

Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira (R)

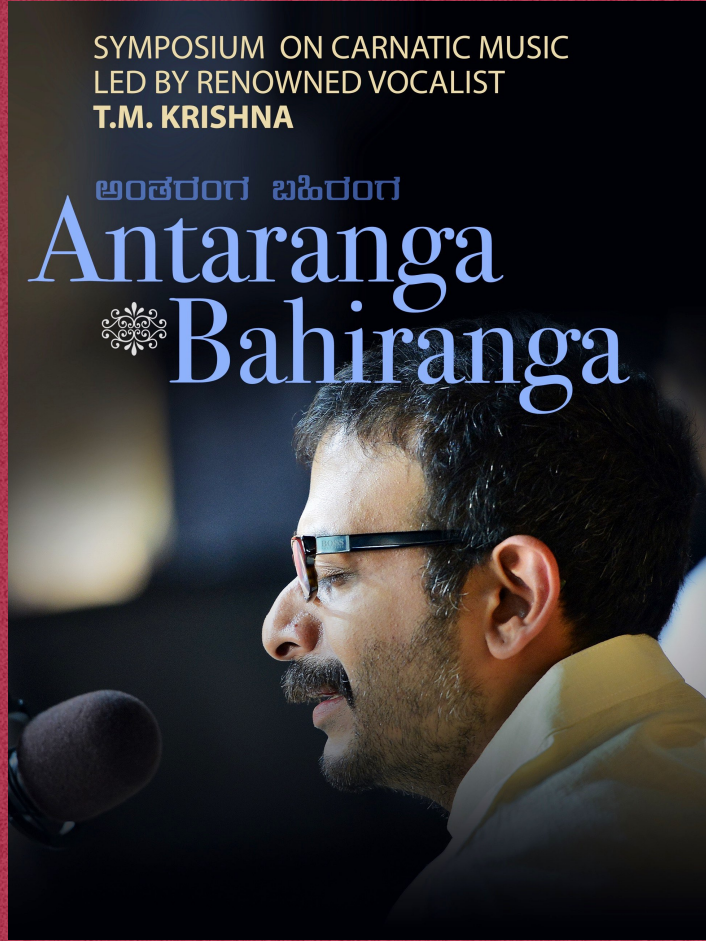
(Distinguished Service to Carnatic Music since 1955)

Lalitha Kala Tarangini

Quarterly Music Magazine

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Second Anniversary Edition

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Commencing the MS Subbulakshmi Centenary Year

Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira launched the MS Subbulakshmi Centenary year with a concert of Sangita Kala Acharya Neela Ramgopal. Several concerts are lined up throughout the year culminating in to the centenary celebration.

Dr. D Premachandra Sagar Centre for Performing Arts joined hands to make it a great experience for all. The auditorium made it a world class musical experience. Needless to say this is one of the best auditoriums we have in the country.



From L to R - Dr. SC Sharma, Provost, Dayananda Sagar University, Bangalore, Smt. GV Neela, Founder Principal, SRLKM, , Dr. Yogananda, Treasurer, SRLKM, Shri. GV Krishna Prasad, Hon. Secretary SRLKM, Sangeetha Kala Acharya Vid. Neela Ramgopal

Sri Sri Jagadguru Shankaracharya Mahasamsthanam

Dakshinamnaya Sri Sharada Peetham, Sringeri - 577 139, Karnataka, India

Message

ಗೆ,

ಶ್ರೀ ಕೃಷ್ಣಪ್ರಸಾದ್
ಗೌರವ ಕಾರ್ಯದರ್ಶಿಗಳು,
ಶ್ರೀ ರಾಮ ಲಲಿತ ಕಲಾ ಮಂದಿರ (ರಿ.)
ನಂ. 28 ಬಿ ವಿ ಕಾರಂತ್ ರೋಡ್,
9th ಮೇನ್, ಬನಶಂಕರಿ, 2 ನೇ ಸ್ಟೇಜ್,
ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು - ೫೬೦ ೦೭೦
ಫೋನ್ : ೦೮೦-೨೬೭೧ ೦೭೬೬

ಮಾನ್ಯರೇ,

ನೀವು ದಿನಾಂಕ ೧೨-೦೭-೨೦೧೫ ರಂದು ಬರೆದ ಪತ್ರ ಅಡಕದೊಂದಿಗೆ ತಲುಪಿದೆ. ಉಭಯ ಶ್ರೀ ಶ್ರೀ ಜಗದ್ಗುರು ಮಹಾಸ್ವಾಮಿಗಳವರ ಪಾದಕಮಲಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಸಾಷ್ಟಾಂಗ ಪ್ರಣಾಮ ಪೂರ್ವಕ ಸಮರ್ಪಿಸಲಾಯಿತು.

ಶ್ರೀ ರಾಮ ಲಲಿತ ಕಲಾ ಮಂದಿರವು ೭೦ ವರ್ಷಗಳಿಂದ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಶಾಸ್ತ್ರೀಯ ಸಂಗೀತ ಹಾಗೂ ಹಿಂದುಸ್ತಾನಿ ಸಂಗೀತ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರದಲ್ಲಿ ಅನನ್ಯ ಸೇವೆಯನ್ನು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದು, ಪುತಿ ವರ್ಷವೂ ಸಂಗೀತೋತ್ಸವವನ್ನು ಯಶಸ್ವಿಯಾಗಿ ನಡೆಸಿಕೊಂಡು ಬಂದಿರುವ ವಿಷಯಗಳನ್ನು ಹಾಗೂ ಕಳೆದ ೨ ವರ್ಷಗಳಿಂದ 'ಲಲಿತ ಕಲಾ ತರಂಗಿಣಿ' ಎಂಬ ತ್ರೈಮಾಸಿಕ ಸಂಚಿಕೆಯನ್ನು ಪ್ರಕಟಿಸುತ್ತಿರುವ ವಿಚಾರವನ್ನರಿತು ಉಭಯ ಶ್ರೀ ಶ್ರೀಗಳವರು ಬಹಳ ಸಂತೋಷ ಪಟ್ಟಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ.

ಶ್ರೀ ಶಾರದಾಚಂದ್ರಮೌಳೀಶ್ವರರ ಕೃಪೆಯಿಂದ ನಿಮ್ಮ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯು ಯಶಸ್ವಿಯಾಗಿ ಮುನ್ನಡೆಯಲಿ, "ಲಲಿತ ಕಲಾ ತರಂಗಿಣಿ" ವಿಶೇಷ ಸಂಚಿಕೆಯು ವಿದ್ವತ್ಪೂರ್ಣ ಲೇಖನಗಳಿಂದೊಡಗೂಡಿ ಸಂಗ್ರಹ ಯೋಗ್ಯ ಗ್ರಂಥವಾಗಿ ಮೂಡಿ ಬರಲಿ ಎಂದು ಶ್ರೀ ಶ್ರೀಗಳವರು ಆಶೀರ್ವದಿಸಿ, ಅನುಗ್ರಹಿಸಿ ಆಶೀರ್ವಂತಾಕ್ಷತೆ, ಶ್ರೀ ಶಾರದಾ ಅರ್ಚನಾ ಪ್ರಸಾದವನ್ನು ಇದರೊಂದಿಗೆ ಕಳುಹಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದೇನೆ.

ವಂದನೆಗಳೊಂದಿಗೆ,

ವಿ ಆರ್ ಗೌರಿಶಂಕರ್
27-07-2015



|| SRI SHIVARATHREESHWARAYA NAMAHA ||

JAGADGURU SRI SHIVARATHRI DESHIKENDRA MAHASWAMIGALU

JAGADGURU SRI VEERASIMHASANA MATH, SUTTU SRIKSHETHRA, 571 159

SRI SUTTUR MUTH (MYSORE BRANCH), MYSORE 570025

Message

We are in receipt of your letter dated 13.07.2015 and copies of the journal “Lalitha Kala Tarangini”.

in fact, the activities of Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira (R.), an institution which is doing yeomen service in the field of Music and culture, deserve people’s appreciation.

Man has evolved over centuries from barbarianism to the mould of modern man. In this exercise, the spirit that led him from lower strata to upper strata, is his refinement in the test of time. Transforming a carbon into a diamond is the result of ‘Sanskara’. It is the quintessence of all human values nurtured and transferred through generations. The ‘Prakrit’ man becoming a “Susamskrit” through this inner light and strength.

In the path of “Samskara”, music also plays a pivotal role. Music is the prayer of a Atman towards his mentor Paramatman. “Sangeetha Sahitya Kala Vihinaha Saakshaat Pashubhissamanaha” says a Sanskrit Sloka. Music is a vehicle to elevate mundane-level thinking instantaneously into a divine level. Music has its roots in Vedic literature, and, has transformed over the times, into various formats, both folk and traditional. Indian music is embedded specially in divinity and expresses itself in abstract philosophical textures.

It is praiseworthy that the journal is coming out very well, true to its tradition and its committed goals. The galaxy of musicians will find expression here, in the form of letters, through the column of this well-produced journal.

We wish to congratulate the selfless team that is behind this journal, and, wish Lalitha Kala Tarangini, a perennial success.

01.08.2015

ಶ್ರೀ

ಶ್ರೀಮತೇ ರಾಮಾನುಜಾಯ ನಮಃ
ಶ್ರೀ ಯದುಗಿರಿ ಯತಿರಾಜ ಮಠ
ಮೂಲಸ್ಥಾನ: ತಿರುನಾರಾಯಣಪುರಂ, ಮೇಲುಕೋಟೆ

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸಂಗೀತ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರದಲ್ಲಿ ಕಳೆದ ಅರವತ್ತು ವರ್ಷಗಳಿಂದ ಸಾರ್ಥಕ ಸೇವೆ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುತ್ತಿರುವ ಶ್ರೀ ರಾಮ ಲಲಿತ ಕಲಾ ಮಂದಿರ ನಮ್ಮ ನಾಡಿನ ಸಾಂಸ್ಕೃತಿಕ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರದ ಧ್ರುವತಾರೆ. ಕೀರ್ತಿಶೇಷರಾದ ಶ್ರೀ ವೇದಾಂತಂ ಐಯ್ಯಂಗಾರ್ ಅವರಿಂದ ಸ್ಥಾಪನೆಯಾದ ಈ ಮಂದಿರ ಸಂಗೀತಕ್ಕೆ ಹಾಗೂ ಕಲಾವಿದರಿಗೆ ಅನ್ವರ್ಥವಾಗಿ ಮಂದಿರವಾಗಿ ಬೆಳಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಅವರ ಪುತ್ರಿಯರು ಹಾಗೂ ಪುತ್ರರು ಈ ಮಂದಿರದ ಪ್ರತಿಭೆಗೆ ಕಾರಣೀಬೂತರಾಗಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಜಿ. ವಿ. ರಂಗನಾಯಕಮ್ಮ, ಜಿ. ವಿ. ನೀಳ ಹಾಗೂ ಶ್ರೀ ಜಿ. ವಿ. ಕೃಷ್ಣಪ್ರಸಾದ್ ಅವರು ತಮ್ಮ ಇಡೀ ಜೀವನವನ್ನು ಸಂಪೂರ್ಣವಾಗಿ ಸಮರ್ಪಿಸಿಕೊಂಡು ದುಡಿಯುತ್ತಿರುವುದು ಅಬಿನಂದನಾರ್ಹ.

ಶ್ರೀ ರಾಮ ಲಲಿತ ಕಲಾ ಮಂದಿರ ಕೇವಲ ಸಂಗೀತ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮಗಳನ್ನು ಮಾತ್ರ ಆಯೋಜಿಸದೆ, ಸಂಗೀತದ ಇತರ ಮಜಲುಗಳನ್ನು ಕಲಾರಸಿಕರಿಗೆ ಪರಿಚಯಿಸುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಸಂಗೀತ ಶಿಬಿರ, ಕಲಾವಿಮರ್ಶೆ, ಸಂವಾದ, ಕಲಾವಿದರುಗಳಿಗೆ ಪ್ರಶಸ್ತಿ, ಗೌರವ ಇತ್ಯಾದಿ ಅಪೂರ್ವವಾದ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮಗಳನ್ನು ಹಮ್ಮಿಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಿರುವುದು ಶ್ಲಾಗನೀಯ.

ಈಗ್ಗೆ ಎರಡು ವರ್ಷಗಳ ಹಿಂದೆ ಪ್ರಾರಂಭವಾದ "ಲಲಿತ ಕಲಾ ತರಂಗಿಣಿ" ಸಂಚಿಕೆ ಅತ್ಯಂತ ಸುಂದರವಾಗಿ ಪ್ರಕಟವಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. 'ತರಂಗಿಣಿ' ಯಲ್ಲಿ ಹೊರ ಹೊಮ್ಮುತ್ತಿರುವ ಲೇಕನಗಳು, ಕಲಾವಿದರ ಪರಿಚಯ, ಸಂಗೀತ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮದ ವಿಮರ್ಶೆ ಎಲ್ಲವೂ ಮೌಲ್ಯಯುತವಾಗಿ ಪ್ರಕಾಶನಗೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಿವೆ. ಈ ತರಂಗಿಣಿ ಪ್ರಕಾಶನದಲ್ಲಿ ಶ್ರಮಿಸುತ್ತಿರುವ ಎಲ್ಲರನ್ನೂ ಅಬಿನಂದಿಸುತ್ತಾ, ಶ್ರೀ ರಾಮ ಲಲಿತ ಕಲಾ ಮಂದಿರದ ಕ್ರಿಯಾಶೀಲ ಸಾರಥಿ ಶ್ರೀ ಜಿ. ವಿ. ಕೃಷ್ಣಪ್ರಸಾದ್ ಅವರನ್ನು ಅಬಿನಂದಿಸುತ್ತಾ, ಶ್ರೀಮಠದ ಆರಾಧ್ಯ ದೈವವಾದ ಶ್ರೀ ಲಕ್ಷ್ಮೀನರಸಿಂಹ ಹಾಗೂ ಆಚಾರ್ಯ ಶ್ರೀರಾಮಾನುಜ ಪರಿಪೂರ್ಣ ಅನುಗ್ರಹ ಸದಾ ಇರಲೆಂದು ಹಾರೈಸುತ್ತೇವೆ.

