

Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira (R)

(Distinguished Service to Carnatic Music since 1955)

Lalitha Kala Tarangini

Quarterly Music Magazine

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March 2017

◆ Special Edition on
T Rukmini



Vidhushi Neela Ramgopal honoured

The title “Sangeetha Vedantha Dhureena” was presented to Sangita Kala Acharya Neela Ramgopal in the divine presence of “H H Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar” on 12 Feb, 2017.

The title carries a purse of Rs. One Lakh, a silver medal and a citation. This award is instituted in memory of the founder Shri. G Vedantha Iyengar who started the institution 62 years ago.



Neela Ramgopal with Sangeetha Vedantha Dhureena award

L to R - Dr. Yoganand, Rajashree Yoganand, Hon. Secretary GV Krishnaprasad, Neela Ramgopal, GV Neela, Founder Principal, Swamiji, Sri. HR Yathiraj, Vice President, Sri. DR Srikantaiah, President

March 2017

T Rukmini, an extraordinary musician who established a benchmark for violin accompaniment during the golden era of music is Karnataka's gift to Tamil Nadu. It goes without saying that Tamil Nadu provided her the perfect platform to be one of the best violin accompanist of our time. She does attributes lot of what she achieved from 1962 onwards to her husband MA Srinivasan and her in-laws.

At a time when a lady artist performing in public was a taboo, T Rukmini shone like a polished diamond. She was the de facto violin accompanist for doyens of music and it all started with Flute genius Mali calling her talent openly from a concert stage at our own Town Hall during a benefit concert.

It will serve our current day practitioners better to follow the path paved by her and also heed to her advice. She calls current crop of upcoming musicians very clever, intelligent and talented but says they are swayed and charmed by speed, excessive focus on tala calculations, rendering long swaras (mostly memorised) and thinking kanakku is the ultimate winner forgetting the most important essence, which is the bhava. We dedicate this March issue of the Lalitha Kala Tarangini to T Rukmini who is a role model for any accompanying artiste.

SRLKM concluded yet another Spring festival in Feb 2017 and as always it was a treat for the music connoisseurs. Seldom thousand odd audience convenes for a music concert, which is a testimony to the dedication and sincerity with which SRLKM conducts this festival year after year. Needless to say this is a charity of the highest order considering the rasikas are provided free concerts of the top musicians of the country.

The music world is looking forward to the 250th Saint Thyagarajaswami Jayanthi during May 2017. Various or-

ganisations across the globe are planning to pay their tribute in their own way. As a mark of respect to the saint composer, we have included an article written by RK Shriramkumar that we consider is a fitting tribute.

Your LKT is appreciated by music lovers with most of them calling us and providing their feedback very positively. The veteran maestros we are covering have come in for special prize and they would want more of the bygone doyens covered. We have included an excellent article on Ramanathapuram CS Sankarasivam (Guru of Ramnad Krishnan and TN Seshagopalan) by Shri KS Kalidas that makes a great reading. He takes us back over a century and connects us to the golden era of music. This is a very well researched article and a must read.

We have also covered an article on Karnataka's pride and violin Vidwan Mysore S Mahadevappa, father of Mysore Nagaraj and Manjunath.

Team SRLKM wishes its readers a happy 'Hemalamba nama Samvatsara - Ugadi'. We wish the very best to come your way in this new year.

Anand S

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

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

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We offer our humble tribute to Saint Thyagarajaswami on the occasion of his 250th Jayanthi

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Lalitha Kala Tarangini - Inbox

To the Editor,

Sir,

Let me express my joy and admiration for the Dec. 16 issue of Lalitha kala Tarangini containing a rare and intimate insight to the life and Music of Calcutta Krishna Murthy (KSK) who was one of the most sought after Kalachaaryas of our times. That he was close to and respected by none other than the legendary Lalgudi Jayaraman bears ample testimony to the rare calibre of KSK. Because of his long stay in Calcutta during his younger days and self evasive nature KSK did not get the type of recognition and adoration he richly deserved. Lalgudi GJR Krishnan

deserves to be complimented for sharing a very intimate and not much publicised glimpse of an extraordinary artist. I remember my esteemed friend Vid. TR Subramanyam (TRS) speaking very eloquently of the rich repertoire of Calcutta Krishnamurthy and his readiness to impart knowledge to whosoever sought, during our music audition sessions in All India Radio. The other articles on Balamuralikrishna, A.V. Anand and Rudrapatnam Bros, have contributed greatly for making the Dec. 16 issue of LKT very absorbing.

NS Krishna Murthy

To the Editor,

Sir,

December issue of the magazine is captivating in design and contents. Tributes by various authors to Balamuralikrishna are too insufficient to describe his contribution. He tuned numerous compositions of Purandardas. His rendering of songs "Natavara Gangadara" in the film 'Swarna Gowri' released in the early 1960's, "Kolanooduva Cheluvanaare pelamayaa" in 'Subba Shastry' to which Veena Maestro the Late Dr. Mysore Doreswamy Iyengar provided music, "Himadrisuthe" in another film 'Sandya Raaga' are deeply etched in my memory.

He served as secretary of Sri Tyaga Brahma Mahotsava Sabha, Tiruvayyaru for over a decade and toiled very hard to give financial stability to conduct the Aradhana every year. He enrolled 1000 life members to the Sabah with each member contributing Rs.250/- one time payment for membership, by appealing to audience during his concerts. One such appeal was made in the year 1976 Music conference at Bangalore Gayana samaja. I suggested to him in my letters to the editor column in Deccan Herald that instead of such appeals, to adopt a resolution in the annual general body meeting of the Sabah to request musicians to contribute Re.1/- per song of the saint they render in concerts and create a corpus fund out of the collections to perform the Aradhana.

Earlier to him, Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer used to charge Re.1/- per autograph and directed it towards the Aradhana festival. He was also the sole trustee of Bangalore Nagarathnamma Trust that owns Tyagaraja's Samadhi. He later transferred it to dancer Abhayambike. Due to her interference in the affairs of the Sabah she was replaced by Kunnakudi Vydyanathan who collected funds from philanthropists and constructed Annadhana Mantapa and the connected building which is now converted into a marriage choultry by the Sabah and fetching good revenue. Although physically he is departed, he lives in the memory of music lovers.

Regards
CP Chikkanna



Our Upcoming Concerts

02 April, Sunday, 5.30 pm, SRLKM auditorium

Geetha Ramanand (Veena), R Adhamya (Mridangam), G Omkar Rao (Ghatam)

29 April, Saturday, 05.30 pm, Kuvempu Kalakshetra (Opposite to Bangalore Gayana Samaja, KR Road)

Musical discourse by Smt. Vishaka Hari Sub: "Sri Ramanuja Vaibhavam" in English. To commemorate with Ramanujacharya Birth Millennium year Smt. Vishaka Hari will be conferred with the title "Sangita Vedantha Dhurina" with a cash purse of One lakh rupees and silver medal by His Holiness Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar. Accompaniments for the Musical discourse Smt. Charulatha Ramanujam (Violin), H.S. Sudhindra (Mridangam), Sukanya Ramgopal (Ghata).

13 May, Sunday, 5.30 pm at Bangalore Gayana Samaja Auditorium

"RAGA LAYA PRABHA AWARD" to Vidwan Madhu Kashyap and Amith A. Nadig, the award will be presented by Sangita Kalanidhi Kum. A. Kanyakumari. The award function will be followed by Violin Solo concert by A Kanyakumari, violin support B. Vittal Rangan, K.V. Prasad (Mridangam), Bangalore N Amrith (Khanjira).

25 June, Sunday, 5.30 p.m. at SRLKM auditorium

Music concert by Kolkatta Padmavathi Saranathan, Charulatha Ramanujam (Violin), HS Sudhindra (Mridangam).

T Rukmini - Unconquered Queen of Violin

Kalpana Kishore and Amrutha Murali



Violin is the king of instruments and there came a queen named T RUKMINI, who stormed the world of Carnatic music with her accompaniment to the Flute maestro, the genius Sri TR Mahalingam popularly known as Mali when she was hardly 15 years old. When Smt.T Rukmini plays the violin, it obeys her command, produces melody, rhapsody, mellifluousness never heard of before & that ONLY MELODY of MUSIC can be the end result. Such is her mastery, with perfect technique, command over the instrument and a high degree of aesthetic sense that touches the hearts of anyone who listens to her playing. Her violin sings and it seems there is a vocal and an instrument singing together and that's the speciality of her Bani. That pinnacle of perfection, very few can possess or

gain. It was said of Dr Johnson there was nothing which he did not touch which he did not adorn. This dictum is fully applicable to T Rukmini. There was no artist that she has not accompanied in her career and it is to the credit of Smt.T Rukmini that not only she lived upto the expectations of the musicians she accompanied but she adroitly enhanced the value and worth of every concert played.

A Tribute to such a personality, multi-dimensional & kaleidoscopic, is a difficult assignment, but nevertheless, as disciples for years & decades, bowing before a legend, in all modesty & humility, try to portray her majestic manifold achievements in the field of music, with our pranams to her.

Smt **T Rukmini's** career spanning more than 60 years, accompanying six generations of musicians and even in that era, shorn of technology & communication, she was able to rise to the occasion with a rare degree of sincerity, seriousness, application, sadhagam & above all, with the full support of her dedicated husband, Sri MA Srinivasan who ensured prime of place in a highly competitive world of music & rose to Himalayan heights of achievement. Bold and convincing in her music, demure and deferential in her ways, she sat beside the giants of the Carnatic music world at a time when not many women ventured outside the threshold of their homes.

A brilliant vocalist, blessed with a pleasing voice, she has also rendered many enchanting vocal performances. She has given regular public performances and also participated in AIR & Doordarsan, Sangeetha Sammelanams, National programmes, and regular concerts.

Spanning over six decades, Smt.T Rukmini has made many a contribution to carnatic music both as a violinist and as a vocalist. She has set to tune several kritis of Saint Purandaradasa and other Kannada composers. Smt T Rukmini has also composed few tillanas and varnams. She has provided vocal support for Bharatanatyam too. Her support for Smt. Vyjayanthimala Bali's dance performances received accolades world-wide. As a revered guru, she has trained several students, many of whom are popular performing artistes today.

It is worth mentioning that Smt.T Rukmini besides providing support to vocal concerts has provided violin support to instruments as varied as Flute, Nadaswaram, Clarinet, Saxophone; Veena, Chitravina, Mandolin, Viola, and even Keyboard performances. T Rukmini has given many Lec-dems in India and abroad on various subjects which were well received and acclaimed by the press. Worth mentioning are her

Lec-dems at UK, USA & Penang. By invitation Rukmini has been to USA, UK, France(Paris), Canada, Australia, Malaysia, & Singapore on concert tours giving Violin support, Violin solo, & Lec-Dem programmes. She has played a lot of solos, duets encouraging her students and also unique combinations with different instrumentalists.

Smt. Rukmini is an 'A Top' grade artiste in Violin and an 'A' grade AIR artiste in vocal music.

Theory & Practice are 2 sides of the same coin. Basic & fundamental thinking, a plan & strategy, lessons learnt, the pathway to Future, Musicians chalk out in their minds to translate. The following extracts reveal her profound philosophy of violin & how she dealt with in life.

She had her initial training in violin from Sri R R Keshavamurthy in Bangalore and later moved on to settle down in Chennai and continued her quest for music under maestros Lalgudi Sri

Accompanying legend Mali with Trichy Sankaran on Mridangam





Accompanying DK Jayaraman with Karaikudi Mani on Mridangam

G Jayaraman and vocal from Semmangudi Sri Srinivasa Iyer.

A few excerpts from her interview about her views on her music..:

"Even as a child, I had the uncanny knack of singing and reproducing verbatim whatever I had heard. I distinctly remember that I learnt "Manasa Guruguha" from merely hearing Smt. DK Pattammal's recording and could sing it without a blemish. Recognising my passion for the art form and my proclivity towards music, my father wanted me to learn to play an instrument as also train for vocal music. Noticing my precocity in playing the violin and grasping subtle nuances he taught me many kritis. He also used to notate every kriti systematically, a practice I have imbibed from him. My mother supervised my practice sessions and it would annoy her if I missed rehearsing even for a day.

"I had a firm belief that a strong vocal background was essential for playing an instrument. Though I never formally learnt vocal music until I came under the tutelage of Sri Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, through rigorous self-practice, I could sing as well as I could play the violin. I also learnt many kritis through the "Isai Payirchi" programmes that were broadcast on the All India Radio every week.

Mali Sir was a sensation with the rasikas and true to his popularity we were greeted to an overflowing hall. I showcased with poise and finesse whatever little I knew then and earned tremendous praise from Mali sir and the audience. At the end of the Ragam Tanam Pallavi in the raga Ranjani, he spoke for about 10 minutes in appreciation and praise of my accompaniment. "This lady is not inferior to any male accompanist. She is going to shine like a glowing star in future". This concert was a big turning point in my life and career and his encouraging words still ring in my ears and I will cherish them for life "TR never looked back, after that concert, growing from strength to strength, peak to higher peak to the peak of excellence.

The fondness and the veneration I had for legend Semmangudi's music made me approach him for guidance in vocal music after I moved to Chennai. With a marked sense of humour combined with a sense of perfection, his classes used to be delightful. The torrential downpour of his kalpana swaras enthralled me and made me wish that I should accompany him some day. I was blessed with that opportunity later on. Writing down lyrics or notations while learning was something he completely disapproved off. He would impress upon his students to memorise the kritis and then sing them. O Rangashayee, Manasu Vishaya, Rama nee samanam evaaru,

Sri Venkata girisham and the Kamalamba navavarnams are some of the kritis I learnt from him.

