



Sruti Notes

A Publication of SRUTI - The India Music & Dance Society

www.sruti.org E-mail: srutipihla@gmail.com

Volume 17, Issue 1, March 2014

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From the President's Desk

Dear Sruti Supporter,

Namaste and Greetings from the new 2014 Board of Directors (BOD) of Sruti. It is a great honor and privilege for me to assume the role of President of Sruti this year and thank you all for giving me this opportunity. At the outset, my heartfelt appreciation and thanks to the outgoing president of Sruti, Ravi Pillutla and his team for completing yet another successful year. Besides events that received great reviews, last year also marked the beginning of a new chapter for Sruti when we won a unique grant that enabled us into looking at new perspectives and collaborations and Ravi and his team are to be applauded for paving the way for Sruti to embark on new adventures.

Time has moved on quickly and we are already into the third month in 2014. Even though our spring season is yet to begin, your new board went to work even before the year began to plan for a year, rich in educational and outreach events, unique presentations with world famous and rising artists.

We will spring into the 2014 season with the Annual Thyagaraja Aradhana on Saturday, March 22 at Hindu Temple in Delaware. Continuing the tradition of rendering of Utsava Sampradaya and Pancharatna kritis, the Sruti community has already begun their practice sessions and we look forward to yet another year showcasing professional and impeccably synchronized renditions. We thank Dinakar Subramanian, Kiranavali Vidyasankar, Srivalli Pillutla and Smt. Praba Subramanian for helping co-ordinate the practice sessions for the Utsava Sampradaya and Pancharatna kritis. The event will also feature a vocal concert by noted musician, Sri Madurai R. Sundar accompanied by Mrs. Sandhya Anand on the violin and Ms. Rajna Swaminathan on the mridangam.

Sruti will present a week-long residency from April 6-12 featuring Ms. Malavika Sarukkai, one of the torchbearers of Bharatanatyam today. With a generous grant from Pew Center for Arts & Heritage (PCAH), we are able to conduct this unique project involving 17 collaborators, many of them new to Sruti and Indian arts in general. The Sruti boards of 2013 and 2014 have been working diligently on this project ever since we received approval of the grant application in March 2013. Aligning to the mission of Sruti, the objective of the project is to increase the understanding of Indian classical dance among both Indian and mainstream audiences, help foster the continued vitality of Indian dance and create cross-cultural conversations among colleague artists. This project paves the way for many firsts in the history of Sruti, one being enhancing its presenting capacity by hiring professionals in curatorial, consulting, technical and project management positions.

As part of this project, engagement activities will take place at the Painted Bride, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Drexel University and Montgomery County Community College, building audience for the Annenberg performance through the activities themselves and through this consortium of venues' individual marketing strengths, each reaching a different segment of our wider community. We are also very proud to bring Malavika Sarukkai to the Sruti platform for the first time in 27 years. Her presentation: "Ganga Nitya Vaahini" has already received rave reviews around the world and we are very excited to bring her and this presentation not only to Sruti but to the larger Philadelphia audience.

(Continued from page 1)

The Sruti board also thanks the monumental efforts by 2013 Resources Committee:

Ramana Kanumalla, Viji Swaminathan and Raji Venkatesan and our guest collaborator Lisa Kraus who were instrumental in conceiving this project and securing the prestigious grant for Sruti.

The successful execution of the Malavika project will also give us a better edge when applying for another grant with PCAH for the next year. As such, a committee to focus specifically on this project was formed immediately after Sruti Day under the BOD's direction to ensure appropriate attention to detail is given to the project. In addition to members of the board, Ramana Kanumalla, Raji Venkatesan, Uma Prabhakar and Gayathri Rao have kindly agreed to be a part of this committee and I am grateful to have an experienced and talented group running this project.

We believe that every event during the week of April 6-12 benefits each one of us: experienced and new to this Indian classical art form, and so, urge and encourage everyone to attend as many events as possible. Being a Sruti sponsor for the year will get you premium seating for no additional cost for the final performance on April 12th. Tickets are selling quickly for this much anticipated event and if you haven't bought them already, we encourage you to do so immediately.