ಆಚಾರ್ಯ ಶ್ರೀರಾಮಾನುಜರ ಸೇವೆಯಲ್ಲಿ

ಶ್ರೀ ಯತಿರಾಜಃ
ಶ್ರೀ ಶ್ರೀ ಯದುಗಿರಿ ಯತಿರಾಜ ನಾರಾಯಣ ರಾಮಾನುಜ ಜೀಯರ್

DEVAGIRI SRI VENKATESHWARA TRUST (R)

VARAPRADA SRI VENKATESHWARA DEVASTHANA

Devagiri, Banashankari 2nd Stage, Bangalore-70. Phone : 2691 9703/26716979

Message

ಜಿ. ವಿ. ಕೃಷ್ಣಪ್ರಸಾದ್,
ಗೌ || ಕಾರ್ಯದರ್ಶಿಗಳು,
ಶ್ರೀ ರಾಮ ಲಲಿತ ಕಲಾ ಮಂದಿರ,
ಬನಶಂಕರಿ, ೨ನೇ ಹಂತ,
ಬಂಗಳೂರು - ೫೬೦೦೭೦

ಸನ್ಮಾನ್ಯ ಶ್ರೀ ಕೃಷ್ಣಪ್ರಸಾದ್ ಅವರಿಗೆ,

ತಾವು ಪ್ರಕಟಿಸುತ್ತಿರುವ ತ್ರೈಮಾಸಿಕ ಪತ್ರಿಕೆ 'ಲಲಿತ ಕಲಾ ತರಂಗಿಣಿ' ಮೂರನೇ ವರ್ಷಕ್ಕೆ ಪಾದಾರ್ಪಣೆ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿರುವುದು ಸಂತೋಷವಾದ ವಿಷಯ. ಈ ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯಲ್ಲಿನ ಲೇಖನಗಳು ಕಿರಿಯ ಸಂಗೀತ ಕಲಾವಿದರಿಗೆ ಮಾರ್ಗದರ್ಶಿಯಾಗಿ, ಹಿರಿಯರು ಸಂತೋಷ ಪಡುವಂತಾಗಿ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಕಲಾಭಿಮಾನಿಗಳ ಮೆಚ್ಚುಗೆಗೆ ಪಾತ್ರವಾಗಿದೆ. ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯ ಅಚ್ಚುಗಟ್ಟು, ಉತ್ತಮ ಗುಣಮಟ್ಟದ ವಿನ್ಯಾಸ, ಮುದ್ರಣ, ಛಾಯಾ ಚಿತ್ರಗಳು ಅಕರ್ಷಣೀಯವಾಗಿದೆ.

ಶ್ರೀ ರಾಮ ಲಲಿತ ಕಲಾ ಮಂದಿರ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ಯಶಸ್ಸಿನೊಂದಿಗೆ 'ಲಲಿತ ಕಲಾ ತರಂಗಿಣಿ'ಯು ಗುರುತಿಸಿಕೊಂಡು ಯಶಸ್ವಿಯಾಗಲೆಂದು ಆಶಿಸಿ ಶುಭಕೋರುತ್ತೇವೆ.

ತಮ್ಮ ವಿಶ್ವಾಸಿ,

ಟಿ. ಎಸ್. ದತ್ತಾತ್ರೇಯ
23.08.2015

October 2015

Dear Readers,

'Sangeetha jnanamu bhakti vina Sanmargamu galade?' - The knowledge of Sangeetha devoid of Bhakti, divinity and devotion is of no value says Saint Thyagaraja in this masterpiece Dhanyasi kriti. He goes on to say that music as practiced by bhaktas like Bhringi, Natesa, Anjaneeya, Agastya, Matanga is the only way to secure salvation.

It has become a fashion for few musicians taking centre stage today to renounce the work of Thyagaraja and in general Trinity. Our music is time tested and has an emotional attachment because of the divinity brought forth by the trinity and their contemporary composers. The moment the divinity element is detached, it will be as good as a folk music and lose the admiration of the rasikas.

This aspect is beautifully brought out in an interview with Abhishek Raghuram who shares his value system and talks highly of Saint Thyagaraja. Looks like he seem to be echoing Saint Thyagaraja saying 'Cakkani raja margamulundaga', meaning when there are straight path (that of devotion), why consider an ambiguous and crooked path.

Flute maestro N Ramani passed away on 9th October. With this, we have lost another connection to the golden era of music. Ramani once said that it is not possible to replicate Mali's style and so wanted to imbibe his own style. It is to be noted that, Mali along with Ramani are significantly associated with bringing flute to the main concert stage which was an accompanying instrument till then. Ramani has gone on record saying that, in spite of the technology advancements, 'the sound of the bamboo flute has never gone down till date and it will never go in the future also. He has shown the way for the current

generation of flautists many of whom adopt his style and technique. May God rest his soul in peace.

Article on Thyagaraja Aradhana Sampradaya connecting Chellam Iyer to the age old tradition of the Saint Thyagaraja Aradhana at Tiruvaiyyaru is interesting and provides historical facts. 96 year old Chellam Iyer is the only connection we have to the age old tradition.

I am very pleased to inform that the 'Sangeetha Nrutya Academy' has recognised the SRLKM's noble contribution to music and culture and bestowed upon us the Karnataka Kalashree award. SRLKM proudly dedicate this award to the founder Shri.Vedanta Iyengar. We do believe YOU have significantly contributed to what we are today. We thank you profoundly for the same.

V Sriram narrates a very interesting episode of Shri. APJ Abdul Kalam during the inauguration of The Music Academy conference. Mark this for your reading.

Let us all pat our back for successfully completing two years of existence with Lalitha Kala Tarangini. It has been a great journey and we have made some great progress. Do continue to support us and keep reading LKT. As always, do not hesitate to share your views.

We at SRLKM wish our readers a very happy Dasara 2015.

Anand S

Contributors and Photo courtesies:

CP Chikkanna, Sachi R Sachidananda, Anagha Yogananda, Thanmayee Krishnamurthy, Deepa Ganesh, V Sriram and Balachandra. Photo courtesy - Paniraj, The Hindu archives, Personal collection of Bangalore Praveen, Aravinda Hebbar, Vittal Ramamurthy and Abhishek Raghuram.

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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Lalitha Kala Tarangini - Inbox

ಶ್ರೀ ಆನಂದ್ ಎಸ್,

ಶ್ರೀ ರಾಮ ಲಲಿತ ಕಲಾ ಮಂದಿರ (ರಿ.) ಇದರ ವತಿಯಿಂದ ನಿಮ್ಮ ಸಾರಥ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಒದಗಿ ಬರುವ ಲಲಿತ ಕಲಾ ತರಂಗಿಣಿ ಸಂಗೀತ ತ್ರೈಮಾಸಿಕ ಪತ್ರಿಕೆ ನಿಜಕ್ಕೂ ಸಂಗ್ರಾಹ್ಯ ಸಂಚಿಕೆಯೇ ಸರಿ. ಪ್ರಚಲಿತ ವಿಷಯಗಳನ್ನಷ್ಟೆ ಅಲ್ಲದೆ ಸಂಗೀತದ ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಗೀತಗಾರರ ಸೂಕ್ಷ್ಮ ಅನುಭವಗಳ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಮನ ಮುಟ್ಟುವಂತೆ ಲೇಖನಗಳನ್ನು ನೀಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದೀರಿ. ಅತ್ಯುತ್ತಮ ಫೋಟೋಗಳು, ಶೀರ್ಷಿಕೆಗಳೂ, ಸಕಾಲಿಕ ಸಮೀಕ್ಷೆಗಳು, ಸಂದರ್ಶನಗಳು, ಮುದ್ದಾದ ಅಚ್ಚಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಬರುತ್ತಿರುವುದು ತುಂಬಾ ಸಂತೋಷವಾದ ವಿಷಯ. ಒಂದೇ ಒಂದು ಆತಂಕ :- ಒಂದು ಸಂಚಿಕೆ ಮುಗಿದು ಇನ್ನೊಂದು ಸಂಚಿಕೆಯನ್ನು ಬರಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ಮೂರು ತಿಂಗಳು ಕಾಯಬೇಕಲ್ಲ ಎಂಬುದು. ಎಸ್ ಆನಂದ್ ಅವರ ದೂರದರ್ಶಿತ್ವಕ್ಕೆ ಮತ್ತು ಜಿ ವಿ ಕೃಷ್ಣಪ್ರಸಾದ್ ಅವರ ಸಾಹಸಕ್ಕೆ ನಾವು ತಲೆಬಾಗಲೇ ಬೇಕಾಗಿದೆ.

ಶುಭಾಷಯಗಳೊಂದಿಗೆ
ವೀ ಅರವಿಂದ ಹೆಬ್ಬಾಳೆ

Dear Sri Anand,

I read with pleasure the July issue of Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Tarangini. I am very glad to see almost the entire issue dedicated to Smt. Neela Ramgopal on her 80th Birthday. I would like to thank the Editorial people of SRLKM for this wonderful Tribute to a Great Musician of our time, Smt. Neela Ramgopal.

If I were to describe Smt. Neela Ramgopal mami in a few words, I would say-a complete musician and a complete human being. Her music has all the ingredients of top class- formidable repertoire, chaste classicism that goes side by side with tricky ragas and adventurous swaras, yet never swerving from the boundaries of the Carnatic grammar. As a woman, right from my father's days, we have admired her indomitable spirit that threw away all the challenges she has faced in life to come out on top in the field that is her life's breath-music. Yes, Smt Neela Ramgopal mami as a Musician is a complete teacher, performer and even organiser. As a human being, she touches everyone with her sunny disposition and great energy that is radiated to everyone in her sphere. Never has the adage 'Age cannot wither her' been more true. Indeed, mami is younger than many half her age in her sheer enthusiasm and love for music. This, combined with

her experience and sheer gyana make for the perfect mix that makes her one of the Top Musicians today. Indeed, Smt. Neela Ramgopal is a one stop shop for rasikas, students and organisers who are earnestly seeking out excellence in music.

May she continue this service for many years to come!

Yours sincerely,
Jaya Balakrishnan,
Naada Inbam, Chennai.

Errata

An inadvertent error has occurred in the Editorial of the last issue of the magazine. "Five kritis learnt from Shri. NM Narayanan (The Hindu critic) in 1965," Should be "Fifty five Five kritis learnt from Shri. NM Narayanan (The Hindu critic) in 1965." We regret the inconvenience.

KFAC and Kalabhiyana 2015

About Karnataka a Fine Arts Council

Karnataka has been at the forefront of promoting Indian Fine Arts over a period through various organisations and temples. So much so, that Karnataka is recognised as the hub of cultural activities. With an intent to further this image of Karnataka and to promote Indian Fine Arts on a larger scale, 10 prestigious organisations have come together to form Karnataka Fine Arts Council (KFAC) in March 2014 as a public charitable trust. The main objectives of this Council are to celebrate fine arts, work for artiste's welfare by liaising with the Government, organise conferences and summits, institute fine arts scholarships to the economically underprivileged artistes, produce documentaries, to conduct cultural exchange programmes etc.

KFAC initiated a highly successful annual international level Karnataka Music concert competition "Kalavanta" in 2014 and 2015. In December 2014, KFAC brought artistes of Karnataka under a common roof to understand and find solutions to the challenges faced by art and artistes.

The 10 member organisations of KFAC are :

Ananya GML Cultural Academy, Bharatiya Samagana Sabha, BTM Cultural Academy, M A Narasimhachar Music Foundation, Nadasurabhi Cultural Association, Ranjani Fine Arts, Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira, Sree Guruvayurappan Bhajan Samaj Trust, The Bangalore Gayana Samaja and Vishesha Fine Arts

Kalabhiyana 2015

Rasikas from across the globe visit Chennai during December (Margazhi) season that has led to its immense popularity. To enhance this celebration, KFAC is happy to announce Kalabhiyana 2015, a first of its kind music concert series, between December 11 and 13, 2015 at the TAG centre, TTK Road, Chennai. This festival is to celebrate the classical music in its pristine form by providing a stage for more than 75 artistes of Karnataka. KFAC is collaborating with the TAG Centre and Iswar Vidya Kendra, Chennai.

There will be 18 concerts of an hour each over these 3 days.

KFAC pays special tribute to Karnataka's great son, Purandaradasa Dasa, the Sangeetha Pitamaha. Artistes performing at Kalabhiyana will also render devaranama with special attention paid to the aesthetics, musicality, sahitya and pronunciation.

We fondly remember the great contribution of the Mysore royalty-the Wodeyars, in the promotion and patronage of art and artistes. This festival will bring the spotlight on the Mysore parampara - vaggeyakaras like Mysore Vasudevacharya, Mysore Sadashiva Rao, Veena Sheshanna among others. Contributions by several great practitioners like Veena Subbanna, Mysore Chowdaiah, Mysore Doreswamy Iyenger, RK Srikantan and others will also be remembered.

Art grows when varied cultures interact and collaborate. KFAC views this unique event as the beginning of a vibrant cultural exchange between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

Kalabhiyana 2015 - Programme schedule

**December 11 - 13, No. 36, TAG Centre, TTK Road, Alwarpet,
Chennai - 600018, Ph# 044-33263927**

December 11, Friday

1	11 am	Inauguration
2	12 pm	Kalavathy Avadhoot (Vocal), Nalina Mohan (Violin), Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma (Mridangam), Sukanya Ramgopal (Ghatam)
3	03.15 pm	Pavan Rangachar, (Vocal) BK Raghu (Violin), Ranjani Venkatesh (Mridangam), N Amruth Kumar (Morching)
4	04.30 pm	Amrutha Venkatesh (Vocal) ,Vittal Rangan (Violin), GS Ramanujam (Mridangam), VS Ramesh (Morching)
5	05.45 pm	Madhu Kashyap (Vocal),Apoorva Krishna (Violin),Anoor Vinodh Shyam (Mridangam) , Sunad Anoor (Kanjari)
6	07 pm	SR Vinay Sharva (Vocal), HN Bhaskar (Violin), BR Srinivas (Mridangam), N Amruth Kumar (Morching)

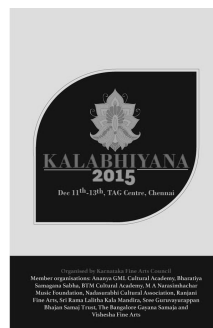
December 12, Saturday

1	09 am	Vasudha Keshav, (Vocal), MP Aditya (Violin), N Vasudev (Mridangam), Ranganatha Chankravarthi (Ghatam)
2	10.15 am	Chandan Kumar (Flute), Charulatha Ramanujam (Violin), BS Prashanth (Mridangam), Sri Shaila (Ghatam)
3	11.30 am	Vani Satish (Vocal), Mysore Srikanth (Violin), Tumkur Ravishankar (Mridangam), Tumkur Shashishankar (Ghatam)
4	02 pm	Sampagodu Vignaraja (Vocal), KJ Dileep (Violin), A Renuka Prasad Mridangam), Bharadwaj Sathavalli (Ghatam)
5	03.15 pm	Bangalore Brothers (Hariharan, Ashok) - (Vocal), MP Aditya (Violin), Adamyia Ramanand (Mridangam), R Karthik (Kanjari)

6	04.30 pm	Pattabhirama Pandit (Vocal), BU Ganesh Prasad (Violin), H S Sudhindra (Mridangam), Panidra Bhaskara (Ghatam)
7	05.45 pm	G Ravikiran (Vocal), KJ Dileep (Violin), Tumkur Ravishankar (Mridangam), ASN Swamy (Kanjari)
8	07.00 pm	HK Venkataram (Violin), Ashwin Anand (Veena) and G Ravikiran (Flute), Jayachandra Rao (Mridangam), Sri Shaila (Ghatam)

December 13, Sunday

1	11.45 am	Karnataka Sangeetha Symphony "Bahudari" led by Apoorva Krishna
2	02.00 pm	Mysore RK Padmanabha (Veena), HL Shivashankar Swamy (Mridangam), N Gurumurthy (Ghatam)
3	03.15 pm	Heramba & Hemanta (Flute Duet), Achyuta Rao (Violin), Akshay Anand (Mridangam), Bhagyalakshmi Krishna (Morching)
4	04.30 pm	Bellary Raghavendra (Vocal), Mathur Srinidhi (Violin), Bangalore V Praveen (Mridangam), Gururaj (Morching)
5	06.00 pm	Nagaraj & Manjunath (Violin Duet), Bangalore V Praveen (Mridangam), Giridhar Udupa (Ghatam)



Ramani's flute goes silent

S Anand, Editor

Ramani was born in Thiruvavur on October 15, 1934 the holy city associated with the birth of the Trinity. He learnt initially from his grandfather Azhiyur Narayanaswamy Iyer. His father Natesa Iyer was a mridangist and mother played on the Violin.