A busy schedule made my learning sessions under Lalgudi Sir infrequent. He gave me a breath of fresh air, when he opened my eyes to the world of aesthetics and subtleties. He maintained that even the bowing had to be suitably modulated to match the mood of the composer. I could adapt to the style change easily as his music had left a big imprint on me and I had by then the experience of accompanying varied styles of music.

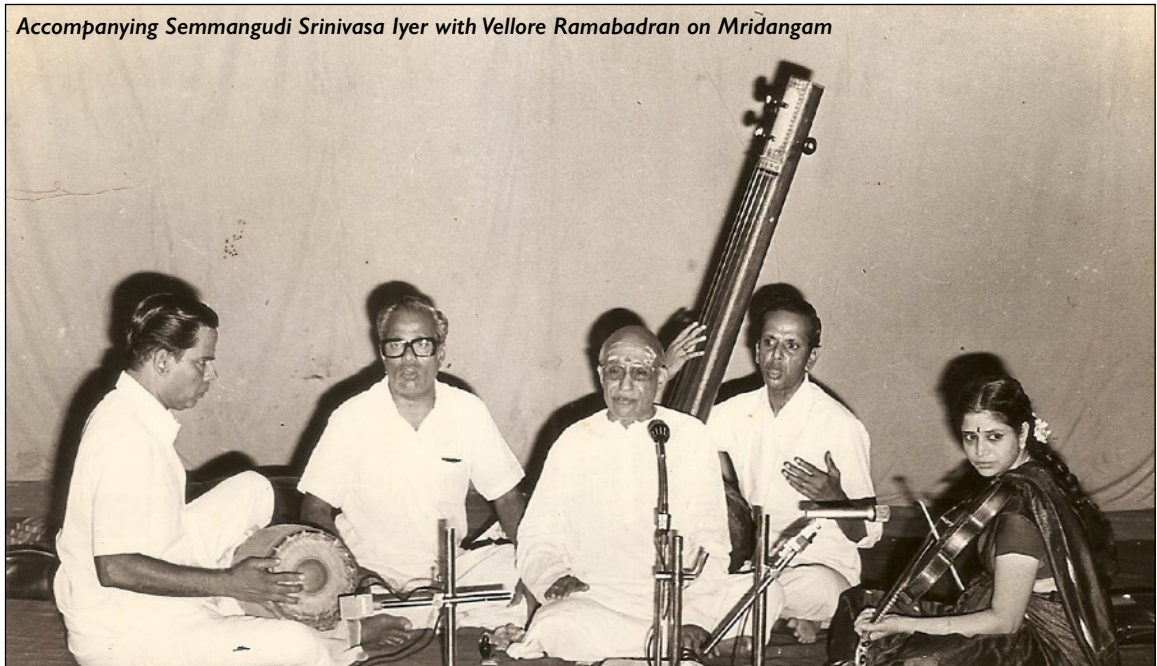
I was motivated to set to tune dasar padas when I was invited by the AIR to render a vocal concert at the fourth birth centenary celebrations of Saint Purandaradasa in Udupi. In fact, when I was in Bangalore, I often sang devotional programmes on the radio for which I set to tune diverse kannada geetams and poems. This practice continued in the Chennai AIR, where I sang compositions of Bharatiar in my own tunes. I composed a few varnams and tillanas out of interest.

The reception Smt. MS Subbulakshmi received wherever she went would keep me in awe. The care and attention the couple gave every small detail was inconceivable.

Shri DK Jayaraman's music and my violin had so much sync that a reviewer once commented "Smt.T Rukmini can shadow Shri DKJ's music even in her sleep." Apart from being part of many of his unforgettable concerts, Shri DKJ also taught me a few kritis.

Smt. T Rukmini has presented lecture demonstrations on several occasions at the Indian Fine arts Society, Narada Gana Sabha, as also at a few other centres during the music season on diverse subjects. She has also played for ragam tanam pallavi demonstrations of Sri Mudicondan Venkatrama Iyer, Sri J Venkatraman and Sri TR Subramaniam at the Music Academy and other venues.

Smt.T Rukmini's playing has always been steeped in classicism with a strong carnatic flavour. Mixing styles of playing never appealed to her. She would make certain that her playing sounds like vocal music and that it has a sense of proportion. Keeping the patanthara of kritis



intact, maintaining the laya in raga and kriti renditions and ensuring that the underlying import of the lyrics are not lost have been her areas of focus. Her gamakas and manodharma have always stayed within the tenets of carnatic music. Saadakam was always her way of life and her playing is absolutely flawless. Her sense of proportion of the Gamaka needs special mention and there was nothing overly done and her music was simple, straight to the heart.

She has sung for several dance ballets and performances of Smt. Padmalochana Nagarajan and Smt. Vyjayanthimala Bali. She cherishes one particular performance of Smt Vyjayanthimala Bali's at Paris in which she rendered the vocal support. The performance was a roaring success and won both of them accolades.

Her teaching to the disciples was based on vocal music, raga bhava, sahitya and not mere swaras. She would insist on learning to sing the kriti before playing it on the violin while Preserving the patanthara which she has passed on

to her students and her advice is not to dilute the music with gimmicks and with unwanted frills to the composition or raga or any aspect of music for that matter. She used to be very keen that as students we develop a sense of proportion in our music and are able to convey the essence of any raga or kriti sans unnecessary phrasings. She would always insist on listening to the best music and learning it for the sake of music rather than focus on performances since she believed success will automatically come when you do things the right way and intrinsically with sincerity. She is a perfectionist and would settle for nothing less than what she wanted. Lobbying was not her way at all and it was always her playing that spoke for herself and she came up by sheer merit to what she is today.

Her view on violin accompaniment was that to be an ideal accompanist, we have to shoulder certain basic responsibilities. We should try our best to enhance the music of the main per-



Accompanying M Balamuralikrishna with TV Gopalakrishnan on Mridangam



Accompanying MS Subbulakshmi and Radha Viswanathan with TGuruvayur Dorai on Mridangam

former and be unobtrusive at the same time. Our raga replies, niraval and Kalpanaswara turns should always be in proportion to what the vocalist or instrumentalist has rendered. We should never over do our role on stage. Care should be taken to keep the sahitya in mind while playing niraval. As far as possible, we should try to play along when kritis are sung and attempt going with the same style and patterns.

T Rukmini's playing style was her own style focussing always on aesthetics, paatantharam krithi rendition focus on gayaki aspect to enable rasikas to appreciate the lyrics of the song and her forte was in maintaining laya in raga & kriti renditions in complicated Pallavis & ensuring gamakas are within the boundaries of carnatic classical music. Her sense of proportion of gamaka was amazing. Her singing and playing are soaked in the Bhava, Raga and Tala which are uniquely & perfectly blended. Several musicians have spoken very highly of this violin legend who is an epitome of simplicity and humility.

Veteran percussionist Sri Karaikudi Mani mentioned that sometimes when he was trying to figure out the Nadai of the Pallavi when the Vocalist sang, Rukmini used to play it immediately and he understood from her playing what the Nadai is, such was her prowess in Pallavi ac-

companiment. If T Rukmini has played over a giant span of 6 Generations of great Musicians, & rare combinations of a variety of instruments, Colossus that she is, she absorbed & assimilated the multi-dimensional genres of music, which none else could have had. For whatever instrument she accompanied, the violin sounded so much in unison with the instrument, be it flute, nadaswaram, Veena, clarinet, saxophone, mandolin, it blended so well and sounded so rich and complete.

T Rukmini has provided violin support to legends like Sri Chembai Vaidhyaratha Bhagavathar, Sri Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Sri TK Rangachari, Sri MD Ramanathan, Dr. M Balamurali Krishna, Dr. S Ramanathan, Veena Balachandrar, Smt. MS Subbulakshmi, Smt. DK Pattammal, Smt. ML Vasantha Kumari, Sri DK Jayaraman, Sri.S Kalyanaraman, Sri Volleti Venkateswarulu, Sri Namagiripetai Krishnan (Nadaswaram), Sri Maharajapuram Santhanam, Stalwarts like Sri. N Ramani (Flute), Prof. TR Subramanian, Sri. PS Narayanaswami, Sri.TN Seshagopalan, Sikkil Sisters (Flute), Sri AKC Natarajan(Clarinet); Popular artists like Sri KJ Yesudoss, Sri Neyveli Santanagopalan, Sri. OS Tyagarajan, Hyderabad Brothers, Sri Vijay Siva, Sri.Unnikrishnan, Mandolin Srinivas, Sri Sanjay Subramanian, Chitra veena Ravikiran, Sri Kadri Gopalnath (Saxo-



Accompanying Balachandar at Shanmukhananda with Guruvayur Dorai on Mridangam

phone) and many others; spanning a service of over 65 years in the field of Carnatic Music.

In recognition of her proficiency in violin several institutions have honoured her with awards and titles. To mention a few:

- 1) The Sangeet Natak Akademi award-in Carnatic Music Instrument-Violin (She is The first lady to receive such an award in Carnatic Music Instrument-violin)
- 2) "KALAIMAMANI" award by the Tamil Nadu Iyal Isai Nataka Mandram
- 3) "SANGITA KALA ACHARYA" award by The Music Academy, Madras
- 4) "TANTRI VILAS" conferred by the Sur-Singar Sangeet Peeth, Bombay
- 5) "VANI KALA SUDAKARA" conferred by Sri Thyaga Brahma Gana Sabha, Madras
- 6) "SANGEETHA CHOODAMANI" conferred by The Krishna Gana Sabha, Madras
- 7) "SAPTAGIRI SANGITA VIDVANMANI" conferred by Thyagaraja Temple Trust & Sri Thyagaraja Festival Committee, Tirupati
- 8) "ARSHA KALA BHUSHANAM" Conferred by Arsha Vdya Gurukulam, Coimbatore
- 9) "SANGEETHA KALA SAGARAM" conferred by Bhairavi Fine Arts, Cleveland Thyagaraja Festival

10) "DHRUVA NAKSHATHIRAM" by SAFE, Chennai

11) "SANGEETHA KALAMRUTHA" conferred by Sri Gnanananda Seva Samajam & Sri Bhagavatha Sammelana Samajam

Smt. T Rukminis life is a Saga of sacrifice & a devotee's obeisance to Goddess Saraswathi. Her life is an eloquent testimony to her creative & intellectual brilliance. She leaves footprints in the sands of time, that will live & last for many more generations to come. She shall continue to enrich & enlighten music rasikas & spread melody of music, regarded as therapy to body, mind & heart. As a person she is so unassuming, loving and very innocent and childlike at heart. She oozes out an irresistible charm, a disarming sweetness, stories of yesteryears, anecdotes laced with wisdom & humour. She & her husband Srinivasan a perfect host combine, keeping all guests & disciples & friends at ease & comfort.

Her disciples from all over the world came together and celebrated 65 years of this veterans grand musical journey in Chennai last year with a PowerPoint presentation on her complete musical journey and felicitations to her by the maestros of Carnatic music.

May her tribe increase to enrich, enliven & enlighten all rasikas!!!

Tyagarajasvami's Inspirations

RK Shriramkumar



The history of Carnatic music is long and illustrious. This hallowed art form has been nurtured, preserved and passed on by several composers of yore. However the most significant contribution is of the Trinity – Sri Tyagarajasvami, Sri Shyama Shastri and Sri Muttusvami Dikshitar. Their compositions offer us a glimpse into the music of their times, that which preceded them and their own musical and literary genius. The world of Carnatic musicians and admirers owe them a great deal of gratefulness.

The Chaturdandi tradition of Gita, Prabandha, Thaya and Alapa gave way to the tradition of Pada, Kirtana and Krti. Of all the greats who

contributed during this period, Tyagaraja's name stands tall. Tyagarajasvami's contribution to Carnatic music stands unparalleled. His compositions cover a wide spectrum of compositions that showcase multi various dimensions of sangita and sahitya.

From smaller compositions to the expansive and ornamented pancharatnas, from divyanama sankirtanas with simple catchy tunes to krtis with dizzyingly elaborate and intricate musical nuances, emotions ranging from dasya bhava to ninda stuti, themes from the religious to the social, ragas with archaic origins to the contemporary ...His compositions encompass almost every possible facet that a musical mind can think of.

His disciple, Valajapet Venkataramana Bhagavatar, in the following verse, reveres him as a personification of Vyasa, Valmiki, Shuka, Prahlada, Brahma, Narada and Shiva, all in one.

*vyAsonaigamacarcayA mrdugirAvalmlkajanmAmunih
vairAgye shuka-eva bhaktiviShaye prhlAda-evasvayam
brahmaA-nArada eva cApratimayoh sAhitya sangltayoh
yo rAmamrtapAnanirjitah shivah tam tyAgarAjam bhaje*

This article is dedicated at the lotus feet of Sadguru Shri Tyagarajasvami, whose 250th birth anniversary is being celebrated this year and seeks to highlight some of the personalities by whom he was greatly inspired by and their influences on his compositions.

Just like Avadhuta in the Avadhuta gita, acknowledges 21 gurus who taught him the truths of life, Tyagarajasvami repeatedly pays obeisance to the various personalities whose music and poetry spurred his creativity. In the krti 'Vidulaku mrokkeda' (Mayamalavagaula), he offers his benediction to all the Gods, Goddesses and sages who were exponents of music - Lakshmi,

Gauri, Sarasvati, Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Narada, Indra, Bharata-muni, Kashyapa, Chandikeshvara, Anjaneya, Subrahmanya, Ganapati, Markandeya, Agastya, Tumburu, Nandi and to scholars like Someshvara (a 12th century chalukya King and author of Manasollasa, one of the earliest works on Southern music) and Sharngadeva (author of the treatise Sangita Ratnakara).

