



SRUTI

THANKS THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES FOR THEIR CONTINUED
FINANCIAL SUPPORT OVER THE PAST TWENTY YEARS

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SRUTI RANJANI 2006

SPECIAL EDITION

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF MUSIC AND DANCE

A SRUTI Publication of
The India Music & Dance Society
Greater Delaware Valley

Volume 16

December 2006

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ARTISTS :

Dr. **M.L.Vasanthakumari**, popularly known as MLV, has been at the forefront of carnatic music world for over three decades. A leading disciple of the legendary musician, late **G.N.BALASUBRAMANIAM (GNB)**, MLV has established an individual style of singing. Her music is marked by controlled effervescence and spacious imagination. With a large repertoire of PURANDARA DASA'skriti, she has been largely responsible for the popularization of the great savant's compositions.

MLV has received numerous awards including the **Padma Bhushan** from the Government of India and the coveted **SANGITA KALANIDHI** from the prestigious Music Academy of Madras.

Kumari Kanyakumari, a disciple of **M.Chandrasekharan**, is a leading South Indian Violinist. She has accompanied many leading South Indian musicians and also given solo concerts.

Vidwan Ramnad Raghavan teaches mridangam at the Cleveland Oberlin College and the Cleveland State College. He has also been teaching mridangam at the S.V.Temple Pittsburgh and was recently awarded the Asthana Vidwan title at the S.V.Temple.

Vocal support to MLV is provided by **Smt. Meena Subramaniam**, who has traveled extensively to many countries with MLV.

DIRECTIONS TO CONGREGATION BETH-EL PAXON HOLLOW ROAD BROOMALL PA. :

1.Traveling South on PA.Rte 320 (Sproul Road) drive about 1.5 miles after intersection with PA Rte 3, to Paxon Hollow Road. Turn right on Paxon Hollow Road. Congregation Beth-El is less than 0.25 mile on your left. Parking is on the rear of the building.

2. Traveling North on PA.Rte 320, drive about 1.5 miles after intersection with Rte. 1 , turn left on Paxon Hollow Road immediately after Lawrence Park Shopping Center. Follow directions in (1)..

3. Traveling West on PA. Rte 3 (West Chester Pike), turn left on Lawrence Road immediately after Haverford Memorial Hospital (to your left) and Pathmark is to your right on Lawrence Road. Lawrence Road ends on Sproul Road (PA. Rte 320) . Turn right on Sproul Road and immediate left on Paxon Hollow Road. Follow directions in (1).

4. Traveling East on PA. Rte 3 (West Chester Pike) turn right on Springfield Road (Bradlees on your right) . Springfield Road joins Sproul Road (PA. Rte 320) . Follow directions in (1)..

We look forward to seeing you at the concert. Thanks.

We appreciate your Membership / Support
SRUTI

THE INDIA MUSIC AND DANCE SOCIETY

PROUDLY PRESENTS

GRAND MUSIC CONCERT
BY

DR. M.L.VASANTHAKUMARI

ACCOMPANIED BY

KUMARI KANYAKUMARI - VIOLIN

SRI. RAMNAD RAGHAYAN- MRIDANGAM



DATE : SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 14, 1986

TIME : 3:30 P.M.

PLACE : CONGREGATION BETH-EL,

715 PAXON HOLLOW ROAD, BROOMALL. PA.19008
(215)-356-8700

(DIRECTIONS ON BACK)

ADMISSION : MEMBERS : FAMILY \$ 12 , SINGLE \$ 6 , STUDENTS \$ 4
NON MEMBERS: FAMILY \$ 15 , SINGLE \$ 8 , STUDENTS \$ 5

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CALL :

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COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
HARRISBURG

THE GOVERNOR

GREETINGS:

It is with great pleasure that I congratulate the India Music and Dance Society on 20 fantastic years of providing entertainment, culture, and education to the commonwealth.

Pennsylvania's rich cultural fabric has been woven from an array of artistic and cultural influences from around the world. This vibrant diversity is maintained and glorified through our freedom of expression and the sense of pride we all hold for our individual heritage.

I commend the India Music and Dance Society on your commitment to the preservation, promotion, and instruction of classical Indian-influenced dance form. It is essential that we continue the time-honored traditions, cultures, and heritage we bring through our ancestry in an effort to pass along the promise of endless possibilities to our children. Your work is a prime example of those efforts being realized.

On behalf of all Pennsylvanians, I applaud the India Music and Dance Society on your 20th anniversary and wish you many more years of artistic beauty.



Edward G. Rendell

EDWARD G. RENDELL
Governor
September 2006



PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL ON THE ARTS
ROOM 318, FINANCE BUILDING
HARRISBURG, PA 17120

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

(717) 787-6803

September 7, 2006

Ms. Usha Bala
President
Sruti, The India Music and Dance Society
1240 Normandy Drive
Blue Bell, Pennsylvania 19422

Dear Ms. Bala:

On behalf of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, I extend our congratulations to Sruti, The India Music and Dance Society for its 20 years of service in presenting quality classical Indian music and dance. Sruti's dedication to preserving and sharing the richness of India's culture has provided both enjoyment and an educational window for countless residents of Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., New York, Northern New Jersey, and Connecticut.

During its first 20 years, Sruti has celebrated an extraordinary cultural tradition, presented countless unforgettable performances, and nurtured an impressive roster of classical performers. In the words of the late Bharata Ratna M. S. Subbulakshmi, "music is the ocean," and Sruti has been the vessel upon which the entire Mid Atlantic region has learned about the beauty and poetry of centuries-old musical and cultural treasures. We commend Sruti's artistic leadership and its dedicated board of directors, who have worked so tirelessly toward achieving their significant mission.

Through its outstanding performers, committed volunteers, leadership, and valued staff, Sruti has brought lasting pleasure to its audience and added a very important piece to the cultural fabric of the Commonwealth. The Council joins in your celebrations and extends its sincere wish that Sruti will continue to thrive in the many years ahead.

Sincerely,

Philip Horn
Executive Director

4.5.3 Creativity Par Excellence (2003) An Exercise in Manodharma

The art of framing a new Raga and a new tala for a new song composed extempore on the spot in a Mela Raga suggested on the spot on December 6, 1982 at the Bangalore Gayana Samaja, was successfully demonstrated to the delight of musicians and rasikas by the eminent, multifaceted Dr. Balamurali Krishna. The dramatic incident narrated by B. V. K. Sastry is briefly resurrected here as it is a profound, perfect as well as a comprehensive application of exercise and a lesson in Manodharma.

Dr. Balamurali Krishna: "Please give me the Arohana and the Avarohana of any Mela and specify the Mela name".

None offered to reply till Veena Doreswamy Iyengar rose up and said, SRGMPMDS _ SNDPMGRS, a janya of Harikambhoji.

The doctor commenced humming to himself and was catching up in his mind with the new Raga and giving it a shape, to which he would be the creator (Brahma). The august audience in the packed hall lay in hushed silence waiting with anxiety amidst tension.

Then he presented the delineation of the new raga, which he named "Dore", in honor of Doreswamy Iyengar who suggested the initial Mela combination out of which a new raga was to be spun out. Then he created a new Tala and named it "Timukhi" (modeled after Adi Tala with nineteen matras, wherein each beat of hand was of three matra duration.) With Dore as Mata (mother) and Timukhi as Pitha (father) he brought out the child, the new Sahitya in Telegu. 'Manaku vachuinade Swatantryamu', highlighting the wide gap between preaching and practice in India. Later a Kannada version was immediately created with the help of a scholar for the same lyric. And he declared before the amazed, overawed audience sitting like statues wonder-struck: "Gentlemen you have all witnessed the creations! I have not brought any book nor have I consulted any as you saw."

It was no magic nor was it a myth. No jugglery either. It was presented to the Samaja in an open demonstration before the cream of musicians and music lovers, a gift of Manodharmic exercise creating a new raga, new Tala and a fresh composition all extempore, It was a magnificent, matchless exhibition of absolute mastery in Lakshana and Lakshya born of assurance, competence, mastery and self knowledge.

From 'Manodharma', an article by Garland N. Rajagopalan in Shanmukha, A cultural Journal of Shanmukha-andha Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha. Vol XXVII, April 2001 #2. (With Permission from the current President of The Sabha.)



Dr. M. Balamurali Krishna with SRUTI members in 1991

4.5.2 Practice! Practice! Practice! (1997)

Chitraveena Ravikiran

Is there a substitute for practice? Not one that I can think of, not even talent or genius, knowledge or scholarship, luck or God's grace included. There are umpteen talented and even brilliant people who are leading unfulfilled or under-fulfilled lives on their failure to translate their talent into tangible results. There are many knowledgeable scholars who are hardly able to express themselves communicatively. And the lucky ones are forever unhappy with their guilt about having something that they probably don't deserve and also live with the insecurity as to how long their luck would hold. In other words, one who has not practiced is not in control. With perseverance and practice, one can overcome the lack of talent or genius or knowledge or scholarship or luck, and can indeed do much better than others. There are many types of practices, from an end result point of view. The objective for practice can be polish and perfection, confidence, pleasure etc. From the focus of the aspiring student, practice could be extensive or intensive. He or she may practice something hard to gain perfection in execution. But perfection itself being a journey unto infinity, the artiste will at least be able to familiarize with his or her strengths (which will be projected) and weaknesses (which will undoubtedly be at least camouflaged, if not fully eliminated). And the repeated practice of a phrase or song increases the polish, sparkle and sheen in execution. Here are some good practices to keep in mind. Always concentrate on basics like sruti purity, purity of tone and timber, maintenance of tala and tempo, proper pronunciation and enunciation and word splitting. Also try to learn the meanings of the songs. One can widen one's perspective by listening to a lot of great masters of the past and present, but seek consistent guidance from anyone reputed teacher. Even after all this, after the student has become an acknowledged master, there could be times when a person's confidence level goes down. Again, practice bails him or her out. Those who practice for the sheer pleasure of it all are in a different category altogether.

