas Alva Edison** made the first successful experimentation of recording sound on his device called the **Phonograph**. On



a tin sheet wrapped over a rotating drum, sound waves were engraved with a stylus attached to a vibrating diaphragm. There were no microphones and amplifiers as this was the 'Acoustic era' of recording. The speaker had to yell into a recording horn and channelize all the sound waves onto the diaphragm which then vibrated the stylus and etched patterns on the tin sheet. To hear the sound back, the stylus was passed over the cylinder which would rotate at a uniform speed (60 RPM). Quality of the sound, lifetime of the recording and production of multiple copies was not possible with this Tin-Foil Phonograph.



Recording on Phonograph

Alexander Graham Bell decided to enhance Edison's discovery and filled wax on the spiral groove on the rotating

drum. This created the **Wax Cylinders** which yielded much better performance.

Wax Cylinders became very popular in India too starting the 1890s. Swami Vivekananda was recorded at the Mysore Palace by Maharaja Chamaraja Wodeyar. Rabindranath Tagore established a private literary club at his Calcutta home in 1896 where 'Listening to the Phonograph' was an item on the agenda! Pt. Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande captured voices of several musicians across India with the phonograph.

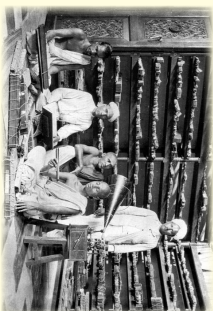


Photo courtesy the Vienna Phonogramarchiv

Felix Exner of the Vienna Phonogramarchiv came to Madras in 1904 – 05 and with the help of the Adyar Library and Theosophical Society recorded several people reciting poems, Sanskrit chants and dialogues.



**1888** : **Emile Berliner**,

a German immigrant in America experimented on Edison's technique and felt that recording on a flat surface by moving the stylus laterally gave better results. This resulted in the first **Gramophone record**



and Berliner thus invented the flat disc format for sound recording. The first trial was a 5 inch diameter made of rubber, later 7 inch diameter Zinc and Shellac records were released as E-Berliner records.

**1898** : Foundation of the Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. (GTL) in London as an official syndicated firm. Arrangements were made for manufacture of gramophones, records and assembly of the machines in Germany. Recording expeditions sent all over the world to record 'native' voices.



**1902** : Frederick William Gaisberg of GTL came to the Indian capital of Calcutta to record local musicians. The celebrated courtesan of the city Miss Gauhar Jean became the first Indian musician and woman to record commercially on the Gramophone. She cut close to 600



William Gaisberg

records in about 10 – 12 languages, including Tamil and Telugu!

Between 1902 and 1908, eight recording expeditions were sent across India taking about 5000 recordings of different artists. First record pressing plant in India came up in 1908 in Calcutta.



Miss Gauhar Jean

**1904** : First South Indian expedition

came to Madras under William Sinkler Darby. The prominent musicians he recorded in Madras during this maiden venture were Dhanakoti Ammal of Kanchipuram, Salem Godavari, Bangalore Nagarathamma, Salem Papa, Salem Arumakkam along with Pudukottai Narayanaswamy Iyer on the violin, Govindasamy Dasu's Band of Madras, Vaidyanatha Iyer of Tanjore and others.

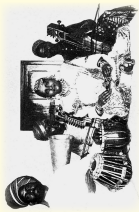


Dhanakoti Ammal Kanchipuram



Bangalore Nagarathamma

In the early decades, women artists were the ones who were more open to recording and gave up the fears and superstitions associated with the new technology and came forward to record willingly.



Janki Bai of Allahabad



Zohra Bai of Agra

Gauhar Jaan, Janki Bai of Allahabad, Allahabad, Zohra Bai of Agra, Binodini Dasi of Calcutta, Bangalore Nagarathamma, Coimbatore Thayi, Bai Sundara Bai of Pune, Mehboob Jaan of Solapur, Malka Jaan of Agra, Mumtaz Jaan of Delhi, S.R Kamalam,



Ustad Abdul Karim Khan

Salem Godavari, Tiruchendoor Shanmukhavadiyu were some of the early female super-stars of India. Ustad Abdul Karim Khan, Pearsa Saheb, Ustad Imdad Khan, Nagaraja Rao (Flute) and



Ustad Imdad Khan



Veene Seshanna

Veene Seshanna were some of the male artists who recorded.

Theatre recordings too were popular all over South India – stars like S.G Kittappa, K B Sundarambal, S V Subbaiah Bhagavathar, The Dramatic troupe of the Maharaja of Mysore under Bidaram Krishnappa and Rachappa became household names.