Switching gears to music, our next spring event is on Saturday, May 3 at Agnes Irwin School in Bryn Mawr, PA and will feature the torchbearers of the Lalgudi tradition and world famous brother-sister duo: Sri Lalgudi GJR Krishnan and Smt. Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi. They will be accompanied by Sri Trichy Sankaran on the mridangam and Sri Tripunithura N. Radhakrishnan on the ghatam.

Next in line and completing the spring session is a vocal concert on Saturday, May 17 at Agnes Irwin School, Bryn Mawr, PA by Ms. Amritha Murali, a multi-talented artist and rising star in the Carnatic music world, demonstrating excellence in both vocal and instrumental renditions. She will be accompanied by Ms. Ranjani Ramakrishnan on the violin and Sri Vinod Seetharaman on the mridangam.

The season opener for Fall is a much-anticipated presentation by the world-famous institution: Kalakshetra on Saturday, Sep 20th at Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts. This event provides a rare opportunity to watch a vintage production from 1955, conceived and choreographed by the founder of Kalakshetra, Smt. Rukmini Arundale titled "*Sita Swayamvaram*", from the most popular Indian epic, Ramayana. This performance features 10 Kalakshetra dancers and will be accompanied by live orchestra comprising of Kalakshetra

musicians.

Next in the lineup on Saturday, October 18, we bring to you another popular artist, Dr. Pantula Rama and will be accompanied by Sri MSN Murthy on the violin and Sri Patri Satish Kumar on the mridangam. This marks the first time Dr. Rama will sing for the Sruti audience. Our next event is another vocal concert by Smt. Gayathri Venkataraghavan accompanied by the renowned violinist Sri Mysore Srikanth and Sri Tanjore K Murugaboopathi on the mridangam. We will conclude the 2014 year with Sruti Day on Saturday, Dec 6 at Bharatiya Temple. Please look out for regular communication from Sruti about these events. We also encourage you to check out our website for detailed information on all these events.

In addition to planning for 2014 programs, the Sruti board and committees are busy with several administrative and operational procedures that enhance member experience and establish protocols that help Sruti grow as a world-class professional promoter and presenting organization. In our continued efforts to go "Green", the board has done extensive research on online distribution of concert music recordings to its members. I'm happy to report that we will launch this method of distribution in 2014 which not only minimizes our production costs but, makes it easier for members to avail the recordings as soon as we publish it. Additionally, we will continue to distribute Sruti Notes publications digitally.

Another initiative that the Sruti board undertook this year is to review the by-laws and operating procedures related to the election process by constituting a special committee to do the same. The board invited Vidyasankar Sundaresan, Bala Balasubramanian and Srinivas Pothukuchi who graciously accepted this responsibility. The committee will soon begin the review of the by-laws and is expected to recommend to the board with changes, if needed.

The 2014 Resources Committee led by Kishore Pochiraju is looking into various opportunities for getting additional funding for Sruti to offset higher production costs and artist fees we will incur for some events. They are busy coming up innovative ideas for securing grants for us. This requires creative minds and passion for and dedication to music and this year's committee is rich with them.

Nari Narayanan continues to chair the Marketing Committee. Despite twice as much responsibility due to the Malavika project, Nari has been very proactive in ensuring all marketing tasks are ahead of time. The incentive program he started for 2013 continued to be a success this year as well to get early sponsorship. The timely production of publicity materials for Malavika and

The opinions expressed by the contributors of articles and reviews are published in a spirit of openness of communication and freedom of expression. They do not necessarily reflect the views of Sruti's Board or its members.

other 2014 events helped raise great interest for this year's sponsorship, thanks to Nari and his marketing team.

Under the able leadership of Suresh Tyagarajan, the Publications and Outreach Committee (POC) is already at task with website updates and enhancements, Sruti Notes, special Thyagaraja Aradhana publications. The committee successfully carried out a smooth Thyagaraja Aradhana registration process this year. Special recognition goes to Lakshmi Radhakrishnan of the POC, for diligently, promptly and patiently working with the board not only on the regular POC tasks but also on many Malavika project related tasks. Also, stay tuned for the launch of a special initiative by the POC on March, 22nd.