Chitraveena Ravikiran is a renowned Chitraveena maestro



Chitraveena Ravikiran in a SRUTI concert (2005)



SRUTI

The India Music and Dance Society

FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

December 1 2006

Dear Friends:

Warmest Wishes for the Holiday Season from all of us on the Board to you and your families.

As we continue to celebrate our 20th anniversary year, we are profoundly grateful to all those who have joined us in a very fulfilling journey to promoting and presenting Indian Classical Music and Dance in the Delaware Valley. Hundreds of volunteers, committees, artists, dozens of sponsoring foundations, agencies, corporations, donors, thousands of patrons have all been part of this exceptional journey. Thanks to such a large support base, SRUTI is a strong and vibrant organization and has great capacities to bring the highest quality of Indian Classical Music and Dance to the Delaware Valley.

This year witnessed unprecedented amount of programming and presentation of big name artists at prestigious venues. A 20th year for a classy organization like SRUTI calls for nothing less than big names, big venues and big and new efforts. The Board is proud to have presented 14 events starting with the traditional Thyagaraja Aradhana, followed by a Vocal Recital by Sowmya, Vocal Recital by Ranjani and Gayatri, Mandolin Recital by Srinivas and Rajesh, Vocal Recital by Vijayalakshmi Subramanian, Vocal Recital by M. Balamuralikrishna, Vocal Recital by Kosuru Seshulatha, Vocal Recital by Kiranavali, Vocal Recital by Sudha Raghunathan, Dance Recital by Ramya Ramnarayanan, Dance Recital by Priyadarshini Govind, Vocal Recital by Maharajapuram Ramachandran, Hindustani Fusion recital by Anoushka Shankar, and concluding the year with SRUTI Day featuring local talent. All the above artists were supported by some of the best accompaniments. The Kimmel Center and Annenberg Center, two state of the art facilities for the arts in our area were venues for the Anoushka Shankar and Priyadarshini Govind Program respectively. In terms of new initiatives, the Board planned and presented an intensive and accelerated training workshop in Pancharatna Kritis conducted by Kiranavali Vidyasanker and Thyagaraja Utsava Kritis conducted by Prabha Subramanian. These workshops were attended by about 25 participants from our area. Another new concept introduced was the presentation of two chamber concerts.

Twenty years ago SRUTI was formed to fill the void of a community arts organization devoted exclusively to Indian Music and Dance. Twenty years later local grant organizations and foundations and the public at large clearly see SRUTI as the leading and serious presenter of such arts in our area. That is indeed a very significant accomplishment and future boards will have the responsibility to maintain and build on this eminent leadership position.

A large number of young adults and kids are attending music and dance classes offered by several teachers

in our area and in many cases via remote from India and far away towns in this country, using latest technologies offered by the internet and telephony. We find ourselves reflecting on how important it is for SRUTI to nurture this talent and hopefully from this group expect a crop of second generation leaders and volunteers to continue with the preservation and expansion of the SRUTI mission.

We enjoyed serving on the board this year and participating in the various opportunities for fund raising, programming, big event logistics, and management. We again thank all our supporters and members and wish every one Safe and Happy Holidays.

Sincerely

Usha, Ramana, Venkat, Sujatha, Uma, Jeya, Raman, Ravi, and Ponnal
Board of Directors
SRUTI, The India Music and Dance Society.

FROM THE LIBRARY COMMITTEE

The current edition of Sruti Ranjani, the annual publication of SRUTI- the India Music and Dance Society marks the 20th year of the organization. This edition is dedicated to previous publications. We have chosen to make this edition primarily a compilation of articles contributed by the community of art enthusiasts and published over the years. We would like to thank M. M. Subramanian, Prabhakar Chitrapu and Sudhakar Rao for taking time to carefully select articles from the past twenty years of SRUTI publications. The articles reflect the excitement of the inception and growth of the organization.

In addition, they provide insight into the environment that helped nourish the organization, the dedicated efforts of the founders, office bearers and supporters. Five year, ten year, twenty year writings mark certain milestones. Reflections on their association with SRUTI have been provided by some of the past presidents. Office bearers have had the opportunity to develop personal relationships with some of the visiting artists.

Photographs of SRUTI events over the last few years are included. They are a visual chronicle of the concert events and the peripheral activities. These photographs speak to the energy that is generated by attending performances of great caliber.

SRUTI has created a niche for itself as a presenting organization in the local community- bringing inspiring performances to local venues in the Greater Delaware Valley. It is the written word which helps to weave together the talents and artistic aspirations of a community. We hope to see more and more of writing from art enthusiasts from all walks of life. Please keep the excitement aglow.

Sincerely,

Raman Visweswaran,
Sundari Balakrishanan,
Ramaa Nathan,
Rungun Nathan
Rangaprabhu Parthasarathy

Library Committee, 2006

4.5. General

4.5.1 Thaamadham enayya? (1991)

Composer: J. Shivakumar
Ragam : Mohana Kalyani
Talam : Khanda Chapu

Pallavi:

thaamadham enayya ?
KaaraNam koorayya!
(Why is this delay? Tell me the reason!)

Anupallavi:

vedhanai theerayya !
sodbanaithevaiya?
bodhanai yaarayya ? - ke
Laadhenai kattharuLath (thaamadham)
(End my suffering! Is testing necessary? Who is (mis)instructing you? To ignore that and save me, why is this delay?)

Charanam:

sooranin serukkazhiuha
theera! (mana) kavalai
theera dhalaikkazhitthal
nera? kadaikkaN
paara dhorutthal - mayi
lera dhirutthal - sivaku
maara I nee niruttha indhath (thamadham)

(You mighty one, that put down Soora's pride and arrogance!
Is it fair to dodge without removing my sorrow?
Punishing me by not 'looking' at me; not getting
on to your peacock (so that you can get here)
to stop such things, you son of Shiva I, why is this delay?)

Notes:

A heavy dose of double negatives to get some rhyme.
Alignment to show rhyme.
Upper case to indicate retroflex
Not a consistent transliteration scheme. Most Indians use 'h' to indicate aspirated consonants. I think in Tamil at least it is more important to distinguish between 'tip' and 'think' or 'pattu (silk)' and 'patthu' (ten).

with his, "Ramajyoti", Badrachalam Ramadasa's composition in Kamas, "Appan Avadharita", Papanasam Sivan's song in Karapriya, "Emanithi" in Sahana, "Evarini" in Ucheni," both Thyagaraja's and "Srikantimatim", of Dikshitar in Hemavathi and not to forget his stamp, "Vidhehi sahitam" as part of the Mangalam. (1 &3). These are just a few examples to illustrate the rapport he established with the listeners. Often, once he sang a song there was a feeling amongst his followers that no one else could sing the same song like him. Who can forget his "Amba Kamakshi," the Swarajati of Syama Sastri in Bhairavi and how that was the beginning of the appreciation of their great beauty and the start of the popularity of Sastri's Swarajatis? It is, therefore, no wonder that he was often known by the songs he sang as, for example, Marubalka Semmangudi, Pattividuvaradu Semmangudi and so on. (1).

Semmangudi was known for his quick and out spoken comments that were considered necessary by him, whether it was on stage or off stage. Many people know how he resented people walking away during Thani Avardhanam in concerts. I was a witness to one of these episodes that happened in the Music Academy concert of 1976. Tiruchi Sankaran was the Mridhangamist at that time. Just as the Thani was starting there was the usual exodus and Semmangudi exploded with the words, " Sit down and listen to Sankaran. He has come all the way from Canada to participate in this program". The listeners were chastised sufficiently and obediently sat down. Same day before starting the Mangalam he said, "Don't be in such a hurry and start running out because Mangalams are sung for specific reasons and it is good to hear the words, at least. And you all know that I do not sing just the two lines like many other artists."

On a personal note I have to share this event with the readers. In late fifties he visited Tirupati temple in the company of M. S. Subbalakshmi, her family and some selected friends. Some of us as the Tirupati Tirumala Devasthanam employees (this is Sarada writing), had the unique opportunity those days of being invited for such rare events in the temple on the hills. In a private concert, almost like chamber music, in front of Lord Venkateswara in the Mukha Mandapam, MSS sang for the twenty or so invitees, opening with " Thera tiyagaradha" in Goulipantu. There were no accompanists on this occasion, making this one of a kind deeply touching experience. Following her inspired singing of the songs, some requested by the audience, we all went as a group inside for darshan of Lord Venkateswara. Just then, Semmangudi spontaneously started singing, "Bhakti margamulu, Teliyaledu Rama", inverting the sequence of the well known Denuka Raga song of Sri Tyagaraja. Everything about the event, the song, the singing, the Bhava and the setting made it a spiritual and awe inspiring moment for those of us, who were fortunate to be there on this occasion. That is an event I will always cherish.

