

Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira (R)

(Distinguished Service to Carnatic Music since 1955)

Lalitha Kala Tarangini

Quarterly Music Magazine

Volume 2016, Issue 4

December 2016

◆ Special Edition on
Calcutta KS Krishnamurthy

◆ Tributes to
M Balamuralikrishna



Our Tribute to M Balamuralikrishna

Our association with Dr. M Balamuralikrishna goes back to 1960's when he visited our Institution in early 1960's at Sannidhi road, Basavanagudi, Bengaluru. His down to earth demeanour endeared him to all and he enjoyed listening to Smt.GV Ranganayakamma and Smt GV Neela singing.

He was the recipient of The Institution's first 'Sangeetha Vedanta Dhureena' in the memory of its founder Late G Vedanta Iyengar and gave a very enjoyable concert. He was all praise for the institution for their service to music.

SRLKM salutes this great music maestro who with his affable nature had endeared himself to one and all. Legends like him come once in many generations and we are blessed to have known him and listened to his music.



Dr. M Balamuralikrishna in discussion with GV Neela during 50th year anniversary of SRLKM

॥ श्रीमते रामानुजाय नमः ॥



श्री यदुगिरि यतिराज मठम्
ಶ್ರೀ ಯದುಗಿರಿ ಯತಿರಾಜ ಮಠ
SRI YADUGIRI YATHIRAJA MUTT

ಮೂಲಸ್ಥಾನಮ್-ತಿರುನಾರಾಯಣಪುರಮ್, ಮೆಲುಕೋಟೆ, ಮಣ್ಡ್ಯ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ

H. H. Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar



ಶ್ರೀಮದ್ವೇದಮಾರ್ಗಪ್ರತಿಷ್ಠಾಪನಾಚಾರ್ಯೇ: ಉಭಯವೇದಾಂತಪ್ರವರ್ತಕಾಚಾರ್ಯೇ: ಶಾಂತಿಶಮದಮಾಧ್ಯನಂತಕಲ್ಯಾಣಗುಣಗಣಪರಿಪೂರ್ಣೇ: ಶ್ರೀಮತ್ಪರಮಹಂಸಪರಿಬ್ರಾಜಕಾಚಾರ್ಯೇ: ಶ್ರೀಸಂಯಮಿಸಾರ್ವಭೌಮಶಾಸನಾಧಿಗತ
ಶ್ರೀ ಯದುಗಿರಿ ಯತಿರಾಜ ಸಮ್ಪತ್ಕುಮಾರ ಸರ್ವವಿಧಕೇಡ್ಕುರ್ಯ ಧುರಂಧರೇ: ಶ್ರೀಮದ್ರಾಮಾನುಜಾಚಾರ್ಯನಿರವಧಿಕ ಪರಮಾನುಗ್ರಹ ಸಮಧಿಗತ ಶ್ರೀ ಯದುಗಿರಿ ಯತಿರಾಜಮಠ ಪರಿಬ್ರಹ್ಮಿಮಾಲಿಂಗಮಣಿಣೇ:
ಶ್ರೀಮದ್ರಾಜೇಂದ್ರಪ್ರವಣ ಸತ್ಸಂಪ್ರದಾಯನಿಷ್ಠಾಗರಿಷ್ಠೇ: ಶ್ರೀ ಯದುಗಿರಿ ಯತಿರಾಜ ನಾರಾಯಣ ರಾಮಾನುಜ ಯತಿವರೇ: ಇದಮ್ ಮಂಜುಲಮಾಶಾಸ್ಯತೇ-

Ref No. :

Date :

ಶುಭ ಸಂದೇಶ

ಶ್ರೀರಾಮ ಲಲಿತ ಕಲಾ ಮಂದಿರ ಸಂಗೀತಕ್ಷೇತ್ರದಲ್ಲಿ ತುಂಬಾ ಚಿರಪರಿಚಿತವಾದ ಒಂದು ಪ್ರತಿಷ್ಠಿತ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ. ಶ್ರೀ ಜಿ.ವೇದಾಂತ ಅಯ್ಯಂಗಾರ್ ಅವರಿಂದ 62 ವರ್ಷಗಳ ಹಿಂದೆ ಸ್ಥಾಪಿತವಾದ ಈ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಹಾಗೂ ಹಿಂದೂಸ್ಥಾನಿ ಸಂಗೀತ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರದಲ್ಲಿ ಅವಿರತವಾದ ಸೇವೆಸಲ್ಲಿಸುತ್ತಾ ಜನಮನ್ನಣೆಗೆ ಪಾತ್ರವಾಗಿದೆ.

ಈ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ ವರ್ಷಪೂರ್ತಿ ಅನೇಕ ವಿಧವಾದ ಸಂಗೀತಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮಗಳನ್ನು ನಡೆಸುತ್ತಾ ಬಂದಿದೆ. ಇದರಲ್ಲಿ ದೇಶವಿದೇಶಗಳ ಪ್ರಖ್ಯಾತ ಕಲಾವಿದರು ಪಾಲ್ಗೊಂಡು ಈ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮಗಳನ್ನು ಯಶಸ್ವಿಗೊಳಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

ಸುಮಾರು 3 ವರ್ಷಗಳಿಂದ ಪ್ರಕಟವಾಗುತ್ತಿರುವ "ಲಲಿತ ಕಲಾ ತರಂಗಿಣಿ" ತ್ರೈಮಾಸಿಕ ಪತ್ರಿಕೆ ಅನೇಕ ಉಪಯುಕ್ತ ಲೇಖನಗಳನ್ನು ಒಳಗೊಂಡು ತುಂಬಾ ಅಚ್ಚುಕಟ್ಟಾಗಿ ಹಾಗೂ ವರ್ಣರಂಜಿತವಾಗಿ ಪ್ರಕಟವಾಗುತ್ತಿರುವುದು ನಮಗೆ ತುಂಬಾ ಹರುಷತಂದಿದೆ. ಅದು ಯಶಸ್ವಿಯಾಗಿ 3 ವರ್ಷಗಳನ್ನು ಪೂರೈಸಿ ನಾಲ್ಕನೇ ವರ್ಷಕ್ಕೆ ಪ್ರವೇಶಿಸುತ್ತಿರುವುದು ಸಂತಸದ ಸಂಗತಿ. ಇದಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ಅವಿರತವಾಗಿ ಶ್ರಮಿಸುತ್ತಿರುವ ಶ್ರೀ ಜಿ.ವಿ.ಕೃಷ್ಣಪ್ರಸಾದ್ ಅಭಿನಂದನೆಗೆ ಅರ್ಹರು. ಇವರ ಈ ಸಂಗೀತ ಕೈಂಕರ್ಯ ಇದೇರೀತಿ ಮುಂದುವರಿಯಲಿ ಎಂದು ನಮ್ಮ ಆರಾಧ್ಯಮೂರ್ತಿಯಾದ ಶ್ರೀಲಕ್ಷ್ಮೀನರಸಿಂಹ ಹಾಗೂ ಆಚಾರ್ಯ ರಾಮಾನುಜರಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಾರ್ಥಿಸುತ್ತೇವೆ.

ಶ್ರೀಶ್ರೀಗಳವರ ಆದೇಶದ ಮೇರೆಗೆ

10-12-2016

ಶ್ರೀಕಾರ್ಯಮ್

December 2016

God specially crafted Mangalampalli Balamuralikrishna to be a messenger of music to this universe and we are all blessed to have lived during his era. It is said that he is an incarnation of Saint Thyagaraja himself having learnt from a grand disciple of the saint. Music came naturally and spontaneously to him and when you talk to him you will always hear that 'I never learnt music' or 'I never practiced music' but it came by itself. There were several examples of Ragas and Kritis that he composed on the fly spontaneously. The ragas he has designed with 4 notes or 3 notes stands testimony to his creative and intellectual brilliance. Words can not describe this immortal who gave over 25,000 concerts and who held 8 doctorates.

He was a Vaggeyakara of repute, Maha Vidwan, a great Guru and more than anything a great personality. For him Carnatic music included all forms of music, be it folk, light, classical music, etc. and anything pleasing to the ears is Carnatic music (गुणादिकीर्तिः देशस्य) कर्णेषु अटति इति कर्णाटः। He has left a strong footprint in our cinema music with songs like Chinna kannan azhaikiran (Kavikuy-il-1977), Himadrisuthe (Hamsageethe-1975) etc. that will live for many more generations to come.

He conquered the world with his voice and connected directly with the soul of the rasikas. His demise is a loss to our music and a void that will never be filled. We are fortunate that his voice and music will remain with us to savour through his recordings. Our association with BMK was long and he was with us during our important milestones. The SRLKM management team passes on their heartfelt condolence to his family members.

21 December, happens to be Calcutta KS Krishnamurthy (KSK) Sir's birthday and we dedicate this issue of the Lalitha Kala Tarangini to one of the most respected musicians, musicologist and a composer. Popularly known as

KSK, he hails from Calcutta where he was settled for many years, but later shifted to Madras to further his music. He has gone on record saying he did not have a successful concert career because he stayed in Calcutta in the prime of his life. His career as a guru began with an assignment at Rishi Valley School in Andhra and later during '80's many youngsters in Chennai enrolled with him. The Madras music Academy recognised him and bestowed on him Sangita Kala Acharya that was befitting to his contribution.

No less than the legend Lalgudi Jayaraman respected him the most and they were intellectually compatible. An excellent article on KSK by Lalgudi GJR Krishnan is a must read.

I am glad to inform you that we are entering forth year of publication of this magazine. Our efforts have been well appreciated by the musicians and rasikas community. We thank all our contributors for the success of this magazine.

The SRLKM management team extends all readers a Merry Christmas and a happy new year 2017. May god spread prosperity and joy in your life on this new year and fulfil all your goals.

Anand S

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Photo Courtesy - Paniraj, The Hindu archives, Personal collections of RN Thyagarajan, AV Anand and TT Srinivasan, Music Academy achieve, Srinivasan Viswanathan, Mysore V Subramanya.

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 Sankranti and Spring music festivals. Mandira also takes pride in conducting music awareness program, music workshops, Lecture demonstrations etc. Entry to all program conducted by the Mandira is free as the aim of the institution is to enable everyone to listen to the best of the music and to propagate Karnatak Classical Music. SRLKM is a Trustee of Karnataka Fine Arts Council (Regd.) which is a consortium of 10 sabhas in Bangalore.

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

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Lalitha Kala Tarangini - Inbox

To the Editor,

Sir,

The several write ups by musicians O.S.Tyagarajan, Mrs.Neela Ramagopal , K.S.Kalidas and others on T.M.Tyagarajan is highly interesting and informative. I was privileged to attend several live concerts of the maestro and one particular concert in the mid 1970 in Bangalore Gayana Samaja is still etched green in my memory. In that concert, the maestro elaborated the raga Madyamavathi spaciouly followed by the ever green composition" Rama Katha Sudha" with spacious niraval and Kalpana swaras,

followed by scintillating tani avartanam by Karaikudi Mani and H.P.Ramachar on the Kanjira. I admire and appreciate the courage of Tyagarajan in refusing legendary Palghat Mani Iyer's mrudangam accompaniment when he refused to play for Tyagarajan on an earlier occasion knowing fully well the scholarship and capability of the singer. Perhaps this must have brought about the welcome change in his attitude when he started accompanying juniors like T.V.Shankaranarayana, Madurai T.N.Seshagopalan, Veena R.K.Surya Narayana etc in the early 1970 on wards.

The profile of Octogenarian Gowri Kuppaswamy, the song bird from Pudukkottai although belated deserves acclaim . Your personal interview with Jayasri Varadarajan in USA and her successful running of Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira's branch there, the various accomplishments and activities have all been narrated excellently. I request you to bring out write ups on past Maestro like the late Musiri Subramanya Iyer, Ramnad Krishnan, and other luminaries in your future issues for the benefit of present generation.