Narada

Legend has it that Sage Narada gifted the treatise Svaranava to Tyagaraja. In the krti 'Svararagasudharasa' (Shankarabharanam), Tyagaraja signs off saying

*rajatagirlshuDu nagajaku delpu
svarArNava marmamulu
vijayamu galgu tyagarAjuderuke
vishvasinci delusuko o manasA*

The secrets of Svaranava, revealed by Shiva to Parvati have been passed on to Tyagaraja....

Tyagarajasvami has expressed his reverence for sage Narada through several compositions like 'Naradaganalola' (Athana), 'Shri Narada' (Kanada), 'Naradamuni' (Pantavarali), 'Narada gurusvami' (Durbaru), 'Vara narada' (Vijayashri) and 'Shri Naradamuni' (Bhairavi).

In the Kanada krti, he describes Narada as the one who has the musical knowledge of the Vina that is born of the Vedas...." Veda janita vara VinA vAdana tatvajna " a phrase borrowed from the Yagnavalkya Smṛti.

Valmiki

As we know, Rama was Tyagaraja's ishta-devata (favourite deity) and the influence of various Ramayanas is important. However, the Adi-Kavi Valmiki's Ramayana had a profound influence on his krtis. Tyagaraja mentions Valmiki in many compositions and echoes the sentiments of Valmiki in several compositions.

Valmiki mentions that the story of Rama was sung by Lava and Kusha, the princes who were endowed with melodious voices. Tyagaraja, like Valmiki, also used the medium of music to sing the praises of Lord Rama. Valmiki proclaims that the epic Ramayana is indeed the sublime legend of Sita.

*kAvyam rAmayaNam krtsnam sItAyAh caritam mahat
paulastya vadham iti evam cakAra carita vratah*

Tyagaraja follows Valmiki and tells Rama in the evergreen Kambhoji krti - 'mAjAnaki cetta batta-ga maharAja vaitivi' - you were just an ordinary prince. You became an emperor only when you held our Sita's hand in marriage.

Tulasidasa

The influence of other Ramayanas, such as the Adhyatma-Ramayana and the Adbhuta-Ramayana is also seen in his krtis.

Tyagaraja offers his benediction to several Hari-bhaktas in the prologue to his opera, Prahlada Bhakti Vijayamu. Of these, the foremost is Tulasidasa, author of the famed Ramacaritamanas.

*tuLasi kAnanamanduna
vilasitamuna harini jUci vismaya yutuDai
pulakIkṛta tanuDagunA
tuLasIdAsa varu sannutulu setu madin*

(I extol, the blessed Tulasidasa, who is always in ecstasy singing the praises of the resplendent Hari in the Tulasi forest.)

A special significance for Rama upasakas is the vision of the Lord as resting on the Suvela mountain. Tulasidasa says in his Ramacaritamanas

*Ehi vidhi kṛpArUpa guNadhAm rAmu AsIn
Dhanya te nara ehim dhyAn je rahat sada layallIn*

'Blessed are those who are immersed in the thought of the Lord (as resting on the Suvela mountain)

Tyagarajasvami describes such a scene in the Sahana composition 'Giripai nelakonna'. A Rama-upasaka, all life, it is only fitting that Tyagarajasvami is said to have had a vision of this particular scene as a premonition of his departure from the mortal world.

Potana

Bammeru Potana, a 15th century scholar of Telugu and Samskrutam, was deemed a jewel of Telugu poetry. He rewrote the Srimad Bhagavata in Telugu as Andhra Mahabagavatamu, popularly called Potana Bhagavata. His poetry was

sweet and his language simple, enjoyed by peasant and cognoscenti alike.

Like Tyagaraja, he too was a Rama-bhakta. In the introductory verses to his Mahabhagavatamu, he says, 'it is Rama who spurs me to write the Bhagavatam – the story of all the incarnations of Vishnu.'

Similarly, Tyagaraja a staunch devotee of Lord Rama sings about the exploits of Krishna in a few compositions, including his opera Nauka Caritramu.

The manuscript of the Potana Bhagavata that was used by Tyagaraja for his daily parayana is now preserved at the library of the Saurashtra Sabha in Madurai.

Purandara Dasa

It is said that Tyagaraja was taught Purandaradasa's compositions by his mother. Purandaradasa's influence on Tyagaraja was not limited to just his compositions. He even seems to

have modelled his life like Purandaradasa, who sacrificed crores of wealth, took to sankirtana, lived a life of moral rectitude and believed in complete surrender to the Lord.

Purandaradasa's compositions deal with different emotions of experiencing the divine ranging from admiration to argument to sarcasm to romance to total submission. His compositions also impart moral values and meaningful messages for the benefit of all sections of society.

Tyagaraja, inspired by this great Haridasa echoes most of the emotions and sentiments expressed in the Purandaradasa's devaranamas.

'Smarane onde salade' of Purandaradasa and 'Smarane sukhamu' of Tyagaraja, 'Katha shravana' of Purandaradasa and 'Rama katha sudha' of Tyagaraja are a few examples.

Kshetragna

Kshetragna's padams are very well known and are regarded as the havens of raga bhava.

On 26th March, 2017, Violin Maestro Prof. TN Krishnan was honoured with 'Life Time Achievement Award' and the title 'Naada Shri' that carries a purse of 50,000 Rs. His Holiness Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Narayana Ramanuja Jeeyar presented the award in presence of Dr. M R V Prasad, President, Gayana Samaja, Bangalore





Kshetragna's influence on Tyagaraja's works can be perceived mainly in the structuring of his compositions and the raga contours rather than the content of the lyric. The pallavi-anupallavi-carana format wherein the last two lines of the carana have the same musical structure of the anupallavi is seen in most padas of Kshetragna as well as in Tyagaraja's kritis. The spacing between the syllables of the words in the krti that accommodates meandering raga swirls is probably an influence of the musical structure of the padam.

Ramadasa

Bhadracala Ramadasa was formerly known as Kancerla Gopanna and a clerk in the service of Tana Shah in Golconda. He was initiated to the Rama taraka mantra by Kabirdas. Ramadasa built the famed temple for Lord Rama at Bhadracalam and the story of how the Lord rescued him from the wrath of the Tana Shah is very famous and highly inspiring.

The kirtanas of Ramadasa were also taught to Tyagarajasvami by his mother. He pays rich tribute to Ramadasa in Prahlada Bhakti Vijayamu – Kaliyugamuna vara Bhadracalamuna.....Shri ramadasu vinutintu madin

And also mentions Ramadasa in his other krtis such as 'Kaligiyunte' -Kiravani (*Bhagavatagresarulu narada prahlada parashara ramadasulu*), 'Emidova' -Saranga (*Ramadasuvale naite sitabhama mandal-*

inchunu nito) and 'Brindavanalola' – Todi (*Ramadasa dasa Tyagaraja nuta*)

Tyagaraja follows Ramadasa in Ramabhakti, construction of compositions and usage of similar thoughts and word phrasings.

Sri Ramula divyanama smarana (Ramadasa) and 'Manasu Svadhina' (Tyagaraja), 'Ramuni varmainamu' (Ramadasa) and 'Grahabalame' (Tyagaraja), 'Kanti nedu ma ramulannu kanukontini nenu' (Ramadasa) and 'Kanukontini' (Tyagaraja) are examples of similar thought and expression. Both have composed a krti with the opening phrase Na moralakimpa.

Narayana Tirtha

The great advaitic sanyasin Narayana Tirtha's Krishna Lila Tarangini seems to have been a great influence. The opera Nauka Caritramu was inspired by the pranks of Krishna that Narayana Tirtha has sung praises of in his work. Similar usage of words can also be seen.

Narayana Tirtha offers his prayers to Lord Ganesha in the introduction of the Krishna Lila Tarangini.

*girirAjasutAsUnuh karirAja varAnanah
paripanthigaNadhvamsi surasevyo virAjate*

Tyagaraja also employs the same turn of phrase in his composition on Ganesha, 'Girirajasutatanaya' in Bangala.

The phrase 'yAga yoga tyAga bhoga phalam-
osange' in the krti 'Ragasudharasa' in Andolika is
a resound from the line 'yAga yoga rAga bhoga
tyAga sambandham vina' in the Taranga 'rAma
krSHNa govindeti'.

The construction and usage of prasa in the
Taranga 'krSHNam kalaya sakhi' of Narayana
Tirtha and the kriti 'rAmam bhajeham sada' of
Tyagaraja are strikingly similar.

Upanishad Brahman

Ramacandrendra Sarasvati, also known as Upan-
ishad Brahman, of Agastyashrama in Kancipuram
was a great advaitic scholar. He was a childhood
classmate of Tyagaraja's father Ramabrahmam. A
great Rama Bhakta, he has written one of the
best commentaries to the Adhyatma
Ramayana. His works, in the footsteps of
Narayana Tirtha and Jayadeva, called the Rama
Taranga and Rama-ashtapadi, respectively are
famous. Shri Muttusvami Dikshitar set the Rama
Ashtapadi to music and unfortunately the music
is not available to us today.

Upanishad brahman sent a Shrimukham to Ty-
agaraja from Kancipuram and invited him to visit
the holy city. This is still preserved in the
Saurashtra Sabha in Madurai.

In the work, Namartha Viveka or Upeya nama
viveka, Upanishad Brahman says that Rama
nama signifies the Supreme Brahman. Tyagaraja
conveys this thought in the krti 'Telisi rama cin-
tanato' – Purnacandrika (rAma yana brahmanu-
naku peru)

Upanishad Brahman also explains that in the
word Rama, the syllable 'ra' is derived from the
Narayana ashtakshara mantra and 'ma' is from
the Shiva panchakshara mantra. Tyagaraja very
beautifully conveys this sentiment in the
krti 'Evarani' (Devamritavarshini).

The Divyanama compositions of Tyagaraja are
inspirations from Upanishad Brahman's Di-
vyanama sankirtanas

Melattur Venkatarama Shastri

The Melattur Bhagavata Mela tradition had its
origins in Kuchipudi in Andhra but eventually
migrated down south to Tanjavur during the

Islamic invasion. Thus their dialogues are re-
tained in original telugu. They recount and
dramatise several stories from the puranas but
their most famous rendition is of the Prahlada
carita and Narasimha avatara. Tyagaraja must
have witnessed the performances of the Bhaga-
vata mela and the influence is clearly seen in the
dramatic sequences of his own Prahlada Bhakti
Vijayamu.

Margadarshi Shesha Ayyangar

Shesha Ayyangar, a great devotee of Lord Ran-
ganatha of Shrirangam, was a trendsetter for the
Trinity and several other composers who fol-
lowed him, hence the epithet 'Margadarshi' (one
who shows the path). Unfortunately very few
compositions of his are available today. Shades
of Sesha Ayyangar's alliterative prowess are seen
in some of Tyagaraja's kritis. For example, the
phrase 'nArada gAna lola' in Ayyangar's Athana
kriti pAhi shri ramA-ramaNa is the opening
phrase of a krti of Tyagaraja in the same raga
(nArada gAna lola natajana paripAla)

Sharngadeva

The krti 'nAdatanumanisham' in the raga Cit-
taranjani is the essence of the invocatory verse
– 'Brahma granthijavande nAda tanum...shiv-
am shankaram' of the Sangita Ratnakara by
Sharngadeva.

Tyagaraja resonates with Sharngadeva's defini-
tion of nAda as the unison of 'na' that is prANa
and and 'da' that is agni –

na kAram prANa nAmAnam da kAram analam viduh

jAtah prAnAgni samyogAt tena nAdobhidyate

In the krti 'Mokshamu galada' in the raga Sara-
mati, Tyagaraja refers to this unison of Prana and
Agni.

Influence of the Varnam

The construct of a Varnam is distinctly different
from that of a krti. The musical spaces between
syllables are much longer and are spread out
over the tala with several points of inflection.
Some of the great varnam composers of the
pre-trinity times were Adiyapayya, Pallavi
Gopalayyar and Melattur Virabhadrayya.

Though Tyagaraja did not compose varnams, the construct of some of his compositions such as Jagadanandakaraka (Nata) and Koluvaipunade (Bhairavi) seem to showcase the musical settings of a Varnam.

Nama sankirtana tradition

Exposure to the Nama sankirtana tradition and its influence is seen in the Utsava sampradaya and Divyanama kritis of Tyagaraja. These compositions have a pallavi followed by multiple caranams. The tunes are simple and highlight the words, which are in plenty and profound.

Tyagaraja picks a leaf off 'Manasa sancarare' the composition of the great advaitic sanyasin, Sadashiva Brahmendra by composing a krti in Punnavarali with the same opening phrase as the ascetic composer.

Maratha Varkari Saints – Tukaram, Namdev and Jnandev

The story of how a Panduranga and Rakhumayi temple came to be in Tiruvaikyaru goes thus. One of the Maratha rulers of Tanjavur, probably Serfoji I, married a princess from Pandharpur and built a temple for Panduranga and Rakhumayi on the banks of the Kaveri just like how the Lord resides beside the Chandrabhaga river

in Pandharpur. This little shrine is just a few yards away from Tyagaraja's house on Tirumanjana vidhi. During Tyagaraja's time, this temple would have resounded with bhajans and the abhangas of the Varkari saints of Maharashtra.