References

- 1. The Hindu Speaks on Music. Editor, Ravi. Kasturi & Sons Ltd. Chennai. 2nd printing. July 2000.
- 2. A. Garland. Biographical Dictionary of Carnatic Composers and Musicians. N. Rajagopal. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. Bombay. 1990.
- 3. Sangeetham, CMANA. Vol. 12. #3, Summer. 1994.

Dr. T.Parasaran is a retired chemist who is interested in listening to all classical music forms and especially Carnatic music because of his origin from Tiruvarur. Dr. T. Sarada is a connoisseur of music and dance and has served on the SRUTI library committee.

2. Reflections on SRUTI—Letters from Past Presidents

2.1 Mani Subramaniam (1986-1987)

I am extremely happy to note that SRUTI is observing its twentieth year of existence. Apart from being one of the founders I have also served SRUTI in various capacities over the years including being its President. Thus I am very much an insider and have difficulty in giving an objective evaluation of the organization's progress. All the same it is very gratifying to note how far we have come since that first concert by MLV on 14 Sept. 1986.

SRUTI is now a leading cultural organization in the Delaware Valley well known for its professional presentation of the leading classical musicians/dancers from India and this country. These artists are happy to perform for SRUTI. Indeed, some of them are disappointed if they are not invited to perform for it. Many funding agencies have given generous grants for its programs attesting to its stature in the wider world of Art organizations.

A vast number of dedicated volunteers and visionary leaders have contributed to the success of the organization. With all the progress, I am afraid one aspect has not improved enough. I am referring to the lack of large audiences to the programs, except in the cases of "name brand artists". The Indian immigrant population has grown considerably in our area in the last twenty years. However, the attendances at the programs has not shown a proportionate increase. I feel confident that the current and future Boards of Directors would more aggressively market our programs to attract larger audiences.

I wish SRUTI many, many years of continued service to the community.

2.2 P. Swaminathan (1990-1991)

'SRUTI Matha and Laya Pitha' - so goes the popular saying among performing artists. The first half of the phrase is particularly true for me even though I am not a performing musician. I have been closely associated with SRUTI since its inception, starting from the signature campaign to gain the support of the local community to form the organization in 1986. I am extremely grateful to SRUTI for many positive things that happened in my personal life during the past two decades (barring some extraordinary times)

I served in the executive committee of SRUTI in different capacities since 1987 when there was no well defined infrastructure for executing many organizational activities. We as a team committed several blunders because of our lack of knowledge and organizational experience. These mistakes were never blown out of proportion. On the contrary, it was a learning experience for me (I am sure of my fellow team members) both intellectually as well as personally dealing with projects and responsibilities which I was not used to in my daily walk of life. I always felt that such training, experience and knowledge can be directly transferred to one's personal as well as career ambitions. SRUTI provides the opportunity for people to realize their untapped skills in music and community leadership. I have encouraged many youngsters to take part into the activities of SRUTI mainly for this reason.

While we are celebrating the 20th anniversary of SRUTI, I have witnessed that it has grown into a fully matured organization thanks to the co-operation, hard work and support of the various committee members and their families. Of course, SRUTI had its share of pain and sufferings in the past years. SRUTI went through some extraordinary times and overwhelming situations thanks to the thoughtless, immature and hasty actions of some SRUTI well wishers. SRUTI has sustained the difficult times because of its robust health and support from the community. Using lessons learned from the mistakes of the past, future leaders of SRUTI should strive hard to take the organization to greater heights. One of the ways, I can think

of, is to promote musical awareness among the growing children in the community by providing venues to display their talents. There should be more community outreach programs towards this goal. If more emphasis is given to this aspect, SRUTI will be in the good hands of the future generation. After all, SRUTI's performance is directly tied to the performance of its organizational leaders.

2.3 Dinakar Subramanian (1996—1997)

As a graduate student at Penn State, I was introduced to SRUTI in 1987. It was therefore with great eagerness that I accepted my first job in the area after my graduation in 1991. The presence of SRUTI had made Philadelphia very attractive and my wife and I have been attending SRUTI concerts ever since. I had the opportunity to be the President of SRUTI for the years 1996 and 1997. The committee for those years consisted of Meena Pennathur, Paul Narayanan, S. G. Ramanathan, Ponnal Nambi, Praba Subramaniam and Srinivas Pothukuchi. The high point of our tenure was the successful celebration of SRUTI's Tenth Anniversary which was held in the Summer of 1996.

As many of you know, the function was held at the Valley Forge Music Fair in King of Prussia (which was razed soon after to build a shopping area). The performances featured a dance drama 'Siva Sakthi' by a group from Boston and of course the grand evening Sitar concert by Pandit Ravi Shankar and Anoushka Shankar. The Gala committee was formed expressly for the event and worked along with the others in the community with great zeal and enthusiasm to make the event a memorable success.

I believe SRUTI has grown to be a force not just in the Greater Delaware Valley but the Northeast and the United States. The caliber of the music and dance concerts offered, types of programs offered - such as lecture-demos and workshops, the level of funding received from a variety of organizations, the number of participants during Thyagaraja Aradhana and the awesome website are all testimonials to what a great organization SRUTI has become.

I wish SRUTI a very happy TWENTIETH anniversary.

2.4 Sudhakar Rao (1998—1999)

SRUTI has established itself as a premier organization in the Delaware Valley for presenting programs of Indian classical music and dance. It began with the mission of providing audiences in our area the opportunity to attend concerts by artists from India. Though SRUTI's mission has not changed over the years, its focus has expanded to organizational development, fund raising, sponsorship, communications, and outreach which are a very integral part of any arts organization.

From the early days when the concerts were held in elementary schools to the present collaborations with the Kimmel or Annenberg center, SRUTI has come a long way. It is a remarkable achievement, considering SRUTI is managed by volunteers who share a common interest and desire to present and promote Indian classical music and dance. It is their leadership, time and effort that has helped build SRUTI to its current stature.

Over the past twenty years I have had the opportunity to witness many memorable concerts and meet some of the musicians and dancers presented by SRUTI. These events would not have been possible without the efforts of everyone involved in this organization. Working with these hardworking and dedicated individuals has made being a part of SRUTI an enjoyable experience. I would like to congratulate all the volunteers who have provided their support and are instrumental in its success.

went for contrived effects; to him music was for Rakti and Bhakti(1).

Semmangudi is well recognized for setting to music many lyrics of Swati Tirunal, Jayadeva, Sadasiva Brah-mendra and Subrahmanya Bharati. The name of Ambujam Krishna, as a composer, became popular due to his efforts. Who could forget Bhavayami, from the lyrics of Swati Tirunal's that is a marvel of brilliant set of ragas with chittaswaras to delight every listener?

In his personal life he was known for simplicity marked by a sense of piety. (3). Highly patriotic, he gave for the national cause generously during India's independence struggle and switched to wearing Khadi. Later in his life he established a senior secondary school in his village. (2).

A brief life story of Semmangudi appears in Rasikan's Tribute to Semmangudi in this issue, in reference 3, the CMANA issue and in the other references mentioned here and hence will not be given in great detail. His early music training was under his maternal uncle and then his cousin, both violinists. Many distinguished teachers like Gottuvadyam Sakharama Rao followed. In his teenage years, he went to study with Umayalpuram Swami-natha Iyer which makes him a part of the Umayalpuram 'Sishya parampara' of Sri Thyagaraja. At this stage, his very first guru Semmangudi Narayanaswami Iyer offered to continue to teach him. Incidentally his name identification, Semmangudi comes from this first guru and Srinivasa Iyer's gurukula vasam with his uncle in Semmangudi. Actually the name is a misnomer of the original name of the place, Sempongudi, it seems. (2) Later he trained with Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer, a student of Umayalpuram Swaminatha Iyer. Being a master of Manodharma, Viswanatha Iyer added to Semmangudi's range of creative of skills. Thus Srinivasa Iyer's training comprised of violinists, a Gottuvadyam artiste and two vocalists, all of them well versed in their fields. He used to account for his extraordinary proficiency in Tanam to the influence of Veena Venkatadri Bhagavathar while in Trivandrum. Also singing at the palace on many occasions with Ariyakudi Ra-manuja Iyengar, sharpened his knowledge of the intricacies of music, according to Semmangudi. (1). Added to this was the fact that his childhood was spent in Tiruvidaimarudur which was a rich cultural center with many music recitals on numerous festive occasions. The multitude of Nagaswara vidvans who played their special brand of music, (their paddathi or unique style) throughout many nights produced pronounced impressions on him. (3) His versatility was thus no chance happening.

Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer's first independent performance was in 1926. (1&3). A brilliant stage career started right away. He was made the Asthana vidvan of Travancore court in 1939 and on the recommendation of Sri Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavar he was offered the position of editing the Kritis of Swati Tirunal. Although Swati Tirunal is a Mukya Vaggeyakaraka, Semmangudi set to music some of Swati Tirunal's compositions and published them in the weekly, Swadesamitran in Tamil Nadu. He stayed with the Academy from 1941 till his retirement in 1963.