Regards,
CP Chikkanna

To the Editor,

"I received via email a copy forwarded by a friend of the Lalitha kala Tharangini - which I am reading for the first time; my wife and I were introduced to Shri T M Thiagarajan's erudition by our daughter-in-law who used to come from the United States to learn from him; and it is very praiseworthy that you have featured Shri TMT in your cover page of the magazine and have had several, very interesting and diverse articles on TMT; while one has heard about Carnatic Music and allied art growing vastly in the US, it was interesting to read the interview with Jayashree Varadarajan; also the concert reviews of various artists, the article on H K Narasimhamurthy was very well-written too (especially for those of us who are unaware), the details of all the happenings in Bengaluru and awards therein - all in all a complete magazine; one small suggestion - it would be good to cover music happenings in other regions, say Mumbai or Kerala, which will further enrich the magazine. Kudos to the Editorial Team for bringing out such a wonderful e-magazine!!",

Regards,
V.Chalam



10 organizations ONE stage

Kalavanta 2017
National Level Karnatak Music Youth Festival

Concert Schedule

24 January 2017, Tuesday
4.30 to 6.00 pm - Surabhi Pustakam (Vocal), Shree-lakshmi S Bhat (Violin), S Ashwini Srinivasan (Mridanga)
6.15 to 7.45 pm - Vidyandadi Gopal (Veena), TR Aravind Kaushik (Mridanga), K Ganesh Murthy (Ghata)

25 January 2017, Wednesday
4.30 to 6.00 pm - Dharini Veera Raghavan (Vocal), T Karthik (Violin), Sriram Srinivasan (Mridanga)
6.15 to 7.45 pm - Vivek Moozhikkulam (Vocal), M Srikanth (Violin), A Sunaada Krishna (Mridanga)

26 January 2017, Thursday
4.30 to 6.00 pm - Lakshmi Suryateja (Vocal), MP Aditya (Violin), Sachin Prakash (Mridanga)
6.15 to 7.45 pm - Srinidhi Murali (Vocal), Vishwesh Swaminathan (Violin), DR Chetan Murthy (Mridanga)

27 January 2017, Friday
4.30 to 6.00 pm - R Sai Vignesh (Vocal), JR Shraddha Ravindran (Violin), Deepika Srinivasan (Mridanga)
6.15 to 7.45 pm - Gargi Shabaray (Vocal), Parur MK Anantha Lakshmi (Violin), R Aravind Srikanth (Mridanga)

28 January 2017, Sunday
4.30 to 6.00 pm - Tejas Manjunath & Pranav Manjunath (Violin Duet), Rohit Prasad (Mridanga), S Sunil Kumar (Khanjira)
6.15 to 7.45 pm - Bhargavi Venkatram (Vocal), Vaibhav Ramani (Violin), T Nikshith (Mridanga)

29 January 2017, Saturday
5 to 6.30 pm - TS Pattabhirama Pandit (Vocal), Mathur Srinidhi (Violin), HS Sudhindra (Mridanga)
6.30 pm - Kalavanta Award Function, Chief Guest Prince Rama Varma

Calcutta Krishnamurthy Bhagavathar & My Guru LGJ

Lalgudi GJR Krishnan

When artistes stand tall due to their exceptional merit and hard work, more often than not they find themselves lonely, with few people around to engage with intellectually. But when an artist finds such a person, who can relate to his/her ideas, the relationship becomes special, and lasts a long time.

Calcutta Krishnamurthy Bhagavathar or KSK (as he was fondly called) and my Guru /father Lalgudi G Jayaraman (LGJ) shared one such unique relationship even from the late sixties spanning for nearly three decades.

Their friendship was marked by mutual respect and affection. Whenever LGJ visited Calcutta for concerts - accompaniment/solo - KSK would

surely make it a point to meet him. They would discuss music for hours together.

At his concerts, KSK would be sitting in an obscure corner in the audience, enjoying LGJ's performance.

Generous in his admiration and prophetic in his observation, KSK wrote to LGJ in a letter dated 5. 1.1968: "It has become rare for an accompanying artiste to be appreciated and encouraged. It is with deep reluctance that one has to continue with the profession amongst main artistes who think "this man plays too well" (for comfort) or "this man might end up playing exceedingly well". It may, perhaps, be possible to get satisfaction only by playing solo concerts.



While KSK thought that LGJ received the fame his artistry truly deserved, LGJ always felt that KSK did not get due recognition for the scholar-musician he was. LGJ persuaded KSK, successfully, to shift to Madras with his family in the early 1970s.

As a young boy I have seen my father mostly as a reserved person. But in KSK's company he would just light up. My grandfather too had a special fondness for KSK. Residing at a stone throw's distance from our T. Nagar home, KSK would frequently visit our home. My father and he would get into one discussion about music or the other, the conversations often eating into the usual lunch time.

Sometimes the discussions would drift into other genres -- Mehdi Hassan, Ghulam Ali Ghazals, light or film music. KSK appreciated my mother's warm hospitality especially the special coffee.

My father would play his new compositions only to my grandfather V R Gopala Iyer, his guru. The only other exception was KSK. At times, after re-interpreting a krithi of the music Trinity or by anyone else, my father would eagerly play it for KSK, looking forward to his reaction.

They shared many things in common. KSK too would notate the pataantharam in his immaculate, neat handwriting and teach students. Sangeetha Bhushanam KSK had a phenomenal repertoire, having learnt from several veterans of yesteryears. At the snap of a finger he would neatly write down the notation without any reference. A noted musicologist KSK was a repository of information.

In each of his Solo concerts for Sri Krishna Gana Sabha LGJ, made it a point to introduce for the first time some rare Krithi / his own composition / a new chittaswaram that he had composed. KSK who was a sure attendee of the concert would visit the next day and share his thoughts.

LGJ was very keen that KSK's abilities as a performer come to the forefront in Chennai. So whenever there was an opportunity LGJ would make sure that KSK was performing.

LGJ had admiration for the pataantharam of KSK and on many occasions KSK would sing for LGJ the songs that he set to tune or his own compositions.

As a young student of music, watching their interaction, I found their exchanges inspiring. The affection they had for each other extended to each other's families too. LGJ took keen interest in KK Ravi (son of KSK) and taught him to play the violin, along with my sister Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi and another student Shashidhar. Ravi had a virtual gurukula vaasam at our house, he was just like one of us in our household.

When KK Ravi was ready, LGJ took him along to accompany him in Violin duet concerts at Krishna Gana Sabha, Tiruvaiyaru and a few other places.

My sister Vijayalakshmi learnt some special compositions and Bhajans from KSK, who lived in the same street as we did. KSK had great affection for me and perhaps a little more for my younger sister

LGJ admired the tunesmith in KSK. LGJ's Solo concerts / VVV/Duets with Dr N Ramani would have KSK's Kathanakuthohalam Varnam/ Patdheep Bhajan (giridaru) / Ahir bhairav Meera Bhajan(sadho) in the concert list. KSK tuned at least a hundred Bharathiya songs.

When a mutual friend of theirs, Smt. Indra Natesan in Calcutta, penned a set of Jyotirmaya krithis, LGJ was eager to see them shine in tunesmith KSK's imagination. He was eager that the project -- of setting to music and notating the composition -- be handed over to KSK, only to be delighted by the latter's creativity that he admired. The book release took place in Asthika Samajam, Venus Colony Chennai followed by KSK's vocal concert accompanied by LGJ. I have attended concerts of KSK with my father and they were sheer hallmarks of classicism and vidwath.

I know of concerts of KSK in Berhampur Jabalpur and Chennai where LGJ accompanied him. KSK slowly became a highly respected musician, though self-evasive. He was a very positive and generous person at heart.

KSK spent his entire life in music. He was a great guru who could masterfully explain even complex ideas to his junior most students. Many popular vocalists and instrumentalists used to flock to his house to learn rare compositions. Most of the top notch musicians of today have benefited in various ways from his teaching. His ideas and opinions on any subject in music were highly original and scholarly. Music being his only passion, KSK chose to serve the cause of music unflinchingly till he breathed his last without worrying about fame or recognition. He indeed belonged a rare breed of mu-

sicians the likes we seldom come across in our lives.

If his sishyas who have hit the top today can pool together and make available to public, the paatantharam of this great vidwan, perhaps in his own handwriting, it will be a treasure for posterity.

(The scribe was initially known as Radhakrishnan but got his name changed to GJR Krishnan thanks to the advice of Sri KSK who was well versed with numerology too)

Guru Karaikudi Mani honoured by Karnataka College of Percussion

Vid. Rajeshwari Sainath from Hyderabad gave an excellent dance performance on 17 November 2016 under the aegis of Karnataka College of Percussion and VRC Academy of Music and Dance. Some of the intricate compositions of Guru Karaikudi Mani were considered by Vid. Rajeshwari Sainath. A Varnam in Tisra Triputa, 3 kalai and a Tillana that has a ateeta eduppu at 3 matra before samam stood out.

Vid TAS Mani took time to honour Guru Karaikudi Mani.

It may be noted that Vid. Rajeshwari Sainath, who is a niece of legend Guru Karaikudi mani is receiving advanced training from him especially in the intricate aspects of Layam.



Tribute to Balamurali Krishna

Prince Rama Varma

Long before I knew what Ragas and Swaras were, I was already attracted to Ragas with two Madhyamams....particularly Behag. My father tells me that as a baby, I would constantly ask him to play a song that went “Kukushishi.” Several years later, while I continued to love the song in question, I discovered that “Kukushishi” was actually “Muddu Siri” from “Muddu Siri Purandara Vittala” which comes at the end of the Behag song “Naaneke Badavanu, Naaneke Paradesi?”

During Sri Purandara Dasa’s time, songs had just the Pallavi, followed by several Charanams. The “Anupallavi” was invented by Sri Thyagaraja, several centuries later. But many people have chopped up the Pallavis of Purandara Dasa’s beautiful compositions into two and have labeled the second part as “Anupallavi”, usually with rather unfortunate results.

In the song in question, Purandaradasa grandly challenges in the Pallavi “Sri Nidhe Hari! Enage neeniruva thanaka, naaneke badavanu? Naaneke paradesi?” “Oh Hari! When You are there for me, how could I ever be a beggar or an outsider?” In the charanams that follow, he names Hari as every possible relative; be it mother, father, sibling, friend, companion....you name it!

In the version I had heard as a child, “Srinidhe Hari enage, neeniruva thanaka” would come as the “Anupallavi” and I just enjoyed the melody, with absolutely no clue about what the lyrics meant.....a case point being “Kukushishi.”

Decades later, I heard Dr.M.Balamuralikrishna sing the same song.....with all its Charanams.....and the complete Pallavi, without being chopped up into two. Suddenly the exquisite meaning of the song and the precious spirit of Purandaradasa started to reveal itself, even though I didn’t speak a word of Kannada at that time. Puttisida Thaay Thande, Ishta, Mithranu Neene....and I could understand

words like Thaay, Thande, Ishta, Mithra, Ashta Bandhuvu and so on. The same thing keeps happening again and again even now.....with songs by Purandaradasa, Annamacharya, Bhadrachala Ramadasa, Sadasiva Brahmendra, Narayana Theertha, Jayadeva, Maharaja Swathi Thirunal, Kaiwara Amara Nareyana and others which have been brought to life by the perfect tunes given to them by the unparalleled Vaggeyakara Dr.Mangalampalli Balamuralikrishna.

When Balamurali Sir would sit down to tune a song by someone else, he would keep his mind completely blank and never decide beforehand that he would tune the song in this Raga or in this Thaala. He would just contemplate the lyrics and think of the composer and a tune would simply come! It would take him literally the time taken to write the notes down, physically! I have witnessed this scene time and again and whenever I have asked him (which I have, many many many times!) how he did it, he would simply smile and say “I don’t know.....It comes!”

He was one rare and privileged being for whom “It” just “Came!” Be it music, poetry, manodharmam or creativity in abundance, fresh, new and radical ideas, speed, power, range.....everything just seemed to come.....effortlessly and spontaneously.

He would pride himself in making declarations like “I never practiced!”....Well.....maybe he didn’t sit at home and practice the Sarali Varisais and Alankarams the way ordinary mortals like you and I should ideally be doing, but he certainly had his huge big share of “practice” because he would give hundreds of concerts every year, right from the time he was a child. The hours and hours of practice would therefore, happen in full public view rather than in the privacy of his own home.



The essential restlessness, the quest for doing something new, something different and original, the courage to defy established tradition, the flamboyance, the unbridled love for the self, the irresistible charm, the disarming sweetness, the streak of mischief and playfulness.....all this characterised his music as well as his personality. When people accused him of being different from others, he would ask “Did Musiri sound like GNB? Did Ariyakudi sound like Maharajapuram? Did Chembai sound like M.D.Ramanathan? No! Each of them was original and different. And I want to sound like Balamurali only and not like anyone else!” And he certainly succeeded 100% in sounding like Balamurali and not like anyone else.