Tyagaraja has paid homage to Tukaram, Namdev, Jnaneshwar and other devotees of Panduranga in the preamble to Prahlada Bhakti Vijayamu-

*'mariyu pANDuranga nAmadeva jnanadeva sa-
hadeva jayadeva tukArAma shri nArAyaNa tirthAdi
bhagavad dAsulanella praNamilli*

This is but a mere drop from the ocean that is Tyagarajasvami's bhakti, prowess and genius. When the incomparable saint sings 'endaro mahAnubhAvulu andariki vandanamulu' it imparts to humanity the significance, importance and greatness of the virtue called humility.

To Tyagarajasvami and the other luminaries who have shaped and contributed to this incredibly beautiful art form, let us bow down to them in complete surrender and gratitude.

(Originally written for the festival souvenir of IFAA, San Diego, USA and reproduced here with their kind permission)

Music Workshop

Under the auspices of Udupi Srikrishna Mutt

The annual music workshop conducted by Mani Krishnaswamy Academy during the month of May will be held this year from 7.5.2017 to 14.5.2017 at Udupi under the auspices of Shrikrishna Mutt, Udupi.

Well known carnatic vocalist, Smt Prarthana Sai Narasimhan, will teach krithis on Srikrishna and other Devaranamas composed by various vaggeyakaras. The participants will render these songs on the valedictory day of the workshop. Free lodging will be provided by the Mutt for those who are in need of it. Those who wish to participate may please contact the coordinator noted below at an early date.

P Nityananda Rao
Secretary, Mani Krishnaswamy Academy
Canara Bank Cross Road, Suratkal 575014, Mangalore
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T Rukmini - Popular and affectionate

C Ramakrishnan, Senior rasika

It is a matter of great prestige and honour for Bangaloreans that Vidushi T Rukmini spent the early part of her life and started her career as a violinist from Bangalore. In her own words, the blessings of Sringeri Acharya has guided her all along her life and musical career. As a child she went along with her father to the Sringeri Ashram. Once as they were walking on the road, she saw the Acharya coming from the opposite side and she did Namaskarams. The Acharya gave two oranges to her and his blessings on that day took her a long way to achieve the zenith in her musical career as a Violinist and Vocalist.

Rukmini had her initial music lessons from Sri. RR Kesavamurthy, reputed violinist from Bangalore. T Rukmini is a Science Graduate from Bangalore Maharani's College for Women. During her college days, she won the first prize in in-

strumental music competitions which was held as part of India's Youth Fest in Delhi during the year 1954-55. TB Narasimhachar, the noted music critic who wrote in the name of Saragrahi played an important role in bringing her talent to the notice of many great vidwans of those years and provided her with many performing opportunities during her early years. TBN was the person who identified her potential and advised her to give priority to violin. By then, her name and fame had spread among musicians, and when TBN introduced Rukmini to Palghat Mani Iyer in person, the great mridangist said "Oh, I had heard that there was a girl from Bangalore who played the violin very well. Is that you?!"

Her first major public concert came when she was barely 16 years old. She was asked to ac-



Receiving the Kalaimamni award from J Jayalalitha



With MS Subbulakshmi

company Flute Mali in a benefit performance arranged by Rama Seva Mandali at Town Hall, Bangalore. Rukmini remembers that before she got on to the stage, a lot of people warned her with concern, about Mali's genius as well as eccentricity. On that day Mali started the performance with a Dikshitar kriti in Khamas and went on to play Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi with ragamalika swaras. Rukmini played so well that Mali was very much impressed as to remark at the middle of the concert over the microphone that- "This young lady is as good as any male accompanist. She accompanied me so well today. She has a very bright future in music." This was her first major concert and from thereon, there was no looking back. She enriched innumerable concerts of Mali in various Sabhas inside and outside the country with her sensitive accompaniment and Mali was immensely happy with her embellishment on the violin.

Rukmini got married to Mr.Srinivasan and settled in Chennai. Her husband and in laws have been greatly supportive of her career. Mr.Srinivasan who was employed in Jamshedpur left his plum job there and shifted to Chennai to further the career of Rukmini. Her two sons are well settled in life. From 1963, she came under

the tutelage of Lalgudi Jayaraman and Semmangudi Sreenivasa Iyer. By the time she came under the wings of Lalgudi, she had already internalised his style. Lessons by Lalgudi provided a breath of fresh air, and he opened a new world of aesthetics and subtleties to Rukmini. Lalgudi would teach her kritis, tillanas, subtle nuances of gamakams etc. He maintained that even the bowing has to be suitably modulated to match the feel of the composer. She has imbibed the Lalgudi style so completely that hearing few of her recordings when she accompanied Mali, S Kalyanaraman, Semmangudi etc, aurally the experience is nearly of hearing a Lalgudi Jayaraman accompaniment. She went to Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer to further her vocal music and kritis like O Rangasayee, Manasuvisaya, Ramanee samanamevaru, Sree Venkatagireesam, Kamalamba Navavarana kritis etc. were taught by Semmangudi in his inimitable patantharam. Guidance from Semmangudi enriched her vocal and violin music. It was a dream come true for her when in later years, she provided violin accompaniment to Semmangudi. Further she learned many songs from the great vocalists whom she accompanied. Ramnad Krishnan taught her Sogasuga Mridanga talamu. M.S.Subbalakshmi taught her many Annamacharya Kri-



With the doyen Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar

tis, Dasarathi in Todi and a few tukkadās. She was simultaneously giving vocal performances and also singing padams for dance recitals of Vyjayanthimala Bali and Padmalochana Nagarajan. Her singing for Vyjayanthimala's dance performance in Paris was a greatly acclaimed event. Soon she recorded two LP Records containing the complete margam for a Bharatanatyam recital by Vyjayanthimala Bali.

In a male dominated music world, T.Rukmini was the first female violinist who remained the preferred accompanist for many great male singers of her times. She has been the ideal team player, faithfully following the music of every musician she accompanied and embellishing the concert with her innate manodharmam. She could easily adapt her playing to the style of any main musician whom she accompanied. As a soloist, the impeccable clarity of her music, the dexterity of her playing, admirable thick and thin shades, her authentic patantharam, wide repertoire and on the spot improvisations created an indefinable aura. Her playing was always steeped in classism. She followed the gayaki style - ensured that the sangathis fell in place as you hear in a vocal concert and it has a sense of proportion. Keeping the patanthara of kritis in tact, maintaining the laya in raga and kriti renditions and taking care that the underlying import of the kritis are not lost are some of the aspects in her playing which appealed to the vo-

calists and connoisseurs alike. Her gamakams and manodharma have always stayed within the tenets of Carnatic idiom and her sadhana and hard work ensured clarity and purity.

She has enriched the concerts of many top ranking musicians of her period such as Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar, TK Rangachary, M Balamuralikrishna, M.S.Subbalakshmi, DK Pattammal, DK Jayaraman, ML Vasanthakumari, Tanjavur S Kalyanaraman, Dr. S Ramanathan, Voleti Venkateswarulu, TR Subramaniam, Madurai TN Seshagopalan, S Balachandar, N Ramani etc. the list is pretty long. She was the first violinist to play a different raga while replying to ragamalika swarams in the RTP in a concert of Voleti Venkateswarulu. She was the trendsetter in this aspect for which she received abundant praise from the Andhra doyen. She has also accompanied the next generation of musicians like OS Thyagarajan, Neyveli Santhanagopalan, Vijay Siva, N Ravikiran, U Srinivas, P Unnikrishnan, S Sowmya, TM Krishna etc. All these musicians had a special liking for her accompaniment. The role of an ideal accompaniment is very complex. He or she should try to enhance the music of the main performer and be unobtrusive to his manodharmam. The raga, neraval, swara replies should be in proportion to that of the main performer. It should never be over done to show the virtuosity of the accompanist. The violinist should faithfully follow the main artist



Receiving the 'Sangeet Natak Akademi Award from President KR Narayanan

while singing kritis in the same style and patantharam. While doing neraval, sahithya should be clearly expressed. Recognising her service to the Carnatic Music world, she was selected for the Sangeeta Nataka Academy Award in 1997, being the first woman violinist chosen for this honour. T Rukmini was awarded Sangeeta Choodamani by Krishna Gana Sabha in the year 1999 which she received from the hands of her Guru Semmangudi and felicitations were offered by her another Guru Lalgudi Jayarman.

Alongside her busy schedule of accompanying great musicians and performing violin solo concerts, she gave vocal concerts also regularly in AIR and other sabhas. She got A Top Grading in Violin and A in Vocal music from the All India Radio. She has laid her hands on tuning of Dasar Padas when she was invited by Bangalore AIR to present a vocal concert of Dasar Padas in Udupi, in connection with the fourth Birth Centenary Celebrations of Purandara Dasa. While in Bangalore, she used to sing regularly devo-

tional songs, Dasar Padas, Kannada Geetams and poems over AIR. She has tuned many Bharatiar songs and popularised through Madras AIR.

T Rukmini has trained a number of students in Violin and Vocal music. While teaching students, her focus will be on imparting lessons based on vocal music embedded with raga bhava, sahithya and not merely swaras. She insists that the students first learn the kritis vocally before playing on the violin. She expects the students to preserve the patanthara of the kritis without diluting them. She also guides them to develop a sense of proportion in their music and to present the music without adding superficial sangatis aimed at getting applause. The Music Academy of Madras bestowed on her the well deserved Sangeeta Kala Acharya Award in 2012.

The disciples of T.Rukmini organised a function on 27 Nov 2016 to celebrate 65 years of service to music by T.Rukmini. The function was attended by many present day legends in carnatic music who spoke passionately about T.Rukmini, the person and as an artiste and offered their whole hearted appreciation and best wishes to T.Rukmini. In the felicitation speech recorded for the occasion, Mridangam Maestro Karaikudi Mani observed that T.Rukmini is the greatest among woman violinists of her period comparable only to Lalgudi Jayaraman among the male violinists. Her accompaniments to the great male singers of that period vouched for her vidwat, anusaranai, laya expertise, manodharmam, smooth bowing technique etc. Many times, people like T.R.Subramaniam will not reveal the details of the pallavi before the concert. T Rukmini will be quick to grasp the pallavi at the start itself and follow it admirably. TR Subramaniam once mentioned that singing with Rukmini as an accompaniment is a challenge for any musician. The team of TR Subramaniam, T Rukmini and Kamalakar Rao was very popular in 70s and 80s and the rasikas immensely enjoyed the magic the three artistes created on the stage. Guruvayur Dorai mentioned that she is the repository of huge number of kritis of various composers and she will be able to follow and embellish any kriti sung by any singer of



that day. Umayalapuram Sivaraman appreciated her sruti suddham, laya suddham, azhutham in bowing, katchitam, proportion, pleasant demeanour towards her co artistes, rasikas, organisers etc. He also paid rich accolades to T Rukmini's husband Mr.Srinivasan who has remained a pillar of support to T.Rukmini in all her endeavours and who provided a very congenial atmosphere at the home front which enabled Rukmini to devote her life entirely to music. Madurai TN Seshagopalan remembered the good nature of Rukmini as an artist always ready to support other artistes when she accompanied Seshagopalan in his first concert in Music Academy in 1971 when he sang in the 3 PM slot. It should be remembered that at that point of time T Rukmini was already playing for greats like Mali, MS Subbulakshmi, DK Pattammal etc in the evening slots, but never hesitated to accompany TNS in the 3 P.M slot. That showed her commitment to the art. He also mentioned about her alertness and laya expertise when she could execute trikalam in any pallavi with acute precision. In the concerts of Flute Mali, many a time, Mali would leave a long gap in between - say varnam, and it required the expertise and spontaneity of Rukmini to fill that gap in a very subtle manner, without pushing herself and never appearing to be over smart. He remembered many instances of their traveling together for concerts when the sweet nature of her demeanour prevailed off stage and on the stage. Sujatha Vijayaraghavan, her first disciple mentioned about one of her violin con-

certs where she played literally like two violins playing - one violin following the other. It requires enormous virtuosity and imagination. The presence of great musicians on the dais who had come to felicitate Rukmini and attendance of a large number of disciples, music students, rasikas for the function is testimony to the popularity and affection enjoyed by Rukmini among musicians and rasikas alike. Rukmini and Mr. Srinivasan were honoured on the occasion and the disciples of Rukmini gifted her a Golden Violin. A website of Rukmini www.trukmini.com has been launched on that day in the hands of Mr. Srinivasan.

T Rukmini has been bestowed with many honours by various organisations. We sincerely wish that she will receive many more National level awards. But all these awards sit lightly on her shoulders. Rukmini is least concerned about the receipt or otherwise of awards. For her, music is a sadhana, never expected monetary benefits or rewards. T Rukmini has passed on the baton to many disciples who tread her path faithfully. Many have become front ranking vocalists and violinists. Some names which immediately comes to mind are Kalpana Venkat, Sumitra Nitin, Amrita Murali, Shertalai Sivakumar, Poorna Vaidyanathan, Santhanam, Ramakrishnan, Kartik Iyer and the list is pretty long. T.Rukmini remains as a beacon in the field of Carnatic music spreading the light of knowledge, congeniality, love and affection to anybody who comes in her ambit.