Ramani's life took a turn after he heard a concert of his maternal uncle, the genius TR Mahalingam (Mali) and he decided to emulate him in the days to come. When Mali heard Ramani perform the next day, he was spell bound by Ramani's ability to reproduce some of his own music. Mali made him his disciple from that day onwards. At a very young age of 11, Ramani started accompanying Mali and for him concerts were a great learning experience. Ramani always maintains that listening to CD's or recorded music is fine but it is the live concert that raises the intellectual ability in our music.

Ramani has recorded that Mali was a man of moods and there would not be any teaching sessions for a long time and at times when Mali came by chance during students practice ses-

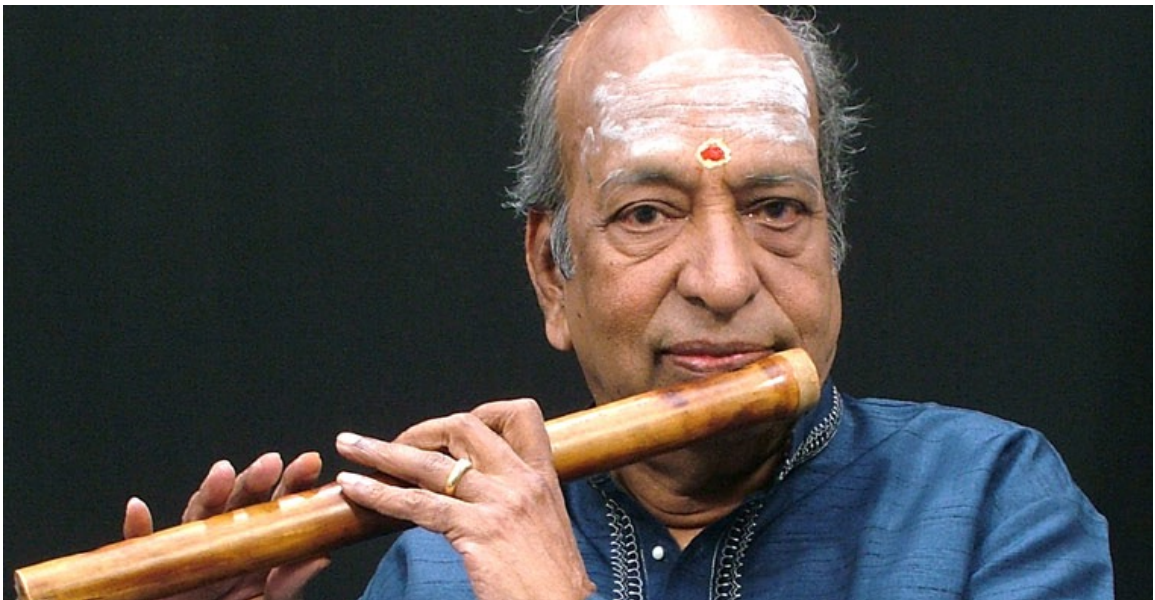
sion, he would give some guidance. So it was through constantly hearing to him that most of the students learnt. This is especially true for some of the benchmark kritis like 'Chinna nate-na', 'Ninnuvina namadendu' etc.

Ramani's cherished movement was when Mali was present for his concert at the Music Academy in 1956.

Ramani has admitted that though he was trained by his guru Mali, he shaped his style following that of the maestro GNB.

During Mali's final moments, he asked him to play on his flute. Ramani was greatly embarrassed and choked with emotion and could not play. But he did play later on insistence from Mali's family and relatives. Ramani recalls 'Mali was great, unapproachable in musical stature'.

We at SRLKM, humbly pass on our heartfelt condolences to his family members.



Karnataka Kalashree for SRLKM



Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira has been awarded the prestigious state award “Karnataka Kalashree” by the ‘Karnataka Sangeetha Nrutya Academy’. The award

will be dedicated to G Vedanta Iyengar who started the institution 60 years ago. GV Krishnaprasad says that this is a mark of acknowledgement by the Karnataka Sangeetha Nrutya Academy for the committed work the institution has been rendering for several decades.

Here is the full list of Karnataka Kalashree award covering Karnatak Classical music for the year 2015.

1. Gudibande Kumaraswamy (Bengaluru)
2. Rajalakshmi Sridhar (Mysuru)
3. MR Sainath (Mangaluru)
4. Virupasandra Gopalakrishna Chair (Chickballapur)

Award presentation ceremony is slated for 19 Dec, 2015 at Ravindra Kalakshetra.

Awards and Titles
<p>Govt. of Karnataka</p> <p>Mridanga Vidwan VS Rajagopal (He will be honoured with Raja Sangeetha Vidwan award) on 13 October 2015</p> <p>Nadasurabhi</p> <p>22 Annual Music Festival 2015 Sangeetha Kala Acharya Vid. Neela Ramgopal (will be honoured with Sangeetha Surabhi) on 08 November 2015</p> <p>Bangalore Gayana Samaja</p> <p>47th Music Conference Vidhushi MS Sheela (Will be honoured with Sangeetha Kalarathna) on 01 November 2015</p>

Nadasurabhi 22 Annual Music Festival 2015 - Scheeule	
03 Nov 2015 Tuesday 06.00 pm	Sanjay Subrahmanyam (Vocal), S Varadarajan (Violin), Neyveli B Venkatesh (Mridangam), Alathur T Rajaganesh (Kanjari)
04 Nov 2015 Wednesday 06.00 pm	Saketharaman (Vocal), Mysore M Nagaraj (Violin), HS Sudhindra (Mridangam), Ranganatha Chakravarthi (Ghatam)
05 Nov 2015 Thursday 06.00 pm	Dr. M Manjunath (Violin), Dr. M Jayanthi (Veena), KU Jayachandra Rao (Mridangam), Guruprasanna (Kanjari)
06 Nov 2015 Friday 06.00 pm	Malladi Brothers - Sriram Prasad, Ravikumar (Vocal), Charulatha Ramanujam (Violin), Tumkur B Ravishankar (Mridangam), Tumkur Shashishankar (Ghatam)
07 Nov 2015 Saturday 06.00 pm	Ranjani and Gayathri (Vocal), HM Smitha (Violin), Delhi Sairam (Mridangam), Omkar Rao (Ghatam)
08 Nov 2015 Sunday 10.00 am	Neela Ramgopal (Vocal), Charulatha Ramanujam (Violin), KU Jayachandra Rao (Mridangam), Sukanya Ramgopal (Ghatam)
08 Nov 2015 Sunday 06.00 pm	Shanmukhapriya and Haripriya (Vocal Duet), VV Srinivasa Rao, Delhi Sairam, BS Purushothaman

The Five Elements in Music - A Conversation with Vid. Abhishek Raghuram

Sachi R Sachidananda

In Steven Spielberg's Tintin classic 3D animated movie (2011), there is an incredible chase in a fictitious Moroccan port Bagghar, with the ever intrepid Tintin chasing on a motorbike a devilishly clever falcon after it flies away clutching a couple of terribly important medieval scrolls, with a trigger-happy villain Sakharine in tow. The space-and-time-warping action, full of daredevilry, improvisation and surprise attacks, is sure to raise your pulse rate and stop your breath. In other words, it's the same feeling as you get while listening to an Abhishek Raghuram concert. Described variously as a creative volcano, a Shaolin master, and sometimes a risk for heart patients, this young vocalist Abhishek (b. 1985) is rewriting the word improvisation in Carnatic music. His forays into impossibly fast akaaras, brighas, 3D glides, ragamalika/talamalika swaras, and grahabheda cycles, make us

wonder again and again how he comes up with such renditions within the confines of Carnatic music. Listen to Abhishek any time, live or in a recording – be it an RTP in Todi, Mohana, Kalyani, or Shanmukhapriya, or ragas like Behag, Shahana, Vasantha/Lalitha, or Natakurinji. The effect is always the same. What a masterly trapeze act! What firepower in music indeed! Yes. Fire. Every bit of music is combustible in Abhishek's approach. He ignites it with an unprecedented creativity. But then, isn't fire one of the five elements, discussed at length in the Upanishads as God's raw materials for all life and matter, also called Prakriti? Hasn't Muthuswami Dikshitar composed five brilliant songs on the panchabhuta linga kshetras? In music, if fire were for creativity, earth would be for a solid grounding in lakshana and lakshya of music. Water would be for the aesthetic connect with audiences, air would represent a lightness of being, and finally ether would depict that inner sky of musical and personal evolution. I decide to go and talk to Abhishek himself, at his home in Chennai, about all these aspects in his music.



Abhishek deflects the discussion from his volcanic musical creativity. He simply says the inner fire or sparks in a musician are a part of his journey, what he wants to sing and how. The sparks are delightful moments no doubt; even sometimes milestones, but the audience will not sense it always. I tell Abhishek that Arunachala is the Agni kshetra, and Shanmukha is called Agni-ja! Abhishek's first album under his own label "Arunachala" is a Pallavi Darbar RTP in Shanmukhapriya (rendered extempore!). But he doesn't make a big deal of the connection. For him, Arunachala, Maharishi Ramana, J. Krishnamurthi, or Mahaperiyava, are all inspirations for living in a particular way just as great musicians have inspired him to sing in a particular way. In fact he feels his journey is already mapped out from above, and he is only walking the way. This perspective gives me an idea of Abhishek's inner sky. It is rather simple- he lives his music, and lives his musical values. After fifteen years of singing, Abhishek considers that the Carnatic "genre" or eco-system is self-sufficient for his musical journey. He doesn't mind trying out or singing



other genres like Hindustani music, but feels that Carnatic music sung by someone “specialising” in Carnatic music alone is different from the Carnatic music sung by someone else who sings other genres too. Abhishek’s upbringing and musical growth has been nurtured by notable musicians in his family, starting with grandfather, the mridangam legend Vid. Palghat Raghu, father Raghuram a mridangist, his mother a violinist from the Lalgudi family, grandmother Vid. Lalgudi Rajalakshmi, aunt Veenai Jayanthi, uncle violinist Vid. Kumaresh, other uncles -violinist Sri Ananthakrishnan and Hindustani vocalist Sri Narayan (trained under Ustad Amir Khan and also uncle of ghazal singer Hariharan), and cousin mridangist Vid. Anantha. He realises only now what a head start it was, growing up in the midst of so many great musicians. Also being an only child, he got undivided attention from everyone, in all ways!

Abhishek turns wistful talking about his grandfather. Sri Raghu used to walk everyday from Egmore to Nungambakkam in the hot sun, to pick up Abhishek from PSBB School. On the return trip, they would take a bus, as Sri Raghu didn’t want the grandson to walk the distance. The mridangam legend was always completely independent and self-sufficient, preparing the mridangam late into the night for the next day even after an exhausting concert. Abhishek says his grandfather had a rare intensity, and gave his all to the family. Even if there was only a thin audience in a concert, Sri Raghu made no compromise and delivered a stellar performance. Abhishek talks about the magnificent treasure of compositions- Thyagaraja’s pancharatna krithis, Dikshitar’s chaturdasha ragamali-

ka, and Shyama Shastri’s swarajathis. When I mention Abhishek’s wonderful rendition of Chandram Bhaja Manasa (Dikshitar-Asaveri), Abhishek is blasé. He says, musicians ought to always focus on the full richness of the krithis rather than show off their musical prowess. The compositions of the trinity will lead the musician, his job is to just learn and present the songs in the right way. In a recent musical upanayagam on Thyagaraja’s compositions – their musical splendour, sahitya bhava, and how they should be sung, he joined his friend Erode Balaji, singing illustrative examples from Thyagaraja’s works. Thyagaraja was not merely a saint-composer, but an incomparable musical genius. In the vast body of his compositions, we have enough evidence of his unparalleled versatility and comprehensive musicianship. For Abhishek, the legend of sage Narada’s meeting and giving Thyagaraja the musical texts as a blessing is borne out by the grandeur of his compositions.

From childhood, Abhishek has been listening to compositions, to as many versions and recordings as possible. First under his grandfather, then his guru Sri P.S. Narayanaswamy, who has taught him many songs and also guided their absorption. Whereas Abhishek learnt to reproduce the songs the way he was taught, when he came up with his own interpretation, suited to his voice and musical ideas, his guru did not stop him. At the same time, Sri PSN is always there to guide him on how to present ragas, and songs. Abhishek emphasises that his grandfather Sri Raghu and Sri PSN have been the two big pillars in his musical world. Sri Raghu used to help him in his early days

before going to Sri PSN, when he was learning songs from recordings. He also guided him in raga singing.

By listening constantly to the masters' works, Abhishek declares that he doesn't enjoy anything in life as much as he enjoys the music of the ever-greats: a GNB alapana, a Madurai Somu alapana, a Rajarathinam Pillai alapana, a KVN niraval or the Lalgudi's solos. His only claim is not his singing ability but developing a deep understanding of the music of the masters. Even that he attributes to the guidance he got from his gurus.