If one studies his rendition of compositions by the Great Masters like Sri Thyagaraja and Sri Muthuswamy Dikshitar, one would find that rather than being “Modern” or “Non Traditional” as he is often mislabeled, he was perhaps closer to the original forms intended by the composers than probably anybody else. This is because apart from being part of a solid and authentic Shishya Parampara of Sri Thyagaraja, he took care to study the word by word meanings of the songs that he sang, which is something of a rarity in the Classical Music milieu. In his own compositions, numbering around 300 or so, one finds the perfect blend of melody,

rhythm, literary and poetic merit, not to mention sheer aural delight! Having had the privilege of studying many of his compositions directly from him and having been present by his side when he set to music dozens of compositions by other Vaggeyakaras whose original music was lost, I find that the process has helped me immensely, to connect with the minds and souls of the Great Masters from the past too.

Though he was a Vaggeyakara from whom the lyrics and the music burst forth as a single unit, the incredible thing is that, while on the one hand just the music is so amazing that his compositions sound wonderful even when played on an instrument, on the other hand the poetry is so amazing that one could just read and enjoy the lyrics separately too! It is up to us the music lovers, music students, musicians and music gurus, to make the most of the wealth that he has left us, much of which is freely available in sites like youtube.com and sangeethapriya.org. I pray that rather than this being the End of an era, it would be the Beginning of a new era where people nurture and enrich the art further, making proper use of the tools that he left us.

Mridanga Vidwan AV Anand

Sachi R Sachidananda

Regular readers of Lalitha Kala Tarangini would have been very happy with the extensive and frequent articles therein covering the art of percussion and the historic greats among mridangam vidwans. How has the art of mridangam playing and accompaniment evolved in the past seven or eight decades? I decide to find out by talking to a well-known veteran of the art form, Karnataka Kalashree, Mridanga Kala Shiromani, Karnataka Kalaratna, Sri A.V. Anand. The following is a report of the interview.

Q. Please tell us how you started in the art of percussion.

A. My father had a keen interest in percussion. Along with my guru, the famous Ghatam maestro, Sri Manjunathan, he had been learning the mridangam under Palghat Srinivasa Iyer, until the teacher passed away. My father later secured a

Sachi R Sachidananda in conversation with Vidwan AV Anand, who takes us to the golden age of Karnatak Music

job in the Government treasury department and therefore did not pursue his music studies further. However, Sri Manjunathan was destined to be a great vidwan. He chanced, once while helping out his hotelier uncle in Chamarajpet, to meet Sri Seshagiri Rao, the brother of Vidwan L.S. Narayanaswamy Bhagavathar, a disciple of Vid. Naina Pillai, who founded the Vijaya College of Music. Sri L.S. Seshagiri Rao had multifaceted accomplishments in music. Although he was a lawyer by profession, Sri Rao was a versatile musician and took Sri Manjunathan under his wing. My guru was a wonderful mri-



dangam artiste and only later became known as Ghatam Manjunath. He took up the ghatam and mastered it in a couple of years in mid 1940s, after being inspired by ghatam vidwans like Sri Vilvadri Iyer of Tanjore. Sri Manjunathan developed his own ghatam playing style, and even had the ghatams made to his specifications by a potter near Bangalore. He was very particular about the ghatam nadam. He played for such long hours that his hands used to bleed. I had received from him as a memento a ghatam with bloodstains from his hands! No wonder he was one of the foremost ghatam vidwans of the twentieth century.

I started learning mridangam and ghatam from Sri Manjunathan in early 40s. My first performance was in fact on the ghatam. But my guru asked me to focus on the mridangam as ghatam playing would roughen the hands and affect the nadam while playing mridangam.

Q. What was the most memorable period of your early years as a vidwan?

A. Whenever the great violin maestro, Sri T. Chowdiah, came to Bangalore, he used to stay in Malabar Lodge on 3rd Main of Chamarajpet. During his frequent visits to Bangalore, Sri Chowdiah used to stop over at our house and no visit to our house was complete without my parents, Venkobachar and Nagamma, treating guests to mouth-watering dishes. So Vidwan Chowdiah would aptly call my mother 'Annapoornamma'!

It was the year 1947. We were celebrating Ananthapadmanabha Vrata on a grand scale at our Chamarajpet residence. In the evening, Vidwan Chowdiah came home and enquired about the pooja. After my parents explained the festival's significance, Vidwan Chowdiah expressed a desire to hold a concert then and there. He called out for Manjunathan Sir to accompany him on the ghatam. I rushed out to the neighbourhood where Manjunathan Sir used to stay in a room on the premises of Rameshwara temple. Manjunathan Sir asked Vidwan Chowdiah whether he should call in Sri ML Veerabhadraiah, a mainstay on the mridangam. The renowned violinist replied: "We've Anand here.

You say he's been performing at concerts. Let's try him out." What followed was pure ecstasy. Vidwan Chowdiah, in a trance, transported the nearly two-hour concert to an unseen level. The soothing strains of music on a festive day attracted neighbours and passersby to our house. After the concert, Vidwan Chowdiah told Manjunathan Sir: "Anand plays very well. Ask him to accompany me from now on." My first public performance with Vidwan Chowdiah was at a wedding in the family of then Mysore education minister Shankare Gowda in 1948. Vidwan Chowdiah, after the concert, patted me on my back. There was no looking back after that. Whenever the first choice for mridangam, ML Veerabhadraiah, was preoccupied, I would land the assignment. I had the fortune of playing for Vidwan Chowdiah from 1947-48 until his death in 1967. His love, affection, encouragement and appreciation largely helped me to become what I am today.

(Sri Anand was employed in Amco Batteries and therefore had two parallel careers, in music and in chemistry.)

Q. Can you please give us a "Simhavalokana" of the percussion art of the 20th century?

A. Since the early part of the last century, the art of mridangam play evolved by leaps and bounds. The art of accompaniment as well as mridangam solo, or thani avarthanam, have significantly enhanced the aesthetics of percussion. Sri Narayanaswamy Appa, a mridangam vidwan, was also an accomplished vocalist. This greatly influenced his mridangam playing. Soon after, with the arrival of Sri Azhaga Nambi, the art of mridangam accompaniment as well as short solo pieces started becoming popular.

Later doyens like Manpoondiya Pillai and his disciple Dakshinamurthy Pillai took percussion to a new level with their mastery of laya. No less a person than the mridangam legend, Sri Palghat Mani Iyer, has stated that their playing made the concerts more appealing, memorable and highly enjoyable. Their tani avarthanams were replete with intricate rhythmic patterns woven artistically, presented with aesthetic beauty, which were appreciated by both the

knowledgeable and laymen alike. Another disciple of Manpoondiya Pillai was Palani Muthiah Pillai, who developed his own playing techniques. His illustrious son was the legend, Sri Palani Subrahmanya Pillai, a left-handed player and a contemporary of Sri Mani Iyer.

I can say without the fear of contradiction that whatever are the best elements of mridangam and laya play today have been developed and presented as the gold standard or benchmarks by these two legends, Sri Palghat Mani Iyer and Sri Palani Subrahmanya Pillai. After these two greats, there has been no looking back for the art of mridangam.

Q. What were the key contributory factors in mastering the percussion art, in your time?

A. We were blessed to sit close and listen to the ever-great musicians of Carnatic music. Every concert was a deep learning experience. Sharing the stage with these greats was unforgettable. For students of our Carnatic tradition, there is no substitute to listening to the great masters live all the time. I feel that the present-day youngsters are very fortunate in many ways, especially with the advent of easy recording and replay technologies. But there is no substitute to listening to the masters in live concerts, and learning from them directly.

Q. How has the thani avarthanam evolved in recent years?

A. In the present-day thani avarthanams, one can see the presentation of complex, intricate, rhythmic patterns with nadai bhedams, mukthayams and theermanams with different combinations of nadais in different speeds, which was very rare before the era of Sri Mani Iyer and Palani Subrahmanya Pillai. Even young artistes are capable of playing such complicated mukthayams with ease. Innovation has stretched to such an extent that if an artiste indulges deeply in nada soukhyas, sarvalaghu patterns in nadais and farans without giving much importance to mathematics or calculations, which the audience look forward to in a thani, that playing will be dubbed as “very ordinary” or “not brilliant”! Therefore playing sarva laghu in different nadais and nada soukhyas are becoming rare. This is a tragedy.

Q. What is your opinion about “laya vinyasa” and “percussion only” concerts?

A. Such presentations, with two or three percussion instruments, have been very well received and are highly successful. This was beyond conception a few years ago. This is a very happy development as it gives more exposure to the art of percussion and also encourages mridangam and other percussion artistes. Such performances have been around in Hindustani music and they are welcome in Carnatic music also.

MA Narasimhachar Music Foundation, Bangalore and Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira, Bangalore

jointly presents A Vocal Concert of

Prasanna Venkatraman
accompanied by

BK Raghu on Violin
HS Sudhindra on Mridangam
Omkar Rao on Ghatam

Date : Sunday 26th February 2017, at 5.30 pm
Venue : Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira auditorium

Calcutta KS Krishnamurthy - A Tribute

Shashikiran KN

Calcutta Krishnamurti was an ideal teacher, a real friend, philosopher and guide. My first experience with him was as a BA (Music) student attending a special contact class for the correspondence programme of the Madras University. I am afraid that, at that stage, I did not know who or how great a teacher he was. At the end of the class, I ventured to ask him a couple of questions and, after answering them, he enquired whether I hailed from a musical family. He was thrilled when I told him that I indeed belong to a family of vidwans.

While he was about to leave, I asked him rather sheepishly what his name was. Without batting an eyelid, he humbly answered that he was Calcutta Krishnamurti. I was speechless.

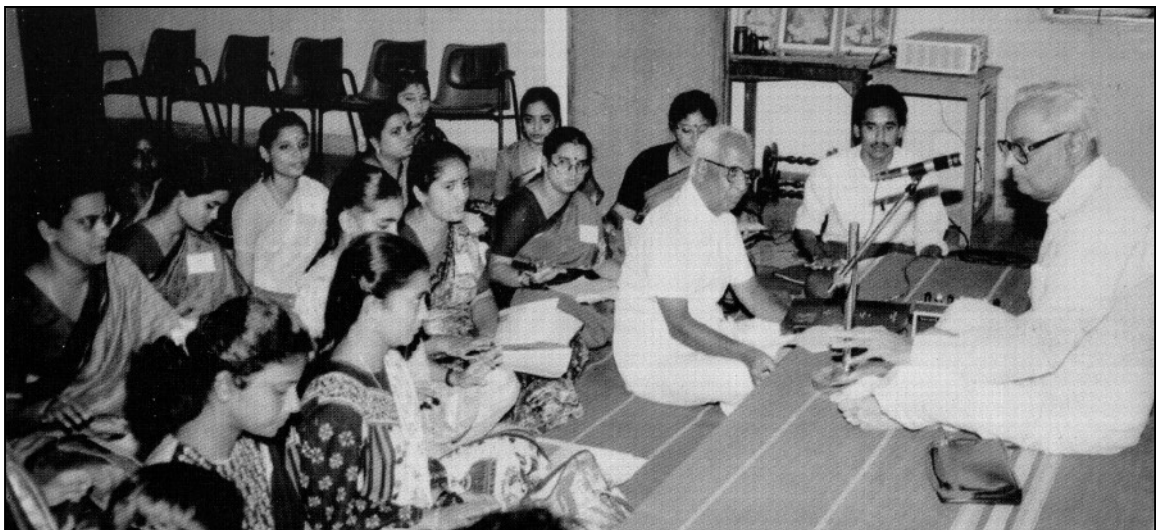
Within a couple of years of this incident, I had the great fortune of having him attend a concert of mine for YACM. It was then that he called up my father to say that he was impressed with my performance and that he was interested in imparting some of his knowledge to me. I thought that it was a great day because

till then I had only heard a lot about his musical prowess.

I was nervous on the first day of my class. I was also determined to win his goodwill, which was my father's wish too. I was wondering what he would teach me.

He started with a masterpiece of Syama Sastri in a raga many believe is bound to break, rather than cement, the relationship between teacher and learner. As you may have already guessed, the raga was Varali and the composition, Karuna joodavamma, which I had never heard before. The sangati-s were quite different from the usual pattern and I tried hard to reproduce them. But when I sang the full composition the next day, KSK was highly pleased and, after blessing me, joked that in this case, Varali had helped to create a bond between him and me! I was amazed to learn later that his repertoire consisted of some 2500 to 3000 songs.