Ramanathapuram CS Sankarasivam : Versatile Musician and Remarkable Teacher

KS Kalidas, Courtesy Sruti magazine, October 1992



Ramanathapuram CS Sankarasiva Bhagavatar, at 89, is perhaps the oldest among Carnatic musicians who have achieved a measure of fame. His reputation rests more on his career as a teacher than as a performer. His younger brother Ramanathapuram CS Murugabhoopathi is a doyen among the masters of the mridanga; in his hey days, he was bracketed with Palghat Main Iyer and Palani Subramania Pillai. The late Ramnad Krishnan, a musician of great merit, as well as his brothers, were products of Sankarasivam's expert grooming and the brilliantly endowed Madurai TN Seshagopalan owes both his prowess as a vocalist and his parallel achievements as a vainika a great deal to the many-splendoured master who has made Madurai his home.

Background

Sankarasiva Bhagavatar was born in 1903 in Ramanathapuram. The then Raja of Ramnad, Bhaskara Sethupathy, in whose court Sankarasivam's father Chitsabai Servai was a vidwan, hearing about the birth of the male child, desired that he be named as Sankaran as he was born on Sankranti day.

Sankarasivam's maternal grandfather was Subbiah Pillai, Tahsildar of the then Ramanathapuram tehsil. He was musically minded and he brought Jalatarangam Subbier from Karaikudi to the Ramanathapuram Samasthanam. The Raja of Ramnad took Subbier in his service and arranged for his arangetram in Ramanathapuram with Pudukottai Dakshinamurthy Pillai accompanying him on the mridanga. (Pudukottai Pillai was then living under the aegis of the Raja of Pudukottai and, although he began his career playing on the ghata, he changed over to the mridanga and still later to the kanjeera).

Sankarasivam's paternal grandfather, Subramania Servai, was a well-known scholar in Arabic and had been to West Asia (the Middle East) often. His son (and Sankarasivam's father) Chitsabai Servai had a natural inclination to music and had gurukulavasam with the great Pudukottai Manpoondia (Mamundiya) Pillai and later with his senior co-student, Palani Muthiah Pillai, father of Palani Subramania Pillai. Chitsabai Servai became adept at playing the mridanga and the kanjeera. It is not surprising, therefore, that the young Sankarasivam had music in his blood.

Sankarasivam recalls the musical glory that was associated with the Ramanathapuram Durbar even in the late 19th century when giants like Patnam Subrahmaina Iyer, Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer and Kunnakudi Krishna Iyer were asthana vidwans. Later, Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Iyer, Kanchipuram Naina Pillai, Pudukottai Dakshi-

namurthy Pillai, Palani Muthiah Pillai and others were frequent visitors. He says a grand ragam-tanam-pallavi would be sung by the three giants; Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer elaborating the raga, Patnam Subrahmanya Iyer rendering the tanam and Kunnakudi Krishna Iyer the pallavi. These RTPs were not the measly half-hour events dished out today, but elaborate offerings lasting hours and exploring all vistas of raga alapana, tanam and pallavi.

Ramanathapuram (Poochi) Srinivas Iyengar underwent training in music under Patnam Subrahmanya Iyer. According to Sankarasivam, the Raja took an exceptional interest in the musical training of Iyengar and had him listen to the three greats often; Patnam Subrahmanya Iyer, Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer and Kunnakudi Krishna Iyer.

In spite of the galaxy of musicians available in his court, Muthuramalinga Sethupathi, the then ruler of Ramanathapuram, picked Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavatar as the most suitable guru for young Sankarasivam. He further selected all the important kriti-s that were to be taught and made private messing arrangements as well. Muthiah Bhagavatar taught Sankarasivam in the traditional way; first the the alankara-s, geeta-s, varna-s and swarajati-s and then simple kriti-s. Only after the youngster had acquired adequate swaragnana, he introduced his disciple to the more difficult kriti-s of the Trinity, the works of other composers and some of his own compositions. He guided the development of his skill in raga elaboration and kalpana swara singing also.

Sankarasivam recalls that in the twenties of the present century, for a non-brahmin boy to learn music from a Brahmin vidwan in the agraharam used to pose quite a few problems, but he hastens to say that the difficulties he experienced were very minor in the context of the unbounded affection shown by Muthiah Bhagavatar who treated him as his own son. The only aspect that concerned the guru was the talent of the student; nothing else mattered. Among Sankarasivam's co-students at this time were two other Sankaras Patur Sankara Iyer and Vedampalli Sankaran. Altogether, there were, 16

disciples, including Muthiah Bhagavatar's brother-in-law Narayana Iyer, who used to sing well.

The gurukula experience encompassed periods of intensive coaching amidst days of total barrenness when nothing used to be taught. It all depended on the guru's mood. The students were expected merely to observe all that the guru did; they were not to ask any questions or advance any opinions. Of course, they used to attend their guru's recitals whenever possible and absorb the kutcheri techniques as best as they could.

Sankarasivam also recalls how, when Muthiah Bhagavatar was residing in Tiruvananthapuram, in the then Travancore State, rivals cast a spell over his guru because of which he could not give any public performance, be it Harikatha or music recital. The maestro overcame this by observing rigorous vrata-s (austerities) and celebrating Skanda Shashti festivals in harikesanallur.

After Sankarasivam had undergone rigorous training for seven years during 1919-26, the Raja summoned the guru and shishya both to Ramanathapuram for the latter's arangetram. Muthiah Bhagavatar was honoured with 'Kidath Sambavanai'; a purse of 1000 rupees, a "mathapi" (a ponnadai) of roughly the same value and various other presents. In Muthuramalinga Sethupathi's court, as well as that of his son Shanmugarajeswara Sethupathi, Sankarasivam served as a samasthana Vidwan.

Versatile Bhagavatar

Sankarasivam received training only in vocal music but because his father Chitsabai Servai was a mridanga vidwan, he developed independently a special aptitude for laya and also the ability to play on the mridanga and other percussion instruments. He developed a similar capability in regard to instruments like violin and flute also, by observing the samasthana vidwans playing them. All this underscored the versatility of Bhagavatar and his tremendous capacity to absorb knowledge relating to different fields. This versatility in turn helped him in time to teach the famous Ramnad Brothers. Lakshminarayana (father of the violin trio,

Vaidyanathan, Subramaniam and Shankar) and Krishnan-vocal music, Venkatachalam violin, and Easwaran and Raghavan mridanga. All of them attained considerable success in their chosen professions. Krishnan coming to be recognised as the most outstanding among them.

Madurai Seshagopalan calls Sankarasiva Bhagavata variously as gnani (wise), Sangeeta Sagaram (ocean of music) and an ashtavadhani or a person who can concentrate on more than one task simultaneously. Seshagopalan says that even today, whenever he is disturbed about anything or is feeling listless, a meeting with his guru for half an hour restores his mental equilibrium and makes him feel rejuvenated. He ascribes this effect to the older man's great practical wisdom, robust outlook on life and a certain power to communicate his own vitality to others.

Sankarasiva Bhagavata is indeed a remarkable person in more than one way. Short and stockily built, he looks as much a wrestler as a bhagavata. He is usually taciturn but, on occasion he can be garrulous. He gives the appearance of being totally insensitive to the feelings of others, but in reality he has a strong sense of empathy. While he remains seated buddha like and inscrutable, he actually watches those around him closely and makes mental notes of their various actions and moods. For a man nearing 90, he is alert as some one half his age and his memory is such that any high school boy preparing for his examinations would gladly swap it, given the option.

Remarkable Teacher

Seshagopalan has earlier given details of his training under Sankarasiva Bhagavata (see Sruti 3). A brief recapitulation is, however, warranted here. Seshagopalan had two stints of apprenticeship under Sankarasiva. The first was only for a few months and was a total fiasco. There was apparently no teaching and the young lad, who was his school's showpiece of a musician, felt it below his dignity to go over to the guru's house and run errands and to add to the 'humiliation', get no coaching in return. Therefore he dropped out. Years later, when his own musical

perceptions had become more mature, Seshagopalan started training with his guru again and in right earnest. This time not merely did the instruction flow from the Bhagavata at a furious pace, but a father-son-relationship came to be established. Seshagopalan recalls his period of tutelage as bracketing something like a musical deluge, when all the free time available outside the school and college hours was spent with the Bhagavata. The guru's approach was not to teach the pallavi of a kriti first in swara notation followed by sahitya, and then the anupallavi and charanam in the swara/sahitya sequence. He would draw attention to the basic points only and Seshagopalan had to discover things for himself. It was musical training by exception and was quite different in character from the learning that Bhagavata himself had received from his guru. When Seshagopalan started this period of apprenticeship, he had no swara gnaana and his entire singing was based on intuition, but, within a period of just a year and half, he became so proficient as to be able to give his first public concert, which was a full-fledged affair.

Of course, Bhagavata did not teach all his disciples this way. He had an uncanny knack of spotting talent and the ability to devise just the right method and degree of coaching for each student. Remarkably, he would never admit that any student was hopeless. He believed that while some could absorb more and rise higher than others, there was none who failed totally. When he was Principal of the Sadguru Sangeetha Vidyalayam in Madurai, he would chide the lecturers who reported to him about the total lack of talent in some of their wards. He would say it was their teaching that was deficient and not the student. To prove his point, he would personally take charge of a few of the apparently deficient students and somehow bring them up to a fair degree of musical competence. Although he was a man who had a reputation of being short-tempered, he was patience incarnate while teaching a student.

Seshagopalan has heard a number of friends and admirers of his guru tell him that Bhagavata had sung elaborate and complicated pallavi-s in

such rare Raga-s like Dhenuka and Salagabhairavi. He himself had been taught only a few pallavi-s, but the pallavi lakshana-s had been so well explained to him that he had no problems in coining his own pallavi-s.

In the gurukula tradition, it is usually forbidden for the disciple to ask questions, even when he has doubts - he is expected to look out for and gather pearls of wisdom when voluntarily scattered by the guru! With Sankarasivam it was dialogue all the way. Seshagopalan could not only ask questions, but the teacher and the taught would exchange musical ideas freely. Even today Seshagopalan frequently asks for and obtains his master's views on special items, like a pallavi, before he sings them at important concerts.

Although Sankarasiva Bhagavatar did not formally study Sanskrit and Telugu, he had picked up both these languages during the time he was a vidwan in the Ramanathapuram court. In his younger days, he is reported to have possessed a good voice. He had acted in dramas besides giving concerts. In his later days, however, his voice seems to have lost its attractiveness and he became more popular as a teacher than as a concert artist.

There is another interesting facet to Sankarasiva Bhagavatar's role as a guru which needs to be recorded. When a vacancy for the post of lecturer (vocal music) arose in the Madurai Sadguru Sangeetha Samajam, Bhagavatar wanted Seshagopalan to be selected for it. But there were some problems due to local politics and Seshagopalan, who had not by then settled down as a concert artist, was denied the job. The guru acted fast. The incumbent veena lecturer was due to retire from service in four months' time and Bhagavatar, without batting an eyelid, told the Appointments Committee that Seshagopalan could play the veena as well as he could sing and that he could be appointed as lecturer in veena against this vacancy. Poor Seshagopalan did not know the ABC of veena playing really and when Bhagavatar triumphantly told him what he had done, he was, to put it mildly, quite nonplussed. In his own nonchalant

way, Bhagavatar explained that he would teacher him (Seshagopalan) the swarasthana-s and alankara-s and give his observations and suggestions as he played on the veena and that the rest would be upto him. Anyway, he added, there was the four month period within which to master the instrument! It is difficult to believe but the fact is that Seshagopalan made it, with the guru's 'coaching' limited essentially to certain pithy observations made and instructions given now and then. In the event, he joined the staff of the Samajam as the veena lecturer and served the institution in that capacity for some time. Today he gives full-fledged veena concerts as well. According to Seshagopalan, his guru's forte is the ability to build up confidence in his disciples to realise their potential and stand on their own feet.

Concert Musician

Bhagavatar's arangetram in the Ramanathapuram Samasthanam in 1926 has already been mentioned. He recalls a concert he gave at the Annamalai University in 1936 in the presence of Tanjavur Ponniah Pillai, Tiger Varadachar and Palghat Mani Iyer, among others. The concert evoked high praise from the great musicians present in the audience. Muthiah Bhagavatar, who had arranged the concert and was present on the occasion, was overjoyed and was heard asking various vidwans : "How did my boy [enga aathu paiyan] perform today!"

Bhagavatar gave a large number of concerts all over South India, including what are now the states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala, as also in Sri Lanka (Ceylon) where he stayed for two years teaching as well. He was also a regular performer of radio concerts. He had the good fortune to be accompanied by such great instrumentalists as Malaikottai Govindaswamy Pillai, Kumbakonam Rajamanickam Pillai, Mayavaram Govindaraja Pillai, Alaganambia Pillai, Pudukottai Dakshinamurthy Pillai, Palani Muthiah Pillai and Palani Subramania Pillai. Brother Murugaboopathy also accompanied the Bhagavatar frequently in concerts.

Bhagavatar's contemporaries were Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavatar and Ariyakudi Ramanuja

Iyengar, who both started their musical careers a few years earlier than he did.

Bhagavatar never ran after awards and titles but he did receive recognition from various institutions. One that he recalls is the title Kalaimamani from the Tamil Nadu Government, however, it failed to excite him in the least.

Views

In conversation, Sankarasiva Bhagavatar freely uses English words, phrases and sentences, testifying to his touch with modern trends. However, his views on certain issues cannot be considered quite modern. He sets great store by the traditional gurukula - based system of training and frowns on institutional teaching of music, where students try to become vidwans after a few years of impersonal coaching. Considering the fact that he himself was the first Principal of the Sadguru Sangeetha Vidyalayam in Madurai, it would seem he is contradicting himself. But, on deeper consideration, it appears that his objection is to the undue importance given to the time devoted to learning rather than to the perfection of skills. Moreover, it is the rigidly structured syllabi of the institutions that disturb him rather than the institutions themselves. He says that music colleges can and should incorporate the good points of the gurukula system. He also does not take kindly to foreigners trying to acquire proficiency in Indian music in the space of a few months. His view is that, although the intentions are admirable and such scholars put in an enormous amount of work, crash courses do not give them a deep enough knowledge and, what is more, the right type of background and atmosphere which are necessary before one can think of becoming a performing musician, are not available in such learning experiences.