Semmangudi received numerous awards and honors in his musical career culminating in Padma Vibhushan in 1990. That he was held in such high esteem even by fellow musicians is illustrated by the fact that Mahara-japuram Santanam composed a song to honor him in Karaharapriya, a raga considered as the favorite of Sem-mangudi Srinivasa Iyer. While conferring the title of Sangeetha Kalanidhi to Semmangudi, in 1947, the presi-dent of the Vidwat Sabha, B. Gopal Reddy, quoted Tagore:
" The light of Thy music illumines the world;
The life-breath of Thy music runs from sky to sky."
It holds good today, said the president. (2)

Srinivasa Iyer's singing captured the audience for more than seven decades for the simple reason that he brought something appealing and inspiring at the same time. For many listeners it was like a personal communi-cation. His fame started with his very early, "Navasiddhi petralum" in Karaharapriya. With the 75 RPM re-cords, and his rendition of "Nidhi Chala Sugama" in Kalyani and "Chalakalla" in Arabhi both of Thyagaraja, he created a long lasting fan club. His admirers do not need to be told about how he got a strong hold on them

A guru always lives on through his disciples and this is particularly true with Srikantan. He has trained many talented students who have gone on to become distinguished musicians themselves. He strongly believed in the *gurukula* style of one-to-one training and demanded the best from his students. His disciples include among others, M.S. Govinda Rao, Gowri Kuppuswamy, K.S. Sathyavathy, M.S. Sheela, Seethalakshmi Madhavan, S.K. Vasumathi, M.S. Shashank (flute) and Vidyabhushana Teertha Swami. Many other leading musicians of Karnataka claim him as their guru through the Ganavihara program and the kriti workshops conducted by him. Srikantan's son Ramakanth was trained by his father and also by his uncle Venkatarama Sastry. Ramakanth still accompanies his father in concerts, but is also blossoming into an independent concert musician. His daughter Rathnamala Prakash is one of the leading *Sugam Sangeet* singers of India.

At the age of 75, Srikantan continues to work tirelessly for the cause of music. Having retired after 32 years of service as the music producer of AIR, Bangalore, he has been giving lecture-demonstrations in all leading sabhas of the country. His voice continues to be very powerful and steady and his adherence to sruti unwavering. According to M.S. Sheela, Srikantan still devotes certain amount of his time for his music practice everyday without fail. Another disciple T.S. Sathyavathy, pays him a great tribute when she describes his virtues as a teacher, quoting Kalidasa. *"One person may be at his best when exhibiting his art in person, another may have as his special qualification the power of communicating his skill. He who possesses both these skills should be placed at the head of teachers."* Srikantan epitomizes the covetable virtues of a conscious performer and a conscientious teacher.

A member of the Sruti library committee, Viji Swaminathan is a physicist and a computer scientist.

4.4.6 Some thoughts on Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer (2003)

T. Sarada and T. Parasaran

It is difficult to say what a Carnatic music lover would miss with the demise of Sri Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer. One of them would definitely be the Bhava, although there are many characteristics of his music that are uniquely appealing. Justifiably called "the old Jambavan and the universal Guruji of Carnatic Music, Semmangudi traveled a long and luminous road to a singular eminence..." (1). His was a true link to the stalwarts of the early 20th century and he continued to set the standard for the next generation of great musicians. Many acclaimed vocal and instrumental artists were directly or indirectly coached, guided or taught by him. Looking through the brief careers of many of these artists in reference 1, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer's name appears more than any other person's as the one who inspired and assisted their development. Some well known and famous musicians are his disciples as mentioned by N. Rajagopal, in reference 2, like Sri T. N. Krishnan, M. Theagarajan, P. S. Narayanaswamiy, Yesudas and M. S. Subbalakshmi.

Epithets like the grand old musician, the doyen of Carnatic music and even the term patriarchal pithamaha have been used to refer to Semmangudi. Paramacharya of Kanchi, Sri Sankaracharya called him, 'Sangeetha Thatha'. What makes him unique is a combination of his contributions to music, musicologists and music lovers, alike. The following statements are all direct quotes and not our making up. Even very early in his life, he learned to develop a unique style of singing by packaging his musical knowledge, skills and imagination in such a manner as to create a great impression. (3). He held the attention and the reverence of listeners and musicians alike for more than seventy years. His theoretical knowledge and teaching ability were only part of his greatness. Musicologists often consulted him on matters of Raga-lakshana. He had an extensive kriti repertoire in many ragas and this made every phrase of his singing beautiful showing the union of tradition and his individual genius. His Alapanas were pure and comprehensive. His Swara singing had both elegance and exuberance and they combined effortless 'saravalaghu' patterns. Though a traditionalist to the core, he introduced many novelties on the concert platform. He also revitalized many songs by suitable changes in the tempo. His Pallavis always highlighted Ragabhava and spontaneity. He never contorted Sahitya and never

2.5 Reflections on SRUTI for the past 20 years—Prabhakar Chitrapu (2004-2005)

When I think of the time of my presidency of SRUTI (2004-5), I think of the wonderful team - the Board of Directors - that I was part of; I think of the friendships that I had an opportunity to develop; I think of the hectic activity that built up every single time the concert day approached; I think of the many long hours I used to be on the phone almost every single evening; I think of the close interactions with the artists.... but none can equal the warm feeling after a successful concert or when one of you would come by to give me & the Board a pat on the back and a word of appreciation. I am thankful to each one of you who had confidence in me and my Board and placed the organization in our hands to lead. There were some rough waters to ride, but I believe we sailed the ship safely to the shores of 2005.

One event I remember in particular was Dr. Yesudas's concert. It was one of the few sold-out concerts for SRUTI and the artists were scheduled to arrive late in the morning for an early afternoon Sunday concert. Cancelled flights, missed luggage, fire alarm in the auditorium all made for tense times, but they were quickly forgotten as the concert began and the audience thoroughly enjoyed the event.

On a personal side, my family and I have been associated with SRUTI since its inception, with my wife Uma having been on the very first formal 'Board'. Since then, Uma and I have been serving the organization in various roles and enjoyed them all. SRUTI became an extended family for us and we developed many friendships. Through SRUTI and SRUTI friends, I learned not only about classical music but also about human relationships and colorful personalities. I am indebted to SRUTI for enriching our lives and feel gratified that I gave back some of my energies in return to SRUTI and its cause. May SRUTI flourish and grow for many more years and touch many more lives, as it did mine.



Maharajapuram Santhanam



Sanjukta Panigrahi (1990)

3. Concert Reviews— Fall 2006

3.1 An evening of enjoyable music : Sudha Raghunathan
Rasikan

Sudha Raghuanthan is and has been for many years a leading and popular star in the Carnatic music firmament. A torch bearer of the GNB/MLV school of fast, brigha based music, Sudha has developed a style of her own. The concert for SRUTI on September 23, 2006 at the Colonial Middle school auditorium in Plymouth Meeting was the second of a rare double bill - Bharatanatyam performance by Ramya Ramnarayanan preceded Sudha's concert - as part of SRUTI's twentieth anniversary celebration. Sudha was graceful in acknowledging this milestone in more than one way during the concert.

Sudha was accompanied by B.S. Raghavendra Rao on the violin, Neyveli Skanda Subramaniam on the mridangam and N. Raman on the morsing.

There is a tendency these days among some musicians of packing their concerts with kriti after kriti with very few alapanas and almost all the kritis in Adi talam. [Sowmya's recent concert for SRUTI comes to mind especially about the talam.] Sudha's concert was a welcome change. [see the concert listing at the end of the review.]

An expansive Kalyani followed by the Syama Sastry kriti '*Birana varalichi*' was the central piece. Sudha rendered the kriti in tisra nadai Adi talam of (8x3) 24 aksharams for a cycle. It is difficult to maintain this talam with a suitable kala pramanam. Thus some musicians simplify it to a Rupaka talam requiring two cycles for the pallavi (6x2x2). I was glad that Sudha did not fall for this simplification. Sudha also exhibited her virtuosity by rendering an alapana for Narayani (*Raama neeve gan*) and some interesting swara combinations. [Narayani differs from the popular Suddha saveri only in the nishadam in the avarohanam.]

The RTP in Bhairavi was a display of her originality. Sudha chose an unusual pallavi in Tisra jathi Ata talam of 10 matras. The words for the pallavi were "Sri Krishna ghanam, venu ghanam, madhura ghanam (and 1½ matras after the arudi) Sruti layamudan serum (Sri Krishna ghanam)". Sudha cleverly started rendering the lyrics at Sruti layamudum as if highlighting that she was giving a concert under the auspices of SRUTI. There was more to the pallavi. She first rendered it in second kalai including tri kalam and tisram; reduced to first kalai for the swara prastarams and then changed to khanda chapu (5x2) for ragamalikai swarams! Compositions of Oothukadu Venkata kavi (OVK) are often referred to as Sri Krishna Ghanam. To emphasize this point (since her pallavi stared with Sri Krishna ghanam) she chose Natakurinji, Kanada, Todi, Simhendramadhyamam for ragamalikai swarams inserting words from pallavis of OVK's compositions (Paal vadiyum mukhathai - Natakurinji, Alai payude - Kanada, Thaye Yasoda - Todi, and Asaindadum mayil - Simhendramadhyamam) - a very interesting touch indeed.