KSK was different, in more ways than one, from many conventional teachers. He never imposed his style on his students and taught them each



in a manner that would suit his or her own endowments. He believed that music should have spontaneity and originality, and his method of teaching was calculated to nurture these attributes.

He was a very innovative and creative person and this was obvious when he sang during classes. He never considered a student arrogant if he questioned him. In fact, he welcomed questions and discussions. His raga gnaana was very special. He would be able to bring out the subtle differences between allied ragas like Nayaki and Darbar; Anandabhairavi and Reetigowla; Kannada, Begada and Sankarabharanam very precisely. He was sure of the gamaka-s that would go well with particular phrases of a raga. As a teacher, he was so committed that he nev-

er thought of time as a barrier. He was available at any time of the day for tutoring or clarifying doubts. Music was life for him. I have never heard him shout at his students when they made mistakes. Instead, he had the knack of making them strive for better results each time. He himself strove for perfection and on more occasions than one, had the large heart to correct himself or accept a better musical expression. I had the great privilege of giving vocal support to him in some of his concerts and he treated me more as his son than as a student.

KSK was a traditional musician but knew where and how to blend in innovation. He encouraged youngsters a lot and was not a person who thought that music had gone with the past generations.

MA Narasimhachar Music Foundation Award for Vani Sateesh

Vocalist Vid.Vani Sateesh was awarded with the title 'Gaana Vaaridhi' on 19th November 2016 at their annual festival. The award carries a citation, a memento, a shawl and a purse of 10,000 ₹.

Sangeetha Bhushana Shri. MA Narasimhachar was one of the leading musician of Karnataka who served the music world for more than 60 yrs. He was bestowed with honours like Sangeet Natak Academy Puraskar, Karnataka Rajyotsava award etc.



Uncompromising Purists - Rudrapatnam Brothers

SA Karthik

Sixty years of kacheris in every part of this country and abroad, Innumerable awards, titles and honours, A very successful career off the dais, An ever growing pool of talented and dedicated students, The many words of appreciation from the cognoscenti, The Rudrapatnam Brothers, Sri RN Thyagarajan and Dr RN Tharanathan, have certainly been there and done that. What is remarkable about them is that the breadth and depth of their accomplishments have left their natural simplicity and humility untouched. To read about their musical journey is certainly informative. To hear of it from them is nothing short of inspiring.

A rich history

The Brothers are the senior torch bearers of a glorious and proud tradition. At the core of this

tradition is Rudrapatna a small place on a big map. Sitting on the bank of the Kaveri in Hassan district of Karnataka, the village has produced not less than 250 serious Carnatic musicians, not to mention the many unknown womenfolk who must have sung as a way of life. Tiger Varadachariar once called it the Tanjavur of the Kannada land.

Rudrapatnam Krishna Shastri, the Brothers' paternal grandfather, was a scholar of Kannada and Sanskrit, a *vainika*, an exponent of *gamakavachana*, and a composer. He was also adept at *katha-kalakshepa*. He moved the family from Rudrapatna to Mysore, the cultural mecca of the Kannada land. He became acquainted with the leading lights of the music firmament of those years, an association that endured to the next generation.



Sitting L to R - C Krishnaswamy Rao, Musiri Subramanya Iyer, TS Tathachar
Standing L to R - RK Narayana Swamy, RK Srikantan



Father RK Narayana Swamy with Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer

His eldest son Vid. RK Venkatarama Shastri started off as a student of vocal music under the *Asthana-vidwan* Veena Subbanna but with the latter's blessings, moved to learning the violin under the legendary Mysore T. Chowdiah. He migrated to Chennai after securing employment with All India Radio (AIR) and established himself as a violinist of great repute, accompanying leading musicians like Vid. MS Subbulakshmi.

The third son Vid. RK Ramanathan was an excellent musician though his chosen profession was the teaching of English. The fourth and youngest brother was the doyen Sangita Kalanidhi Vid. RK Srikantan.

The second son of Krishna Shastri, Vid RK Narayana Swamy was a vocalist with a tremendous work ethic in music. It was to him and his wife Smt Savitramma that Thyagarajan was born in 1943, and Tharanathan in 1946. Beginning his training from his father, Narayana Swamy eventually moved to Chennai for 5-6 years to train under the peerless Musiri Subramania Iyer before coming back to Mysore.

Recalling his pedigree with calm pride, Thyagarajan Sir says, "We were surrounded by very high quality music. On the one hand, there was our father and his brothers practising and discussing Carnatic music all the time. On the other, there were the giants of the field who visited and stayed with us in our relatively spacious home

in Ramavilasa Agrahara in Mysore whenever they had their kacheris or AIR recordings in Mysore. Regular visitors were Tiger Varadachariar, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer and Musiri Subramania Iyer."

Thanks to such a deep exposure to good music, the boys picked up their music simply by listening. A contributing circumstance to this method of 'non-training', was the decision of their father not to teach them formally; his own experience with music had convinced him that it was ill suited to earn a reliable livelihood. He did not wish his sons to go down that path.

The early years

"So when did your father really begin training you formally?" I ask.

At this point Thyagarajan Sir recalls his mother and grandmother. "My mother Smt. Savitramma was always keen that we take big strides in music. We will always remember her and our maternal grandmother Smt. Nagamma for not only having big dreams for us but for putting them into action. It was in fact our *ajji* who arranged our first public performance in 1955 at Bharati Stree Samaja, Ontikoppal, Mysore. I was 12, my brother was 9. The concert was well received. A few more kacheris followed. My father heard about our talent and ability only after we had given a few concerts. And then he started formal training. It is curious isn't it, that by the time



Performing with Lalgudi Jayaraman and Velore Ramabadrar

we started our *sarale varase*, we were familiar with the stage!”

Tutelage under father RK Narayana Swamy was no cakewalk. He was quick to fly into a rage at the slightest slip up in shruti, sahitya or tala. Lessons began late in the evening for the brothers and their sister Smt. RN Srilatha and went on for a couple of hours. Father taught only the grand rakti ragas like Thodi, Bhairavi and Kalyani in a unique ‘Rudrapatna-Musiri’ *bani*. His view was that if the pupil attained mastery over such ragas the other ragas could be sung with ease. He never taught *vivadi* ragas. He was particular that except for a few stalwarts of the day like Vidwans Ramnad Krishnan, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer and Alathur Brothers, a budding musician should not listen indiscriminately.

In any case listening to music was nowhere as easy as now. Other than kacheris, the only accessible medium was the radio. For a while there was no radio at the Brothers’ home. Thyagarajan Sir recalls, “I used to climb sacks of paddy and align my ear to the window through which I listened to the radio next door. If the neighbour didn’t switch the radio on, I would go and request them to turn it on. In due course a radio arrived and courtesy our doting maternal uncle, we got a spool recorder. Notated Carnatic music books were hard to come by. I listened to the radio and notated the songs in notebooks.”

During these precious formative years, the precocious Brothers had another mentor in their uncle RK Venkatarama Shastri. Not only did he teach them on his visits to Mysore but had them over at Chennai during the school holidays. With him the boys visited the greats of the time like MS Subbulakshmi, Ramnad Krishnan, Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer and Lalgudi Jayaraman. Lalgudi Sir taught the boys his *varnams* and *thillanas*. Vid Needamangalam Krishnamurthy Bhagavathar, a direct descendant of Oothukadu Venkata Kavi, taught the boys many songs of the great composer when visiting Mysore.

During this period the music of Ramnad Krishnan shaped the aesthetic sensibility of the young musicians. They listened and analysed the finer aspects of his art and tried to derive inspiration from them. However, be it Ramnad Krishnan or their other heroes like GN Balasubramaniam, Alathur Brothers or Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, they never copied anyone wholesale. Thyagarajan Sir says, “A pupil must be discerning enough to draw inspiration from what the greats do. But it is shallow to simply copy blindly. Carnatic music is an individual-focussed art form and the individual has to cultivate and express his own musical idiom. While many noble influences shaped us, we developed a style of our own.”

The years of achievement

Even before they entered teenage the precocious boys had collected prizes literally by the



During Karnataka Kalashree Award function - HR Leelavathy Chairperson on the right and GR Chennabasappa to the left

sack full. However, it was in the 60s that their names were heard all over India for the first time. In 1961, Thyagarajan won the AIR music competition. He followed it up in 1963 with the first prize in the light classical category. The following year and in 1968 it was the turn of Tharanathan to bag the prize. The judges were names uttered in hushed whispers of reverence, like T Brinda, GNB, and Dwaram Venkataswamy Naidu. Not only were they noticed by such eminences but as was the norm in those days, being AIR prize winners they were broadcast thrice. It must have been thrilling to know that you were heard all over this big country. Never to waste an opportunity for want of effort the brothers promptly followed up their success by passing the regular AIR audition process.

It must be mentioned here that till this time the duo were not yet known as 'Rudrapatnam Brothers'. In 1968 after a concert in Sheshadripuram, the noted critic Sri TB Narasimhachar (whose pen name was 'Sargrahi') referred to them as Rudrapatnam Brothers in his review of the concert. Both Thyagarajan and Tharanathan and the *rasika* community adopted that as their stage name.

A few years later, in 1972, the Brothers were thrilled to be blessed by their music hero, Vid Ramnad Krishnan. They were singing at the Madras Music Academy when a *rasika* sounded out Ramnad Krishnan that two young men were singing in a style reminiscent of him. The

latter instructed the *rasika* to fetch them home immediately after the programme, spoke to them with great affection and wished them well.

In 1978, the great Vid DK Jayaraman was scheduled to sing at the Bidaram Krishnappa Rama Mandira in Mysore. His accompanists for the day were Vid. VV Subramaniam and Vid. Umayalpuram K Sivaraman. For some reason DKJ had to skip the programme. It was UKS who suggested that the Rudrapatnam Brothers perform in DKJ's stead. The audience were sceptical. Would the 'local' artistes live up to the expectations they had from DKJ? In the event, the Brothers rendered a flawless *kacheri*. It was UKS who said after the programme that it was a joy to accompany the Brothers and that the Kannada people had a duty to encourage purists like them.

From that time on, the Rudrapatnam Brothers only grew from strength to strength without making any compromises on their style of singing. They performed to very receptive audiences all over India and in foreign countries including in many venues across the USA, Singapore, Malaysia, Dubai, and the UK and continue to do so. Throughout their career they have been accompanied by the who's who among both past masters and upcoming artistes.

The other careers

While their musical career was taking flight Thyagarajan and Tharanathan excelled at acad-



During Central Sangeeth Natak Akademy award function

emics too. Even after they secured jobs, they continued to straddle adeptly both music and non-music worlds with the same level of proficiency and dedication.

In the late 60s, Thyagarajan completed his graduate studies and went on to do a master's in mathematics from Mysore University. Not intending to earn his livelihood through music, he started off as a college lecturer in Pandavapura (near Mandya) in 1969 and continued there till 1976. In between his attempts at getting jobs in Mysore proved disappointing even though he was eminently qualified for them and was recommended by musical giants of the time. It was in 1976 that he had his homecoming when he joined AIR Mysore as a staff artiste. That signalled a long and illustrious career which for the most part was with AIR and culminated with Doordarshan in 2003. In between he served with great distinction in AIR Gulbarga, AIR Chitradurga, and Doordarshan Chennai, pioneering many well received and award winning productions on the way.

All this while Tharanathan was also scaling new heights in his chosen area of study and work. He obtained a M.Sc and then a Ph.D in bio-chemistry from Mysore University and joined the CFTRI (Central Food Technology Research Institute) in 1973. While moving up the ranks within that prestigious organisation, he secured an opportunity to do post-doctoral research at the prestigious Max Planck Institute for Immune Biology and spent a couple of years in Germany

on further research and teaching. He would go on to receive the rarefied Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship and visited Germany a few more times in the 80s and 90s. To this day his numerous research papers are cited often in scientific journals and books. He retired from CFTRI in 2006.

Awards and accolades

The Sangita Kalacharya award will be conferred on the Rudrapatnam Brothers by the Music Academy during this year's conference. It is the latest feather in a cap full of prizes, titles and awards. Among scores of such accolades, they are recipients of the Karnataka Rajyotsava Award (1992), Karnataka Kalasri of the Karnataka Sangita Nritya Academy (2003), Asthana Vidwans of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam (2008), and Central Sangeet Natak Academy Award (2015).