Abhishek feels it is impossible to match or come anywhere near these great masters. For example, GNB has sung Shahana in 4 parts in an RTP. This is stupendous given the usual tentative approach to this raga. At the end of listening to GNB's Shahana, you will be hesitant before singing your next Shahana. When I mention Abhishek's own recent concert and the remarkable Shahana RTP, he shrugs it off as nothing compared to the GNB master class.

But wasn't GNB all about brighas and not gamakas? Not at all, says Abhishek. GNB was labelled for his brighas by a particular section of people, but brighas formed only a part of his armamentarium. He had a very intellectual approach to music and invented in

fact his own style of gamakas, perhaps inspired by nagaswaram and so on. As an example, in Kalyani raga, one is supposed to just gloss over Dha. But GNB made all the seven notes of Kalyani jeeva swaras. Abhishek illustrates with examples. The result was an unprecedented personality of the Kalyani raga, with GNB's remarkable sophistication. Was it the special GNB voice? Not really. Abhishek says that beyond a point, your voice will do what you want it to do, what you want to express. The way Madurai Somu's voice sounded could well have been the result of what he wanted to sing.

The universal set of all trinity compositions has so much variety that we don't need to go anywhere else- we can do a complete concert, from start to end. Bhava, raga, tala, the rasas- they are all there, any kind of variety, and also the musical challenge. Most of Thyagaraja's compositions are actually meant for performances: Nagumomu, Ragasudharasa, Enta muddo, Mokshamu galada, Banturiti kolu, Brova bharama, Sarasa samadana, Orajupu, Marugelara, Makelara... Be it the mood of the song, or the raga fitting the sahitya, or the notes fitting the tala, Thyagaraja's songs are too perfect to be a human compositional effort, it would have been only a divine providence working through Thyagaraja. Another interesting point – Thyagaraja's many compositions are so



well suited for instrumental rendition: Niravadhi sukhada, Ninnu vina, Banturitikolu, Anathudanuganu,...Sri Lalgudi has shown their potential. That can only highlight the vastness of Thyagaraja's musical vision. There is even a fine string quartet (Sri VS Narasimhan) recording of Thyagaraja's compositions!

So Abhishek's internalising the compositions of the trinity, and deep understanding of the music of the masters, has moulded his music and that's what matters most to him as a Carnatic musician. He reminds me of Jonathan Livingstone Seagull.

We are half way in the conversation. It is clear to me that the fire in Abhishek's music is coming from the earth element- his being so grounded in the classical inspirations and ingredients of Carnatic music.

How long would Abhishek take to internalise a composition before presenting it? A surprising answer: there is no hard and fast rule. Recently he sang Rajavedale on the same day he learnt it. He had earlier heard and absorbed the melody and could well have done niraval for the song even before learning the sahitya! Abhishek says the test for a true musician is to learn and present a song even if it's given just before going on the stage. There have been occasions when he has sung a pallavi for the very first time on the stage. This happens because of so many genius

musician friends and well-wishers. A pallavi idea from Vid. Palghat Sreeram was presented right away in Idea Jalsa.

Is this not the fire element, his musical edge? Abhishek shrugs and says many other musicians have also done it. No big deal.

I point out that listening to Abhishek is always an adventure. He seems to be an explorer taking us on a journey into an unexplored forest. The adventure gives many wonderful surprises, and if rarely the experience is less than perfect, it is to be accepted humbly. He heartily agrees. If we explore Todi in a new way, finally it is Todi that wins, neither the singer nor the audience.

How does Abhishek construct a pallavi? Is it driven by raga, or tala, or what? Off the bat, a pallavi is foremost about the niraval. Swaras, trikalams etc. come later. He remembers the Sri TNS pallavi in Kalyani (Mishra-triputa 4 kalai) he sang in Jaya TV. He chose it as it is ideal for niraval exploration.

Abhishek changes tack and raises the tricky subject of remuneration for musicians. He is committed to creating a fair system of artiste payments so that musicians are not left in want. The musician community should earn enough for them to pursue music as a career option. Also a fair remuneration will make musicians go beyond one's own needs and serve



common interests, like helping other musicians in need, or support the upkeep of some sabhas and concert halls. To bring in equity in this matter of remuneration, the current situation of each artiste taking care merely of his own interests should end.

We come to the aspect of music's aesthetic value, its "entertainment". The water element translates to musical "rasa". Abhishek is clear that a musician has to give musical delight to the audience. Our audiences may enjoy the sahitya, feel bhakti. But Abhishek feels that going beyond the confines of Hindu mythology and sahitya will extend the reach of music, as a pure "musical" experience. When Abhishek recently performed to a predominantly non-Indian audience in Paris, they enjoyed Carnatic music for its sounds and silences. They did not know any lyrics. It was a regular concert with violin and mridangam, singing songs in Mayamalavagowla, Reetigowla, Purvikalyani, Sindhu Bhairavi.

He feels even in India, many young audiences listen to Carnatic music, and even learn it, for its sounds, not merely lyrics. This will enhance the universal reach of Carnatic music. There will still be its emotive appeal, like joy, love, pathos, and playfulness, even without going into sahitya and Hindu mythology. He gives the example of his better half, who has no background in Carnatic music and listens to his music with "fresh" ears. Her feedback after concerts is very important to him. He feels that ranjakatva, or rasa in his music comes out of emphasising the music and de-emphasising its religious dimensions.

Abhishek's forays beyond concerts, e.g. the Sri Ilayaraja's album "Swappnam", the album "Kadhalan Bharathi", and his compositions for Vid. Jayanthi's album "Mysterious Duality", give an insight to his penchant for musical soundscapes, unfettered by Carnatic sahitya.

Abhishek shares another nugget. He says that the two musicians with fire in their music, whom he knew very closely and accords the same respect as his grandfather, are Khanjira Vidwan Harishankar and Mandolin Vidwan Shrinivas. Incidentally, they were both at the top of their art when they passed on.

Abhishek has seen the chemistry between the two maestros Sri Raghu and Sri Shrinivas on stage on many occasions. Abhishek says with pride that Sri Shrinivas congratulated him when he performed at Thiruvaiyyaru aradhana, just before the mandolin wizard. Abhishek also laughs when he recollects how, just before a concert, Sri Shrinivas used to pray for a

while, placing in front his instrument with its case open, filled with pictures of various gods. When asked what he prayed for, he said "for good imagination"! And for Abhishek, mandolin Shrinivas epitomises musical imagination.

Khanjira Vid. Harishankar was such a wizard that once, when a large Indian percussion ensemble performed with all top class artistes in front of the British queen, she singled him out for compliment, asking to meet "that musician who played that one-handed drum". Abhishek feels it is immensely satisfying to listen to a well-balanced concert, with optimal amplification for all, including khanjira/ghatam, as only then is the sound of the Carnatic music complete. Old recordings have that quality unlike now.

Khanjira is an instrument on which Abhishek has played at the top level also. He also admires the wonderful percussion instrument called idakka (edaykka), a most difficult instrument played only by one particular community, Marars in Kerala. Abhishek recently performed in a Lakshmana temple in Kerala hinterland, just with idakka accompaniment.

We talk about "popular" stars. Some musicians are able to pull crowds; however, some pundits say their music lacks serious depth. Abhishek has a different take on this. He says music is like cinema- each type of music has its own audience. He listens to all types of music, and all musicians without reservation. If a musician develops a style of music that creates a dedicated audience, then the musician is doing something right. Whatever it is, popular artistes have worked at it, and are doing it smartly. Abhishek says music is all about rasa and one should not label music as high and low.

We come now to another dimension. Can a musician benefit from a lightness of being (the wind or air element!)? Abhishek feels that this lightness of being comes from music itself. First of all, musical honesty is very important. Not only does he enjoy listening to the old masters, Abhishek also feels such listening gives one also a realistic assessment of oneself, with an openness to great music in anyone anywhere. When he threw a very tough challenge to the kids enrolled in the Carnatic Choir: they had to sing datu varise cycling through three different ragas- Mayamalavagowla, Hindola, Mohana- line by line, it looked impossibly difficult. But within a day every kid had cracked it and they were all able to sing that! If they could do so much at their level, it humbles a performing musician to think about his own journey. Then there is a violinist in his teens, Vaibhav Ramani,

who surprised his guru Sri Kumaresh by learning all the 72 melakarta scales overnight. He also amazed Abhishek by playing the Shahana varnam chitteswara at 2X speed compared to Abhishek's own fast-paced version. A friend B. Jayaram, who is blind, recently recorded a song for the album Kadhalan Bharathi in his pristine voice, learning the song on the spot and delivering his lines perfectly, despite being unable to read the words. Abhishek says that recording a song in a studio with all the orchestra and so on is extremely difficult even when one can readily see the words.

The element Akasha, or the inner sky of the musician: what does it mean to Abhishek? Abhishek gives a disarmingly simple answer. He has long ago realised that his destiny, his path, his life's abiding theme, is music, music and music. Whatever happens in his outward journey, and inner journey, is all about music. The choices one makes from time to time may undergo change, but not the very journey. Just last

year, he met with a major car accident when he was miraculously saved and suffered only minor injuries. He was face to face with the thin line between life and death. This was a reality check. Having witnessed two deaths (his grandfather and mother) as well as the birth of his child, he knows very intensely that the most important thing in life is to make people close to him feel like a king or a queen when they are there. Similarly, he has to do his best through his music for his audiences. The worst thing that can happen to anyone is regret. If he did not love and take care of people near and dear, he would invite regret. If he did not pursue music, he will surely regret it. That sums up his two values, his inner journey. What makes Abhishek himself feel like a king? Listening to the choicest of music from the masters. That is everything. Living in the here and now, in the richness of its spirit. Music is the best thing that man can pursue.

Veeneya Bedagu and awards

Swaramurthy VN Rao Memorial Trust conducted the annual music festival "Veeneya Bedagu" from 29th July 2015 to 2nd Aug 2015, at Bangalore Gayana Samaja auditorium. Veena Sheshanna memorial national award was conferred on veteran violinist M Chandrasekaran. MS Sheela received the Swara-

murthy VN Rao memorial National Award. Each award carries a purse of Rs. 50,000., a bust of Veena Sheshanna and other paraphernalia. Sri. N Murali, Chairman of the music academy, presented the awards.



Endaro Mahaanubhavulu

S Anand, Editor

The small town of Tiruvayaru wakes up during the Thyagaraja Aradhana festival in January every year. Five day musical festival on the banks of Kaveri to pay respects to Saint Thyagaraja who was born here in 1767 is attended by people from all over the globe. Thyagaraja attained Samadhi on January 6, 1847.

Thyagaraja Swamy took sanyasa during the latter part of his life after the passing away of his wife. Hence he was not cremated but was buried according to tradition and a vrindavan (garden) built on his samadhi. The holy texts prescribe that the proper way to pay homage is through chanting of holy texts, homas and other Vedic rituals that invoke the spirit of the Divine

Initially, the Aradhana was conducted by his grandson, Thyagaraja Iyer along with his direct disciples till 1885. Unfortunately his grandson passed away in 1885. Then his Antaranga Shishyas and other direct disciples continued the tradition. Over the years,



Nonagenarian Chellam Iyer forms a very important link to the Thyagabrahma Aradhana at Thiruvaiyaru. The Thyagabrahma Aradhana Kainkarya Trust conducts Vedic rituals during the five days of the Aradhana.

different people conducted the ceremonies and it was in 1940 that a school teacher, K Lakshminarayan or Chellam Iyer as he is popularly known, took it upon himself to conduct the annual Vedic ceremonies without a single break. A typical ceremony agenda today includes, Veda Parayanam, Akhanda Rama nama japam, Srimad Ramayana parayanam, Tulasi Laksharchana for Lord Rama, Lalitha Sahasranama Laksharchana and other pujas besides Veda Sadas representing all 11 shakas of the four Vedas. It is sad that famous and popular musicians participate and partake in the rendering of the pancharatna kritis and only few of them take part in the relatively low-key Vedic celebration spearheaded by Chellam Iyer.

For Chellam Iyer, the Aradhana is a mission that occupies his thoughts all the time and he leaves no stone unturned to make it happen every year. Infirmary does not stop him from visiting philanthropists, distributing pamphlets and spreading the message.

He says, 'my desire is that people in large numbers should learn about the Kainkarya aspect of the festival and participate in it. This is the only way one can pay respects to Thyagaraja and the deity he loved and worshipped all his life. The tradition should be kept alive.'

Born and brought up in Thiruvaiyaru, Chellam Iyer retired as an English and Science teacher from the Govt. Higher secondary School in 1978. After living for 80 years in Thiruvaiyaru, he now lives in Chennai for the last decade. His single minded devotion to the saint is remarkable and awe inspiring. He himself is a talented singer and yogic practitioner. It was in 1984 that Chellam Iyer and a few others of Thillaisthanam tradition formed this trust that even

today continues the religious part of the Aradhana celebrations that began in the time of Thillaisthanam Rama Iyengar; Thyagaraja's Antaranga Shishya.

Evolution over the years

Tyagaraja Swami's maternal grandson Thyagaraja Iyer performed pujas at Swami's samadhi till 1885, and upon his death, the saint's disciples such as Thillaisthanam Rama Iyengar continued the annual aradhana at Subbarama Bhagavatar's residence, and Rama Iyengar also made arrangements for daily puja at the samadhi.

In 1903, granite replaced the brick structure of the samadhi thanks to Sundara Bhagavatar and Krishna Bhagavatar, known as the Umayalpuram Brothers. This was recorded by them in an inscription, which also referred to Thillaisthanam Rama Iyengar as the 'Anthranga Shishya' of Thyagaraja. Chellam Iyer refers to a photograph of the slab with the inscription.

Upon Rama Iyengar's death, his disciples Narasimha Bhagavatar and Panchu Bhagavatar continued the aradhana pooja. Until 1907, there were no music concerts during the aradhana. It was in 1908 that Narasimha Bhagavatar and his younger brother Panchu Bhagavatar held a five-day aradhana festival that included harikathas and concerts, and the celebration took place, at Pachiappa's choultry, No. 2 Tirumanjana Veedhi, which was where Chellam Iyer's grandfather Gopalakrishna Iyer resided.

To raise money for the next year's festival, Narasimha Bhagavatar presented a Harikatha on Tyagaraja swamigal, at Tondaimandala High School, Mint Street, Madras, on December 20, 1908. Panchu Bhagavatar went round the villages near Tiruvaiyaru, collecting rice, pulses and vegetables, because the brothers had to ensure that those who came for the celebrations were provided food.