A note about the tanam. The mridangam and morsing artists accompanied the tanam. This is a tradition followed in Trivandrum during the Navaratri concert series. Since Sudha's concert was during Navaratri, perhaps they felt it appropriate to accompany tanam with rhythm.

Sudha has a very good stage presence and is a good communicator. It was very nice of her to acknowledge that she was part of SRUTI's twentieth year anniversary, even mentioning that the very first concert for SRUTI was given by her guru the late M.L. Vasanthakumari. Sudha complimented all the volunteers and leaders without whose hard work the milestone could not have been achieved and exhorted the audience to give a big hand to the present Board of Directors. A very gracious gesture indeed.

Raghavendra Rao, though young, is a veteran violinist. We have had the pleasure of hearing him many times.

the South like Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Musiri Subramania Iyer, Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer, Chowdiah, GNB and others.

With the rich musical heritage, Srikantan is still widely regarded as a self-made man. He established his name in the Carnatic music field by his firm adherence to *sampradaya* (tradition), and his own *manodharma*. He developed his own rich pattern and chaste form of exposition of ragas and it is his style of rendering ragas that won him great admiration. Clear-cut pronunciation of the text, emphasis on *bhava* and *bhakthi* aspects of music, strict adherence to *sruti* and equal emphasis on rhythm are noteworthy features of Srikantan's music.

An arts graduate of the University of Mysore, Srikantan chose a career in Carnatic music at a time when the profession was not very remunerative. The Mysore palace and the Maharaja (a musician and a composer himself) attracted eminent musicians from the music world who visited Mysore for the recognition and honor bestowed by the Maharaja. People were treated to the free concerts of these musicians throughout the year and many connoisseurs of music had the pleasure of listening to them at the courtesy concerts at the residences of Veena Subbanna and Muthiah Bhagavathar. Hence concert opportunities for a budding artist like Srikantan were few and far between. However, Srikantan stayed firm in his choice of career and eventually found a job as a music producer in the broadcasting field with the Mysore state radio station. In late nineteen forties, when the Maharaja-ruled state became a part of the Indian union and the radio station was taken over by the All India Radio, Srikantan was transferred to the AIR station in Bangalore.

As a young budding artist in the late forties, Srikantan sang with a full throated voice rich in timbre. According to many of his peers who have followed his career, his singing was robust but impulsive. However, there is no doubt that over the years, his performances gained depth and maturity and he came to be regarded as an accomplished vidwan and an upholder of traditional values. Ganabhaskara, Ganakala Praveena, Karnataka Sangeeta Ratna, Gayaka Chudamani are just a few of the titles and honors that have been bestowed on him before he received the coveted title of Sangitha Kalanidhi from his peers at the Music Academy.

While Srikantan became well-known through the many concerts throughout the nation, he became a household name in Karnataka for the yeomen service he rendered to the cause of Carnatic music in the state and for his reputation as a fine teacher. During his position as a music producer at the AIR for more than three decades, he popularized Ganavihara; a radio program in which he taught all aspects of Carnatic music. His teaching techniques made the program a great success and earned for him many indirect disciples. The program was so popular that when it was terminated a decade ago, students and connoisseurs alike protested and succeeded in having it restored. As a music producer, Srikantan produced numerous musical features based on unfamiliar as well as familiar compositions, song-forms, raga-s, tala-s, etc. In addition, he also set numerous songs to music with a deep knowledge of historical, theoretical and technical aspects of music.

Besides his service to the cause of music education, there is another very important reason for which he deserves the gratitude of music lovers and that is his yeomen contribution to the preservation and propagation of the invaluable musical tradition of the Dasakoota of Karnataka. Srikantan has been particularly instrumental in giving wide popularity to the Devaranamas of all Haridasas and especially Purandaradasa. This involved another aspect of his career, namely tunesmithy, the setting of lyrics to music. While setting several compositions of the Haridasas to music, Srikantan has retained the traditional tunes and tala-s and embellished them. He also tuned several *vachanas* of Saivite savants like Basaveswara, Akkamahadevi and Allmma Prabhu. He also set to music the poetry of many contemporary poets like D.V. Gundappa, Kuvempu, P.T. Narasimhachar (PuThiNa) and Bendre. He also tuned, sang and taught many songs composed by Narayana Teertha in Krishna Leela Tarangini. Many of the musical features he produced show the uniqueness of the simultaneous popularity of both Carnatic and Hindustani music in Karnataka (Karnataka has been a seat of Hindustani music and has produced many of the leading Hindustani musicians). Among the numerous musical features he produced for broadcast, one of his own favorites is Sree Krishna Vaibhavam which consisted of kriti-s, varna-s, sloka-s and bhajans in Hindustani style.

A devadasi turned into a devotee. Nagarathnamma's story has all the archetypal elements of a bhakta's journey through life: abandonment by the father, a childhood of hardship sustained only by the mother's will and determination, relentless pursuit of art, accumulation of wealth and fame, the trauma of a murder attempt, disillusionment, the vision of a saint, renunciation, and dedication to a life of service. I believe it offers rich material for a fine dance drama. Here is wishing that some imaginative artist will soon make use of it.

(Jackson's book was published in India by Motilal Banarasidass of Delhi in 1994. His other book was published by Oxford University Press in 1991.)

Dr.H .Y. Rajagopal is an engineer by profession and also teaches at Villanova University. A very enthusiastic supporter of SRUTI he has previously served as a member of SRUTI's executive committee.

4.4.5 R.K. Srikantan (1996)
Viji Swaminathan

R.K. Srikantan has been a household name in Karnataka for over five decades. To me the name brings back memories of the days I was growing up in Mysore. I remember, at about the age of four (my earliest recollection), one of my sisters holding me by the hand and rushing to a concert of R.K. Srikantan to get 'good seats' (we sat so close to the 2-ft raised platform seating the artists that I could have just reached out and touched one of the artists). Though I did not understand much of Carnatic Music at the time, I enjoyed listening and accompanied my parents and sisters to every concert. The Dasara, Ramanavami and Vinayaka Chaturthi concerts I attended, particularly at the Bidaram Krishnappa Mandira and Aralikatte Rama Mandira are still vivid in my memory. Of all the beautiful voices I came to love, R.K. Srikantan's was the most familiar one. Not a day went by without hearing his voice either in a concert, a devaranama in the morning, or the Ganavihara, the music class he held over the All India Radio (my sister, who learnt music from a disciple of RKS, sang along with the students, trying to writing down the *swaras* at the same time).

The coveted honor of the Sangita Kalanidhi award to R.K. Srikantan by the Music Academy has come late, but has been widely welcomed in the Carnatic Music world. I cannot think of another musician who has so pervaded the classical music scene in Karnataka or worked so tirelessly for the cause of music like RK. Srikantan. He is the fifth musician from Karnataka to receive the honor [earlier recipients are Mysore Vasudeva-charya (1935), Mysore T. Chowdiah (1957), Rallapalli Ananthakrishna Sarma (1974), and Mysore Doreswamy Iyengar (1984).] In relating the facts about his life and career, I have taken excerpts from the many articles that appeared in the Sruthi magazine from India.

RK. Srikantan (Rudrapatnam Krishnasastri Srikantan) was born in 1920 into a Sanketi family from Rudrapatnam village in Hassan district in Karnataka. Srikantan's father Krishna Sastry was a distinguished musician, a playwright, a scholar in Sanskrit and Kannada and also a Harikatha exponent. His mother Sannaka was a well trained vocalist. His paternal grandfather, Veena Narayanappa was also a well known musician and a very close friend of Veena Seshanna, while his maternal grandfather Bettadapura Narayanaswamy, was a vainika and a vocalist. With such a pedigree, it is no wonder that Srikantan and his brothers revealed an aptitude for music at a very young age. Srikantan's elder brother R.K. Venkatarama Sastry, was a disciple of Mysore T. Chowdiah and a distinguished violinist. R.K. Narayanswamy, another elder brother, was a good vocalist trained by Musiri Subramania Iyer. A third brother R.K. Ramanathan, was a vocalist as well as a professor of English.

Srikantan learnt Carnatic music for about eight years from his father, and later from his elder brother R.K. Venkatarama Sastry who was greatly responsible for molding Srikantan's music. When Venkatarama Sastry relocated to Madras to facilitate his career as a violinist, Srikantan's training continued through his own avid desire to reach perfection. Over the years, his music was greatly influenced by many leading musicians from

Once again he gave a very good account of himself, although he did not render the tisram for the pallavi. The "tani" by Skanda Subramaniam and Raman after the Kalyani piece was short and sweet. I may be wrong, but I had a feeling that they were somewhat lost during the pallavi.

A few days after the concert I met a friend of mine who opined that Sudha's concert was one of the best ones he had heard in SRUTI in the recent past. I couldn't agree more.

Concert listing:

- (1) Mathe (Dharu varnam) - Khamas - Adi - Muthiah bhagavathar;
- (2) Saranam Sidhi Vinayaka - Sowrashtam - Chapu - Purandara Dasa;
- (3) Pahi nikhila janani - Nattai - Adi - Irayamman Thanpi;
- (4) Rama neeve gani - Narayani - Adi - Thyagaraja;
- (5) Akhilandeswari - Dvijavanti - Adi - Dikshitar;
- (6) Birana varalichi - Kalyani - Adi (tisra gathi) - Syama Sastry;
- (7) Marugelara - Jayanathasri - Adi - Thyagaraja;
- (8) RTP - Bhairavi - Tisra Ata.