It is a tribute to their *gurubhakti* that when asked about their notable awards they mentioned first the Musiri Subramania Iyer Prize (Music Academy, 1999 for *neraival* singing) and the TS Sabesa Iyer & Ponniah Pillai Prize (Music Academy, 2000); it was a matter of great satisfaction for them that they had obtained prizes named after musicians in their *guruparampara*.

also read Rudrapatnam Brothers Interview on page 37....

(SA Karthik is a senior disciple of Isai Peroli Neyveli Santhanagopalan and a lawyer by profession)

KS Krishnamurthy - Beyond Music

Brindha Manichavasakan



"I approached KSK sir in 1982 to request him to teach me. This was a few years after my learning from Musiri Sri Subramanya Iyer. KSK sir said that he had heard me sing many times before and that he was so happy and proud to have me as his student! I was so overwhelmed when he welcomed me with such warmth and kindness."

The first composition Suguna mami learnt from KSK sir was Sri Moolaadhaara – Sri ragam. This was followed by Karuna joodavamma, in Varali. KSK sir's wife Parvati mami said that he would not generally take a raga like Varali for his student this soon, unless he felt the disciple was capable of handling it. Parvati mami supported KSK sir throughout his journey, as his pillar. She was someone who was so dedicated and loving. "I always remember mami when I think of KSK sir" Suguna mami reminisced.

Brindha Manickavasakan in conversation with Smt. Suguna Varadachari, who recollects fond memories with her beloved Guru.

"KSK sir was an enthusiastic learner," mami said with pride. While learning in institutions, and later under Musiri Sri Subramanya Iyer, she did not choose the composition to be learnt. With KSK sir, she requested him to teach certain compositions. Especially, when mami had joined to teach in Madras University in 1984, she learnt many of the songs in the syllabus from him. One would never hear him say no, if he was asked to teach a song he himself had not learnt. He would do his research, learn the song, notate it and be ready the next day to teach!

"Apart from musical greatness, KSK sir stood for values I can never forget. It was not only music that I learnt from him. He was a wonderful human being," mami said as gratitude shone through her eyes. He would teach uniquely for every student - from the composition he taught, to the application of manodharma- according to the 'vazhi' imbibed by them, also keeping in mind the student's voice nature and creativity. There was immense freedom in the interaction between him and his disciple. "In all the years that I knew him, he never took to argument or politics; he never spoke ill about anyone ever" mami said, her voice filled with respect and admiration. He could see and talk only about the good in others. He did not think twice before appreciating anyone. He would notice even the smallest detail and speak of the greatness in it. He had a husky voice. 'Podi' sangati-s came so naturally to him. GNB sir was a great inspiration to him. He passionately shared with his students his listening experiences and about the great musicians of his time. He attended a lot of

concerts; he had listened to many concerts of Suguna mami too. He would promptly give feedback after. Once, he appreciated her raga delineation and rendition of Kambodi, O Ranga Shayi, in Krishna Gana Sabha - "I thoroughly enjoyed it, it was so good!" he had said. He would even proudly tell his friends and well-wishers about how well his student sang. If he heard a radio concert, he would call after and bless his student. "After an All India Radio concert, I immediately received his call and sir said 'Surutti was presented so well, I could see reflections of my teaching in it'", mami recollected fondly.

His repertoire was endless as was his creativity. Suguna mami learnt many compositions of Gopalakrishna Bharati from him. He also structured and notated many compositions, arrayed sangatis for them, embracing the core of the composition whole-fully and naturally. It was evident from his 'set-up' of the composition, the rich quality of music he had listened to and drew inspiration from. He tuned many Bharatiyar songs. He composed many Varna-s and Kriti-s. His exemplary handling of ragas such as Janaranjani, Malavi, Katanakutuhala is evident in his Varna-s. His expression of rakti raga-s was bhava-laden and very intricate with delicate nuances. In general, his compositions have patterns which are not apparent, but are seamless and subtle. He insisted on singing 'neraval' in all

the kriti-s that mami learnt. He loved the 'vadisamvadi' concept and used it extensively and seamlessly while singing and composing. "If some of my ideas in a raga involve vadi-samvadi, it is definitely inspired by KSK sir" mami smiled.

He had a huge number of students to whom he taught individual classes, with utmost commitment. He would encourage his students to apply to different venues for performances; he wanted all his students to sing and earn good names. He could be approached so easily, he was so simple, humble and genuine. He was a man of no expectations. He was always seen in a clear white 'jippa' and it was very evident when one saw him, that he was particular about neatness and organisation. He had some health issues, but not once did he ever complain or mark his face with it; he was ever-smiling. Especially during class, one could see his involvement and that undying urge to impart his knowledge with his students. His son had passed away at a young age – this hit his heart terribly, but it would not alter his dedication in teaching. "He was recognised much later in his life. A man of his vidwath and qualities is extremely rare. Nothing ever stopped him from abundantly sharing and giving knowledge. He did not expect any amount of fees from his disciple. He never held himself back from teaching anything he knew. A gem of a person." mami said.

JSS Sangeetha Sabha, Mysore

Dr. Shri Shivaratrishwara Rajendra Mahaswamigalavara Samsmarana



Vid. TAS Mani has been Awarded the title 'Sangeetha Vidya Nidhi' at the conclusion of the 23rd Annual 'JSS Music Conference'. The event was scheduled between 2nd-6th December 2016 which is one of the important cultural events of Mysore. Many senior musicians performed in this festival.

Tribute to BM Balamuralikrishna

Vittal Ramurthy

Dr. M. Balamuralikrishna, the crowned jewel of Carnatic Music is not with us anymore, but his evergreen music legacy that he has left behind will stay with us forever. He was an unparalleled versatile musician – a great vocalist, a prolific composer, master of several instruments, and a humble rasika too. One can say that he was a 'Music University'. Such was the caliber of the great master. He will be genuinely missed by the world of music.

Balamurali Sir was very dear to me. I am blessed to have accompanied him in several concerts in India and abroad. All these years of my association with him has been very enlightening, not only in music but also in the general approach to life, worldly aspects, attitude to face anything, a new perspective to live life happily. He taught me many of his compositions.

The way he appreciated all our team efforts on stage is incomparable. He always inspired and encouraged the fellow artistes and brought out the best from them. He always ensured that the accompanists were given equal prominence on stage and off stage. Every concert, every tour, every moment spent with him is so memorable and I will always cherish these moments.

He was like a fatherly figure in my life. He would advise me on various occasions. If I was stressed with anything, he would lighten the mood easily with his sense of humour. His outlook and perspective on life is so different that he would really live every moment to the fullest extent. There was never a dull moment. Whether it is a cup of coffee, or an ice cream, or a walk on the beach, or a new raga, or an improvisation, the way he enjoyed it cannot be



expressed; it can only be experienced. He was a very great guide, friend and philosopher for me. The loving relationship we shared was one of a kind.

Our whole village was blessed when he visited us in Nidde, Dharmasthala for our annual Karunbithil Shibira. He was so delighted to spend a few days with young kids and teach them music. He ate with them, went for walks with them atop hills and shared his experiences with all of us. He even surprised us by giving an

extempore concert one evening. That was indeed the grand pinnacle of our Shibira. Everyone was so mesmerised by his blissful music. All these experiences will be etched in our hearts forever.

Words cannot express the void and vacuum his demise has left. He was a true phenomenon. What a musician he was?

His divine music will always live with us and inspire us.

Gana Samudhra award for Dr. TS Sathyavathi

Samudhra Magazine an off shoot of 'Mudhra', a cultural organisation in Chennai recognises every year, a senior musicologist /critic/writer with the title 'Gnana Samudhra' in recognition of his/her service to the art field.

On 20th November, 2016 Samudhra honoured Dr. TS Sathyavathi with the 'Gnana Samudhra' award during its 14th anniversary celebrations. The award was in recognition of her yeomen contribution to music and musicology.

Dr. TS Sathyavathi as a child sang before Maharani of Mysore at the age of two and at eleven proved her merit as 'Eka Sandhigrahi'. Sanskrit and music have been inseparable twins in the life of Sathyavathi. Her special training in Mridangam and Musicology has equipped her with the essentials in laya and lakshana".

She is mentored by Vidushi Vasantha Madhavi and Dr. RK Srikantan in Vocal, Sri. BVK Sastry in Musicology and Vidwan Bangalore. K Venkatram in Mridangam.



Flute Maali a phenomenon

CP Chikkanna

My association with flute maestro Maali was in the year 1974. It was a visit to his residence in Sadashivanagar with mrudangam maestro Tanjore Upendran and flutist Ramani that lasted until the maestro migrated to USA. This association is deeply etched in my memory. I developed an intimate contact with him along with critics V Bhasker of The Hindu and Late S Ramachandra of Deccan Herald and Indian Express's Bangalore edition. Maali's friends circle was very huge. It included the high elite of society like senior bureaucrats, real estate promoters, businessmen and many musicians. He was very friendly by nature, jovial and highly alert to political and social atmosphere both within the State and the Country. He was a regular contributor to the letters column in News papers. His friends circle always stood by him. Some race bookies gave Maali prior tips about the prospective horses in Bangalore's summer racing events. Cards, race, spirit(In his language) and discussion with friends over phone about politics and current affairs were his hobbies. He was a vociferous reader and very good in debates. He even played cricket in the nearby play ground opposite to Poorna Prajna school in Sadashivanagar with the youths. He had a good sense of dressing and used to attire himself in tight slacks. He would dress traditionally while giving concerts or attending functions.. He was very fluent in Kannada language.

Maali owned about 16 acres of agricultural land near Devanahalli which was given on lease to farmers. Whenever he was free and felt bored in the city, he used to visit his lands and freely move with farmers. He sold this land before his permanent migration to USA after marrying an American lady (Ellen Chadwick). He had a trusted and devoted disciple in photographer Sunder. He served Maali like a servant without pay for over 5 years with deep devotion awaiting Guru Kataksha any moment. When the

Guru Maali didn't oblige the disciple, he sought Guru's permission to leave. It was then that the Guru started teaching, because it was very difficult to find another person with the same amount of dedication, devotion and honesty. Maali owned an old car which was driven by Sunder for his Guru's movements within the city for purposes other than music concerts. It was a dilapidated car which was sold later. By constant listening, observing Maali's fingering, blowing and breathing techniques while he practiced, Sunder began to assist his Guru in concerts. Late CM Maduranath was a Senior disciple of Mahalingam and earned name and fame before his premature death due to heart attack. Senior Advocate NDR Ramachandra Rao was another disciple who too would assist Maali in concerts.

The late HV Nagraja Rao was the editor of Prajamatha, a leading Kannada weekly who was a great patron and connoisseur of music who gave me an assignment to prepare a write up on Maali. At first, the maestro was reluctant as he was averse to publicity. I had to persuade Maali a lot for the write up. Late Nagraja Rao was immensely pleased and was present throughout the session that lasted for nearly two hours. He Spoke with gay abandon on various topics and current affairs which was as lively and interesting as his lightening birkas and swara korvais. He was very caustic about the Govt's stinginess with regard to treatment of musicians who according to him are National pride and Assets, the politics and influence plaguing the selection of persons for prestigious National awards, relegating merit, scholarship, achievements and seniority to dust bins enraged Maali. When he was conferred the coveted Padhma Shri award, he openly expressed his resentment questioning the mode and yard stick of selection, the knowledge, the wisdom and the eligibility of the selection committee in choosing the awardees.

He addressed a strong letter to the then President of India, returned the award and released the letter to the press. How many persons dare to do this?

He compared payment to musicians by the AIR to that in foreign countries. For a 30 minutes recording of his flute, he was paid an honorarium of 17,000 Francs in Paris that is equivalent to Rs.1.0 Lakh at that time. We countered him stating that he has to take into consideration the prevailing financial position of the Country before drawing comparison with France. The matter ended there.

Our conversation turned to music. I requested Maali to explain me the meaning of bani and its relevance in music. Bani should not be confused with style he maintained. Bani is manifest within himself/herself. It is like finger print. One can copy the other's style but not the bani he averred. He quoted several examples through vocal media and on the flute to make us understand his point. Our next query was with regard to his commitment to concerts and giving a slip at the nick of moment. He said concerts are a matter of responsibility and depends upon mood. Sometimes, although I am not in a mood, I am requested by organisers and friends to perform which I cannot turn down for obvious reasons. He did not elaborate what these obvious reasons are. There are several instances when he was punctual even in small venues like Tulsi Thota Sri Rama Temple and Laldas Temple near Chiklabbagh, Bangalore and other organisations both in and out of Bangalore. He was highly moody.