Bidaram Krishnappa

Gramophone records were all of 3 minutes duration only! Artists had to compress their rendition in this limited span and also announce their names at the end of the recording.



Many rival companies came to India to seek the market here, but the Gramophone Company (known by its label name of 'His Master's Voice' or HMV) emerged the winners.



HMV Logo



**1925 :** Electrical recording replaced Acoustic recording- was introduced in Britain using the Western Electrical Systems. This helped amplify sound patterns to any degree. By the late 1920s and 1930s several artists, aided by the microphone, began to record without any inhibition. The 78 RPM gramophone discs of artists like Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Musiri Subramania Iyer, G N Balasubramanian, M S Subbulakshmi, Chennai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar, M L Vasanthakumari, D K Pattammal and others flooded the



D K Pattammal



M S Subbulakshmi

market. These double sided records contained about 6 minutes of singing time in which the artist would compress their alapana, the kriti and round off with a quick volley of kalpana swarams!

Records also became a medium for social and political transformations- the freedom movement, emancipation of women and downtrodden castes.

Women like Vai Mu Kothainayaki used the gramophone as an effective medium for nationalistic struggle.



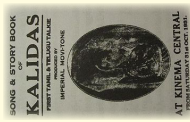
Vai Mu Kothainayaki

Radio Broadcasting, as an offshoot of the Electrical revolution, was pioneered in India by the Madras Presidency Club Radio in 1924. But this wound up in about 3 years. By 1932, the British Government took over the broadcasting and 'All India Radio' was established.



**The 1930s** saw the coming of sound in films.

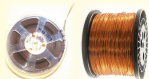
Madras was the prime centre for South Indian cinema. H.M. Reddi's 'Kalidas' in 1931 with T.P Rajalakshmi in the lead saw the advent of 'talking' films. Films and their songs became another major medium for spreading patriotic zeal.



**1931 :** The Gramophone Company Ltd and Columbia Graphophone Company Ltd merged to form Electrical and Musical Industries (EMI). Stereo recording and reproduction was patented.



**B**y late 1940's and early 1950s, Magnetic Wire spools and Tape entertainment devices for making short recordings of family and friends or of excerpts from radio broadcasts. Unlike home-cut phonograph records, which could accommodate only a few minutes of audio, the steel wire could be repeatedly re-recorded and allowed much longer uninterrupted recordings to be made.



## 1952 : EMI launched the first 12-inch Long Playing (LP) and 7½ Inch Extended Play (EP) microgroove Vinyl records. In 1955 Ustad Ali Akbar Khan's recording of Ragas Bhairav and Pilu on either side of an LP disc, each of about 30-40 minutes duration was the first LP to introduce recorded Indian music to the Americans. The renditions were prefaced with Yehudi Menuhin introducing the artist, the ragas played and the rhythmic cycles. Records of Pt. Ravi Shankar, Ustad Ali Akbar Khan and Ustad Vilayat Khan became a rage all over the West and introduced Indian classical music to the audiences there.



*Ustad Ali Akbar Khan's*

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*Pt. Ravi Shankar*



*S Balachander*

S Balachander along with his group of musicians Umayalapuram Sivaraman, Vellore Ramabhadran and N. Ramani formed the 'Sangeetha Madras' troupe that toured the West to introduce them to Carnatic music in 1962. Some of their concerts were recorded on HMV and Columbia Labels in the USA. Balachander was not only the earliest Carnatic musician to record on a Long Playing disc but was credited with the maximum number of LP's cut by any musician in his time.



*MADURAI MANI AIYAR*



*Ustad Ali Akbar Khan*



## 1958: EMI launched its first stereo LP.

**1960 – 70 :** The advancement of science un-'spooled' the untapped potential in the production, preservation and recording of popular music. With artists recording prolifically and with no inhibitions, music lovers had a wide choice. The western touch of Elvis Presley or The Beatles and others was evident; whether it was for love songs or the quintessential cabaret in the movie. In 1963, six microphones as opposed to a maximum of three were used in a single song recording for the first time in India. The use of western harmony and percussion instruments, orchestration and musical 'arrangement' in the Indian song now became a permanent feature in the age of 'Technicolour' films. Lata Mangeshkar and M. S. Subbulakshmi sang into the hearts of billions of music lovers world-wide. Emphasis on the projection of the voice and enunciation of words became the catchword. Ghazals under doyens like Begum Akhtar and Talat Mahmood became a pleasant addition for many!



*M. S. Subbulakshmi*



Small record players and portable radios made musical entertainment more accessible to people.



## 1966 : EMI released its first pre-recorded Cassettes.



The seventies rocked with 'jazzy' experimentation. Multiple microphones, synthesized sounds and heavy western musical influences gave 70 mm stereophonic strokes to the music of this hip generation. The mantra was obvious – just sing your blues away, Here Rama Here Krishna!