His views on present day music and on ladies music are also rather old fashioned, at least at first glance. Music new, according to him, has lost depth while at the superficial level all is well. Asked whether this was not a complaint that is levelled against each succeeding generation of musicians by those belonging to the earlier generations, his reply is that today the accent is more on the formal and mathematical aspects, rather than such subtle but very important aspects as tone modulation, proper techniques and sense of proportion. Well, the last has not been said on the ongoing debate on old versus new, but the fact remains that, in music as in any other art-form, the passage of time generally introduces decorative elements which constitute horizontal rather than vertical development and at certain points of time, result in the whole edifice looking florid.

The old man of music, who often rages at everything these days, is very skeptical of ladies singing any thing other than kriti-s, pada-s and javali-s. He holds the view they are no good for laya intricate items such as ragam-tanam-pallavi. There could be vehement protests about this observation and quite possibly with justification, but if one were allowed to rationalise, one would interpret the Bhagavatar's comment as based on the perception of the general tendency among lady musicians to keep clear of laya intricacies and, when forced into a situation where they cannot avoid laya aspects altogether, being rather shaky. The maestro obviously does not refer to the notable exceptions to this rule – women singers who are equal to or better than their brethren.

(Originally written for Sruti, Indian premier magazine for performing arts, Chennai for October 1992 issue and reproduced here with their kind permission)

MJ Sreenivasa Iyengar Memorial Veena Contest

Veena Vidwan M.J. Sreenivasa Iyengar Memorial Veena Contest will be held at Mysore and the last date for registration is 20th April 2017. For further details please contact Sri TS Venugopal. email - statsvenugopal@gmail.com, Ph Number 9900082773.

Mysore S Mahadevappa - The Doyen

Vidwan Rao R Sharath



The entry of the violin into the world of concert music in the Karnatak tradition has resulted in making all other instruments take a second place. Its supremacy has been achieved through hard work on the part of violinists to adapt it to our system.

There are hundreds of techniques of violin playing in the West. But the carnatic Violinists have carefully selected and adopted those which enrich our music and have evolved new techniques of bowing and fingering to suit Carnatic Music. A hundred years ago our great grand-

fathers were astonished by the scope offered by Western Stringed instruments in the British Band. Today the wheel has come a full circle.

Veteran Vidwan Sri Mahadevappa stands tall in the art of Violin playing in Carnatic music today. Born in a very poor family in a remote village called Mudigundam his father Sri Subbappa was an agriculturist by profession and also an expert Harmonium player. This helped Sri Mahadevappa to envisage carnatic classical music right from his childhood. His musical talent was revealed when he enacted in plays. He had ample opportunities to sing and one of them was in the role of Bhakta Prahlada. His vibrant voice tapped the doors of the audience and this persuaded him to pursue musical lessons from Sri Mudigundam Narayaswamy, from whom he learnt both vocal and violin.

In those days, Mudigundam – Kollegal surrounding was culturally very active and many concerts were being organised in different occasions throughout the year. This paved way for young Mahadevappa to meet enormously talented musician Sangita Ratna Sri T. Puttaswamaiah, the Prime disciple of the Legendary Bidaram Krishnappa.

It was destiny that created an opportunity for Young Mahadevappa to come in contact with this master musician. Once it so happened that the violin accompanist, who was supposed to accompany Sri T. Puttaswamaiah for his concert in Kollegal, could not make it due to ill health at the last minute. Someone suggested that young boy Mahadevappa would be a good option. Sri Puttaswamaiah quickly drove towards Mahadevappa's house. He asked Sri Subbappa if his son could accompany on violin. Both Father and Son were a bit reluctant initially, as they thought young Mahadevappa, at that level, could not manage accompanying a stalwart! but on per-



suation of Sri T.Puttaswamaiah himself, Mahadevappa agreed to accompany him for that concert. The concert was a big success and great vidwan Puttaswamaiah relished young boy's violin playing and particularly his passion for music.

From the village to the city of Palace

After the success of the concert, Puttaswamaiah, who predicted the great future for this highly talented boy from the village, wrote a letter to the boy's father asking him to send Mahadevappa to Mysore expressing his willingness to accept him as his disciple. He had also mentioned an auspicious day for the same! It was in the year 1950, that Mahadevappa started from the tiny village Mudigundam to the Cultural capital of south India with bundles of dreams and Rs 25 in his pocket! The actual Gurukulavasa began as the young boy stayed with his guru and doing all household things besides learning music in an extremely traditional style.

The great guru started classes for Mahadevappa which had no restrictions on the duration of classes. Mahadevappa was determined to learn every single nuances that the guru taught. The intense training in scholarly Ragas, Manodhara-

ma orientation, and Intricate Raga Tana Pallavis were part of routine Vigorous training. At times, even when it seemed difficult and challenging to match the intricacies of his Guru's renditions, exploring newer techniques to achieve this was inevitable for the shishya! This was a challenge to Sri Puttaswamaiah also as he was a Vocalist and Mahadevappa had to be guided on the violin! Mahadevappa was inclined towards learning from Sri T.Puttaswamaiah only and nobody else.

This forced Mahadevappa to analyse different techniques of playing violin to reflect his Guru's singing. Sri Mahadevappa stretched his practice duration to as much as 12 hours in a day, in his pursuit to perfect the nuances of violin playing. It was a process of introspective self-evaluation. This reflects the attitude of a real sadhaka aiming for excellence than success.

Performer

It was by 1957, Sri Mahadevappa established himself as an able violinist in the musical fraternity. By his analytical approach and diligent sadhana, he was compared to almost all the eminent violinists of his times. His style of violin playing was rich in Raga bhava and Gamaka Shuddhatva. He started accompanying stalwarts like Sattur Subramanyam, Dr. M Balamuralikrishna, DKJ, Dr. S Ramanathan, Radha-Jaylakshmi, Maharajapuram Santanam, RK Shrikantan, Dr. N Ramani, Sikkil sisters, Bombay sisters, Madurai TN Sheshagopalan and others. He enthralled audiences all over including innumerable major sabhas of south India including Madras Music Academy, Krishna Gana Sabha, etc. thereby, he gained enormous performing experience to be shared with the generations to follow. He was one of the most sought after violinists of his times and was recognised as one of the most visible musical faces from the city of Mysore.

The Guru

Very successful, Mahadevappa soon established in the field as prominent Violinist of his era. When his elder son Nagaraj was born, the father who always adored Carnatic Music naturally started teaching him Violin. The bright and prodigious son soon established himself as a brilliant violinist. During his initial stages, once,



Mahadevappa approached an organiser of a sabha in Mysore and sought an opportunity for his meritorious son Nagaraj who was then 10 years. To his dismay, the biased temperament of this secretary, rejected his plea, stating that the stage wasn't for local artists! Even repeated requests for a junior concert for highly talented son, fell on the deaf ear! This was a turning point not only in the musical career of Mahadevappa's family but more importantly in the broader perspective of the musical representation from the city! Though Mahadevappa was hurt on that occasion, he took it positively and this triggered him to train son Nagaraj vigorously. The training was, as many remember, was one of its kind. The hard Task master trained his son without mercy ! For the guru, violin bow soon turned a hitting weapon! Introducing unparalleled violin practicing lessons, various techniques, fingering combinations and precise bowing techniques and other exercises in addition with teaching intricate pallavis, and Major classic Ragas of Carnatic Music – were the hallmarks of this coaching. The result was very evident! Within no time, the same sabha secretary approached Nagaraj for Performance in the sabha. As a matter of fact, positive men are never bogged down by such negative experiences in life. They normally take it as a challenge and rise to higher elevation by virtue of their consolidated and focused efforts. Sri Mahadevappa was no exception to such highly positive atti-

tude. Later when Manjunath was born, the same training process began for him. For this extremely strict father, his sons should always be practicing and practicing. All who know this family closely still remember how the violin training used to take place around the clock! Mahadevappa, who was also regarded as Jamadagni by many, music was every thing and he made sure his sons also understood the importance of music in life. Fortunately with both sons emerging as front line Violinists in the country today, Mahadevappa is very happy that his dream, ambition came true.

Sri Mahadevappa was in limelight from 1955 to 1990 as a performer. He was an excellent thinker and an open-minded Guru. Just like a honey bee, which sucks the sweet nectar from the flower, without tampering it, Sri Mahadevappa was open to any technique and style of playing the violin. He would critically analyse different kinds of techniques of playing a raga. He would explore possibilities of playing a raga in different styles and adopt them in future playing. That is the reason, he is regarded as one of the greatest thinkers. He used to upgrade the playing techniques along with his thought process. This is similar to upgrading a hardware in proportion to the growth in software industry. This indirectly helped his both sons to a considerable extent.



Being honoured with the highest state Music Award "State Sangeetha Vidwan" by then CM N. Dharam Singh

An able Guru takes his students out of their comfort zone and gives them sufficient exposure, so as to strengthen their wings and enable them to fly in the sky of eternity. Likewise, Sri Mahadevappa organised musical events on Saturdays under theme of bhajana sampradaya and created opportunities for Sri Nagaraj and Manjunath to listen to various senior musicians. Several eminent musicians used to render pallavis on such occasions wherein Nagaraj & Manjunath had to accompany them, which exposed them to different musical conditions. They had reached a stage of reproducing any difficult pallavi extempore on stage, with great ease. This speaks of the rigorous and quality musical education, Sri Mahadevappa had imparted to his students. Sri H K Narasimhamurthy, Sri Awanishewaram Vinu, Ganesh kumar, Vasantha Ramamnujam, Arun Ramamurthy and others were his leading students apart from Nagaraj and Manjunath

There is another interesting illustration to highlight the musical exposure he had given to his students. Vidwan Sri T.Puttaswamaiah used to visit Mysore for a month on examination duty, which was when Sri Mahadevappa would request him to sing different pallavis. The students had to replicate pallavis of various degrees of complexities which had given them immense confidence to accompany on violin with ease and without having any doubts, whatsoever.

Mahadevappa would always insist his disciples to listen to radio concerts regularly. The process would never end up in just listening to the programs, but would be followed by additional sessions of discussion on the salient features of the program, like the tempo adopted, sangatis in kriti singing, kruthi rendition, possibility of adding additional sangatis as prefix or suffix etc.

An important mention to be made here is that Sri Mahadevappa found his success in being instrumental in the phenomenal success of his sons and sacrificed priorities of his own. It is even more interesting to note that many times he would skip playing his concerts and gave away those opportunities to his young sons.

It is noteworthy that he sacrificed many functions of social obligation, entertainments etc., for the sake of his son's music progress. He would miss such opportunities intentionally with a view of spending musical time with Nagaraj or Manjunath. Nagaraj-Manjunath who very much missed their childhood play, friends, movies etc., never repent for it and now are proud that this unique method of upbringing by their father has yielded tremendous success today.

When he was asked on his views on taking up music as a profession, Vidwan Mahadevappa strongly opined that, if one pursues anything

with dedication, determination and perseverance, they will definitely savor the fruit of excellence and success and it's true with music as well. We find the best examples in our very own, Highly acclaimed violinists Sri Mysore Nagaraj and Dr Mysore Manjunath, who took up music as their profession in spite of being bright potential candidates in fields like Science and Engineering. For Mahadevappa, nothing is important in his life than Carnatic Music. On the contrary to the popular belief, he never shifted either to Chennai or Bangalore despite tremendous success of his family in Carnatic music as he always believed that if one is too good, he can be successful anywhere. This made them inspire hundreds of music practitioners looking upon them as trail blazers.

He has played a key role in establishing J.S.S Sangeetha Sabha which has been regarded as one of the foremost music organisations in the state today, contributing to the musical world through regular concerts, Music conferences &

other festivals which seem like musical feasts to the connoisseurs in Mysore. In fact he also taught music to many dignitaries including IAS officers, Swamijis and others. He was one of the pioneers in shaping up Kalabhivardhini sabha, Purandara-Thyagaraja Sangeetha sabha and many such sabhas. He has been instrumental in inspiring countless music aspirants. He has been honoured with innumerable awards including Government's Chowdiah National Award, Rajya Sangita Vidwan award, Sangita Ratna, Gana kalavaridhi, Sangita VidyaNidhi Etc. He presided over as the president of Music conferences by Gayana Samaja and JSS Sangita Sabha. Serving at various government and private bodies in the advisory board & selection panel, he always worked for the promotion of Carnatic music all his life.

The world of music feels proud to see a person of such a high caliber as Sri Mahadevappa who is a Violinist par Excellence, Guru, organiser and an exceptionally great inspirer.

On 18th March, RK Shriramkumar gave an extraordinary Lec-Dem on "Srimathadhi Guruguho Jayathi" - An insight into the Guruguha Vibhakti Kritis of Muthuswamy Dikshitar at SRLKM. It made an extraordinary impact on the audience who gave a standing ovation as a mark of respect to his knowledge in several area of music especially the philosophical aspects. This was followed by another Lec-Dem by Arun Prakash the next day on "The Art of Apt and Creative Mridangam accompaniment". Our sincere appreciations to Neela Ramgopal who was the brain behind the Lec-Dem.