When Narasimha Bhagavatar and Panchu Bhagavatar fell out, those who took the side of the elder brother became the Peria katchi (katchi meaning group), and those in the other camp became the Chinna katchi. On February 17, 1914, Panchu Bhagavatar set up the 'Tyagabrahma Vaibhava Prakasa Sabha', with Pandit Lakshmanachar as the president and Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar as the vice-president, to conduct the aradhana. Sangita vidwans could become members, upon payment of an annual fee of 10 rupees. "Apart from this executive committee, a reception committee was also set up, and that included grandfather of Chellam Iyer (Gopalakrishna Iyer). Panchu

Bhagavatar retained the right to perform the first puja at the samadhi.

After the quarrel with his brother, Narasimha Bhagavatar celebrated the aradhana in Kumbakonam, but when he died, the Peria katchi too resumed its celebrations in Tiruvaiyaru. "Until 1914, the Chinna katchi festival was held in Pachiappa's choultry, in 1915 and 1916 in Balayee chatram, 1917-1925 in Pushya mandapam, and 1926-1939 in Central High school.

The Peria katchi would serve lunch early in the morning, but the Chinna katchi would serve food only after their elaborate pujas. Many people would be the first to eat at the Peria katchi festival in the

Forthcoming Concerts

11 October, Sunday, 5.30 pm

Shanthala Subramanya - Flute, Akkarai Sornalatha - Violin, Vijay Natesan - Mridangam

08 to 11 October, 04-07 pm

Workshop on rare compositions of Saint Tyagaraja and Thillanas

30 October to 01 November, 5.30 pm

Music festival in association with 'Suswaralaya College of Music'

08 November, Sunday, 5.30 pm

Bharat Ratna M.S. Subbulakshmi Birth Centenary Celebrations continuation programme at Dr. Premachandra Sagar Auditorium
OS Thyagarajan - Vocal, BK Raghu - Violin, Dr. K. Ashok - Mridangam, G Omkar Rao - Ghatam

21 November, Saturday, 5.30 pm

Lecture Demonstration by Prince Rama Varma
"Complementary aspects of Vocal and Instrumental Music"

22 November, Sunday, 5.30 pm

Book release function - Compositions of Sangeetha Kalanidhi Mysore Vasudevacharya with notations in English

06 December, Sunday, 5.30 pm

Ramana Balachander - Veena
GS Ramanujam - Mridangam



morning, and the last to eat at the Chinna katchi festival. That way they had the best of both worlds.

After the death of Pandit Lakshmanachar in 1919, his successors - Mayavaram Vaidyanatha Iyer and Thanjavur Govinda Bhagavatar - died soon after they assumed office. Soolamangalam Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar then took over as president, but Sabesa Iyer and a few others fell out with him, and in 1923, they had separate celebrations. But the two factions of the Chinna katchi patched up in 1924.

After Bangalore Nagaratnamma built the samadhi and performed the kumbabishekam in 1925, she handed over the keys to Ramudu Bhagavatar, great-grandson of Tyagaraja's brother, and on Bahula Panchami day, Chinna katchi had to take the help of the Tiruvaiyaru Sub-Magistrate Das Rao to do their annual puja.

In 1926, Chinna katchi's right to perform the aradhana puja was upheld by the court and Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar was elected president of the party.

Nagaratnamma wanted to give a concert during the aradhana, but both factions were united in denying her an opportunity. And that heralded the entry of yet another group in 1927, that of Nagaratnamma. Individual Aradhana festivals were conducted by three factions on three different platform from then on.

The year 1940 saw the three factions come together, and it was only after this that lady artistes also began to perform at the aradhana and the practice of group singing of Pancharatna kritis began.

In November 1984, Chellam Iyer, S. Parthasarathy and a few others of the Thillaisthanam tradition, formed a Trust called 'Sadguru Thyagabrahma Aradhana Kainkarya Trust, Madras,' that even today continues the religious part of the aradhana celebrations under the guidance of Chellam Iyer that began in the time of Thillaisthanam Rama Iyengar.

The present managing trustee, former chartered accountant and auditor turned Vedic purohit, Radhakrishna G Seshappa from Bangalore, hopes to continue this age-old tradition and involve more musicians and people from all walks of life. He urges people to join the Vedic celebrations with as much enthusiasm as they do the musical festivities and make donations in cash or kind.

It was in the year 2009 that the Trust received the blessings of Sringeri Mahaswamiji and was affiliated to the Dakshinamaya Sri Sharada Peethem, Sringeri. His Holiness Sri Sri Jagadguru Ananthasrivibhooshitha Bharathi Theertha Mahaswamiji has been guiding and supporting the trust and its activities.

Bharathi-Thyagaraja Samman award

The CEO and Administrator of the Sringeri Mutt, Padma Shri Dr. VR Gowrishankar's personal contribution to the activities of the Trust have been immense in the last few years. For the first time, a national-level award 'The Bharathi Thyagaraja Samman' has been instituted to recognise and honour musicians, dancers, Vedic scholars, Sanskrit poets and others. The winner is shortlisted by the Sringeri Swamiji himself. The awards celebrate the different facets of the saint's achievements. (Also see centre spread photograph).



Sri Sri Jagadguru Shankaracharya Mahasamsthanam, Dakshinamnaya Sri Sharada Peetham, Sringeri

BHARATHI THYAGARAJA SAMMAN - 2015

Karunbithil Sangeetha Shibhira

Thanmayee Krishnamurthy, Disciple of TM Krishna

As a kid, I eagerly awaited for my summer holidays every year, not just for a vacation, but to experience the Shibira at “Karunbithil” house in a small hamlet called Nidle, near Dharmasthala. This house, located amidst a hilly backdrop, lush greenery, cashew and arecanut trees, resonates with Karnatik music, day and night with tutoring, lecture demonstrations, concerts by students, teachers and renowned musicians during the week of the Shibira. Sri Vittal Ramamurthy, a prime disciple of PadmaBhushan Lalgudi Jayaraman and his entire family have been living their mother Vidushi Krishnaveniamma’s dreams by hosting this annual Shibira in Gurukula style from past fifteen years at their ancestral home.

Renowned artists like Sri Lalgudi Jayaraman, Dr. M Balamurali Krishna, Sri. Umayalapuram K. Sivaraman, Sri. M. Chandrashekharan, Sri Vellore Ramabhadhran, Sri Kamalakar Rao, Sri T.M. Krishna, Sri Neyveli Santanagoplan, Sri Vijaysiva, Smt S Soumya, and many more have graced the camp in these 15 years and

mentored students. In addition to learning the aesthetics of music from these legendary artists, staying under the same roof and interacting with the maestros in close quarters has been a humbling experience to all attendees.

The Shibira was initiated in the year 2001 by Smt Rajarajeswari Bhat, a sibling of Sri Vittal Ramamurthy, with her ten students. It is now being presided by the Vidwan, his family and a few patrons as an annual event, accommodating nearly 200 students from in and around south-Canara. The family of five siblings, with the blessings of their parents and help of a few patrons, have since then conducted the Shibira every year during the month of May. Today, this shibira is a global affair, and many students from abroad fly down to experience this unique musical extravaganza.

A typical Shibira day starts early in the morning with the rhythm of chirping birds and the aroma of fresh coffee and breakfast in typical south-Canara style. As



early as 5 am, sounds of akara sadhana and music lessons set the tone for the day to come. Formal classes, which starts at 9am go on till 5pm, with a kashaya (a traditional drink) and a lunch break in between. Classes are planned and conducted with an intention to inspire and help students of all levels. Simple bhajans to complicated krutis, padams, RTP (ragam-tanam-pallavi) and so on are taught during the Shibira. The evening performance sessions provide every student an opportunity to come out and perform on stage. The presentations vary from simple geetams and krutis to elaborate concerts depending on the student's capability. Concerts by the virtuosos fill the air with inspiration.

This year, the Shibira was held between May 14th and 19th and was graced by the Oscar nominee Vidushi Bombay Jayashri, and Vidwan Abhishek Raghuram. Senior musicians like Sri Udupi Gopala Krishna, Sri Umayalapuram Mali and many more also blessed the students with their guidance. On the first three days, Bombay Jayashri taught the students some beautiful bhajans, krutis in raga Kosalam, Kam-bodi and so on. Sri. Umayalapuram Mali gave lecture demonstrations on interesting aspects of Laya. Smt. Rupa Gopal, a Chennai based art critique presented a documentary on Vidushi M.L. Vasantha Kumari. Sri. Abhishek Raghuram, an amalgamation of energy and talent, joined the second half of the Shibira, and galvanised the pupils. Sri Abhishek's classes on voice culture and akara-sadhana was a real energy booster and his classes continued till mid nights. Sri. Abhishek taught krutis in Kamas, Madyamavati and a few tuku-das. Abhishek, enthralled the students not just by his

singing, but also with his Mridangam accompaniment to Sri. Udupi Gopala Krishna. The highlight of this year's shibira also included a surprise concert of Sri Abhishek Raghuram with Vishaal Sapuram, Akshay Anand and Apoorva Krishna, words of blessings by Sri Devendra Pejathaya, a great orator and writer of Kannada and Tulu literature, an astonishing Yakshagana performance by Master Chinmaya and so on.

Apart from learning music, students have a lot of fun staying in Nidle. The traditional south-Canara food, exploring the hills and near-by farms, musical exchanges with peers and artists until mid-night are part of this enriching experience. Versatile students get an opportunity to show their talents like mimicry, Bharathanatyam, Yakshagana and other art forms.

The Shibira stands out as perfect example of "giving back to the society", with no expectation of any monetary returns. The aim of Sri Vittal Ramamurthy's family is to create a path into the music world for the rural students who have been isolated from the world of Karnatik music. This Shibira has been immensely contributing towards creating a Karnatik community in and around the Mangalore and Udupi districts. Many students who are regular attendees of the Shibira have taken music as their subject of study, shaping up into good musicians and performing artists and teachers today. As a part of this family, I feel very fortunate to have been a part of this Shibira as a student, performer and host year after year. Even today, I eagerly wait for the month of May just so that I can travel to Nidle for the Shibira.



Ajatha Shathru, Mridangam Maestro ML Veerabadraiah

CP Chikkanna

In the Golden era of Carnatic Music, amongst the most sought after Mrudanga Vidwans of Karnataka, Mrudanga Maestro M.L.Veerabhadraiah has occupied a prominent place.

Born into a Telugu Shastry family, his father Lingappa Shastry was a vocalist, a Harikatha Exponent, an astrologer and a scholar. He taught his children basic lessons in music. His younger son, Veerabhadra developed a keen interest in the art of playing Mrudangam. His elder brother, Nanjunda Shastry who was a Tabla Player, taught the rudiments/primary lessons in Mrudangam.

Young Veerabhadra was highly influenced by the artistry of Pudukottai Subramanya Iyer. Watching his son's keen interest in Mrudangam, Lingappa Shastry sent his son to Tanjore, where he came under the tutelage of Vydyanatha Iyer and his Principle disciple Palghat Mani Iyer under Gurukula Vasa.

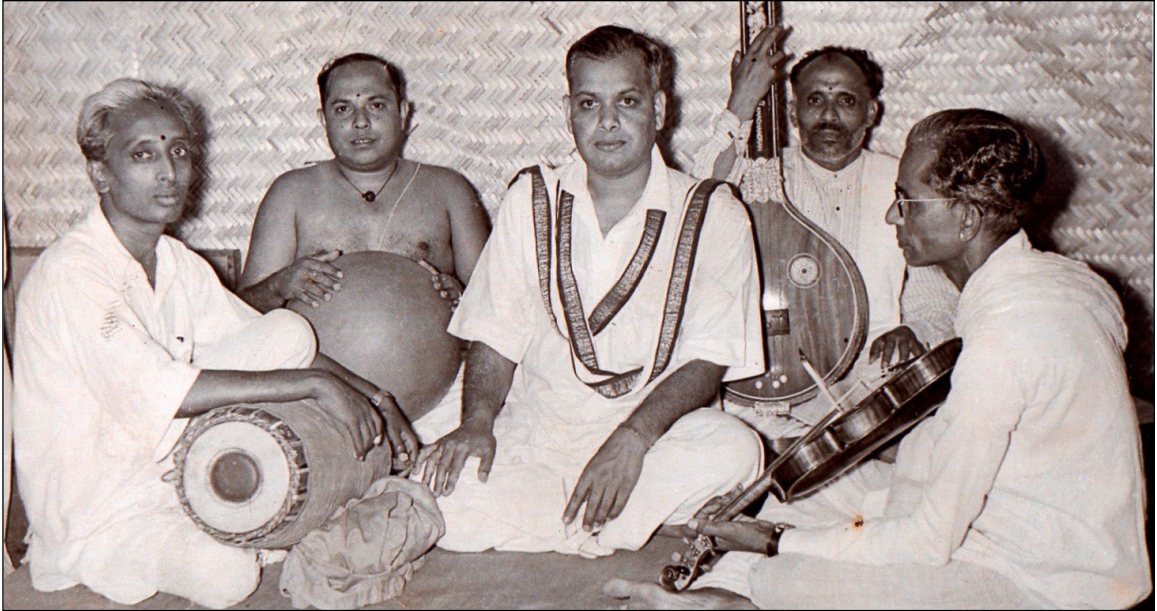
He soon acquired proficiency in the art of playing Mrudangam and settled down in Bengaluru.

His quick anticipation, adjustment and adoptability to the main performer's form and standard, his unstinted persuasive support irrespective of the fact whether they performed, be an amateur or established and carried the concert to higher level emulating his Guru, the legendary Mani Iyer.

Second reason for Veerabhadraiah's busy professional Schedule is his humility and safe nature. He never demanded flat remuneration and quietly accepted whatever money he received from the main performers/organisers. This soft nature was amply misused by many who received hefty payment and paid a pittance to Veerabadraiah. On instance is worth recounting here.

For a marriage concert, I arranged his Mrudangam and Late KS Manjunath's Ghatam accompaniment to Veena Chitti Babu's recital at Chikkamagalore during





the 1980's. After returning to his room, he opened the envelope containing his remuneration. Without waiting for a minute he carried the envelope to the marriage hall and told the host, that by mistake someone's envelope has been handed over to him!

Touched by his predicament, the hosts informed him that it is the remuneration I have fixed for him besides his travel expenses. It was Rs.750/- + Bus Fare. On his return to Bangalore he met me and expressed his joy. I told him that this amount too is a paltry sum for his caliber and nature. He revealed with moist eyes that during his long stint, his remuneration rarely reached three figures!.

He was always held in high esteem by leading performers. Once, we arranged Dr. Bala Murali Krishna's vocal recital in the Ganesha festival at Rama Iyengar Road, Visveshwarapuram, Bangalore. S. Seshagiri Rao, M.L. Veerabhadraiah, and K.S. Manjunath were the accompanists.

In Balamurali's room, while interacting with him, we casually mentioned Veerabhadraiah's soft nature and his neglect by the State Government to suitably honour him.