The post pallavi pieces were

- (9) Kandanaal - Madhuvanti;
- (10) Jagado darana - Kapi,
- (11) Theerada vilayattu pillai - Ragamalika and
- (12) Brahmam okate - Folk tune based on Bowli

An ardent admirer and lover of Carnatic music, Rasi-kan has been a regular contributor to Sruti Notes and other publications of Sruti.



3.2 Maharajapuram Sri. Ramachandran's Concert

Yeshwant Prabhu

Maharajapuram Sri. Ramachandran's concert at the Montgomeryville Community College on October 14, 2006, was a most satisfying, wonderful and traditional *Kucheri*. It was one of the finest I have attended in the last five years. It reminded me of the grand concerts of the golden era of Carnatic music, a time when the legendary Madurai Mani Iyer, Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Chembai Vaidyanatha Iyyer, and, of course, G. N. Balasubramaniam were alive. Even though I am writing this review a month later, his superb Harikambodhi alapana is still ringing in my ears.

He started the concert with a varna in raga Charukeshi, Innum Manam, a composition of Lalgudi Sri. Jayaraman. It was followed by the kriti Vinayaka Vinayaka in the Ghana Pancha ragas: Natta, Gowla, Arabhi, Varali and Sri. Ilalo pranathaarthi in raga Atana, a Thyagaraja kriti was sung with great bhava. It reminded me of the soulful rendition of Ela nee dayaaraada, in the same raga, by the late Sri. Santanam. A superb rendition of an elaborate alapana in Harikasmbodhi followed. It was methodically developed. I have rarely heard a Harikambodhi more beautiful than this. This alapana alone was worth my driving more than one hundred miles to the concert! He sang Thyagaraja's kriti Undethi Ramudu gadu, a composition rarely heard at concerts. Sri. Nagai Muralidharan's alapana on the violin was equally superb.

I was delighted that Sri. Dikshitar's Swaminathena samrakshitoham in the raga Brindavani (also known as brindavanasaranga) was sung at madhyama kala, to bring out the raga swaroopa. Many vocalists simply rush through this song. Next he sang an astonishing Poorvi Kalyani alapana, followed by Dikshitar's Ekambranaatham. The violinist's alapana was equally pleasing to the ears. (I am tempted to say that on the violin his melodious Poorvikalyani became Karnaranjani!) A short kriti in Huseni, Thyagaraja's Raghuvira ranadheera was next. For ragam taanam and pallavi he chose Begada. This is a delicate raga; only a few vocalists sing it well. Sri. Ramachandran's deep voice suited the raga perfectly. The alapana was very satisfying. I was surprised, however, that for pallavi he chose the simple Chaapu tala, instead of one of the more complex talas such as atta, Jhampa, Dhruva tala, or even the Deshadi, to give the mridangist wider scope to display his enormous talent. I have heard from some mridangists that for dhani avarthanam, the short Chaapu tala doesn't offer much scope for elaboration, unlike the longer talas such as Dhruva tala.

At the request of a rasika, I believe, he sang Purandara Dasa's Ksheeraabdhi Kannike in ragamalika. This kriti was made very popular by his father, and I think Sri. Ramachandran sings it at almost all concerts. He sang with bhava Bhuvaneshwariya Nene maanasave in Mohana. A ragamalika in the ragas Kedaragowla, Dhanyasi and Sucharitra followed by a Tamil Kriti, Koteeswara Iyyer's Velum Mayilume in Sucharitra was excellent. Thyagaraja's Haridasulu vedale in Yamuna Kalyani was very pleasant. I believe the artist gave special attention to the sukha aspect of Carnatic music. He concluded the concert with a superb tillana in the raga Basant Bahar, a composition of Sri. Santanam, followed by Thyagaraja's Pavamana in raga Saurastram. Lasting more than four hours, the concert was well balanced, and interspersed with quite a few elaborate alapanas. All in all, it was an extraordinary, most memorable concert. I left the hall with my heart bursting with joy, and my head ringing with divine music.

I must say that at most vocal concerts, the accompanying artistes rarely match the vocalist. Even though I would be breaching etiquette if I say this, I must say that I truly felt that the violinist even excelled the vocalist at many places! Mannargudi Sri Iswaran's mridanga was of very high caliber also. As a result, the entire concert was elevated to a level one rarely experiences these days.

Yeshwant Prabhu is a Chemist and an aspiring vocalist. He learnt Carnatic vocal music from Flutist Sri Gopalakrishna Iyyer and Composer/Vocalist Sri T.N.Bala.

it on the anniversary date, while the larger group held it at the Sanskrit College for four days starting on that date. Nagarathnamma and her group of women conducted their worship in front of the samadhi. In 1938, she decided to sell away all her jewelry to raise funds for making the much wanted additions, an assembly hall and a kitchen; and in 1940, largely due to her efforts, the three groups decided to form a single organization, the "Sri Thiaga Brahma Mahotsava Sabha. "

Nagarathnamma lived in Tiruvaiyaru in her final days, devoting herself completely to the service of her Guru Sri Tyagaraja, who was also her ishtadevata, and to the teaching of his music. In 1952, her health deteriorating, she heard about the passing of one of Tyagaraja's descendants (brother's lineage). Grieving over his loss, she felt acute pain in the chest. A doctor was summoned who prescribed some injection which she refused. She said Rama's name alone was sufficient for her. She told one of the devotees present, "Touch my forehead; the name of Rama s contained within me " Though in pain, she remained cogent, thinking of her own ishtadevata and his ishtadevata. She lay her head in a disciple's lap and died peacefully, with the names of Rama and Anjaneya on her lips. The day was May 19, 1952.

As instructed by her will, her friends arranged for her samadhi on the banks of Kaveri. But the residents of Tiruvaiyaru, who so dearly loved and revered her, buried her mortal remains in front of Tyagaraja's samadhi, so she would always remain at her master's feet.

Nagarathnamma was a colorful personality, enormously capable and courageous, compassionate and witty. She had an amazing talent for putting people together and getting things done. And what is even more remarkable in a person of such religious fervor is that she had a great capacity to make people laugh. She won many honors and titles, but the one that gave her much satisfaction was "Tyagarajasevasakta." In 1951, around the Aradhana time, Rajaji said of her: "All the musicians and vidvans should offer homage to this sanniyasini of our times." Nagarathnamma, however, was never one to rest complacently on honors and tributes. She spoke out against the way the Aradhana was conducted: "Though the celebrations were spectacular, the element of bhakti was lacking in the atmosphere. There was more pomp and show than a simple offering and dedication. " Nagarathnamma never forgot the trauma of her childhood, the slights and humiliation and hardships she and her mother had to suffer, their valiant efforts to lift themselves out of a place society did not look upon with any kindness but never ceased to exploit, to a rightful place of honor and dignity. Once she was invited to a conference of Telugu and Sanskrit poets where a noted poet (Kaviraja Sarvabhauma Krishnamurti Sastri) spoke admiringly of a translation of Andal's Tiruppavai by one Muttu Palani whom he mistakenly referred to as a man. Nagarathnamma burst out laughing and chastised the great poet: "Shame on you! Despite all your learning, you do not know that Muttu Palani had the honor of being a devadasi, like me." She tirelessly championed the cause of women artists. Her will charges the executors "never to depart from the real spirit of principle and purpose underlying the celebration," and forbids anyone from trying "to debar lady artists and singers including devadasis." She wanted more women to spread the music of Tyagaraja.

Tyagaraja always denounced those who used music for material gain. How then did he call upon her, one who had become rich through her art, to build a temple for him? There is a universal belief that the pure at heart are always dear to God regardless of their outward status in life. There are innumerable stories in religious literatures of all lands attesting to it. As for the guru, Indian tradition believes, as Swami Rama says in his book "Living with the Himalayan Masters," "When the disciple is prepared, the master appears when the wick and oil are properly prepared, the master lights the lamp." When Purandaradasa was in search of a guru, after renouncing all his wealth following his encounter with the poor brahmin asking for donation to perform his son's upanayanam, a vision appeared in his dream telling him to go to Vyasaraya. Non-believers in such mystical experiences and proponents of the western psycho-analytical approach may contend that Nagarathnamma's vision was a self-induced one, for after all, by her own admission, Tyagaraja appeared in the same form she had conceived him in her daily worship. Perhaps, in the final analysis, all this really doesn't matter. Go east, or go west, if you go far enough, you reach the same point.

the great violin vidwan Muniswamappa, who was a disciple of Walajapet Venkataramana Bhagavatar or his son Krishnaswami Bhagavatar, both of whom were direct disciples of Tyagaraja. Thus started a spiritual link with Tyagaraja, which only became stronger with time, and ultimately transformed her life completely.

During the next four years, under the able guidance of her guru, and the watchful eye of her mother, Nagarathamma made tremendous strides in music and dance. Puttalakshamma was pleased. But, unfortunately, just when her daughter was about to launch on her illustrious career, she died. Nagarathamma was only fourteen at that time.