The Sruti Youth Group is also coming together under the guidance of Madhavi Ratnagiri, who along with the BOD, is looking into ways to engage and incentivize the youth for active participation in Sruti.

Sundar Arunapuram and Uma Sivakumar have quite a few responsibilities in the Malavika project along with various event management tasks for the rest of the year's programs.

Santi Kanumalla as President-Elect is already working on the line-up for 2015 along with taking the lead on various parts of the Malavika project.

Venkat Kilambi in his role as treasurer has the unenviable task of managing the budget for the Malavika project along with the regular Sruti budget. However, I rest assured that the financials are in good hands.

Together with a talented, motivated and fair group of individuals on the 2014 board, whose sole mission is to operate in the best interests of Sruti, I know that this board will serve Sruti to the best of our abilities. We also need your help in running the organization effectively: we need your constructive feedback to know and understand what we are doing best and what needs improvement. Did you know that a good number of concerts this year were finalized based on your feedback on artists you'd like to see on the Sruti platform? Please continue to respond to surveys sent after each concert and feel free to drop in a line or two anytime to srutiphila@gmail.com with questions, inquiries, concerns or applause.

We have come a long way since Sruti's inception in 1986. It is no easy feat to continue to uphold the vision and mission of any organization, let alone for 27 years. You, our members, through your commitment, involvement and volunteerism have created, sustained and developed this organization into a highly reputable one, as acknowledged by artists, sponsors and the community alike. Indeed, I'm proud to be part of an organization such as Sruti.

Please mark your calendars as we look forward to seeing you at all our upcoming events. We look to your continued support, enthusiasm and commitment to Sruti.

Warm Regards,
Sunanda Gandham, President
On behalf of the SRUTI Board of Directors,

From the Resources & Development Committee

The resources committee for 2014 has the privilege of continued service from Mr. Ramana Kanumalla and Ms. Raji Venkatesan from last year. Two new members, Mr. Srinivas Pentavalli and Mr. V. V. Raman, joined the committee this year. The committee started off the blocks running with reporting and proposal activities. We look forward to continued success with securing funding from granting agencies, making Sruti a candidate society for corporate philanthropy and securing patron benefactors.

Last year was highly productive for the resources committee. The committee, chaired by Ramana, sought multiple grant opportunities and secured grants to the tune of \$165,000. The Dance Advance grant for presenting Ms. Malavika Sarukkai, the largest grant ever to be awarded to Sruti, came to fruition from efforts that began during the presidency of Raji. Funds from the Knights Arts matching grant was used for Mr. Shujaat Khan with in-kind matching funds from the Annenberg Center and Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. The Knight Arts funds are available for Sruti for two more years, but with the restriction that the events be held within the city Philadelphia. Thanks to the relentless work of two Sruti Patrons, PECO - an Exelon Company became a corporate sponsor.

Sruti depends upon the generous support of its patrons and sponsors. We request to keep Sruti in mind for your charitable giving and corporate matching funds from your workplace. Please bring any potential opportunities to secure funding or in-kind support for Sruti's programming to the notice of the resource committee and we promise that we will energetically pursue them.

Kishore Pochraju
On behalf of the Resources & Development Committee

(Continued overleaf)

From the Publications and Outreach Committee

Our Dear Connoisseurs,

Welcome to Sruti Year 2014.

This year promises to be an act of balance; balance between music and dance; balance between vocal and instrumental and last but not least - balance between High Tech and High Touch. Our expectation is that you are going to be as excited as we are in unfurling Sruti in its full colors this year. Our team – consisting of ardent players like Balaji Raghothaman, Lakshmi Radhakrishnan, Vidya Jayaraman and Srikant Raghavachari – is eager to serve you with our publications and notes. With the goal of deepening Sruti's connection with its members, Balaji will introduce his 4S (Sruti Sangeeta Sahitya Sangraha) during Thyagaraja Aradhana Day. This will be a living, evolving, interactive gadget for the novice as well as for the veteran in our community.

The respective committees, is already working vigorously to provide interfaces to the Malavika Project. In this regard, srutimalavika.org and our blog tumblr site (Sruti Smriti) are worth special mention here. Our periodic publications shall continue as usual but we shall make every effort towards electronic / searchable media and try leaving printing as an option. All our precious older publications are available at <http://sruti.org/sruti/srutiPublications.asp>.