Bala Murali asked us to arrange a function to honour Veerabhadraiah and promised to perform free in the function besides bringing his closest friend, the then Governor of Karnataka. His excellence, Sri Ashoknath Banerji.

Myself, Mr. V. Bhaskar, the then Music Critic in the Hindu, the Late S. Ramachandra, the Late U. Krishnan of M/s. Parthasarathy Swamy Sabha fame and Mr. M. Bayyannachar of Tumkur jointly organised the function at the Institute of Engineer's Hall, Bengaluru. We sent a biography of Mr. Veerabhadraiah to the then

CM, Mr. Ramakrishna Hegde and requested him to preside over the function in our covering letter.

In the absence of any response from the CM's Office, we concentrated on the arrival of HIS Excellency and were waiting at the main gate of the Hall. To our dismay, came the CM's convoy 10 minutes before the Governor's arrival! The CM was accompanied by his cabinet colleagues Mr. Raghupathy and Dr. Jeevaraj Alwa.

In my welcome address, I drew the attention of the dignitaries on the dais, the yeoman services of Mr. Veerabhadraiah to society and for uplifting the art and the lack of suitable honours in the State level in recognition of his art. Replying on behalf of the CM, Mr. Raghupathy mentioned that the CM was very enthusiastic to attend the function not as a dignitary but as a common man that too in a function graced by HIS Excellency and Dr. Balamurali Krishna. He declared that Mr. Veerabhadraiah would receive the State award on the occasion of Karnataka Rajyotsava on November First.

Such occasions where State Chief Minister and the Governor participating in a private function is very rare. He was a top grade AIR and TV artiste. He served as a visiting professor in the newly stated music course in the Bangalore University. Several awards, honours and rewards were showered on him in his later stage. Despite his busy schedule, he was a versatile Guru. Amongst his disciples, mention could be made of his son Master Praveen and Kanjira Vidwan B.S. Purushotham.

A Temple of Music

Anand S, Editor

It is another glorious day at the temple town of Udupi and at 5 am, 'Lathangi' the house of Hebbar's is already hustling and bustling with activities. The ardent and disciplined disciples of Hebbar's have their day cut out starting with Yoga followed by music practice and school. For Archana Upadhyaya, Samanvi and Gargi Shabaraya, 'Lathangi' is meant to be a temple to pursue their music with utmost devotion. It is a home away from home, but they consider themselves part and parcel of the Hebbar family. Prof. Aravinda Hebbar calls it 'shishyakulavasa' referring to the way they are being looked after as though their own children.

Prof. Aravinda Hebbar says, it has been a journey for over 25 years to bring music to the people of Udupi and in general the western parts of Karnataka. While the place was famous for art forms like Yakshagana, the music never flourished here. It all started in 1989 under the banner 'Raga Dhana' to which he gave his heart and soul. Bringing music to this part of the country was like creating a farmhouse in the interior of a desert!. The path was never easy, but the zeal and determination of Prof. Aravinda Hebbar made all



Rajamohan Varamballi, BIL of Aravinda Hebbar was to support and encourage the Hebbar's morally and financially during their journey. Hebbar's attribute a lot to him on what they and 'Raga Dhana' has achieved.

this a reality. Today 'Raga Dhana' boasts of over 2000 concerts, highly cultured audience and few students emerging as a formidable force to reckon with.

One such rare artiste was to be born on 09.09.1983. It was a festival of Gowri and for the Hebbar couple, it was like goddess Parvathi born into their family. Ranjani Hebbar, naturally inclined to music from birth was to receive one of the finest of the parenting in the days to come. For Hebbar couple, it was an obsession to mould her into a great musician and they gave everything towards this goal. 'Lathangi' was the epicentre of all activities leading to her education in music, be it lecture-demonstrations, chamber music, discussions, etc. The significance of this was so much that the effect was felt across Udupi and served the larger cause of 'Raga Dhana' to promote and propagate music in the area. As Ranjani developed, the Hebbar's also perfected the art of guiding/training/upbringing through first hand experience.

Ranjani Hebbar was god's gift to the music, though He decided to keep it short. She achieved so much in such a short time that people were beginning to think if she was getting nearer to some of our own legends. Ranjani at the age of 3 was able to identify many ragas and was even attentive throughout the concerts clearly reflecting god's intention. Annavarapu Ramaswamy hearing young Ranjani in Vijayawada could not resist but compared the concert to the first concert he heard of the legend MS Subbulakshmi. At a very young age, she was acknowledged and accepted by artists, rasikas and sabhas in Chennai that reflected her calibre. Awards and recognitions followed her one after the other. Among several of them, few important are, I Prize in AIR national competition in 2000, First Rank in her BA music at



Queen Mary's College, Chennai in 2005, MS Subbulakshmi award from Bramara Trust, Mysore in 2005, Kalki Krishnamurthy Award in 2007, DK Pattammal award and TV Subba Rao memorial award at the Music Academy in 2008.

Hebbar's daughter in law Shrimati Devi is a proficient Hindustani vocalist who is a disciple of Late Sri Chandrashekhar Puranik Mutt, Sri Narayana Panditji (Kumar Gandharvaji's desciple), Smt. Padma Talwalkar of Pune and Sri Vyasamurti Katti of Bangalore. Son Saranga is a keen rasika and they live in the US.

'Lathangi School of Music' was established 15 yrs ago and many students enrolled to study music. Over time, it was decided to select few who were serious about music and train them to achieve the level of perfection Ranjani had achieved. A workshop conducted with TS Satyavathi gave the impetus and inspiration. The lucky students Gargi Shabaraya, Archana Upadhyaya and Samanvi, who were associated with the Hebbar's from their 1st Std. were handpicked for advanced continuous training. The kids used to spend long hours at 'Lathangi' and the Hebbar's took the role of parents in addition to being music teachers. Being learned people, they ensured the kids did well in their academics while focussed training on music was imparted. Often Ranjani used to get involved and on quite a few occasions the kids travelled to Rajnani's Chennai home to learn. Needless to say Hebbar's were on top of the world.

Alas, the narrative was to change drastically as fate had other plans. As always, God takes away someone he loves the most and it was unfortunate that Ranjani's journey had to end abruptly. She was diagnosed for Ovarian cancer in November 2012 and she underwent chemotherapy in December 2012. Unfortunately the cancer spread to all parts of her body and the best of the medication could not save her. She breathed her last on 09 June 2013 at 07.30 pm.

Hebbar's were shattered and it was as though the world came to a grinding halt. While they lost the most adorable daughter, they also missed a great opportunity to bring forth a musician of repute from Udupi that would bring glory to their land and family. Everything was done to divert the attention and it took a year to bring about some kind of stability.

Aravinda Hebbar says with emotion that the role played by the students and their parents are unbelievable as they stayed with the Hebbar's as though they were all a single family. It was their idea that a 'Gurukula' should be started keeping the advancement of students in mind and Hebbar's continue to enjoy being involved in music especially bringing up the kids. The co-ordination between the families was outstanding and they took over the affairs of the house, planning and dividing tasks between them. All this meant the onset of another journey for Hebbar's with a goal to bring up Gargi, Archana and Samanvi to the level of Ranjani or beyond. The involvement and commitment of Hebbar's was so much so that they took complete ownership of the kids academics

The kids consider it a punishment if they were asked to go over to their parents home...



Hebbar's with their disciples (Gargi, Archana and Samanvi) and their parents



and music. A typical day would include 15-17 hours of involvement with subjects ranging from music, musicology, Biology, story of Hamlet or any play etc.

Hebbar's established rules and procedures with a view to achieve a high level of effectiveness at the same time ensuring harmony between families. All decisions on music is completely left to the Hebbar's while the parents made decisions on their academics. Overall, it turned out to be a highly professional outfit that has already started showing results. The kids are really fortunate to be guided on music, academics as well as life skills all under one roof of 'Lathangi'. So much was Aravinda Hebbar's commitment that he resigned from 'Raga Dhana' which he nurtured from scratch just so that he can focus on the kids progression.

In this challenging world, how do the kids strike a balance between music and academics? The answer lies in the professionalism established by the Hebbar's. A monthly timetable drives all activities that is continually reviewed and corrections incorporated as needed. Clearly there is no substitute for discipline and hard work. There is a time for music and a time for studies and Hebbar's ensure that they all come together well. No wonder the kids score 90% plus consistently in their academics with Archana and Samanvi (popularly called Lathangi Sisters) being class

toppers. There are also instances where young and aspiring artists from other city like to come, experience and feel the vibrancy at 'Lathangi'.

It was a nostalgic moment when the Hebbar's surprised the kids with a trip to New Delhi immediately after the Sangeetha Yatra competition where Gargi won a prize with a purse of Rs. 30,000 (Sr. Category), Samanvi won a purse of Rs. 50000 (Jr. Category) and Archana won a purse of Rs. 30000 (Jr. Category). The big budget vacation had them travel by air for the first time to New Delhi and they had a wonderful opportunity to see the places around Delhi. The one week trip left an everlasting memory something they will relish all their life. Aravinda Hebbar says it was the best way to reward the hard work put in by the kids for the competition.

Now that the kids have reached a stage, is there a plan to give them higher education in music? Hebbar's have a plan cut out. Aravinda Hebbar says god answered their prayer quickly as Chitraveena Ravikiran readily agreed to provide higher education. In addition to this, a Customs Officer who is a third generation of Koteeswara Iyer family readily agreed to provide accommodation in Chennai free after listening to the kids. It just looks like the kids are destined to reach the peak and make a mark for themselves.

'Ranjani Memorial Trust' is formed to provide the catalyst for the journey ahead. It is a great opportunity for Hebbar's to provide focus on a few individuals and work specifically towards their career progress. The Trust distributes scholarship for the needy and talented individuals just so that it comes in handy for their musical progress. I see the overall approach to be a one stop solution to excel in music covering all aspects of music under one roof be it voice culture or Lec-Dem or musical discussion, etc. Hebbar's take the kids to musical events outside of Udupi and on return a review will determine what to include in their body of knowledge and those that are to be considered for future.

What seems to be the winning formula here is the bonding between the Hebbar's, kids and the parents. It mimics the 'Gurukula' of the good old days com-

pletely. It is something that is seen to be believed. Parents have complete confidence on the Hebbar's inspite of the fact that the kids don't live with them. The household work is so well planned and co-ordinated between the families that the house is run seamlessly without any hitch.

The sincerity and commitment with which the music is pursued is bound to deliver results. The ease and confidence with which the kids perform is astonishing. While one gets to see wonderful results from them, to an outsider, the processes that go into producing the result is invisible that is what the Hebbar's seems to have perfected. Clearly the kids show all the signs of equalling or surpassing Ranjani Guruprasad Hebbar in the days to come, and for those risikas who adored Ranjani, it will be Gods own way of compensating with atleast three Ranjani's.

Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswami, the presiding
Jagadguru Shankaracharya of Dakshinamnaya Sri Sharada Peetham at Sringeri,
receiving the 'Lalitha Kala Tarangini' and blessing
Hon. Secretary Sri GV Krishnaprasad



Music, meanings

Deepa Ganesh, Senior Associate, LKT



The framework is music. Are the physical and philosophical binary opposites? Do emotion and intellect occupy two ends of the spectrum? The answer is perhaps they don't. But where do these seemingly contrary ideas begin and end? They co-exist, argued Carnatic vocalist T.M. Krishna in a symposium, *Antaranga-Bahiranga* organised by Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira in Bangalore, recently. T.M. Krishna's lecdem was followed by a panel discussion with musicians Neela Ramgopal, H.K. Venkataram, Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma and musicologist Dr. N. Ramanathan.

Where there is bhava, there is technique as well, said TMK emphatically, responding to an audience question. Technique may perhaps be an intuitive presence, but there is no one without the other. In his lecdem, earlier on, TMK drew attention to words that are often used in music – rather soppy – indicating thought processes that are assumed to course different trajectories. “Singing is an act of thinking. Thinking is also an emotional act. The two cannot be dissociated. When an idea strikes you, it treads both the emotional and intellectual,” TMK averred, setting the tone for his talk which collapsed many bound-

aries. “Why then do musicians abhor the word ‘intellectual’? Why do they quickly tell you to ‘just sing’? While singing is the most important thing to do for a musician, you cannot divorce thought from it. It is therefore important to discuss music not just to take it forward in one's own mind, but also to recognise several other viewpoints,” he observed.

If the word ‘tradition or Sampradaya’ is hugely popular, ‘change’ is also used just as frequently. Tradition is complex for not just its meaning, but also for how it has been used and understood. The nothing-must-change doggedness is problematic, but convenient modification of tradition also makes for interesting politics. For instance, citing Tiruvottiyur Tyagiyer's work *Pallavi Swarakalpavalli*, TMK said ‘dhaivata’ in *Begada* exists in a clipped form and not in the elongated form as one sees in the practise of contemporary Carnatic music. “What we change and don't change in tradition is therefore a matter of convenience. Most changes are made from the individual's point of view, and not exactly from the point of music.”

Modernity is another word that classical musicians shun, said TMK. “So much so that if you tell a musician his music is modern, he sees it as an insult. But the very idea of Carnatic music is a modern one; its real practise can be traced to about 150 years. One should celebrate the fact that the human mind has created such a modern narrative of music.” Modernity is not a timeline, but that which is reflective, introspective and is willing to have a dialogue with the past, present and future. In fact, the bani that we talk so much about, is itself a modern creation and its presence is a very recent one. “Why is it a Semmangudi and GNB bani whereas a Tyagaraja shishya parampara?” While on the one hand, it is indicative of a musical period, it also indicates a movement in musical tradition. Some musicians in a conscious act conceived an intellectual idea. They changed certain traditional practises and substantiated it with their thought process. “That is what is called a bani and anybody can take from it.”

The other point that TMK discussed was that of oral and written traditions and how they invariably occupy different compartments. “Musicologists accuse musicians of being ignorant of theory, and musicians accuse them of being ignorant of practise. But the truth is that these two traditions live off each other. Theory is not a dry, debate happening in a room



between four scholars. They infer from practise and document it in an articulate form. Both are bound within each other.” Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer set up the Kamalamba Navavarna keertanas of Dikshitar based on the Sangeeta Sampradaya Pradarshini. “He, in turn, has passed it on to his students, and it currently exists in the oral tradition form. Three generations from now, nobody will even know that this spectacular work was done by Semmangudi. So is it oral or written tradition? It is impossible for one to be independent of the other.” If you see the Keertana patanthara of T. Brinda, it has amazing similarities with what is said in the Sangeeta Sampradaya Pradarshini. “You realise that there was a dialogue between theory and practise.” Is there diversity in music as we claim? Are we thinking differently? “The music that has come to stay today is a masculine interpretation of music,” he categorically said. The Devadasis were huge repositories of knowledge, and with that tradition being lost we have lost a unique dimension to Carnatic music. Reading passages from the works of Bhatkande, Mundikondan Venkatarama Iyer and other musicologists, TMK revealed that ‘conventional practise’ was always met with enquiry and innovation.