Storyteller with a difference

Vatsala Vedantam, Courtesy Deccan Herald,

Dasa nina pada Dasa, Nina pada Dasa Salahalu bharrayya...”

She entreats with closed eyes and outstretched hands. The spell is cast as Vishaka Hari embarks on yet another journey into the hinterland of Kannada Nadu to tell us the rich folklore of the Dasaragalu who lived and sang in praise of Vittala and his myriad forms. If these memorable words of Kanakadasa moved his beloved Krishna to turn towards him, it is not surprising that this exceptional artiste’s recital should move her audiences to tears. Dressed in her signature attire of a resplendent nine yard sari, jasmine-braided hair, silver anklets and toe rings - all typical of a conventional South Indian housewife – this wonder woman transforms herself into an avant-garde virtuoso on stage with her incredible repertoire of mythology, history and music.

Meet Vishaka Hari, brand ambassador of the 21st century Indian woman - sophisticated, educated, English-speaking, walking encyclopaedia of scriptures. Trained in music by Lalgudi Jayaraman and in katha-kalakshepam by the eminent Tamil scholar Krishna Premi Swamigal, she has slipped into the role of harikatha exponent effortlessly. When I ask her whether women artistes in this country face gender bias, she shakes her head with conviction: “Not at all. India has respected women more than any other nation.”

I persist: “In this male bastion where you have excelled, do you feel threatened by competition?”

Again, her answer is stunningly simple:

“If one thinks this is a profession, then there is a threat. I do this for atma thrupthi. There is no question of competition or conquest.”

SRLKM is honouring Vishaka Hari with ‘Sangita Vedantha Dhurina’ that carries a cash award of one Lakh Rs. on 29 April, Saturday, 05.30 pm at Kuvempu Kalakshetra (Opposite to Bangalore Gayana Samaja).

This article is a tribute to an extraordinary artists who performs for her ‘atma thrupthi’ than any thing else....

We are sitting in the green room of the classy auditorium where she will perform later. I see her, a real diva, reflected in a dozen mirrors as she leans forward and says in all earnestness: “I never compare myself with others. I merely ask myself, ‘is today’s concert better than yesterday’s?’”

Perhaps, this is the secret of her success as a performing artiste. She gave up a flourishing career in chartered accountancy to don the role of a harikatha bhagavatar, which she practises with elegance and style. She feels that this art, which calls for intense manodharma, has a widespread message for young audiences as it has an added moral significance other than its artistic value. Vishaka sees a great future for this art, greater perhaps than music or dance, because “it’s a theatrical art form where there is music, dance, drama and storytelling – all the navarasas are contained here.” As for audience criticism that there is more music than storytelling in her performances, she quickly retorts: “When I relate the story of Purandharadasa or Thyagaraja, would my audience have me cut out their divine music? What is their life without those exquisite compositions?”



Vishaka Hari in a recent performance for Devagiri Temple and Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira

As if to prove her point, Vishaka Hari teaches only music to her pupils. If they are inspired to learn the art of kathakalapshhekam, she guides them and no more. For, this is one art that needs self- motivation. She must have that in plenty, considering she gave her harikatha arangetram when she was still in school. She has now elevated what used to be a mere musical discourse into a fine art, and honed it to perfection.

When she says “this is my life, my passion...” one can understand what drives her performances into divine experiences. She invests each storytelling session with a wealth of erudition and piety that the characters she portrays stand larger than life before us. Whether it is the story of the Dasaragalu of Kannada Nadu, Narayana Theertha of Kerala, Annamayya of Andhra or Meera of Rajasthan, she carries her audiences effortlessly to those lands to depict their lives through song and prayer. As she explains, “My goal in life is to create an awareness and joy in our culture and tradition among young people living far away in other countries.”

When I heard Vishaka Hari perform to an eclectic audience in the Siva Vishnu Temple in Washington, I understood what she meant. She is not a mere storyteller. Her stories are the props on which she carefully builds and unfolds an entire civilisation that is India. It is a mission she carries with her, whether she performs in New York or Nungabakkam, Singapore or Srirangam. She targets the young and the vulnerable who must know their own culture before imbibing others’. To get her message across, Vishaka chooses the great epics of India. It may be episodes from the Ramayana, Bhaghavatham or Mahabhatha, they leave an enduring impression on the listeners. Speaking in chaste Tamil or flawless English, her performances are remarkable for their clarity, authenticity and charm. Her alluring personality adds to their appeal. It may be a far cry from direct taxes to direction in life, but this commerce graduate and ex-chartered accountant has it all neatly planned and executed. A Vishaka Hari harikatha is always a winner.

Excerpts from a unique conversation

Mangala Karthik

A Sunday morning in February has a charm like no other. Spring is round the corner and the mood is set for music, poetry and other things of beauty. What better time then to soak up the wit and wisdom of two maestros, one a monarch of mridangam and the other a wizard with the violin.

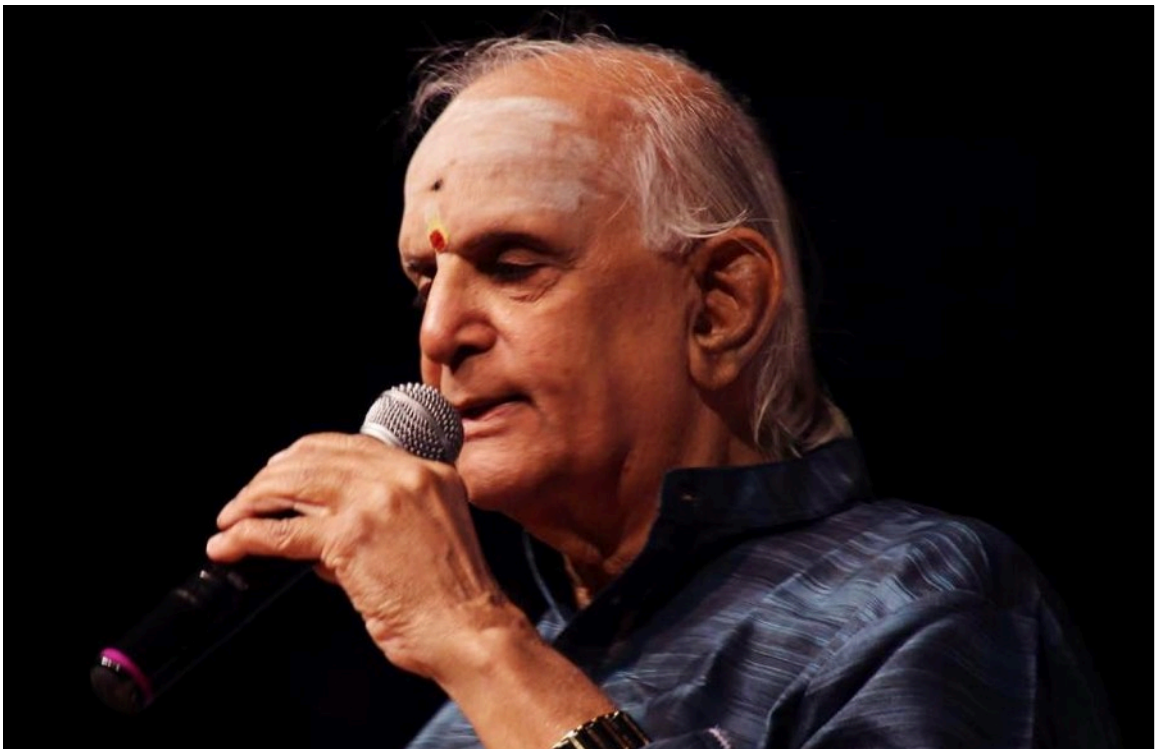
We bring you excerpts from a stimulating conversation between Padma Bhushan Vid. Umalalapuram K Sivaraman (UKS) and Dr Mysore Manjunath (MM) at MLR Convention Center, JP Nagar for Vishesha Fine Arts on 19 February 2017.

MM: The latest trend in performing, especially in Carnatic music – there are many people who are playing like they are in their 90s whereas

you have been playing with the sort of energy of a 20 year old all along.

UKS: If you always think you are aged you become aged. Recently, after a percussion ensemble in Besant Nagar young boys from the fishing community came up and said, “Taatha, superb”. When the youngsters call you Taatha or Paati, take it in the right spirit. As you grow older, you will become a Taatha.

I don't have any generation gap. These are two sides of the same coin – the stalwart of old, and today's young master. When I played for the earlier greats I enjoyed each of them. They made me great. Today I play for all the youngsters. I want them to become an Ariyakudi or a Semmangudi. I play with the same amount of



cooperation and sincerity as I did then. Then I gave 100 percent, I give 150 percent to make the youngsters great.

MM: Sir, what is the difference between people taking music as a profession and those who do it as a hobby?

I am a BA and BL degree holder. I am now entering the 72nd year of my mridangam career.

As you know, the bygone days were very different. Today, I'm very happy that many professionally qualified people are taking music as their profession. They are jolly people, wearing jeans and T shirts but at the same time taking their profession very seriously, improving their repertoire all the time. They have support from the media, the government and have many global opportunities. They are always touring, have concerts year round and make lot of money and are happy. I see a great awakening in the younger generation and see a great future for this art.

Now I am asking a question to Nagaraj and Manjunath. How are you really faring in your profession?

MM: By God's grace, fantastic.

UKS: You are half my age. At the age of 80, I am saying I am happy. At the age of 40 you are happy and when you reach my age you will achieve the greatest happiness.

The question is, what is really life? Life is you enjoying happiness and giving happiness to others, leaving behind a legacy of laughter and smiles.

In the "Natya Shastra", Bharatha says, "When you are appearing before the public and performing, don't have a wry face. Have a smiling and beautiful face so that it mirrors you and your art." I have trained myself to have a smiling face and it has become second nature to me. Kutcheriyile eppadi irukkunum anna, jaaliya irukkunum. appodaan janangal rasippar.

Music gives you ananda and shanti. When you become a rasika of the main artist you enjoy every moment. It is my father's mahamantra to

enjoy the music of the main artist. I will only produce such naada as required by the main musician.

Anything that you do with sincerity, it will confer innate beauty and spiritual power. That's why yogis always have a smile. When you see the rasikas you have to motivate them for happiness. It is the only panacea that you can give yourself and the audience.

MM: Your take on the state of music amongst the youth in the present day.

UKS: When I began my career, as early as 1945, I never thought that I would play for jugalbandhi, rap, percussion ensembles or jazz. Carnatic music is so holistic. If you master the rhythm and melody of our music, we can win the whole world. Jazz musicians come to us to learn manodharma. Pt. Ravishankar himself told me that there was much to learn from our music. Film directors welcome Carnatic musicians as they can notate anything and learn. There is always something to appreciate in every kind of music folk, classical, semi folk or film. I tell youngsters to take what is good from each. Kalidasa is an inspiration to me. He said whatever is old need not be good and whatever is new should not be criticised. People with wisdom will take the best of the old and new.

Take the case of the glass mridangam. I believe it is as traditional as a conventional mridangam. Artisans from the association of St. Gobain have made the glass mridangam. They asked me what the cost is. I work only on three Cs. I don't mind the Cost, I don't want to make it Commercial and it is my Contribution to the percussive world.

MM: Yes, we had the privilege to perform with you Sir when you first used the glass mridangam at a concert for Mudra Arts. It was an amazing concert.

We have heard you repeatedly talk about the integration through music. How far is it successful and what is your take on that?

UKS: National integration is absolutely necessary. National integration is happening between

the north and south. In my experience of these 71 years, when I delve deep into the ocean of bliss that is called 'Sangeetha' there is only one music, one sentiment, one emotion. After all, what we call Shankarabharanam, the north Indian musicians called Bilawal and the westerners call Major Scale. Same thing goes by different names.

MM: I remember when we toured Europe, we interacted with a famous jazz band called 'Aka Moon'. They recognised Carnatic music only through Sivaraman Sir.

UKS: I have been playing for the band for 20 years now. I recall one interaction with a middle aged man in the band about 10 years ago. He confessed that he thought Carnatic music was only cacophony until he really put his mind and seriously meditated upon it. It was after listening to a recording of Semmangudi with my accompaniment on the mridangam and also my solo performance that his opinion changed. He said if you don't have any bias and you become a devotee of music, you can enjoy every form of music. I feel the same, whether it is classical, jazz, rap or Michael Jackson's music. That is why I recently played for a Hindustani concert instead of the tabla as part of the Bharat Sangeet Utsav. You have to take challenges. Rather than be content with what you know, you should yearn to know more. You have to be a thief not for money acquisition but knowledge acquisition. You have to be energetic and hone your intelligence every day. As a pianist of repute once said, "If I don't practise for 2 months, I will know my defects. If I don't practise for 3

months, the musicians will know and after 4 months the public will know them."

MM: Sir, finally your advice to young musicians.

A devotee asked Ramana Bhagwan – "Why don't you do something for the nation?". Pat came the reply "If you conquer yourself and your mind and everybody does so, the nation will become ok".

You have to see who you are and improve your character. I don't want to give any suggestions to the youth as I am still learning and improving. When I really reach a particular stage of fulfilment and I am prepared to give advice to you I will. Till that time, I am developing myself. Thank you very much.

MM: All these years we have seen your mridangam sing and dance and this is a rare opportunity for us to have an interaction with you. It is a great honour and privilege for us.

UKS: Manjunath, it is always a matter of proportion. We must stop at this and leave the rest to the imagination of the public.

I bow to all of you and salute you. I love you so much because you are in my heart, I am in your heart. What can I say when I've established Advaitapada between you and me. Words fail, emotions run high.