Last but not least, we request your enthusiastic participation in contributing and reacting to all our publications / blogs / media contents.

Please contact us at srutiphila@gmail.com.

Looking forward to a synergistic travel through Sruti 2014 and beyond.

Tyagarajan Suresh
On behalf of Sruti Publications and Outreach Committee.

From the Marketing Committee

Following on the successful Spring and Fall 2013 performances, Sruti Marketing Committee is pleased to have the opportunity to promote and support another year of outstanding programming during 2014.

Malavika Sarukkai grand event and associated residency activities in April mentioned in the President's note have kept the marketing committee very busy throughout the snowy 2013-2014 winter season.

All the innovations from the previous years are being

continued for 2014 including Season sponsorship packages that offer excellent value for patrons. These packages bundle in preferred seating tickets for all events, annual Sruti membership fees and concert music downloads when available, into one low price, including premium seating for the eagerly awaited Malavika Sarukkai Bharatanatyam event on April 12, 2014 and Kalakshetra performance on September 20, 2014.

Please encourage your friends and family to take advantage of this special opportunity that offers the best value if subscribed early in the year at <http://www.sruti.org/sruti/srutiMembership.asp>.

Audience contact would be maintained through website (www.sruti.org), Sruti Smriti (srutiphila.tumblr.com), Facebook ([facebook.com/srutiphila](https://www.facebook.com/srutiphila)), LinkedIn, Twitter (twitter.com/srutiphila), Google+ ([srutiphila](https://plus.google.com/srutiphila)) and E-Mails through Vertical Response would continue during 2014. Please link up with Sruti using your favorite social media outlet to keep current with the latest Sruti events and developments. Please continue to provide your valuable feedback through audience surveys sent after each Sruti event.

In addition to our traditional marketing methods, we have been getting great expanded reach and awareness about Sruti throughout the eastern seaboard of USA using \$10,000 per month Google Ad grants for non-profits which we received starting 2013. We are getting more than 6,000 extra visitors to our website per month using Google ads. (We are also getting greatly increased number of offers by musicians and dancers throughout the world to perform for Sruti.) We have also started renting tables at events by other organizations to promote Sruti. The first event was at the Pongal event by Tamil TAGDV earlier this year and our presence at more events is planned.

We are also keen on expanding Sruti's reach to people who are not aware of Sruti. Please encourage them to sign up in our website to be included in the mailing list.

During 2014 and 2015, we would like to develop mobile apps in Apple IOS and Android platforms for Sruti. If you are able and willing to help us develop these apps or volunteer to market Sruti, please E-Mail srutiphila@gmail.com.

We look forward to your attendance at all Sruti events. Please pick up a 2014 event rack card during Aradhana on March 22 and attach to your fridge with a magnet as a reminder for our events.

Nari Narayanan
On behalf of the Marketing Committee

(Continued overleaf)

Aparna Balaji Concert

Review by Lata Suresh

This performance by Aparna Balaji was short and sweet and definitely showed a lot of talent to be unfolded in the future.

The concert began with a varnam of Shri Lalgudi G Jayaraman followed by Vathapi Ganapathim in Hamsadvani which laid a nice stage for a good musical afternoon. The kalpana swaram rendered by Aparna was crisp, with good short combinations and was well matched by Balaskandan on the violin. Karunanidhiye Thaye in the ragam, Bowli sounded soothing with the blend of her tonal quality. Aparna sang Subrahmanyena in Ragam Suddha Dhanyasi. She was able to bring to essence of Suddhadhanyasi in her rendition of the ragam and was ably complemented on the violin. She sang kalpana swaram for the Pallavi line. Following this was Apparama Bhakti in Panthuvrali; a good choice to keep the momentum of the concert. The highlight in her ragam rendition was some of the signature phrases in the lower register. Her neraval was impressive.

She rendered a crisp Ragam Thanam Pallavi in Shankarabharanam and the Pallavi in Chathusra Jati Thriputa Thalam. We learnt that it was composed by her husband, Balaji. The Pallavi lyrics: Pashupathe Umapathe Namosthutha Gangadhara Shankara". This was followed by the mridangam thani aavarthanam by Sivakumar.