Then how do we actually envision ‘manodharma sangeeta’ which is how one defines Indian classical music? Can it be transferred, is it acquired from listening, or gained through practise? Opening the panel discussion, vocalist Neela Ramgopal said that entering into the ‘manodharma zone’ takes years and years of learning, listening, and repeating. “I was obsessed with music, listening and thinking about it all through the day. To my surprise, one fine day, my mind began to fill with ideas for neraval. Manodharma is something that one gains through rigorous engagement,” she explained the beginnings of her own creative persona in music. For her, the journey of manodharma, in aspects like neraval, had only improved to become ‘fashionable and modern’. “Unlike Neela maami, who sees good things, I see only dark things,” responded musicologist Dr. N. Ramanathan, who had a problem with the term manodharma itself. The term, according to him, was a recent one and carried connotations of spontaneous, extempore, impromptu etc and thereby giving manodharma sangeeta a certain adhocism. “According to manodharma, something new has to be sung always. This is almost impossible. At best, you can improvise, to use a term that is used in jazz.” Studying the music of the great masters carefully, one recognises, manodharma comes close to a kind of reorganising and not always a creative outburst.

“An accompanist is usually guided by the framework of the main artiste,” said violinist H.K. Venkataram. “Usually shadowing, or mimicking the style of the main artiste, helps you take the mood forward. If you are a soloist you can do what you are best at, but being an accompanist requires a lot of hardwork. It is a tough job.” Venkataram calling himself Sankataram jocularly, recalled instances when the main artiste violates the tenets of classicism and it in turn becomes a challenge for the violinist to play his part. “In such situations, it is not only about tradition but also about the parameters we set for ourselves,” he explained

A good percussionist should be able to understand the manodharma of the main performer with the first kriti itself, said Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma.

“While complex mathematics is vital, it should not disturb the nadasoukhyam,” he added. He narrated ‘funny’ experiences about how privileging of musicians on a concert stage happens, and TMK quickly interrupted a laughing audience saying, ‘please don’t just remember it as a joke. It says another story.’

The symposium opened up a space for discussion. From the enthusiasm of the audience that turned up in huge numbers and remained totally engaged till the very end, it was evident that it was a much needed one.

Sri Shankarabharanam Kala Mandiram

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APJ Abdul Kalam at the Music Academy

V Sriram, Columnist, Music historian and Heritage activist

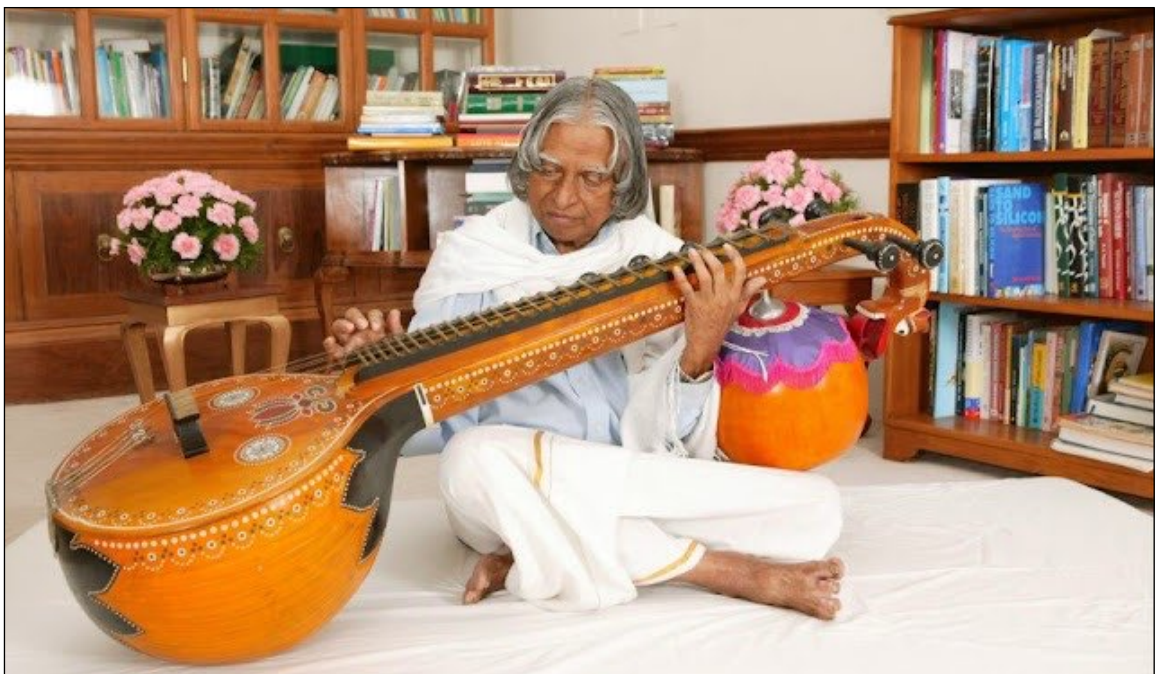
It is long past my usual bedtime but I am unable to sleep. Somehow Kalam's passing is like the death of a close relative. True, he was 83 but somehow I thought he would always be around – simple in his joys, straightforward in his communication, honesty personified, friendliness radiating from his eyes...In a nation whose leaders are by and large arrogant crooks (except during elections), he made a difference and somehow held out a hope. If a man of such humble origins could make his way to the top through just hard work, surely India was a meritocracy? And now he is gone. Today I am able to understand why men wept and women broke their bangles on January 30, 1948.

I met Kalam only once and briefly at that. And that is not the story I want to relate. The one I am writing about is of his coming in 2002 to inaugurate the December Season at the Music Academy. The Sikkil Sisters were selected for the Sangita Kalanidhi and this being the platinum jubilee of the Academy, four great

musicians – Semmangudi, MS Subbulakshmi, DK Pattammal and Pt. Ravishankar were to receive a special award. Of the four, only Semmangudi made it, MS and DKP were quite frail in health and Raviji was abroad.

The Music Academy as you know, has a fetish for punctuality. It had in the past once drawn the curtain when Madurai Mani Iyer failed to finish on time. A wooden box that had a red bulb in it would greet those giving lecture demonstrations. This would be placed on the lectern just below the nose of the speaker and in case he/she exceeded the time limit, it would begin to glow. Time if not tide, did not wait for anyone at the Academy. It was said that its second President, KV Krishnaswami Aiyar began the trend. It slackened somewhat under his successors but picked up pace from 1982, when TT Vasu became numero uno.

Vasu became the red bulb himself. Giving his trousers a characteristic hitch, he would think nothing of bounding up to the concert performer or



speaker and wag an enormous finger in front of their face in case they exceeded time. He would also begin a countdown of sorts, waving five, then four fingers and so on till just the forefinger would remain standing. The curtain would descend almost simultaneously. I cannot say I disapproved of what Vasu did. In a tightly packed typical Season Day, this discipline was needed. But perhaps it could have been done more gently.

Vasu's terror tactics did not work with Kalam however when he, as President of India, came to inaugurate the Academy's platinum jubilee concert series. The curtain went up to reveal Vasu, Kalam, a couple of Secretaries, Semmangudi and the Sikkil Sisters on stage. It was clear from the word go that the time schedule was going to be shot to pieces. After the standard 'naada tanumanisham' invocation, Dr VV Srivatsa, one of the Secretaries, led Sikkil Kunjumani to the mic. They were so slow in their progress that Vasu began to grunt impatiently. Kalam however beamed beatifically. Kunjumani then began a long-winded speech that clearly overshot the time allotted to her. Vasu began to get up, finger already uplifted when Kalam smiled at him in a soft fashion and grasping his hand, pushed him gently back into his seat. "It is all right Vasu sar," said Kalam. It was a quite a sight – the President of India cajoling the President of the Music Academy to calm down! Poor Vasu did not say anything and squirmed considerably in his seat. Kunjumani eventually finished her speech and was led back by Srivatsa as slowly as she had come to the mic. Semmangudi received his award and when asked to speak said in his characteristic fashion that Vasu had told him to be brief (Vasu enna romba pEsa kUDadunnu sonnAn). He spoke little and then sat down.

This was a day when Vasu got an award as well – a silver plaque with a verse in his praise. Kalam handed it over. Vasu spoke briefly and then it was Kalam's turn. We were already ten minutes behind schedule and with some luck would get the concert of the evening going some half an hour late. But the Academy had not contended with Kalam or the audience adulation of him.

Every move he made was received with thunderous applause. This was no President but a matinee idol. The Academy lectern was too tall for him and a special platform was placed behind it for him to climb on. When he achieved this simple task, we all cheered. He delivered his speech in English and there was loud clapping at the end of every sentence. This

was no prim and proper Academy inauguration but a college graduation day.

The speech came to an end and everyone clapped once again. Vasu stood up, ready to get a Secretary to deliver the vote of thanks. Kalam however was not getting off so easily.

"Mr President," he said. "I am aware that there are many people in the audience who know only Tamil and so I have brought a Tamil translation of my speech. With your permission sir, I will now read it."

I don't think anyone else could have got away reading the same speech twice in the same evening, even if its second declamation was in another language. But Kalam achieved this impossible feat. And what's more, the audience cheered all over again. Vasu had to grin and bear it.

The speech came to an end and Vasu was once again on his feet. But Kalam had other plans.

"This is a great occasion Mr President Sar," he said. "And so I have composed a special song for it. My DRDO members will now perform it. But before that one of my colleagues will read out the lyrics."

The applause hit the rafters even as what looked like a minor army came on stage bearing all kinds of musical instruments. Vasu had given up by then. The instruments were tuned and then even as Kalam beamed with joy, the song was sung by a couple of scientists to the accompaniment of other scientists in the orchestra.

By the time the national anthem was sung (and here Kalam entreated everyone of us to sing loudly), we were a good 45 minutes late – an unpardonable crime at the Academy.

The next day's papers revealed that Kalam drove from the Academy straight to MS Subbulakshmi's house and presented her with the award in person.

We have never seen such crowds at any season inauguration day ever since at the Music Academy and never again has the audience cheered a speech or song so much. Simplicity was the hallmark of this great man and that is why we loved him. India and the world is poorer by his passing.

Vignesh Ishwar at SRLKM

Anagha Yogananda, Sr. Student of Vid. GV Neela

M.A Narasimhachar Foundation in association with Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira hosted the concert of Vid.Vignesh Ishwar, the winner of 'kalavantha-2015' organised by Karnataka Fine Arts Council, on the 23rd of August, 2015. He was skilfully accompanied by Vid. B.K Raghu on the violin and Vid. B.C Manjunath on the mridangam.

Sri Vignesh began his concert with an explosive and powerful rendition of one of saint Tyagaraja's ghana raga pancharathna krithis, 'Jagadaanandakaaraka' in the ragam Nattai. Following that, he sang another krithi of Tyagaraja swami, 'upachaaramu jese' in the ragam Bhairavi. The neraval and kalpana swaram that was sung for this krithi was rich with the essence of the ragam. The next Tyagaraja krithi that he presented was 'evarikai avataram' in Devamanohari. The raga alapana that preceded was mellifluously sung and proficiently handled. 'Mayamma anine', a Shyama Shastri's composition in the ragam Ahiri, where he asks amba as to why she refuses to speak to him, was rendered pleasantly at a slow pace. It was a soulful and moving experience, with the excellent accompaniment of Sri Manjunath on the mridangam. This was followed by a fast and zealous rendition of 'padavini sadbhaktiyu' in the ragam Salaga bhairavi. Sri Raghu responded on the violin brilliantly to the kalpana swarams sung by Sri Vignesh.

The main piece was in the ragam Shankarabharana. The raga alapana was appeasing and lenitive as both the vocalist and the violinist explored this beautiful

and expansive ragam meandering through all its intricate nuances and bringing forth the raga bhavam picturesquely. The krithi that followed was 'Sadashivam upasmahe', a composition of Sri Muttuswami Dikshitar. The krithi was rendered splendidly. The neraval and kalpana swaram sung at, 'purana purusham puranthakam, shankarabharana bhaasamana deham' was elaborately done and had an element of intensity in it. The tani avarthanam that followed by Vid. B.C Manjunath, who is the recipient of the 'Raga Laya Prabha' award conferred by Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira for the year 2015, was meticulous and pleasing to the ear.

The next piece he took up was a ragam taanam pallavi, in the raga Varali. It was a brilliant exposition of the ragam throughout, having a very aesthetically appealing approach to it. The pallavi that was sung, was, 'Mangai vaaham khila sadguru krupa' and was set to tishra jathi roopaka taalam. The kalpana swaram got extravagant treatment as he dealt with four other ragams- mohanam, kanboji, behag and suruti before returning and concluding with Varali. This was then followed by Sri Purandara Dasa's famous devaranama 'jagadoddharana' in the ragam Kapi. The concert concluded with a tillana in the ragam Chenchuritti. Sri Vignesh Ishwar's concert was a sheer pleasure to listen to and one could see the imprint of his guru Sri T.M.Krishna in his singing. He is a rising star in the field of Karnatic music.



The Violin's Carnatic Voice

Sachi R Sachidananda

In Carnatic music, generations of noted vocalists may come and go. Famous duos may rise to fame and after some years lose their sheen. But one thing is constant- unmissable, unshakeable and indispensable in our music. That is the Carnatic violin accompaniment, often rendered by the same wonderful musicians, delivering our music like nothing else. One may feel a tinge of reservation that the violin is a foreign import. But just listen to pure Carnatic music on the violin, and you cannot but embrace its unique Carnatic voice.

Today we have a number of young violinists producing incredibly sweet sounds. Then of course we have senior violinists who have held sway for long years and are still in their prime. Men and women, concert after concert, vying for that rightful place reserved for the violin beside every well-known vocalist.

The violin, in its modern avatar, was imported from the west in the 19th century. That credit goes to Baluswami Dikshitar (brother of Muthuswami Dikshitar). It was then adapted with the right strings and playing techniques, to cover the range of Carnatic sounds or voices. There have been bowed instruments in India from ancient times, called variously as Dhanur veena, Pinaki veena, Ravanhatta and so on. There is a beautiful sculpture featuring a woman playing a bowed instrument in Halebidu in Karnataka

(12th century CE). Quite possibly, these instrumental traditions were taken by travellers to Europe.