Sometime thereafter, a performance she gave at the home of Veena Seshanna, the legendary musician of the Mysore court, attracted the attention of the art connoisseurs and patrons. She was invited to perform at the Palace, where she was later appointed as the Durbar musician and dancer. Her fame began to spread.

When she was 25, her guru Muniswamappa died, and then began another chapter in her life. She moved to Madras where one Rajarathna Mudaliar became her patron. She bought a house in a neighborhood where many other musicians lived, including Veena Dhanammal, who became a close friend to her.

Nagarathamma either did not have any children of her own or lost an only child, a daughter, at a very young age. Yearning for a child, she adopted a young girl from a poor family. By this time, Nagarathamma had amassed so many riches that the parents of the adopted girl, coveting her wealth, plotted to murder her. They were so blinded with greed, they did not hesitate to employ their own little girl to be part of their scheme. As the girl approached Nagarathamma with a cup of milk laced with poison, Nagarathamma sensed some danger. Maybe the girl's faltering steps gave her away but Nagarathamma later said that she felt someone was tugging at her hand, cautioning her not to drink that milk. She forgave the child, but the shattering experience brought on a deep sense of disillusionment concerning her wealth, her desire for a child, and her very existence. The child died shortly thereafter.

One night in October 1921, Nagarathamma had a vision of Tyagaraja in her dream. As she recorded in her last will and testament:

"It was a rare blessing to me to have the vision of Sri Tyagaraja Swami in the form in which I have conceived him in my daily worship. It was for me a call to pay my homage to the great soul at his samadhi and I obeyed it".

Nagarathamma was mystified, wondering what to do as she had no knowledge of Tiruvaiyaru. However, the next day, as if to help her set in motion the great task that was to consume her for the rest of her life, Bida-ram Krishnappa, the great vocalist of Mysore came to visit her. Nagarathamma told him of her dream. Bida-ram Krishnappa listened to her carefully, and explained to her the meaning of her dream, that she had been called upon to dedicate her wealth to the service of Tyagaraja. He took her to Tiruvaiyaru the very next day and what she saw there deeply pained her. The place was in utter disrepair and was subject to all kinds of abuse. As she recalled later, "there was then only the Brindavan with the stone slab on one side feebly announcing to the world that the remains of the great soul lay interred within."

The very pain she felt turned into an inspiration. She lost no time in following up on the call. Endowed with great strength of will and single-mindedness in the pursuit of a goal, which she must have inherited from her mother, Nagarathamma succeeded in laying the foundation for Tyagaraja's temple the very same month. It took another four years of work before the temple was completed and dedicated.

Nagarathamma felt, however, her work was not done. Although the temple had been completed, there were no facilities for assembly or food preparation. In those days there were three groups that performed the Aradhana separately. The smaller group would hold it on the bathing ghats of Kaveri for five days concluding

3.3 Priyadarshini Govind
Anita Ranjani and Meena Pennathur

The exhilarating Bharathanatyam performance of Priyadarshini Govind opened at the Annenberg Center, on October 7, 2006 with a Devi stuthi, Jaya Jaya, that immediately set the tone and tempo for the rest of the performance. The feminine power in all its glory was woven on stage where you witnessed the divine compassion of Devi. Her portrayal of Devi's Soundaryam spoke volumes about her abhinaya skills. The Ragamalika varnam that followed next was a show of perfection in all aspects of Bharathanatyam, the geometric aramandi, the subtle but distinctive attami, the ease and flow of adavus, the clarity of expressions, the adherence to tradition, the defined arudis and body extensions . The varnam was indeed poetry in visual form.

If we thought that we had seen the best of Priyadarshini in the varnam, we were at once proven wrong in her rendering of Siruvan in Bhavapriya. A verse from Puranananooru, she has been working on for the past six months, set a sharp contrast in mood to the vibrant varnam. This was about a mother searching for her young son in the battle field, in an attempt to verify the rumors she had heard that he was killed by an arrow to his back as he was running away from the battle field as a coward, contrary to the way he was raised - to be a brave soldier. As Shakthivel, the mridangam artist of the evening, raised the battle field drum beats, the mother enters the scene filled with shame searching for her son. When she finally finds him dead from an arrow to his chest disproving all the rumors she had heard, the mother is so overcome with emotions, a somber, dense pathos takes over. I would be surprised if there was one person who did not shed a tear for the mother, the dead son, and her sad, but fulfilled ambition in a brave lad. We might say the Siruvan she portrayed who was indeed too young for war does not matter, but what actually matters is the intensity with which Priya unleashed the emotions on stage. The sadness and depth with which she hits you with her total surrender to the character - of the mother - she was playing, was unmistakably striking. You become a pawn in her hands dancing to the emotions that she invokes in you.

A javali Samayamide followed. She pretends to be the faithful wife and bids farewell to her trusting husband with tear filled eyes. She then transforms to a coy, flirty woman the minute she shuts the door. Cheating on her unsuspecting mate, she challenges her secret lover to be bold in demonstrating his love for her. The Javali was done extremely well were you were able to see the sudden contrast between the shy faithful wife and a flirty light hearted nayika.

The rhythmic Kavadichindu brought a sway and swing among the audience responding to her movements and the music.

Kadanakudoogalm thillana of Balamuralikrishna was performed as only Priyadarshini could perform. It almost seemed like it was composed with her in mind though she came to fame many years later. The sarpadanadai was the first time I have seen it employed in a thillana very effectively.

She concluded the performance with a mangalam on Muruga of Sri Lanka. Vocal by Preethi Mahes was exceptional for a performance that was complete and satisfying leaving a longing to see and hear more.

Following are couple of quotes from the audience who were foreign to this art form :

'I am going to India soon. This program was wonderful' Thomas Scasins - he added the he would like see more.

'Brilliant, I could have sat here for hours today. I would come back again' - Francis McKloskey.

Priyadarshini's form and beauty seems just made for Bharathanatyam and her well developed techniques, grace, alacrity and precision made the program one of a kind leaving you thirsting for more.

4. Selected SRUTI Articles From The Past 20 Years

4.1 SRUTI

4.1.1. 'SRUTI' - Five Years And Growing (1991)

T.S. Venkataraman

In recent years, it is a common experience for the lovers of Indian Classical Music and Dance in the Greater Delaware Valley to attend performances by five to six top ranking artistes every year. In fact one of the problems of "SRUTI" is to try to accommodate all the visiting artistes due to conflicting schedules.

This was not the case, however, before 1986 - the year 'SRUTI' came into existence; not because there were fewer artistes visiting this country, but because there was not much of an organized effort to bring many artistes to perform in our area. Prior to 1986, if we had any treat of Indian Classical Music and Dance, it was mainly due to heroic efforts of a few music loving individuals like Mr. T.N.Bala from this area. Because of the tremendous effort needed to successfully organize even one program, these programs were necessarily few and arranged very infrequently. Also perforce, the audience for these programs were small consisting mainly of those who knew the organizer(s) and others who got to know of these programs by word of mouth. It was not easy for an individual, however dedicated, to generate a large mailing list and maintain it, especially without the advantages of the modern computer systems. Thus many artistes were simply bypassing the Philadelphia area.

It was these considerations that gave fillip to a group of music lovers to start a formal organization. Actually the seeds for such an organization were sown at an informal discussion during the lunch break of Thyagaraja Aradhana, organized by a few individuals in March 1986. Soon after, the group met and decided to form an organization to be called 'SRUTI', The India Music and Dance Society, dedicated to fostering Indian Classical Music and Dance forms in the Greater Delaware Valley.

While the group went through the initial organizing efforts, they were also looking for an opportunity to start off with a 'bang'. Such an opportunity came their way in September '86 when Sangitha . Kalanidhi Dr. M.L.Vasanthakumari was visiting the US and the group found it very appropriate to have the inaugural concert by her. The large attendance of 200+ people at the concert confirmed to the organizers that they had set the ball rolling by starting a much needed organization in this area. True to its name, 'SRUTI' organized its second program- Classical Bharathanatyam performance by Jothi Raghavan with live accompaniments of Kalaimamani Swamimalai Rajarathnam and group.

Like any fledgling organization, 'SRUTI' went through some 'teething' troubles. After the initial euphoria had died down, the attendance for the programs dwindled. Part of the reason was that some programs were organized on Sundays. Saturday has always been the 'prime' day for such cultural activities and the sponsors who arranged concert tours of artistes required higher fees for Saturdays. Working on bootstrap budget, 'SRUTI' could afford only Sunday programs which did not generate enough revenue, leading to a vicious circle. However, the group persevered waiting for popular crowd-drawing artistes.

The break came when 'SRUTI' arranged the performances of Dr. Padma Subramanyam, Padmashri Dr. N. Ramani and Padma Vibhusan Dr. N. Balamurali Krishna. The sell out attendance at some of these concerts gave 'SRUTI' recognition not only in the immediate Philadelphia area, but also in North Jersey, New York and Maryland areas. These programs helped 'SRUTI' build a decent amplification and recording sound system and a sound financial base.

Right from its inception, 'SRUTI' had decided that it should be community oriented organization providing

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Dr. Sitaramayya, is a Biochemist. A founder member of SRUTI, he is also an editor of the newsletter/ publication for the Telugu Association. The above article is an adaptation of his article which originally appeared in that publication.