In the year 1977 during the 29th Ganesha festival under the aegis of Sri Vidya Ganapathy Seva Sangha, Shimoga, I was requested to arrange for a concert by Flute Maali. He agreed for a remuneration of Rs.1500/- plus a car and requested for suitable accompaniments. We fixed up Violinist M Chandrashekar, Tanjore Upendran for the mridangam and HP Ramachar's Kanjira. The previous evening, we had a meeting at NMH when Mali asked Upendran and Ramachar to join him for the journey to Shimoga. I engaged a Tourist cab.

The next morning Ramachar rushed to my house and took me to Maali's residence near my house. When he was at NMH Hotel, his wife had a fall and suffered a deep cut on her forehead. He immediately sent a telegram to the organisers late in the night cancelling his concert without assigning the reason. This was conveyed to Ramachar by the organisers. We had to persuade a lot and request Maali not to cancel the concert, to which he finally agreed. I returned home for a bath anticipating the cab. When I went to pickup Mali, his servant gave me a letter in which Maali had apologised for his inability to perform and left home for an undisclosed place. I conveyed this to Shimoga and asked them to request M Chandrashekar to give solo recital as substitute.

I again went to Maali's house around noon and met him to inquire about his wife's health. He said she is normal. I immediately met Dr. Narayan, a close friend of Maali. He came and after a brief chat persuaded him for the concert. We left around 2pm and requested the organisers to have the concert from 9pm onwards and to make announcement in this regard. Due to radiator trouble, we reached Shimoga around 9.30 pm. The concert started around 10pm and went on up to 1.30am. It was an historical event in Shimoga. An elderly person embraced Mahalingam with tears flowing in his eyes told him that he was awaiting for this moment before shedding his mortal coil. That was my first and last concert deal with Maali and there after I never invited this risk again.

After his wife migrated to America, the Late B Jayamma theatre actress and wife of legendary Gubbi Veeranna who was an MLC requested the then Chief Minister R Gundu Rao to allot her suit in the Legislature's home to flute Mahalingam and a G.O to treat the maestro as State Guest. He remained there until the fall of Gundu Rao's Govt and permanently migrated to America. He returned back to India in 1985 but died of Haemorrhage in May 1986 bringing to an end a colourful era in the history of Carnatic music.

Expensive Tani Avarthanam

CP Chikkanna



In the pre independence days, Alathoor Brothers performed at Ananda Tandavapuram, near Mayavaram in Tamil Nadu. They were accompanied by Papa Venkata Ramaiah on the violin and Palani Subramanya Pillai on Mridangam respectively. It was an evening concert. As the brothers had a programme the next day at Madras, they cut short the duration sacrificing the Thani Avartanam. There was only one train that passed through with the boarding facility at Mayavaram.

The station master of Ananda Tandavapuram was a great patron of Music. He requested the

brothers not to cut short the concert and promised to put them onto the train.

The station master hid the signal key which had to be passed over to the Engine Driver without which the train could not pass the station. The train came to an unscheduled halt at Ananda Tandavapuram for nearly 30 minutes. It resumed its journey after the music party boarded the Train!

An inquiry fixed the station master. He was immediately suspended with a hefty fine. He had to pay a heavy price for listening to Palani's Thani Avataram!

Needa Mangalam Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai (father of Musicologist B.M. Sundaram) was a leading Taval Maestro of the past. He commanded high respect for his artistry and scholarship in rhythm. He celebrated his daughter's marriage in late 1940's. It was well attended by all the leading musicians of that period. In the marriage Alathoor Brothers gave a vocal recital. Palani Subramanya Pillai accompanied them on the Mrudangam. By his artistry, Palani carried the concert to ecstasy.

Thanking the musicians and honouring them, Pillai told Palani "you have conquered us by your performance today. How can I pay back your debt? The only way to clear this debt is by my life".

The same night Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai passed away due to a massive heart attack!

Vid. Dr. RK Srikantan Trust, Bangalore to conduct music competition

Application are invited from eligible youngsters in the age group of 20-25 Yrs as on 01.01.2017 for participation in the national level Carnatic vocal music competition. The dates for the same will be 25th to 27th February. The candidates must have the ability to present a full fledged concert. Last date for submitting the application will be 5th January 2016. For more details contact 080-23368190, 9448468192, 9845376019

Amrutha Murali at SRLKM

Anagha Yoganand

Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira held a concert of Vidushi Amrutha Murali who performed on the 18th of September. She was accompanied by Vidwan B.K Raghu on the violin and Vidwan Akshay Anand on the mridangam.

Amrutha Murali began her concert with a shloka followed by saint Tyagaraja's krithi 'Rama nannu brovara' in harikamboji with a short neraval and kalpana swaram. This was later succeeded by the devaranama by Sri Purandara Dasa in the raga Pantuvarali 'guruvin gulama'. After a detailed alapana in the raga bilahari the kriti 'Sri chamundeswari' of Mysore Vasudevacharya was sung, for which neraval and kalpana sawaram were sung. Following this, she presented two chakrams of the mela raga malika composed by Sri Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan starting from Mararanjani to Chalanattai. 'Manavyalakina-

chara' in raga Nalinakanti followed. After a quick succession of kalpana swara for the same, one of the popular compositions of Saint Tyagaraja 'Pakkala nilabadi' in the raga Kharaharapriya was rendered. The tani then followed this. After a very rhythmic and pleasing tani, she sang 'Veenabheri' in the raga Abheri by Sri muttuswami Deekshitar. This was followed by short raga tana pallavi in the raga Kamaach. The rtp was handled by the artists in a very erudite, beautiful and in a pleasing manner. There were a flurry of ragams that were explored during the swarakalpana. This was succeeded by the Madhurashtakam, in praise of lord Krishna. A kavadi chindu of Annamalai Reddiar, 'Manju nigar kuntala' was presented after that. 'Sundara te dhyaan', an abhang by Saint Tukaram was the piece sung before the concluding one, which was a Bengali composition in the raga Sindhubhairavi.



Veena Seshanna Memorial Award

Mysore Subramanya



Swaramurthy VN Rao Memorial Trust conducted the annual music festival 'Veeneya Bedagu' from November 18th to 20th, 2016, at Udupi. On the occasion, Veena Seshanna Memorial National Award was presented to Vidwan D Balakrishna, senior Vainika and Swaramurthy VN Rao Memorial National Award was conferred on Vidushi Bombay Jayashree Ramnath by HH Sri Pejaware Swamijee and Dr. Veerendra Heggade of Dharmasthala, was also present. Each award

carries a purse of Rs. One Lakh and a bust of Veena Seshanna, with a citation and shawl.

Five concerts were held in this year's 'Veeneya Bedagu' and the response was overwhelming. D. Balakrishna (Veena), Bombay Jayashree Ramnath, N Vijaya Shiva and Bangalore Brothers (Ashok and Harihara) (vocal) and Herambha and Hemantha (Flute) - are the artistes who performed in the festival.



Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma Foundation

Sowmya Sanak Kumar Athreya

The morning of November 5th 2016 witnessed the grand and unique inaugural event of the AAKS Foundation for Music at Seva Sadan, Malleswaram. The Anoor AnanthaKrishna Sharma Foundation for Music is a one-of-its-kind initiative by none other than everybody's beloved Shivu Sir (aka Anoor AnanthaKrishna Sharma). The vision of the organisation is to facilitate all genres of music and arts, educating youngsters on how to learn from the greats while also bringing about awareness among listeners or Rasikas about the multifarious facets in the field of arts.

The function was kick started with a special invocation based on Konnakkol, well-executed by a group of students of Shri. Anoor AnanthaKrishna Sharma, all dressed formally in crisp whites. After this, as tradition goes, the event was opened with the lighting of the lamp. A

brief introduction to the purpose of the organisation was given by the compere, Smt. Indira Sharma. The chief guests of the day were Dr. HS Jamadagni- connoisseur of music and 'Karnataka Kalashree' Pandit. Ravindra Yavagal- renowned Tabla maestro. The audience was filled with all the who's who of Bengaluru's classical music scenario adding great strength to the initiative. All of them unanimously applauded the efforts of Shri. Anoor AnanthaKrishna Sharma and his team for this much-required initiative and expressed happiness in supporting the venture.

The mainstay of the day was a concert-cum-demonstration, where the stage was shared by 2 eminent octogenarian giants in the field of Karnatic percussion. The first performance was a LayaVinyasa by none other than 'Mridanga Kala Shiromani' 'Ganakala Bhushana' Vidwan. Shri. T.A.S. Mani, accompanied by Vid-



wan.Shri.TN.Ramesh on Konnakkol. They gave an extensive demonstration in Adi Tala, with Shri TAS.Mani sharing many of his rich stage experiences with percussion ensembles internationally. The second performance was aptly titled “Layaananda-The Joy of Rhythm” by ‘Mridanga Kala Shiromani’ ‘Sangeetha KalaRatna’ Vidwan.Shri.AV.Anand supported by ‘Ganakala-Shree’ Vidwan. Prof.V.Krishna and ‘Khanjira Praveena’ Vidwan.Shri.N.Amrit. They presented Adi Tala and detailed elucidation in each of the Nadai-s with brilliantly constructed mohras and muktayams in each Nadai. The rendition was replete with lucid explanations that were a great takeaway for students of the art.

Dr.HS Jamadagni, in his speech encouraged musicians to also look at the scientific aspects of music with the same keenness as they observe

aesthetics. He quoted Pythagoras –the ancient Greek mathematician-musician and suggested to draw inspiration from him. Pandit. Ravindra Yavagal expressed a deep sense of appreciation for the performances of each of the stalwarts and highlighted the need for both Hindustani and Karnatic musicians to come on a common platform to enhance the values of the field itself.

On the whole, the event was a huge runaway success with outstanding performances and filled the audience with many positive vibrations. As the saying by Lao-Tzu goes, “A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step”....and now, that step has been well-taken! We all look forward to great musical times ahead with AAKS Foundation.

Nadasurabhi Award for Dr. TV Gopalakrishnan

Legendary carnatic musician Dr.TV Gopalakrishnan was the recipient of the title ‘Sangeetha Surabhi’ for the year 2016. The award was presented on 6th November 2016, in a colourful ceremony in the presence of several senior musicians, students, admirers of Dr.TVG and music lovers. General Secretary of Nadasurabhi in her

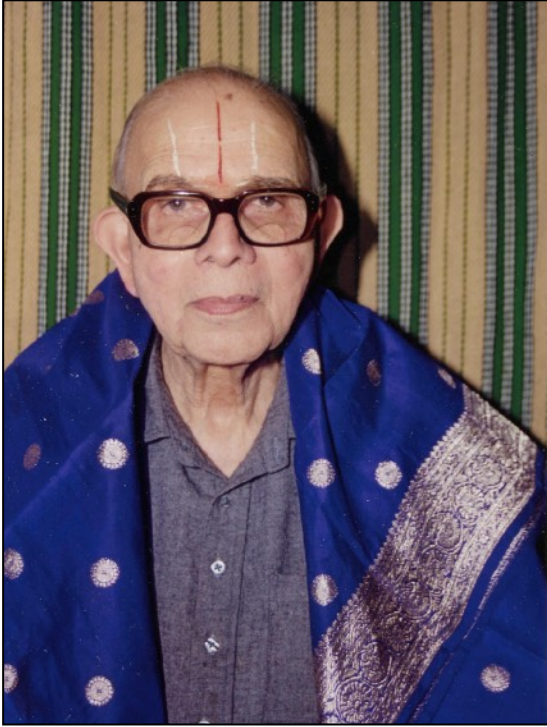
citation pointed out the breadth and depth of Dr.TVG's contribution to music as a mridangam maestro, vocalist, composer, guru and a specialist in the various genres of music, Carnatic, Hindustani, western, jazz, etc., Prof. Mysore V Subramanya narrated the immense contribution of Sri.TVG.