The redundant 78 rpm records were completely replaced by the LPs and EPs. The 'compact cassette' culture became the new craze as one could have a compilation of one's favourite songs on the more affordable tape recorder, an innovation of the spool tape recorder.

**Indian Television entered the entertainment scene for the first time in this period.**



*Lata Mangeshkar*



*Begum Akhtar*

## 1980 – 1990 : Due to the distinctive expansion of the dynamic range of recording equipment, sharper extremes of bandwidth frequencies were experienced. The flexibility provided by the 'dubbing' technology and multiple-track recordings created newer aesthetic and technical opportunities in production of recorded music. Reasonable to heavy expenses on music orchestration and recording were observed. Classical musicians particularly took care of their tonalities in the age of better sound production and aural aesthetics.



observed. Classical musicians particularly took care of their tonalities in the age of better sound production and aural aesthetics.

## 1986 : the first Compact Disc or CD Factory came up in England by EMI. Gramophone, LP and EP Records made way for Compact Discs (CD). The market was also flooded with several hi-fi equipment, audio and video cassette recorders and players & Two-in-One's.



## 1990 – 2000 and onwards : CDs, DVDs, Floppy Discs took over all kinds of reel tapes in the audio and video world. Satellite TV and multiple cable networks changed the whole concept of personal recorded music and its collection. 'Bit' by 'bit', computer aided machines heralded a paradigm shift in recording technology. Digital recording with limitless head room virtually drove the 'byte' less analogue recording and reproduction out of the market. Emphasis on programming of rhythms and keyboard-based "orchestration", synthesized sounds and special effects was evident. New Albums of a variety of fusions were created by India's globally recognized musicians. The advent of Internet and the World Wide Web makes recording, listening and teaching of music today an altogether different experience!



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# Panchalinga Sthala Kritis - Dikshitar's Tribute to Lord Shiva

Vidushi K.Vrinda Acharya

Ever since the beginning of time, the five basic elements or panchabhootas - earth, water, fire, air and ether have been worshipped by man. The entire creation is made of these elements. Without the functions of these elements, this world would never exist. The five elements make up the physical body of man, permeate his consciousness and are responsible for his various functions. These in turn activate the five subtle elements (tanmatras) of smell, taste, form, touch and sound and the five organs of action (karmendriyas).

The five Shiva kshetras situated in South India are sacred centres of pilgrimage of the Hindus. These holy places represent the five primal elements of nature. Lord Shiva himself manifests as these five elements. Ekamreshwara of Kanchipuram represents Prithvi (earth), Jambukeshwara of Tiruvanaikkaval represents Ap (water), Arunachaleshwara of Tiruvannamalai abides as Tejas (fire), Kalahastishwara symbolises Vayu (air) and Nataraja represents the akasha tatva (ether) at Chidambaram.

Muthuswami Dikshitar, the pilgrim composer, visited all the five shrines during his voyages and composed wonderful kritis on each of them, which besides being extremely rich in devotion to Lord Shiva, are awe-inspiring compositions of unsurpassed melody and lyrical beauty. He has also described the temples and the sthala puranams in a capsulated form in these compositions. Of these, Chidambaram (and the presiding deity Nataraja) have been sung by innumerable composers in hundreds of songs. But, it is noteworthy that most Carnatic music composers have not sung in praise of the other four deities, except of course, Muthuswami Dikshitar. This makes Dikshitar's Panchalinga Sthala Kritis very significant.

*I. PrithviLinga (Kshetra-Kanchipuram, Kriṭi—Chintayama kanda, Raga-Bhairavi)*

Kanchipuram in North Tamil Nadu is a great seat of religion, culture and education. It is hailed as “Nagareshu Kanchi”, the best among cities. The principal deity of Kanchipuram is Kamakshi and the deities of all the shrines in Kanchipuram face her temple. The Linga which is believed to be made of sand by Goddess Parvathi herself is the prithvi linga – that is the central deity of Ekamreshwara temple here. Ekamreshwara means Lord of the solitary mango, which is the sthala vruksha.

Dikshitar was invited to Kanchipuram by a great yogi, Sri Upanishad Brahman, and stayed with him for a few years studying Vedanta. This was when he composed the beautiful bhairvi kriti ‘Chintayama kanda mulakandam’ as a tribute to the prithvi linga.

Special references to earth

The opening line of the kriti has the word kanda twice (kanda mulakandam). ‘Kanda’ means root, which grows inside the soil and penetrates the earth.