The western violin made its entry around early 16th century. The earliest violins were used for popular and dance music. During the 17th century, it replaced the viol for chamber music. The violin was recognised early for its singing tone, and it then underwent several modifications. Stradivari's innovations created a more virile tone. In the 19th century, with the advent of large auditoria, and the violin virtuoso, the violin was modified - its sound post, bridge, bass bar and body, as well as an angled back to give greater pressure of the strings on the bridge. The result was a stronger, more brilliant tone, in place of the delicate intimate tone of the violin of the 18th century. The violin holds a pride of place in most classical performances, including operas.

Prof T N Krishnan (1928-), Lalgudi Jayaraman (1930-2013), and M S Gopalakrishnan (1931-2013), are hailed as the violin trinity of Carnatic music, having held sway for a cumulative period of 180 man-years. The best vocal concerts in the golden age (1940's-1970's) featured them. They accompanied the big stars in thousands of concerts, criss-crossing the country, and later the globe. They forayed into solo and duet violin presentations, attracting keen audi-



ences with their unique concert presentations and individual trademark violin techniques.

Even before these three big names, violinists like Dwaram Venkataswamy Naidu, Mysore T Chowdiah, Papa Venkataramiah, Rajamanickam Pillai, commanded great respect from audiences as well as main artistes. And before them, there were great violinists like Malaikottai Govindaswamy Pillai, and Tirukkodikaval Krishna Iyer, and Lalgudi Jayaraman's grandfather Valadi Radhakrishna Iyer.

The violin's Carnatic voice is capable of matching most vocal renditions. The way the violinist 'shadows' the vocalist is so effective that a vocalist would feel lost without it. Whenever we name our favourite vocalists, we are quick to add the names of violin accompanists that best enhance their music. Some vocalist-violinist alliances have lasted for many years, thereby enriching both careers. The great violinists are able to anticipate and decorate the vocalist's presentation for many "Aha" moments. That is the violin's Carnatic voice!

GNB wrote about Chowdiah as follows: After he came into his own, all the leading musicians of South India remember with pride and real joy that the great periods in their lives as a musician almost always synchronised with that when Sri Chowdiah was their frequent accompanist.

Dwaram Venkataswamy Naidu who headed the Maharaja's College of Music, Vizianagaram for a long period, was a highly acclaimed violinist and the first one to be conferred the Sangeeta Kalanidhi in 1941. His arduous practice over the years conferred extraordinary mastery over the violin. Mali, the flute wizard, wanted to enrol in the Maharaja's College but was ruled under-aged. But Dwaram benignly took him under his wing, had practice sessions with him playing the violin and kanjira, and also performed with him as an accompanist. Mali was to say later that Dwaram's purity of tone on the violin was unmatched. Dwaram's great mastery of the violin attracted luminaries like Rabindranath Tagore. So impressed was Tagore that he even sang to his violin accompaniment. Dwaram was a specialist in tanam. He also incorporated Hindustani influences in his solo renditions.

Sriram V, narrates an interesting episode in his "Carnatic Summer". In 1954, when Dwaram attended a performance of the legend Yehudi Menuhin, his fascination with European violins led to his requesting Menuhin to be allowed to handle and perhaps play Menuhin's violin. Menuhin refused, upsetting Dwaram. But a well wisher, in a face-saving gesture, arranged a violin recital of Dwaram the next day, to be attended by Menuhin. At the end of the performance, Menuhin was amazed at Dwaram's virtuosity and apologised for the previous evening. The two spent hours after-



wards talking music, and Menuhin allowed Dwaram to play on his violin.

The violin that Lalgudi Jayaraman played on for many years was actually gifted to him by Menuhin who had invited him to perform at the Edinburgh festival in the 1960's.

The role of violinists in the making of big name vocalists is well documented. The well-known violinist Papa Venkataramiah was one of the gurus of KVN. Stars like Ariyakudi, Maharajapuram Vishwanatha Iyer, GNB, Chembai, Madurai Mani Iyer, Semmangudi, all had top-class violinists accompanying them throughout their careers. When they lost their voice, or in their wearied renditions in the evening of their career, it was young and brilliant violinists who added immeasurably to the success of their concerts.

GNB saw Lalgudi's talent early and signed him up for accompaniment. Many years later, GNB said that Lalgudi, and mridangist Raghu, were like his two eyes. Semmangudi not only played the role of a guru and coach for T.N. Krishnan, but enjoyed his violin support for many decades. MSG, the third one in this trinity, carved a unique place for himself in both Carnatic and Hindustani music, and was the torchbearer of the "Parur Bani" in violin.

All this shows how the violin, a superb western "singing" instrument, has become an integral part of Carnatic music for at least 100 years now. Violinists

put in thousands of hours of practice in order to achieve a position of wide acceptance. They expand their repertoire of songs, and learn to accompany different styles of singing. Their melody comes in very useful when the vocalist has a strained voice or an off-day. They are at work throughout a concert, except during the percussion solo or tani. They have to be on their toes, as it were, to unravel rare ragas like a Kalyanaraman's Jyotiswarupini, or a tricky pallavi of the Alathur brothers, or during grahabheda exercises. In recent times, an Abhishek Raghuram, with his unbridled delivery and uncanny imagination, can keep the violinist on a tight-rope walk.

The Carnatic voice of the violin fills our ears and hearts with weighty raga alapanas, delightful kalpana swaras, and moving raga essays during viruttams. It comes into its own in the rakti ragas and devotional or Hindustani tail-pieces. When the honeyed bow delivers swaras with sonorous mridangam accompaniment, it is sheer Carnatic ecstasy. On such occasions, we may be forgiven if we think that the vocalist is merely setting the stage for this musical feast.

These are days of loud amplification, electronic tambura, and many concert halls with poor acoustics. Audiences today miss Carnatic music's subtleties, delicate nuances and haunting soft touches. But we are surely lucky when a good violin accompanies a good voice in a solid Carnatic concert. If the percussion also combines well, we are in seventh heaven.

Malladi Suribabu garu conducting a workshop on Navavarna kritis of Muthuswamy Dikshitar at SRLKM



Vasudha Ravi at SRLKM

Anagha Yogananda, Sr. Student of Vid. GV Neela

On the evening of the 26th July 2015, we were treated with the concert of an young artist, Vid. Vasudha Ravi, who also participated in the Kalavanta competition-2015 held by the Karnataka Fine Arts Council.

Vid. Vasudha Ravi gave the concert a flying start with a varnam in todi, which preceded the krithi 'Ganganapathe' in hamsadhvani. This was then followed by a spirited rendition of 'Rama neeve gaani nannu' a composition of saint Tyagaraja in the raga Narayani. Her next item was in the raga Varali where she explored the raga extensively much to the delight of the audience. We could certainly say the same for Vid. H.M Smitha who accompanied on the violin, whose alapana was just as exquisite. Her command over the instrument was certainly laudable. The alapana was teamed up with a fine rendition of the krithi 'karunajoodavamma' in which Sri Shyama Shastri pleads goddess Uma to be more compassionate towards him. The line 'marakathaangi pancha nadeeshu raani' was where Vasudha chose to further explore the raga by means of neraval and kalpana swara.

The atmosphere of the concert hall shifted to a lighter vein when the audience found themselves tapping their feet and nodding their heads to an energetic and buoyant rendition of one of Tyagaraja swami's famous krithi 'nenarunchi naanu' in the raga malavi. The splendid mridangam accompaniment of Vid. Akshay Anand took the krithi to a new level altogether.

After that vibrant composition, the lilting notes of brindavanasaranga took its place as Vid. Vasudha Ravi dwelled deep into the raga, she and Smitha exhaustively went about singing and playing the raga in all its splendour. The kriti that followed is the much popular and one of the favourites – 'soundara raajam aashraye' of saint Thyagaraja. The tani that followed was remarkable with the rhythmic beats engaging the audience as they applauded Vid. Akshay's talent and the skills. A composition in Sanskrit by Maharaja Swati Tirunal-'paalayamaamayibho' was rendered in raga Khamaach, which preceded a Ragam Thanam and Pallavi in the raga Keeravani. The pallavi she sang was 'maa maduraivalar meenakshi madhuravaani keeravaani' and it was set to an intricate dwi-nadai talam of chaturashra jaati tripata, where the poorvangam was in chaturashra nadai and the uttarangam was in the khanda nadai. The trio showcased their profound skill and won the rasikas over.

The familiar strains of Kaanada soon followed as the artist invoked her guru through the shloka 'dhyanamoolam gururmoortim...' which served as a prelude to the devaranama of Sri Purandara Dasa 'Guruvina Gulaamanaaguvatanaka'. She concluded the evening's concert with a tillana of TK Govinda Rao set to raga Sindhubhairavi. Vid. Vasudha Ravi with her infectious smile and pleasant demeanour enthralled the rasikas. Her concert will definitely linger in our memory for long.



SRLKM reaching out to schools

Balachandhran



In their endeavour to promote Carnatic music among youngsters, Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira organised concerts in two schools at Bangalore.

The first one was at 'The Valley School' on the 22nd of July featuring Master Ramana Balachandhran on the Veena and Master Akshay Anand on the mridangam. Over 300 students attended the concert that was introduced by Mr. Shankaraman, faculty at the school. The one hour recital was followed by a Q&A session where the school children opened up and posed several interesting questions to the artists.

The wild nature amidst which the school is situated was a perfect setting for the concert that featured

Pranamamyaham in Gowla and Aparama Bhaktiyento in Pantuvarali followed by Devarnamas and a Thillana. The students proposed a vote of thanks to the artists and the faculty thanked Sri Krishnaprasad of SRLKM for the opportunity & welcomed them to the premises for more such shows.

The second concert was at "Sri Kumaran Children's Home Educational Council (SKCHEC)" at their Malasandra campus on the 7th of August. The program was attended by a fairly large number of students that filled the big auditorium. The concert featured Master Ramana Balachandhran on the Veena and Vid Vinod Shyam on the Mridangam. The artists were introduced by Mrs. Vishnupriya, faculty at the school. The recital, like the one before, was followed by an interesting Q&A session. The recital featured Vara Vallabha Ramana in Hamsadvani and Durmarga charadamulanu in Ranjani followed by Devarnamas and a Thillana. Mrs. Deepa Sridhar, Principal of the school proposed a vote of thanks and expressed her desire to bring more such programs to the school.

Both the programmes were well received by the young students. They also showed keen interest during Q&A sessions.

Request your attention

Your 'Lalitha Kala Tarangini' in circulation for two years, is completely funded out of 'Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira'. We print about 400 copies every time and the magazine is circulated free to musicians, musicologists and serious rasikas. Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira has always kept up the best of the standard and the magazine is today a treasure for serious and musically inclined people. Many have preserved the copies for posterity.

We are reaching out to you at this time requesting for contribution to 'Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira' voluntarily and liberally (Indian Residents only) just so that we can better serve the cause of music. If you are keen to support and participate, kindly make your contributions as below;

- 1) Cheques can be sent to SRLKM. Mark your cheque in favour of "Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira". Also mention your name and phone on the back of it.
- 2) Online transfers can be effected to 'Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira' A/c No. 0473101915798, IFSC code CNRB0000473, Canara Bank, DVG Road Branch, Basavanagudi, Bangalore.

Send us a mail (srlkmandira@gmail.com) with subject as 'SRLKM Donation' intimating the Payment details for despatching a receipt. All donations carry Tax exemption as per 80G of IT Act, 1961.

Selvapullai Iyengar Centenary

Sangeetha Vidwan Selvapullai Iyengar was a veteran vocalist and a reputed Guru, who also served Akashvani (All India Radio) for several decades, as a staff artiste. His birth centenary was celebrated on 12th and 13th September by his family members, in association with Sri Rama Lalitha kala Mandira.



From left to right - Sri. Ram Mohan Reddy, Hon'ble Justice, High Court of Karnataka, Sri. H. Billappa Hon'ble Justice, High Court of Karnataka, GV Krishnaprasad, Sri. NS Krishnamuthy, Ex. Station Director, All India Radio, Bangalore

Sankranti Music Festival

(5.30 pm at SRLKM Auditorium)

01 January, 2016

Trichur Brothers (Sri Krishna Mohan and Ramkumar Mohan), Dr. Kandadevi S Vijaya Raghavan (Violin), Trichur R Mohan (Mridangam), DV Venkatasubramanyam (Ghatam)

02 January, 2016

Nisha Rajagopalan - Charulatha Ramanujam - HS Sudhindra - G. Omkar Rao

03 January, 2016

Dr. Vijayalakshmi Subramanyam - HM Smitha - Cheluvaraju - Anoor Sunad

04 January, 2016

Kunnukkudi M Balamuralikrishna - Trivendrum Sampath - Nanjil Arul - Vyasa Vittala

05 January, 2016

Vivek Sadashivam - CN Chandrashekar - Adamy - Srishylan

06 January, 2016

Subha Santhosh (Veena), Vani Manjunath (Flute), Prema Vivek (Violin) - BS Prashanth (Mridangam) - Narayanamurthy (Ghatam)

07 January, 2016

SR Vinay Sharva - BK Raghu - MT Rajakesari - G Guruprasanna

08 January, 2016

Dr. RN Srilatha - Mattur Srinidhi - Tumkur Ravishankar - ASN Swamy

09 January, 2016

P Vasanth Kumar (Veena) - Umayalapuram Mali - Sukanya Ramgopal

Spring Music Festival

(5.30 pm at Gayana Samaja Auditorium)

07 February, 2016

Bombay Jayashree Ramnath - Embar Kannan - Patri Satish kumar - G Guruprasanna

08 February, 2016

G Ravikiran (Ragalaya Prabha awardee) - Charulatha Ramanujam - KV Prasad - B Rajashekar

09 February, 2016

TM Krishna - RK Shriram Kumar - K Arun Prakash

10 February, 2016

Priya Sisters - Mysore Srikanth - Patri Satishkumar - BS Purushotham

11 February, 2016

Sudha Raghunathan - Embar Kannan - Neyveli Skanda Subramanyam - R Raman

12 February, 2016

Ashwin Anand - Veena - HM Smitha (violin) - N Rajkamal (flute) - BC Manjunath (Mridanga) - All Ragalaya Prabha awardee

13 February, 2016

Ranjani & Gayathri - HN Bhaskar - Sai Giridhar - GS Ramanujam

14 February, 2016

Presentation of G Vedanta Iyengar Memorial Award to Sanjay Subrahmanyam. The award carries a citation, a silver medal and a purse of one lakh Rs. followed by a concert of Sanjay Subrahmanyam - S Varadarajan - Neyveli Venkatesh - B Raja

26, January 2016, 10 am

Sri Thyagaraja and Sri Purandaradasa day programme
at Devagiri Venkateshwara temple

**Festival Concerts supported by Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India, New Delhi and
Dept. of Kannada and Culture, Govt. of Karnataka**