L to R - KSS Raghavan, President Nadasurabhi, Dr. TV Gopalakrishnan, Mysore Subramanya, Harini Raghavan, Secretary Nadasurabhi

TS Tathachar - A Life in Music

Mirle Karthik



A tall, stately, bespectacled, fair complexioned with a tinge of red gentleman, attired in a spotless white dhoti in the traditional manner with the folds between the legs, a white full sleeved shirt, a red line running across his broad forehead from between the eyebrows to the hairline, betokening his belonging to the Srivaishnava religious order. When he spoke, it was a, soft, measured, dignified tone that signified his cultured background as also his cultural moorings. But, that was, after all, to be expected. For, T.S Tathachar was a representative of the 'old Mysore' tradition, where art and culture is a way of life that accorded more importance to values and ethics was more the norm than the exception. As a musician and a violinist, as one hailing from the old Mysore region with its accent on understated achievements and quiet,

unostentatious lifestyle, as one who rose to prominence during the era of royal patronage to men of arts, letters and other fields of human endeavour, as a witness to the transition from princely rule to the new way of democratic administration, as a quiet onlooker to the course of events, especially in the world of music during the post independence period, Tathachar symbolised the rock solid values and morals of his times as juxtaposed against the fast flowing, materialistic ways of the world of the seventies and eighties. At the same time, he was pragmatic enough to understand that all this was in the natural course of life. This is not to say that he did not have his reservations against certain developments in the Carnatic music field which he considered to be detrimental to the art. But, he was essentially a stickler to tradition, as was to be expected of one of his generation, who sincerely, unwaveringly followed the path as charted out by his mentors as well as the doyens of his times.

Looking back at the course of events of Tathachar's life, one would admit that perhaps, he was destined to cohabit with the muse. Entering the world on the 21st of May 1917 at Pavagada in the old Mysore region, Tathachar had his initial lessons from his father T Srinivasachar, who was himself a musician and violinist and afterwards from his uncle. His next move was to Mysore where he came under the tutelage of the legendary polymath Rallapalli Ananthakrishna Sharma. A few words on this phenomenal man would be in order here. An erudite scholar in Telugu, Kannada, Sanskrit and Pali, Shri Sharma, a faculty at the Maharaja's College, Mysore was regarded as a walking encyclopaedia in these and many other subjects. Besides, he was also well versed in Carnatic music, being a protégé of the redoubtable Bidaram Krishnappa of Mysore. An authority in the theory and practice of Carnatic music, a



File photo of 1943 - TS Tathachar accompanying Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar with MS Ramaiah on Mridangam. Also seen are KV Narayanaswamy and MA Narasimhachar

violinist of no mean order and a composer, Shri Sharma, who straddled both the Kannada and Telugu lands with his exemplary accomplishments was honoured with the title of 'Sangita Kalanidhi' by the Music Academy. Tathachar was the first disciple of Shri Sharma and being a student of such a towering personage, it was quite but natural that Tathachar imbibed the ideals and values that Sharma stood for. Besides the qualities of quiet disposition, non - projection of one's accomplishments, grace and dignified bearing, Tathachar's music reflected the sweetness and flavour of a bygone era. The staccato bowing that drew out elongated phrases with the gamakas characteristic of Carnatic music, fingering that unhesitatingly landed on the right note, Sangatis that enhanced the beauty of the composition or raga being elaborated, all denoted an approach to music that was neither flamboyant nor flippant. It was just music that he expressed as he had learnt it, as he felt it fit to be brought forth at that particular moment. As an accompanist, he was a faithful follower of the lead artiste, never overdoing anything, even in his solo turns. As a solo violinist, he was again the quiet, reposeful musician. His raga essays, though short, encapsulated the essential features of the raga in a sweet, melodic manner.

One still recalls his elaboration of rakti ragas like Suruti, Kedaragowla and Shahana and Ghana ragas like Todi and Shankarabharanam in which he projected the high notes of the ragas with soulful flourishes. As a musician of the old school, he had a preponderance for the compositions of Thyagaraja. 'Enduku Peddala' in Shankarabharanam, 'Koluvamaregada' in Todi, 'Upacharamu' in Bhairavi, 'Nannu Palimpa' in Mohana are some of the songs that spring to mind in this connection. Giving due importance to the lyrics of the song by trying to understand the emotions of the composer and articulating this 'bhava' as effectively as possible was stressed upon by his Guru which Tathachar always followed. It must be remembered that Mysore was the destination of every musician, poet, writer and scholar, as the rulers of the Wodeyar dynasty were great patrons of art and learning, who encouraged such learned men to settle in Mysore and adorn their courts, by providing them with all facilities for their livelihood. Thus Tathachar had ample opportunities to listen to the music of all the great musicians of his times who came to Mysore. This moulded his musical sensibilities which stood him in good stead when he later sat on the stage with great names like Mysore Chowdaiah, Ariyakudi Ra-



TS Tathachar standing behind Chowdaiah with MS Selvapulle Iyengar and TM Puttaswamaiah on extreme left and right respectively.

manuja Iyengar, GNB, Mysore Vasudevachar, Harikeshanallur Muthaiah Bhagavathar, Tiger Varadachar, Palladam Sanjeeva Rao Musuri Subramania Iyer, Madurai Mani Iyer, Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar, Sarabha Shastry, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Maharajapuram Vishwanatha Iyer, Alathur Bothers, T.R Mahalingam and many others. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to say that the list of musicians whom Tathachar accompanied comprises the entire galaxy of Carnatic vocalists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century! The young boy who sat in the audience listening to these giants would hardly have imagined that he would, one day, sit on stage with them as their co-artiste. The ebb and tide of fortune, as Shakespeare says “takes men on its back, giving them their due as the creator decides”.

All India Radio, then as now, has been the greatest repository and nurturer of all genres of Indian music. Tathachar’s first employment was with AIR-Madras which provided immense opportunities to listen, mingle with other musicians, enhance his repertoire as also his musical acumen and imbibe the finer points of the

chaste art. The outbreak of the second world war saw him moving to Akashvani Mysore, then a fledgling unit started by the inimitable M.V Gopalaswamy. His broadcasts from Mysore were greatly appreciated by discerning rasikas. When AIR Bangalore came into existence, Tathachar moved to Bangalore, the place where he was to stay for long. As a staff artiste, he not only participated in the regular broadcasts, but also produced innumerable programmes which comprised a veritable ‘audio library’ of Carnatic Music. His programmes like those on the Tarangas of Narayanateertha, Thyagaraja’s Nowka Charitramu, Muthuswamy Dikshitar’s Navavarna Krithis, the Ugabhogas of Purandaradasa may be recalled here. Tathachar was a part of the ensemble of all musical productions, whether it was classical Carnatic music or the works of the renowned poets like D.V. Gundappa, Pu.Thi. Narasimhachar, V.Seetharamaiah, with their immortal short stories, poems and musical operas. His stint as leader of the Akashvani Vadyavrinna is also to be recalled here.

During the later part of his musical sojourn, many awards and recognitions like the Chowda-



From Left to Right - Krishnaswamy Rao, RK Venkatarama Sastry, Dwaram Venkataswamy Naidu, TS Tathachar, RK Srikantan

iah Award, the Dasara Award and more came his way. But he remained the same person as always, a soft smile on his lips, who endured the vicissitudes of life with fortitude. His son, T.T. Srinivasan is ably carrying on Tathachar's music tradition in his quiet but affirmative manner. The eminent writer T.S. Eliot in his essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' says "Talent is important if you wish to succeed, but remember, don't ignore the past, don't just dismiss the contributions of the earlier travellers as of no conse-

quence. Respect the past and build on it to proceed where you want to". Tathachar's life exemplifies this - respect for the past and tradition, hope for the future. A man who bowed to the past and bowed his way through life! It is befitting that we remember this unassuming, but fragrant flower on this occasion of his birth centenary.

TS Tathachar centenary celebration

Karnataka Sangeetha Nrutya Academy, Bangalore will be celebrating Vid. TS Tathachar centenary celebrations on 18th Feb 2017, Saturday at 5.30 pm. The venue will be at Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira auditorium. Bangalore S Shankar will be presenting a musical feature on Saint Thyagaraja.

Savitha Narasimhan at SRLKM

Anagha Yoganand

On the 16th of October, the audience present at Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira were treated to a delightful concert presented by Vidushi Savita Narasimhan. She was accompanied by Vidushi Charulatha Ramanujam on the violin and B. Ganapati Raman on the mridangam.

She began her concert with the varnam in ragam Shahana, 'Karanimpa', followed by a rendition of 'Kanjadalayatakshi' in the ragam Manohari, composed by Muttuswami Deekshitar. This was followed by Saint Tyagaraja's composition in the raga Poornachandrika with a short prelude of an alapana and followed by quick rendition of Kalpana swaras for the same. Then, the famous composition of Muttuswami Deekshitar in Dwijavanti, 'Akhilandeshwari' was handled in an effortless and graceful manner. The next raga that was taken up was Anandabhairavi and the kriti chosen was 'Marivere Gati' by the composer saint Tyagaraja, for which a detailed raga alapana and kalpana swara was sung. This was followed by a rendition of Ty-

garaja's 'Seetamma maayamma' in vasanta raga. This was succeeded by a composition of Uttukaadu Venkata Subbaiyer in the raga Kalyani, 'Sarasija bhava' on goddess Saraswati, which was preceded by alapana and followed by kalpana swara.

The main item of the concert was a padam by Arunachala Kavirayar, 'yaaro ivar yaaro' in the raga Bhairavi. After a detailed exploration of the raga through alapana, neraval and kalpana swara, the tani took over. this was followed by a javali in poorvikalyani, 'Nee matale mayanura' by the composer Pattabhiramayya in the raga Poorvikalyani. Then, the very popular devarnama of Sri Purandaradasa, 'Venkatachalanilyam'. After this, a beautiful rendition, made famous by MS Subbulakshmi, 'pag ghungroo' was sung melodiously and later, the concert was concluded with Bhavayami Gopalabalam. The concert was very meditative and spread solace to all the rasikas present.



MSS Centenary Celebration at Chennai

Srinivasan Viswanathan

On the occasion of the 100th birthday of Bharat Ratna MS Subbulakshmi, a grand function was organised by the Suswaralakshmi Foundation for Classical Music and Performing Arts at the Music Academy – Chennai. The highlight of this function was the honouring of two living legends Sangita Kalanidhi Dr TK Murthy and N-dayogi Sri VV Subramanyam with the “Suswaralakshmi Subbulakshmi Lifetime Achievement Award” along with a prize money of Rs one lakh for each Vidwan.

Welcoming the huge gathering of rasikas, Sri V Shrinivasan, Managing Trustee of the Foundation said that it was most appropriate that the centenary of the “Queen of Music” was being celebrated at the Music Academy, towards which MS Amma had raised money through innumerable benefit concerts and it was this contribution that was used for the construction of the

building and auditorium. It was at the inaugural function where Pandit Nehru had exclaimed when he was asked to say a few words on MS “Who am I, after all a mere Prime Minister to say anything on the Queen of Song”

Participating on this occasion were Sri Gopalakrishna Gandhi, Sri N Murali, Cleveland Sri VV Sundaram and Gowri Ramnarayan. The function commenced with the lighting of the lamp and a prayer – “Nagendra Haraya” by both S. Aishwarya and S. Saundarya, great grand daughters of MS Amma. Subsequently a picture exhibition on the Bharat Ratna was inaugurated by Sri N Murali at the foyer of the Academy where around 500 pictures of the MS Amma were displayed sequencing her entire life history. Each picture had details of when and where the picture was taken along with details of persons in the photograph.



Sri Gopalakrishna Gandhi honouring Sangeetha Kalanidhi TK Murthy



Sri Gopalakrishna Gandhi honouring Nadayogi Sri V V Subramanyam

Gowri Ramnarayan spoke of how much Subbulakshmi appreciated the music of her accompanying artists and said she was the person who refused to perform at the Music Academy unless “Upa-Pakavadyam” artists were also allowed to accompany her. She said that the Golden Age of Carnatic Music was when Subbulakshmi and Radha were accompanied by T K Murthy, VV Subramanyam, V Nagarajan and Vikku Vinayakram.

Cleveland Sundaram talked about the matchless perfection of Subbulakshmi’s music. He said that just like Ariyakudi was blessed with T N Krishnan and Palghat Mani Iyer to support him so also was MSS blessed with T K Murthy and VVS. Sri Sundaram also mentioned about Radha Viswanathan’s peerless support to her mother and said he was extremely happy that the MS legacy will now be carried forward by Radha’s Grand Daughter S. Aishwarya who has been so well trained.

Sri N Murali said that Subbulakshmi was a Genius of Song and her music transcended geographical boundaries. Her humility and simplicity combined with her musicianship and perfection made her an international icon. He also said that not only were MS and Sadasivam major contributors towards the Academy building fund but also pointed out that Subbulakshmi never took any remuneration for herself from

the Academy all through her music career. Sri Murali mentioned that the Academy has towards Subbulakshmi a deep sense of gratitude.