Similarly, the anupallavi has the line ‘samrajyaprada’- bestowing empires. The term *samrajya* or empire is temporal and of the earth. But, when a spiritually evolved person like Dikshitar uses the word *samrajya*, he most probably means *moksha samrajya*, the kingdom of liberation, which is the true kingdom to be gained. Nevertheless, the innate ignorance, the sadhana for its elimination and the consequent liberation i.e., moksha is for inhabitants of the earth. Therefore, Dikshitar's usage of *samrajyaprada* in the kriti dedicated to the earth element is quite appropriate. Later, the Lord is described as the slayer of death (antaka sudana).



Death again is for the inhabitants of the earth. The last line of the charanam refers to the prithvi linga.

## 2. *Ap Linga (Kshetra–Tiruvanaikkaval, Kriti–Jambupathe, Raga–Yamuna Kalyani)*

Tiruchirappali or Trichy, as it is called now, is at the geographical centre of the state of Tamilnadu and is a great pilgrim centre. Here is situated the temple dedicated to Lord Jambukeshwara and Goddess Akhilandeswari. A forest of Jambu trees existed near a tank here and Lord Shiva is said to have manifested under one of the trees as a Linga. The sthala vruksha is the jambu tree and hence the name Jambukeshvaram for the place itself. The Puranas say that Goddess Parvati made a linga out of water particles and worshipped it here. Water is always present in the inner shrine of Lord Jambukeshwara even during peak summer testifying to the nature of the element the Lord represents here.

Dikshitar often visited his daughter's house in Trichy. He composed the ap linga kriti 'Jambupathe' in the raga Yamuna Kalyani. The music world is grateful to Dikshitar for giving unto it such a sublime, soulful work, a work of such exquisite aesthetic beauty that it is impossible not to be moved by it. And the way he has utilised a North Indian raga for a major kriti defies description.

### Special references to water

The pallavi of the kriti asks the Lord to give the devotee the nectar of true bliss (*nijanandamruta bodham*). Amruta or nectar is a fluid. The anupallavi begins with a reference to Brahma, seated on a lotus that is born out of water (*ambujasanadi*). Later, the anupallavi says that the Lord quenches the fires that rage in the heart (*hrudayatapopashamana*), which is an indirect reference to water, for it is only water that can douse fire. The next line says that the deity is the Lord of the sea and of the rivers Ganga, Kaveri, Yamuna. Dikshitar further says that Shiva is the Lord of Goddess Akhilandeswari whose throat is akin to conch. (*kambu kanti akhilandeshwari ramana*). Conch is born out of water. The charana refers to the Lord as *ap linga*, as an ocean of nectar of compassion (*karunasudhasindho*) and as one bearing the Ganga in his locks (*nityamauli vidhruta*

*gangendo*). The raga name itself has an association with rivers. This composition has the maximum number of references to the element in concern among the five and is noted for its alliterative beauty especially in the charanam. The ending words, vibho, prabho, shambho, swayambho, sindho, bandho, bindho, gangendo, etc., testify to Dikshitar's command of the language as well as his poetic genius.

## 3. *Tejo Linga (Kshetra–Tiruvannamalai, Kriti–Arunachalanatham, Raga–Saranga)*

Arunachala is one of the oldest and most sacred of India's holy places. Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, the Sage of Arunachala, declared it to be the heart of the earth, the spiritual centre of the world. Arunachala is called Tiruvannamalai, the hill which cannot be reached, in Tamil. The Shiva linga here is a manifestation of fire. Linga worship is supposed to have begun here. The temple is one of the largest in India. The pradakshina of circumambulation of the hill is considered the most important form of worship to the Lord.

Muthuswami Dikshitar visited Tiruvannamalai of such glory on his way from Kanchipuram to Tiruvarur. 'Arunachalanatham' is one of his most important songs and celebrates the Tejolinga.

### Special references to fire

The opening line refers to the Lord as 'Arunachalanatham'. 'Aruna' is associated with the light of the morning sun. The anupallavi says that the Lord is like a million suns at the dawn (*tarunadityakoti*). The charanam says the deity is a radiant linga (*tejomayalingam*). It goes on to say that in his effulgent locks (*swapradeepamauli*) he holds Ganga and that his brightness excels that of the sun, the moon and fire (*swaprakashajita somagnipatangam*). Also, among the many meanings of the word 'Saranga', are two that are relevant to the kriti – camphor (easily inflammable) and light. Interestingly, the letter 'ra' refers to agni and there is a lot of usage of 'ra' throughout the song.