Karnatak Music coir by Sriranjani Santhanagopalan

Bhoomija is organising a Karnatak music coir in coordination with Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira by Sriranjani Santhanagopalan on April 12-15, May 1-5 and June 17-19 at Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira auditorium. The timings will be 2 - 7 pm.

Interested students of music may contact 'gayathri@bhoomija.org' for more information.

Three days with MSS

CP Chikkanna

My friend M.Bharadwaj was the coordinator/convenor of Sree Rama Seva Samithi Shimoga. He entrusted me the job of arranging M.S.Subbulakshmi's music concert under the aegis of the Samithi in 1977. Through my friend Mrudanga Vidwan Guruvayur Dorai, I contacted Atmanathan, Sadashivam's trusted secretary, introduced myself and appraised him about the activities of the samithi. He handed over the phone to Sadashivam. He patiently heard me and said that there is a possibility of Amma going abroad and promised to consider the request the following year

This reasoning was elongated for eight years. Finally he spilled the beans. He said to me "you see Amma is giving only one concert during Sri Rama Navami under the auspices of Bangalore's Sree Rama Seva Mandali " and that we should excuse him. I replied that we Bangaloreans are highly privileged in that aspect and requested him to extend the same courtesy to the citizens of Malnad since we cannot expect all of them to come to Bangalore to listen to Amma's soul stirring performance. I also mentioned to him that on two occasions we released Guruvayur Dorai to accompany Amma despite his engagement to accompany Dr. Balamuralikrishna and Veena Chitti Babu under the aegis of the samithi in the past. Finally Sadashivam tentatively accepted the invitation to perform during the festival in 1986 subject to condition that we must be prepared in the event of any important engagement elsewhere and asked me to meet SR Venkatachalam, the then secretary of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bangalore for the arrangements.

Myself and Bharadwaj met Venkatachalam who advised us to arrange two Ambassador cars for the journey from Bangalore to Shimoga, S Seshaagiri Rao's violin, TAS Mani's Mrudangam, HP Ramachar's Kanjira, BR Ravi Kumar's Ghata and

Vittal Rao's Tambura besides comfortable stay arrangements. There should not be any felicitation functions, mic arrangements of the highest quality, adequate security and water proofing of stage. Regarding remuneration, we were expecting hefty sum and were deeply surprised when Venkatachalam quoted Rs.7500/- inclusive of train travel expenses from Madras to Bangalore and back for 5 persons in A/C First class. A month before the concert, Venkatachalam summoned me to his office and enquired if the samithi could mobilise Rs.15000/- as Sadashivam had agreed to meet one year's boarding expenses of the Veda Patashala run by the Kanchi Seer. It was not a compulsion but only a request. I conveyed this to Bharadwaj.

After long discussions, we chalked out money mobilising plan to raise funds. The samithi printed special donor passes for the concert at Rs. 200/- per 2 persons in a special enclosure close to the dais and enlisted the support of music lovers. The response was over whelming and the collection reached Rs.40,000/- and the samithi had to stop passes as there was space constraint. The samithi sought the support of all the three Special Deputy commissioners of Shimoga, District superintendent of police, Chief Engineer of Sharavathi hydro electric project and town municipality to make M.S.Amma's concert an epoch making event in Shimoga. The samithi arranged Tungabhadra Sugar Mill Guest house, a palatial bungalow with a sprawling garden for M.S.Amma's comfortable stay. I and Venkatachalam too stayed with them.

On the morning of April 24, M.S. Sadashivam, daughter Radha Vishvanathan, Amma's maid assistant Vishalam and Sadashivam's servant alighted at Cantonment Railway Station. I and Venkatachalam received them and proceeded to his bungalow in Shivajinagar. I requested them to be

ready by 11am for the journey to Shimoga with a coffee break at Tiptur in the residence of Nagappa, proprietor of Gopi Coffee works arranged by Bharadwaj. The women folk in Nagappa's residence performed paada pooja to M.S and Sadashivam at the main entrance that brought tears in the eyes of the couple. The entire guests were treated with mouth watering dishes. M.S.Amma and Sadashivam interacted with each and every member of the family as if they were blood relatives for generations. After spending nearly an hour there, we resumed our journey. While sending us off, Nagappa requested Sadashivam to bless the citizens of Tiptur by Amma's concert during the Ganesha festival which was accepted on the spot with humility.

On the way, summer showers greeted us. I casually told Sadashivam that the rain God is extending the couple a warm welcome to Malnad. He recounted an interesting incident a couple of years ago. Some elderly farmers from M.S's native village near Madurai came to Kalki Gardens and requested for Amma's concert in their Village in fulfilment of their prayers to the Village Goddess. Any amount of excuses and reasoning were futile. They resolved and determined not to leave until the invitation was accepted. They offered the entire concert fee in advance. After confirming the date they left with great joy. After an overnight stay at Madurai, the Music party reached the village and found no arrangement for the concert! The villagers told that they were suffering continuous draught for a long period. Their Prayers, Japas and Varuna Homa failed to appease the rain God. The Village elders finally decided that M.S.Amma is their last hope and saviour. Lo! Two days before the concert, heavy rains lashed the area bringing much relief to the farmers. They honoured the music party and placed the remuneration before the couple with great reverence. Touched and moved by their immense devotion and faith in M.S, Sadashivam requested the villagers to use the money for the Villages' welfare and returned.

In front of Sharavathi hydro electric receiving station on the outskirts of Shimoga, a specially erected huge banner by the citizens wishing a

warm welcome to the Queen of Music MS Subbulakshmi and T.Sadashivam with their photos on it was in place. The couple were welcomed with jasmine/sandal wood garlands by the three Deputy Commissioners, the town municipality besides the samithi and other dignitaries. All of them lead the couple to the guest house. From there the convoy went to the residence of Rajaram Iyengar, Sadashivam's close friend who resigned his Executive Govt job in the early 1920's and joined Swarajya movement. He and Sadashivam were selling Khadi garments door to door besides managing the store in Doddapete in Bangalore. Their meeting after nearly 3 decades was very warm and touching as they hugged each other. A grand dinner followed. A police jeep ensured security in the night outside the bungalow.

On the day of the concert, after morning pooja, M.S.and Sadashivam were relaxing in the garden. To their surprise, there was heavy turnout of citizens to garland them and have photograph with the couple. This went on for nearly 2 hours. It was lunch time (11am). The couple invited me to join them. I excused myself as I had breakfast. A barrage of questions, what was the breakfast menu? Where? How it tasted? Came from the grand old man. It was set dosa at Hotel Jewel Rock and it was tasty, I replied. Set dosa! What is it? This is the first time I am hearing it. Was there gun powder in it? I told him it is three small fluffy dosas with pudina chutney and vegetable curry with a tea spoon of ghee. There was no gun powder (Sadashivam's gun powder is red chilli powder mixed with salt and gram dhal powder called "pappu"). Then please arrange it for our evening tiffin, let us also taste it, he ordered. The hotel owner brought specially prepared Rava Idlis and set dosas for the distinguished guests. After the tiffin, Sadashivam wanted to appoint an expert cook from Shimoga. The samithi could not fulfil his desire as nobody was interested.

Heavy cloud formation in the evening threatened the concert and everyone was tension filled. This came in for comments in the guest house before the evening tiffin session. Sadashivam assured that their efforts will not go

in vain and told that the concert would start with a special prayer to Lord Ganapathy ("Sri Mahaganapathi ravatu mam" a composition in the raga Gowla by Maharaja Jayachamara Wodeyar). As predicted by him, the clouds melted away but took revenge by lashing out heavily the next day washing out N.Ramani's flute recital!

The concert started at the stroke of 6.30 and lasted till 10 pm. People from nearby places like Sagar, Bhadravathi, Sringeri etc gathered in large numbers and extra speakers were fixed in the park behind the concert venue. Police diverted traffic in the area. It took nearly half an hour to bring M.S to the car from the stage as people lined up to have a close look at the queen of music and her husband. With broad smile, the couple and daughter Radha acknowledged the greetings of admirers.

While having dinner, I recounted her masterly rendering of Purandardasa's compositions with clear cut pronunciation in the Purandara Mantapa on the banks of Tungabhadra river in Hampi which was relayed live by all the south Indian stations of AIR way back in 1964 followed by yet another memorable concert two days later in aid of Indian Air Force in Bangalore's Ravindra Kalakshetra attended by Kannada luminaries Dr.D.V.Gundappa, Justice Nittoor Srinivasa Rao, Masthi Venkatesha Iyengar, PT Narasimhachar, family friend and host VT Srinivasan. I sought the secret behind her clear-cut pronunciation of Kannada lyrics. She replied that she is well versed in Telugu script which is very close to Kannada and with the help of Kannada scholars perfected her diction. I also expressed my delight at her rendition of Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer's magnum Ragamalika in 72 melakartha ragas "Pranatarthihara Prabho Purare" for 4 continuous years at the rate of 3 chakras per year under the aegis of Madras Music Academy's annual music conference. This raised Sadashivam's eye brows that he cracked a joke at his diminishing music memory. At that time, MS Amma recounted a memorable incident during dinner in Teen Murthi Bhavan, New Delhi, official residence of the then P.M.Jawaharlal Nehru way back in early 1950's. A particular

dish was amongst the menu. When M.S was about to consume it, Nehru held her wrist and told Indira Gandhi that the dish may affect the voice of the queen of music who was to perform the next day. At that time Rajiv and Sanjay were playful children, occupying the laps of M.S and Sadashivam during their stay at Teen Murthi Bhavan. Nehru asked his grand children to sing "God save the King", the British National Anthem to his guests. The very same child is today's Prime Minister she admired.

The next morning, around 8am, Sadashivam asked me to ring up his close friend H.Y.Sharada Prasad, senior diplomat and principle private secretary to the then P.M. Rajiv Gandhi in New Delhi. After exchange of pleasantries, they were in long conversation. He called me again and gave me a list of phone numbers to ring up and both he and M.S were speaking to the other side. At that time, I observed M.S's eyes were reddened with water. I hesitatingly inquired about it. Sadashivam informed me that after the concert, she gets migraine (partial headache) since she concentrates on shruthi and cannot sleep. One of the special Deputy commissioners IM Vittalala Murthy, Bharadwaj and Local MLA K.H.Srinivas came to the guest house and took the dignitaries to the ancient Seetha Ramanjaneya Temple around 9.30 am. The priests received them with purna kumbha swagatha. Overwhelmed with Bhakthi, MS and Radha sang Ramanatham Bhajeham and Rama Nanubrovara. Lunch was arranged in the residence of Bharadwaj. As the couple were fond of Melkote Puliogare which I learnt from Guruvayur Dorai, it was specially cooked.

The Samithi Office bearers and the special Dy Commissioner IM Vittala Murthy came there. The entire collection of Rs. 40,000 in a tray with fruits was offered to the couple by the Dy.Commissioner. Sadashivam told the office bearers to send a Demand Draft for Rs.15000 to Kanchi mutt and utilise the balance for the music festival. Since Bharadwaj's mother could not come to the concert due to old age, M.S.Amma and Radha sang Maithrim Bhajatha and Hari Tumharo to her. As a memento, Bharadwaj presented Sadashivam a Hero Cycle

to be used by the staff of Rajaji Foundation at Madras managed by him.

From there, the same persons who accorded a warm welcome at the Sharavathi receiving station escorted the Queen of Music to the same place for a warm send off, each one garlanding them which was touching and highly emotional. We reached Bangalore around 6PM. I went to the residence of Venkatachalam around 9pm and escorted the couple to the city railway station and was there until the departure of train. Sadashivam collected my visiting card and the couple warmly invited me for the marriage of their grandson Chandrashekar with Sikkil Neela's daughter Mala in the month of July at Madras. We attended the marriage and received a warm welcome and treatment by the couple.

During my three days of close movement with them, I discovered the secret behind Sadashivam's longevity. It is his humour. He was always jovial and would crack jokes every 30 minutes evoking peels of laughter. He was equally short tempered. Small things/mistakes he could not tolerate, expressing his anger and would regain his composure within a few minutes! He was a highly perfectionist and disciplined in everything be that small or big and generous in paying tips

to railway porters. They were very magnanimous towards their car drivers and ensured that they are always comfortable in their journeys. Their public relationship/response were of the highest order. Perhaps, it is these qualities that have played an important role in enhancing their universal image.

After returning to Madras, Sadashivam wrote three pages letter to Bharadwaj with a copy to me conveying his and M.S.Amma's gratitude for the homely arrangements, atmosphere, love and affection showered on them by the citizens of Shimoga. The entire first page was about my efforts in fixing up the concert and mentioned that I looked after them ever since they arrived in Bangalore until they boarded the train back to Madras which only a blood brother would extend with that much of devotion, care and attention. He concluded the letter by expressing a desire that if at all there is punarjanma, they aspire to be born as citizens of Shimoga, chanting the name of the Lord in a Divine atmosphere and company of the privileged citizens who seem to live closer to heaven. Thereafter, I and Bharadwaj became his close acquaintances and were meeting them during their visits to Bangalore throughout his life time.

The Music Academy, Madras honoured Rudrapatnam Brothers (RN Thyagarajan and RN Tharanathan) with Sangita Kala Acharya on 1 January 2017 during their annual sadas





Dharini Veera Raghavan (Vocal)



T Nikshith Puttur (Mridangam)



JR Shradha Ravindran Bangalore Gayana Samaja (Violin)

Kalavanta - 2017



Spring Music Festival - 2017