She then sang the Revathy Thillana composed by Shri Lalgudi G Jayaraman and completed the concert by singing a Thyagaraja Kriti - Vinayakuni in Madhyamavati ragam, Adi Thalam.

Balaskandan's violin had shades of brilliance. Aparna was accompanied on the Mridngam by P. Sivakumar.

Overall, the concert had the seeds of authenticity of Carnatic music. Aparna showed a lot of promise, being groomed and mentored under great stalwarts one can expect even better quality music from her under different circumstances. A longer, leisurely concert, with ample accompanying support, would have brought out an even better performance from her.

*Lata Suresh is a Carnatic Vocal artiste in the Philadelphia Area. **She runs her own music school Sangeethalaya in West Chester PA.***

Malavika Sarukkai

Ganga Nitya Vahini
Bharatanatyam Performance

Saturday April 12, 2014 at 8 PM

Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, Philadelphia, PA

Additional Engagements:

Sunday April 6, 2014
10:00 am to 3:00 pm

Science Center Auditorium, Montgomery County
Community College, Blue Bell PA

- 3 Public Master Classes
- 1 hour each
- Registrations at www.sruti.org

Monday April 7, 2014
7:00 pm

URBN Annex Screening Room, Drexel University,
Philadelphia PA

- Screening of Documentary "The Unseen Sequence"
- Open to Public

Wednesday April 9, 2014
7:00 pm to 8:30 pm

Philadelphia Museum of Art, South India
Temple Hall, Philadelphia, PA

- Lecture Demonstrations of Indian
Bharatanatyam Dance
- Open to Public

Thursday April 10, 2014
10:00 am to 3:00 pm

Painted Bride Arts Center, Philadelphia, PA

- Workshop for Dance Professionals of
different disciplines

Taking audiences on an
"unearthly journey"
(*The New York Times*),
internationally acclaimed
dancer Malavika Sarukkai
returns to the United States
to share her mastery of
the Indian dance form,
Bharatanatyam.

The
Pew Center
for Arts
& Heritage

Malavika Sarukkai's dance performance and
related residency activities are supported by
The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage

ANNENBERG CENTER
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

This performance is co-presented
with the Annenberg Center for the
Performing Arts.



Sruti
The India Music
& Dance Society,
Philadelphia

Tickets and More details are
available now at www.sruti.org

2014 Event Schedule



Thyagaraja Aradhana
with Vocal Concert
by Madurai Sundar

Saturday, March 22, 2014 • 8:30 AM
Hindu temple of Delaware



Malavika Sarukkai-
Bharatanatyam*

Saturday, April 12, 2014 • 8:00 PM
Annenberg center for the Performing Arts,
Philadelphia, PA

Malavika Sarukkai's dance performance and related
residency activities are supported by The Pew Center
for Arts & Heritage

This performance is co-presented with the
Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts.

ANNENBERG CENTER
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

**The
Pew Center
for Arts
& Heritage**



Lalgudi G.J.R. Krishnan
and Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi-
Violin Concert

Saturday, May 3, 2014 • 4:30 PM
Agnes Irwin School, Bryn Mawr PA



Amritha Murali Carnatic
Vocal Concert

Saturday, May 17, 2014 • 4:30 PM
Agnes Irwin School, Bryn Mawr PA



Kalakshetra Ramayanam
Dance Ballet

Saturday September 20, 2014



Pantula Rama
Carnatic Vocal Concert

Saturday, October 18, 2014 • 4:30 PM



Gayathri Venkataraghavan
Carnatic Vocal Concert

Saturday, Nov 1, 2014 • 4:30 PM

**Also attend and watch three planned residency workshops the week of April 6th-April 12th*

All events, dates and venues are subject to change.

Check www.sruti.org for latest information.

Details, Season Passes and Event tickets are available from www.sruti.org

E-Mail srutiphila@gmail.com for questions or to join mailing list.

Phone: 267-797-7006 • www.sruti.org



www.sruti.org

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* Programs and artists are subject to change.