## 4. *Vayu Linga (Kshetra–Kalahasti, Kriti–Sri Kalahastisha, Raga–Huseni)*

This is the only panchabhoota kshetra outside Tamil Nadu state. Situate in Andhra Pradesh near

Tirupati, Kalahasti is one of the most sacred Shaivite shrines. The vayu linga is housed in a vast temple that abounds in sculptural wealth adjacent to the hill on the banks of the river Swarnamukhi. In the inner sanctum, there is a lamp which keeps flickering signifying the air element.

Dikshitar visited Kalahasti during the time he lived at Manali near Madras and composed 'Sri Kalahastisha'. For this kriti again, Dikshitar has utilized a raga that does not offer much scope. Nevertheless, the genius that he was, Dikshitar has coaxed the maximum melody from Huseni.

#### Special references to air

In the pallavi, The lord is described as a zephyr for those seeking refuge in him (shritajanavanasameerakara). The anupallavi further describes the Lord as the life breath of Indra, Brahma and Vishnu (pakarividhiharipranamayakosha) and as radiating through the five elements (anila akasha bhumi salila agni prakasha).

#### 5. Akasha Linga (Kshetra—Chidambaram, Kriti—Ananda Natana prakasham, Raga-Kedara)

The confluence of great art, vibrant religion and esoteric philosophy; the meeting point of great artists, poets, sages and the Gods; Chidambaram is the only place on earth that can boast of all this and more. It is one of the very rare shrines where Shiva can be worshipped in human form in the inner sanctum itself and where the moola moorti itself is the utsava moorti too. In all other shrines, Shiva is represented only by the Linga.

The panchaloha idol of Lord Nataraja is a beautifully sculpted piece and is the zenith of art. It reveals the power of the Lord as marvellously as it projects his joyous *Ananda Tandava*. The symmetry of the arms, legs and body, dancing with perfect rhythm, coupled with the expression of joy, confidence, valour, peace, sublimity and infinite compassion on the face, present a picture of the greatest artist and the supreme dancer. The Chitsabha which is graced by the dancing Nataraja idol is the inner most sanctum of the temple and the Kanakasabha is a mantapa situated just in front of the Chitsabha.

Dikshitar came to Chidambaram on his way from Tiruvannamalai to Tiruvarur and stayed there for a few days. Of the several kritis he composed here, the most important is the one, which specifically refers to the akasha tatva and describes the esoteric significance of the place and the dancing Lord – 'Ananda Natana prakasham'.

#### Special references to Akasha

The element here is space or ether which signifies Consciousness, which encompasses all other elements and is the most difficult to comprehend due to its formlessness. The composer treats the subject accordingly. The deity here is the Lord of the cosmic hall (chitsabhasham). He is dazzling like a million suns (bhanukotisankasham), the sun being a celestial object in space. The Lord is Cosmic Consciousness who grants well-being and salvation (bhuktimuktiprada daharaakasham). The charanam begins with two celestials who occupy the Lord's matted locks, the moon which is high up in the sky and Ganga who descended from the heavens (sheetamshugangadharam). His whole being is Consciousness (Chidambaram). The entire creation emanated from Consciousness or space and space existed before all creation. The Lord is appropriately described so (vishveshvaram, *adyam*). Consciousness is ever present (aprameyam) and this pure space is the import of advaitic philosophy (advaita pratipadyam). Space stimulates the remaining elements thereby causing creation (bahutarabhedachodyam).

#### Conclusion

It is the one and only Lord Shiva who manifests as all the five elements in order to emphasise the ultimate truth that he is the Self in all. Different manifestations are only required to cater to the different perceptions of bhaktas. In this way, Dikshitar, a truly enlightened being and a realised soul, brings out the inherent relationship between Advaita philosophy and polytheistic worship. It is beyond doubt that his Panchalinga Sthala kritis underlie the fact that the essence in all is the same and all are but manifestations of the Supreme being.

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## Special vocal trio concert by the Malladi family - A report

Vidwan Ashwin Anand

Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira organized a rare vocal trio concert by veteran vocalist Vidwan Malladi Suribabu and his sons, Vidwan Sreeramprasad and Vidwan Ravikumar as part of its annual day celebrations. They were accompanied by Vidwan S Varadarajan on the violin, Vidwan Mannargudi A Easwaran on the mridangam and Vidwan Phanindra Bhaskar on the ghatam. Rasikas were treated to a number of rare gems from their vast repertoire of compositions. Jalajaksha, a lilting varnam in Asaveri, a composition of Lalgudi G Jayaraman was sung with aplomb.