Sri Gopalakrishna Gandhi said that the special flavour of the evening was the presence of two extraordinary musicians in our midst, T K Murthy and VV Subramanyam and said that they are the living representatives of the legendary MSS. He said Subbulakshmi’s concerts were enriched by the artists who accompanied her. He said that the bow of VVS’s violin was indistinguishable from the voice of MS. Sri Gandhi also mentioned that T K Murthy was the pulse of an MS concert and his tani was heard with rapt attention by MS.

This was followed by a 40-minute documentary on the “Nightingale of India” organised by the Suswaralakshmi Foundation which had various rare pictures, music recordings both audio and video of Subbulakshmi.

Befittingly, the second session had a grand concert by S. Aishwarya and S. Saundarya, Grand daughters of Radha Viswanathan. They were accompanied by Dr M Narmadha on the violin, B Sivaraman on Mridangam, Papanasam Sethuraman on Kanjira, H Sivaramakrishnan on Ghatam.

Interview with Rudrapatnam Brothers

SA Karthik

Q: What do you identify as the distinctive characteristics of the 'Rudrapatnam bani'?

A: We can name two or three distinctive features to which we have been faithful for the last so many decades:

a) A good pathantaram which means that we don't listen and learn indiscriminately. In fact, our father used to recommend only certain musicians to us not because he felt they had a pathantaram which students like us could emulate to our benefit. So we have stuck to the versions of kritis as taught by our father; if we found something suitable to our style from Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Ramnad Krishnan or GNB, we borrowed them carefully.

b) The second feature of our style is due attention to the sahitya. We pay full respect to the lyrics because we believe for our Carnatic music, the compositions of the great composers is the fountain from which everything else is derived.

c) We don't indulge in gimmicks of any kind just to make ourselves popular. We strive for a balance between the various aspects of the kacheri without overdoing any of them.

Q: You are known to sing rare compositions in your concerts. How has the audience received them?

A: To be honest, the response is mixed in venues where the audience has strong opinions of what should be sung and what shouldn't be. We have got feedback that we don't sing the common kritis. However, in venues that don't have such strong likes and dislikes and the audience is willing to listen with an open mind, especially outside India, they really enjoy what we offer. As far as we're concerned, we remain faithful to what we intend to present.

Q: Our elders always stress on the benefits of listening to good music. Today we are going through a paradox – on the one hand, the number of young people attending live concerts is diminishing; on the other hand, people of all ages can listen to anybody at any time on phones, players, computers and so on. What is your assessment of this situation?

A: In our time listening to kacheris live was the only means available to hear the masters. Then the radio came into our homes and even then Carnatic music was not available all the time. Many gurus discouraged their students from listening too much because they were concerned that the student may pick up unwanted elements without any guidance and absorb them into his singing.

Now, with youngsters having the ability to listen to music all the time, there is the danger that they will pick up sangatis and sancharas not suited to their voice or style of singing. It is a kind of distance education where no guru is monitoring what the student is imbibing.

So while we believe that students have to listen to a lot of music no doubt, especially live kacheris, but this must be music of a certain standard and must be done under the guidance of a competent guru.

Q: What is your advice to teachers of music since you have trained many young musicians?

A: Teaching is a very big responsibility. The teacher must be sincere in imparting training to the student. He must have patience to put up with the student's mistakes. Over and above anything else, he should have affection for the pupil.

The teaching will have to be adjusted to accommodate the specific qualities of a given student. Not everybody can sing or play an instru-

ment in the same way, not everybody learns at the same speed. The teacher will have to account for all these variables.

Q: You have both excelled at academics as well. In fact Dr Tharanathan is among an elite group of scientists who are named in a reputed survey as the most cited authors of technical papers. What is your advice to young students of Carnatic music who also want to do well in academics and professions?

A: The only thing required is a strong determination to overcome all obstacles and do well in

both fields. If that is there then everything else will fall in place.

Q: What is the role your families have played in your musical career?

A: Without the support of our families we would be nothing. Since we both had to travel and spend time outside the home regularly, it would not have been possible if our families had not cooperated. We owe them a lot for their support.

Bengaluru Vasantotsava

Suswaralaya College of Music (R) & Swarasindhu Trust

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Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira

cordially invites you to the
release of www.swarasindhu.in website at 4:30 pm

Vidwan HK Venkatram
will inaugurate

Vidwan RK Padmanabha
will release the website

Musicologist, Columnist and Art critic

Dr. M Suryaprasad will honour renowned Vocal artiste **Vidhushi Nagarathna Sadasiva**

B Srikar will demonstrate the Swarasindhu Website

Notations downloadable in Devanagari, English, Malayalam, Kannada, Tamil and Telugu scripts. Raga, Tala, Composer lists, Audio/Video, Articles and information links, User Profiles. Swarasindhu is created and sustained by professionals in the IT, Music and other fields on a voluntary basis. Thousands of hours of effort have gone in to preparation of the content which are made available free.

Followed by a grand vocal recital by

Vid. Swathi Srinath (Vocal)
Vidwan NN Ganesh Kumar (Violin)
Vidwan Anoor R Dattatreya Sharma (Mridanga)
Vidwan Panidra Bhaskara (Ghata)

Date : 21 January 2016 at 4.30 pm
Venue : Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira, BSK II Stage, Bangalore

All are welcome

Suswaralaya annual Festival

MB Hariharan

Suswaralaya College Of Music celebrated its 17th Anniversary with a 3 day musical feast at Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira on October 21, 22 and 23.

The music festival was inaugurated on Oct 21st by Karnataka Kalashree Vid Sri M Vasudeva Rao. Kum Pavani Kashinath rendered a melodious invocation. Renowned Educationist Sri LS Shyamsundar Sharma released the 8th edition of Directory of Musicians (Karnatak and Hindustani). Renowned Mridanga Artiste Vid Sri T S Chandrashekar was felicitated and bestowed with the title of 'Swaralaya Shrunga' by the guest of honour Sri KN Venkatnarayana (President, Akhila Karnataka Brahmana Maha Sabha).

Vidushi Smt Sahana SV accompanied by Vidwan Sri Kotipalli Ramesh (Mridanga) and Vidwan Sri G S Ramanujam (Ghata), Sangeetha Kalanidhi Vidushi R Vedavalli supported by Sumithra Vasudev and accompanied by Vidushi Charulatha Ramanujam (Violin), Vidwan Tumkur B Ravishankar (Mridanga) and Vidwan Ranganatha

Chakravarthy (Ghata) and Vidwan Saketharaman accompanied by Vidwan H K Venkataram (Violin), Vidwan Vijay Natesan (Mridanga) and Vid Anirudh Atreya (Khanjira) were the main performers.

The morning sessions included lecture demonstrations and laya vinyasa performances by budding laya vidwans.

Vidwan Ashwin Anand gave a lecture demonstration on nuances of Gayaki style on the Veena. He demonstrated the same with several examples and stressed on the importance of this for effective Veena playing.

Senior Vocal artiste and noted scientist Vidwan Dr K Varadarangan gave a technical presentation that demonstrated the relationship between various aspects of music and Physics. He covered several aspects of music and explained how it is related to science.



Release of the special Edition on Tanjavur M Thiagarajan

Savitha Narasimhan released a special edition of our magazine on Tanjavur M Thiagarajan on 16th September 2016. We are glad the magazine is well accepted by senior musicians and connoisseurs for its rich content. Clearly it is emerging as an important music journal disseminating knowledge on music that many want to preserve for posterity.



From L to R - Savitha Narasimhan, Honorary Secretary GV Krishnaprasad, Anand S, Treasurer Dr. MR Yogananda



Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira (Regd.)

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

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29th Year Karnatak Classical Music Festival - Musical Extravagansa

Sankranti Music Festival - Jan 2017

(Venue - Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira Open air Theatre, Time - 5.45 pm)

Spring Music Festival - Feb 2017

(Venue - Bangalore Gayana Samaja Auditorium, Time - 5.45 pm to 9 pm)

 01-01-2017, Sunday S Aishwarya (Vocal) HM Smitha (Violin) Akshay Anand (Mridangam) Anoor Sunad (Khanjara)	 06-01-2017, Friday AS Murali (Vocal) Vishwesh Swaminathan (Violin) Sai Shivu (Mridangam) Bhagyalakshmi M Krishna (Morsing)	 05-02-2017, Sunday Bombay Jayashree Rammath (Vocal) HN Bhaskar (Violin) VV Ramana Murthy (Mridangam) BS Purushotham (Khanjara)	 10-02-2017, Friday Amrutha Venkatesh (Vocal) L Ramakrishnan (Violin) SJ Arjun Ganesh (Mridangam) Bhagyalakshmi M Krishna (Morsing)
 02-01-2017, Monday Sikkil Gurucharan (Vocal) Balu Raghuraman (Violin) Rajesh Srinivasan (Mridangam) CPVyasa Vittala (Khanjara)	 07-01-2017, Saturday Laya Lavanya Subramanya Sastry (Flute) Aniruddha R Nadig (Violin) Shadaj Godkhindi (Bansuri) Anoor Vinod Shyam (Mridangam) Sunaad Anoor (Khanjari) Chidananda (Morsing) Nagendra Prasad (Thavil) Sudatta (Tabla) Pranav Dath (Rhythm Pads) Triumale Gopi Shrivana (Drums)	 06-02-2017, Monday Sanjay Subrahmanyam (Vocal) S Varadarajan (Violin) Neyveli B Venkatesh (Mridangam) B Rajashekhara (Morsing)	 11-02-2017, Saturday Ranjini and Gayatri (Vocal duet) HN Bhaskar (Violin) Sai Gindhar (Mridangam) N Guruprasad (Ghatam)
 03-01-2017, Tuesday MK Pranesh (Flute) B Vittal Rangan (Violin) Anoor Anantakrishna Sharma (Mridangam) M Gururaj (Morsing) Somasthekar Jois (Konnagolu)	 07-02-2017, Tuesday MS Sheela (Vocal) Charulatha Ramanujam (Violin) Anoor Anantakrishna Sharma (Mridangam) Sukanya Ramgopal (Ghatam)	 08-02-2017, Wednesday Shashank Subramanyam (Flute) HN Bhaskar (Violin) Patri Satish Kumar (Mridangam)	 12-02-2017, Sunday Sangita Kala Acharya Neela Ramgopal will be conferred with the title " Sangeetha Vedanta Dhurina " instituted in the name of founder G Vedanta Iyengar with a cash award of Rs. One Lakh, a Silver medal and a citation followed by a concert of: Neela Ramgopal (Vocal) Trivandrum N Sampath (Violin) Sherthalai R Anantakrishnan (Mridangam) Dr. S Karthik (Ghatam)
 04-01-2017, Wednesday Shankari Krishnan (Vocal) NN Ganesh Kumar (Violin) Ranjani Venkatesh (Mridangam) ASN Swamy (Khanjara)	 09-01-2017, Monday HK Narasimha Murthy, HN Bhaskar, Pritivi Bhaskar (Violin Trio) GS Ramanujan (Mridangam) S Srishyla (Ghatam) VS Ramesh (Morsing)	 08-02-2017, Thursday Abhishek Raghuram (Vocal) Charulatha Ramanujam (Violin) Anantha R Krishnan (Mridangam) G Guruprasanna (Kanjira)	 10-02-2017, Friday Dr. Padma Sugavanam (Vocal) BK Raghvi (Violin) BC Manjunath (Mridangam) SN Narayanamurthy (Ghatam)
 05-01-2017, Thursday Mahadevan Shankaranarayanan (Vocal) Srinidhi R Madhur (Violin) Arjun Kumar (Mridangam)	 10-01-2017, Tuesday Dr. Padma Sugavanam (Vocal) BK Raghvi (Violin) BC Manjunath (Mridangam) SN Narayanamurthy (Ghatam)	 09-02-2017, Thursday Abhishek Raghuram (Vocal) Charulatha Ramanujam (Violin) Anantha R Krishnan (Mridangam) G Guruprasanna (Kanjira)	 12-02-2017, Sunday Sangita Kala Acharya Neela Ramgopal will be conferred with the title " Sangeetha Vedanta Dhurina " instituted in the name of founder G Vedanta Iyengar with a cash award of Rs. One Lakh, a Silver medal and a citation followed by a concert of: Neela Ramgopal (Vocal) Trivandrum N Sampath (Violin) Sherthalai R Anantakrishnan (Mridangam) Dr. S Karthik (Ghatam)

Entry to all the concerts of SRLKM is FREE.
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