Thyagaraja's Nenendu vedakudura in Karnataka Behag was presented emotively with a spurt of wonderfully woven swaraprastharas at hari nenendu vedakudura with equally creative responses from seasoned violinist Vidwan Varadarajan. The famous kriti of Ponniah Pillai – Ranganathude in Sowrashtra was presented with brief swaraprastharas. Malladi Sri Suribabu presented a bhava-laden Dhanyasi alapana with vintage phrases, beautifully capturing the essence of the raga. Thyagaraja's Ni chittamu was the kriti that

followed with a wonderful neraval at Gurude uttama gathi. The masterful accompaniment on the mridangam by the maestro Vidwan Sri Easwaran was a connoisseur's delight indeed! A rare composition in Kalyani (Mathim dehi) of Vanamalai

Jeer Swami, Mysore Sadashiva Rao's Ninnuvina gati in Balahamsa and Thyagaraja's lesser known kriti in Phalaranjani, Sri Narasimha were presented in scholarly fashion. The piece de resistance of the concert was an evocative and creatively brilliant Kambodhi by both the brothers and was

followed by a riveting alapane by Vidwan Varadarajan. Mysore Vasudevacharya's masterpiece Mari mari vaccuna was the kriti rendered and was embellished with neraval and swaras. The thani avarthanam by Vidwan Easwaran and Vidwan Phanindra Bhaskar capped a wonderful evening for the large gathering of rasikas. A viruttam was sung with bhava followed by a Devaranama, Kande govindana in Maand. The gripping padam of Kshetragna in Suruti Indendu Vachitivira signed off what was a wonderful evening of sublime music.

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**Sunday, Aug 03, 2014 (10 am to 05 pm)**

**Ragam, Thanam and Pallavi - Workshop by Vidushi's Ranjani and Gayatri**

Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira will present an advanced workshop on Ragam, Tanam and Pallavi singing by Vid. Ranjani and Vid. Gayatri. The one workshop is scheduled for August 03, 2014. The venue will be the Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira auditorium. Those who are able to sing Ragam, Neraval and Swaram only are eligible. Interested candidates may register by sending their profile directly to Mr. Krishnaprasad at "srllkmandira@gmail.com".

This is a great opportunity for advanced students of music to learn the intricacies of RTP singing. Mr. Krishnaprasad can be contacted at 080-26710766 for more details.

## Wholesome music of Ashwathnarayanan

*Courtesy Deepa Ganesh, The Hindu Dated April 3, 2014*

*Ashwathnarayanan, a disciple of the couple K.V. Narayanaswamy and Padma, has all the makings of a promising vocalist*

The most striking aspect at that evening's concert was the age of all the three musicians who adorned the stage. What was even more prominent was that their understanding of music far exceeded their age. When many veteran musicians have given up values like restraint and unhurriedness, what one got from this team was exemplary. The vocal concert at Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira by Ashwathnarayanan accompanied by Apoorva Krishna on the violin and Akshay Anand on the mridangam was a memorable one. The confident and mature Ashwathnarayanan, recipient of The Hindu M.S. Subbulakshmi award, has received training from the legendary K.V. Narayanaswamy and his wife Padma.

The young vocalist began his recital with Tyagaraja's kriti in Arabhi "Nadhasudharasambilanu". Endowed with a good voice, Ashwathnarayanan infused the kriti with power and clarity. He presented Malayamaruta expounding each note with patience and care, filling the shadava raga with immense possibilities. The young violinist Apoorva Krishna's delineation of the raga was a reflection of her fine sense of music. The manner in which she conceived the raga and enriched the fine Malayamaruta that Ashwathnarayanan had created was admirable. Ashwathnarayanan rendered the kriti "Manasa Etulo" with a conviction that was reminiscent of masters like Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar. His neraval at "Kalilo" brought forth his ability to adhere to the technicalities of music; however, from his rendition it was amply clear that skill never overshadowed the essence of his music. In Akshay Anand lies a perfect accompanist -- the manner in which he followed the neraval, providing emphasis in a way that it harmonised with the stresses of the vocal rendition was testimony to his role as accompanist.

Ashwathnarayanan, as if it were a tribute to the legendary vocalist MS, rendered two kritis that have been made immortal by her. The lovely Annamacharya kriti in raga Lalita "Natanala Brahmyaku" and the mellow, sedate "Bhogheendra Shayinam" in Kuntalavarali raga. Without taking away the spirit of their original renditions, Ashwathnarayanan brought his own into it, like a competent musician would do.



*Good things to come: Ashwathnarayanan is a competent and immensely talented vocalist*

His alapane for Simhendramadhyama was rich with ideas, Ashwathnarayanan's voice brought out the raga bhava complemented with a chaste Carnatic idiom. In this delineation which stretched to a considerable length of time, he never sounded repetitive; it was a well thought-out and detailed piece. Apoorva added to what Ashwathnarayanan had built; in a meditative exposition, Apoorva's flourishes had the Lalgudi touch to it – the double string effect, the subtle dissonances etc all. He rendered Mysore Vasudevacharya's kriti "Ninne Nammiti Naiya" replete with complex sangatis and the neraval at "Pannagendra Shayana" was robust, yet never lost the devotion of the kriti. A torrential swara prastara and a tani by Akshay Anand took the piece to its crescendo. Akshay's fine artistry carries in it the glimpses of the legends of

percussion, and doesn't show the temptation of gimmickry.

The concert was indeed a treat. It seemed like one was watching the curtains go up for a new phase of

promise in Carnatic music. One hopes that all the three artistes will hold on firmly to their musical values in the days to come.

*Photo Courtesy - The Hindu*

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## 14 music concerts in eight days

*Courtesy Ranjani Govind, The Hindu Dated May 19, 2014*

*Bangalore should be the hub for people to gather and sieve the best of youth-talent during the mid-year, said KFAC chairman, M.R.V. Prasad*



Bangalore Gayana Samaja on Sunday played host to the inauguration of a National Youth Festival in Carnatic music, "Kalavanta 2014", brought together by the Karnataka Fine Arts Council (KFAC).

The eight-day festival (May 18-25) with 14 music concerts would bring forth 45 young artistes who would perform and be evaluated for the Kalavanta Award of the year.

"We have made history in Carnatic music with 10 sabhas coming together in the city for promoting youth talent in the country," said KFAC chairman, M.R.V. Prasad.

"One keeps a track of professionals in the mega year-end music season at Chennai. So, Bangalore, we thought, should be the hub for people to gather and sieve the best of youth-talent during the mid-year," he said.

Thus was born KFAC with Gayana Samaja, Ranjani Fine Arts, Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira, BTM Cultural Academy, Ananya Cultural Academy, Nadasurabhi, Sree Guruvayurappan Bhajan Samaj, Bharatiya Samagana Sabha, M.A. Narasimhachar Music Foundation and Vishesha Fine Arts.

KFAC secretary Arvind Brahmakal was happy his fervent enthusiasm for hosting a cultural bonhomie for the aspiring youth from across the country was well-received by the 10 organisations involved.

While the competitors are here after strict rounds of selection procedures, four senior Carnatic icons would be the judges for the eight-day music affair.

"Malladi Suribabu, father and guru of Malladi Brothers; mridangist A.V. Anand; (retired) Director, All India Radio, N.S. Krishnamurthy; and star vocalist M.S. Sheela would evaluate the 45 artistes, while audiences too would be involved in the grading," said Mr. Brahmakal.

The best "Kalavanta" would be awarded Rs. 50,000 in cash, while the best of violin and mridanga accompaniments would be given Rs. 25,000 in cash each," he said.

Earlier, speaking to The Hindu, Mr. Prasad said, "It costs us nearly Rs. 10 lakh for this eight-day exercise and apart from sponsorships, the 10 sabhas gathered here are sharing expenses. Not just going national, KFAC's 'Kalavanta' will soon be a mid-year hub for patrons across the globe."

"Most youngsters who are into serious classical music are working professionals these days, and that is what makes this youth festival more special," said Dr. Krishnamurthy, after formally inaugurating the festival. "Yesteryear star GNB (G.N. Balasubramaniam) was hailed a hero as he was a musician and a graduate. Today, it is working professionals who are performers and it is their energy and passion towards arts that showcase a focussed journey. Let Bangalore mirror these young stars to the world," he said.

## Voice of the Violin's Soul

Vidwan RK Shriramkumar

The concert is at the United Nations. The song, '*Jagadoddharana*' rendered in the heavenly voice of Smt M S Subbulakshmi permeates every corner of the vast auditorium. She is accompanied vocally by Smt Radha Viswanathan. As the audience listens, enthralled and spellbound, they hear a 'Third voice' merging with the divine voice of Smt MSS.



Vid.VV Subramanyam accompanying Vidushi MS Subbulakshmi and Vidhushi Radha Vishwanathan

The Music Academy resounds with Muttusvami Dikshitar's immortal '*Chetasshri balakrishnam*' rendered by Shri Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer in his own inimitable and majestic style. Shri V Subrahmanyam & Shri Palai Ramachandran support him vocally. And every person in the audience is astounded to hear a honeyed 'Fourth Voice'.

At Kalakshetra, the audience is in a trance, listening to the soulful rendition of '*Varugalamo*', by Shri K V Narayanaswamy. Vocal support is being provided by Smt Padma Narayanaswamy. Even in that state of trance, the audience is able to hear the silken 'Third Voice' pulling at the heart strings.

That 'invisible' voice belongs to Shri VV Subrahmanyam, whose fingers weave the swirls of musical silk on the strings of the violin, bringing forth that added 'voice' in each of these concerts and many more.

A violin player bringing forth a 'voice'? Yes, in the hands of Shri VVS. His playing is so perfectly

tailored to flow along with music of the singer, matching it to every movement and melody, inseparable as the flower and its scent, bringing forth an aural treat that is like hearing a human voice sing along.

Shri VVS being a violinist with incomparable attributes is very well known. The hallmark of his musical acumen is in the fact that he has kept aloft the great tradition of Carnatic music in its most pristine manner. His beautiful handling of the bow, with the ideal grip and control, the dexterous drives with his consummate fingering techniques, his impeccable consciousness of *shruti* and *laya*, the myriad hues of the light and shades in the contours of his musical portraits, his all-encompassing skills in *manodharma*, his research and innovations in shaping the violin tone to heart-warming mellifluousness and his striking grand presence make him a complete musician, undeniably exclusive and simply matchless.



Vid.VV Subramanyam and Vid. RK Shriramkumar in a concert

The edge to Shri VVS' persona goes beyond in him being just an ace violinist or an exemplary musician. The insight into the unknown realms of music that Shri VVS has envisioned is absolutely amazing. His exploration and experience of music in its all-pervading form as *Nada*, in its multi-various arrangements is eclectic. His ongoing search in the dominions of *Nada yoga* has

empowered his music glow with added lustre and poise. Shri VVS has brought forth several interpretations of the significance of the seven notes and their various colors, their effects with respect to a musical measure and also their relation and relevance to the human body, the import of the perfect construction of the *sahityas* of the great *vaggeyakaras* couched in the perfect tune, the understanding of the emotion of the great composers through their colossal compositions and the presentation of a raga or a composition to enable an experience that transcends to an inexplicable state of ecstasy. His renditions of *Vatapi Ganapatim*, *Sujana jivana* and *Nannu brovu Lalita*, to name a few, are testimony to his wealth of *Nadanubhava*.

A great teacher, Shri VVS shares with his students, without any reservation, this illustrious wealth of *Nadanubhava*. Any teaching session will not finish without an exhaustive elucidation of the hidden beauties of our music. Adding to it, Shri VVS will talk about his own concert experiences with

various musicians and the kind of challenges and situations that he has encountered. His classes are undoubtedly one of its kinds, aiding the student to have a holistic perspective of our great art.

Awesome appreciation from musicians and music lovers world-wide and awards from premier institutions have adorned Shri VVS. Nevertheless, his plunge into the ocean of *Nada* continues incessantly to bring forth many a rare gem. As the waves of *Nada*, that emanate from his violin, intricately designed by his heart and intellect, trigger one's life to bliss, a deep sense of gratitude to the Almighty prevails for having blessed this soul to be a student of Shri VVS forever.

*(Reproduced with permission from Sruti, India's leading performing arts monthly. We are thankful to Vid. Shriramkumar RK for making this article available to "Lalitha Kala Tharangini". Photo credit-UN concert picture from personal collection of Vidushi Radha Viswanathan and Shri. Srinivasan Viswanathan. Photo credit of VVS and RKS - Chella Vaidyanathan)*

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## Forthcoming Programmes

### **Sunday, August 24, 2014, 5.30 pm**

NJ Nandini, disciple of Parasala Ponnammal and granddaughter of Vechur Harihara Subramanya Iyer will be giving a vocal concert at SRLKM, Banashankari on 24th Aug. She will be accompanied by Apoorva Krishna (Kalavantha 2014) on Violin and NC Bharadwaj (Kalavantha 2014) on Mridangam. The venue is SRLKM auditorium and the concert starts at 5.30 pm. All are Welcome.

### **Sunday, September 14, 2014, 5.30 pm**



Begum Parveen Sulthana will be performing for SRLKM on 14 September at the Dental College Auditorium. She will be accompanied by Vyasamurthi Katti on Harmonium and Vishwanath Nakod on Tabla. The venue is RV Dental College auditorium, JP Nagar and the concert starts at 6 pm. All are Welcome.

## Kalavantha 2014 - Flashback



## Kalavantha 2014 - Flashback



Hemantha-Heramba-Dinesh Kumar-Sunil Subramanya



Shraddha Mohan-Sindhu Suchetan-Kishore



R Ashwathnarayanan-Vittal Rangan-Akshay Ram



Manda Sruti Ravali-HM Smitha-VS Raghavan



Soumya Sridhar-Sangeetha-Adamyia Ramahand



Priyanka Prakash-Papu Gnanadev-L Subramanyam



A view of the crowd



Abhishek Raghuram-HK Venkatram-Arjun Kumar