4.4.4 She Followed A Dream—The Life of Bangalore Nagarathnamma (1996)

H. Y. Rajagopal

Recently, on a visit to Arsha Vidya Gurukulam at Saylorsburg, Pa., I stopped at the bookstore, and found a new book on Tyagaraja by a western scholar. I hadn't known of any book on him by a western writer until then, and the title was rather intriguing: Tyagaraja and the Renewal of Tradition, with a byline that said: "Translations and Reflections." The author was William J. Jackson, an Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Indiana University, who, I learned from the dust jacket, had written a book on him earlier ("Tyagaraja, Life and Lyrics"). The book contained a translation of the opera, Nauka Charitram. I browsed through a few pages and liked, at least tentatively, what I read. I have since been reading it more carefully, and the initial promise seems to hold. The book contains many interesting topics which need to be read, discussed and debated. I would like to share my thoughts on the book on a later occasion, but for now I would like to concentrate on one of its chapters, the one on the fascinating life story of Bangalore Nagarathnamma, a great devotee of Tyagaraja, who was largely responsible for the organization and conduct of Tyagaraja Aradhana at Tiruvaiyaru in its present form. It is but fitting that when we venerate the Guru, we also pay homage to an ardent devotee of his.

Jackson's account of Nagarathnamma's life is based largely on two biographies of her, one by Banni Bai, and the other by T. Sankaran, and to some extent on Nagarathnamma's last will and testament. Jackson uses the name in its Tamilized form as Nagarathnammal, probably because both his source biographies were in Tamil, but I shall use the name in its original Kannada form as Nagarathnamma. That is the way she is referred to by her illustrious contemporaries vaggeyakara Vasudevacharya (in his brilliant memoir of the musicians of his day 'Na Kanda Kalavidaru') and D. V. Gundappa, the great Kannada writer and authority on culture, in a short pen portrait of her.

Nagarathnamma was born on November 3, 1878 (probably in Mysore). Her mother, Puttalakshamma, belonged to the traditional Devadasi class of artists. Her father, Subba Rao, a lawyer by profession, deserted the family when Nagarathnamma was barely one and a half years old. The young mother went through many hardships, but she seems to have overcome them by a resolute will. She was determined to have her daughter well educated in the arts and Sanskrit, and put her under the tutelage of Giribhatta Thammayya. A fast learner and a keen student, Nagarathnarnma made so much progress by the time she was nine, that it evoked the envy of many detractors who caused bad blood between the teacher and the student. The distraught mother did everything in her power to prevail on him, but the guru would not relent. Once again, the resolute mother, instead of meekly surrendering to the circumstances, left Mysore in search of a guru for her talented daughter, vowing never to return home except triumphantly with her daughter established as an accomplished artist.

Her search first took her to Madras, then to Kanchi and Srirangam, and finally to Bangalore, where she met

pist without invitation. just like the bees go to the flowers). Needless to say, the king loved Varadayya's Padam and patronized him. After Raghunatha Nayaka, Vijaya Raghava ruled Tanjore. He was such an admirer of Varadayya's Padams that the Marga Kavis (those who wrote in heavily sanskritized Telugu) of the day could not understand why the king liked the simple Desi language Varadayya wrote. But the king was a great admirer of Desi Kavita. With the defeat of Vijayanagara empire by muslim invaders, Telugu writers, dancers and artists who lost the tremendous support they enjoyed, found patronage in the courts of the Telugu Nayaka rulers of Tanjore. Vijayaraghava was probably the most ardent supporter of the writers and dancers who migrated from Kuchipudi and other villages in Andhra in search of patronage. (The Melattur school of Kuchipudi derived from the dance teachers who migrated to Tanjore in the days of the Nayaka rulers). Varadayya probably spent his last days in Tanjore, though he was thought to have visited Muvva around 1650 AD looking for Mohanangi.

According to his own account, Kshetrayya wrote about 4,000 Padams. Of these, less than 400 are available today. Love is the subject of all of them. His lyrics portray "lovelorn solitary contemplation, dialogue with confidante-maids, whisperings of love pairs, odes to lonesomeness, and pangs of separation, messages of mediating maids" etc (1). Many of these Padams were sung by Kshetrayya to the courtesans, Devadasis and Rajanarthakis who danced to his songs with heartfelt joy.

With Kuchipudi and Bharathanatyam becoming accepted as classical arts, people outside the Devadasi communities also began to learn and perform these dances. However, the lyrics popular with Devadasis became a taboo for these people and Kshetrayya's Padams were kept out of dance halls for many years. It should be cautioned however that love lyrics per se have not been a taboo! If the song was in Sanskrit, if the heroes and heroines were Gods and Goddesses, it was a good dance piece as evident from the popularity of Jayadeva's Ashtapadis. Kshetrayya's Padams were in a language that everybody in the audience understood (therefore morally corrupting!) and the songs were often about his own love for some one. That was more than what the people who controlled dance teaching could swallow. Sreenivasa Chakravarthi's book has the following analysis which translates to "Sanskrit is the language of Gods. Only Pandits understand it, ordinary folks don't. Pandits' minds are not corrupted by descriptions of love, but if you do so in Telugu, you will spoil the minds of ordinary people. Sex among the divine is not vulgar. Sexual *activity* of the mortals *is* vulgar. That is the real secret" (3).

However, during the last few decades, there have been changes *in* our perceptions of morality. Kshetrayya's Padams are once again popular. In fact, it is in a large part due to Kshetrayya that the word Padam today means a romantic lyric and most artists today dance to the Padams of Kshetrayya.

Kshetrayya or Kshetrajna? : Varadayya became Kshetrayya simply because he left home to visit punyakshetras and he often preferred to live in temples rather than in more comfortable quarters. Telugu scholars and ordinary citizens either love him for his fluid and elegant lyrics or hate him for writing poems which they believe are vulgar. Kshetrayya's poems are usually sensual and some contain descriptions of physical love. There are some admirers of Kshetrayya, these are mostly Tamil scholars, who refer to Varadayya as Kshetrajna. This title elevates Varadayya to a spiritual level. The principal argument of these scholars is that Varadayya was a highly spiritual person and that his lyrics, albeit sensual, were written in admiration of the Lord's love life. When we elevate some one to that level, that person is beyond criticism by ordinary mortals! I find this unfortunate because Kshetrayya's life was devoted to average people, not to the elite and certainly not to spiritualism! He loved to sing either in the court or in the street, so the Devadasis can dance and express their thoughts in beautiful Abhinaya. He ended most of his Padams with a salutation to Muvvagopala and he was no doubt a religious person, but the language of his Padams is an eloquent indication that the principal deity in his temple was Mohanangi (or some other woman). Why can't we accept him for what he was?

The editorial help of Dr. C. Prabhakar is very much appreciated.

quality programs at affordable prices. Occasionally, due to higher artiste fees and auditorium expenses; some programs had to be priced higher than what 'SRUTI' would normally like to. 'SRUTI' set up certain standards like starting the programs on time, making the copies of such concerts available on quality tapes etc.. As of now 'SRUTI' has arranged a large number of other vocal and instrumental programs by the Bombay Sisters, Lalgudi Srimathi, Mandolin Srinivas, T.R. Subramanyam, Maharajapuram Santhanam, Nedanuri Krishnamoorthy and dance recitals by Dhananjayans and Sanjukta Panigrahi- to mention a few.

'SRUTI' also encourages North Indian Classical Music and dance by arranging the Jugal Bhandi programs by Bhimsen Joshi, Balamurali Krishna and the great flutist Chaurasia, Odyssey dances by Sanjukta Panigrahi and other forms of dance programs like Kathak etc... . Based on the audience response to these classical programs, I am sure many more of these will be arranged in future.

In addition, consistent with SRUTI's objectives, it welcomes and encourages participation by the experienced as well as the upcoming local talents by arranging suitable programs. This is evident from the tremendous response during the day-long annual Thyagaraja Aradhana festival paying tributes to the great composer Saint Thyagaraja. Also, many concerts and dance programs by the U.S. based artistes like Simanthini Kowtha, Sitalakshmi Madhavan, Vijaya Prabhakar, Shakuntala Srinivasan, Ramya Harishankar and Jothi Raghavan were arranged in the past.

Seen from the performances arranged by 'SRUTI' over the years and the response from the community in the area, we have a large number of talented young and experienced musicians and music and dance lovers in this area. 'SRUTI' should do everything possible to sustain this interest and encourage as many artistes as possible. We know that it requires a lot of time and dedicated service by many members of the community to keep this going. While we thank all the members of 'SRUTI' for their continued support and encouragement and the members of the managing committees for their devotion and dedication, we look forward to many more people to get actively involved in these efforts and help build even a stronger organization.

4.1.2 History and Growth of SRUTI (1996)
- M.M. Subramaniam and H.Y. Rajagopal

On 14 September 1996, SRUTI will celebrate its tenth anniversary. From small beginnings, today SRUTI has grown to be the premier institution presenting classical Indian music and dance in the Greater Delaware Valley. It is fitting that the day's events include a dance program, a music concert and recognition of a member of our community for his contributions to music. From its inception, it has been among SRUTI's goals to have a mixture of dance and music programs and to regularly recognize talented artists in our midst.

It all started in March '86 at the Thyagaraja Aradhana organized by S.Rao Yadavalli and M.M. Subramaniam (Mani) at the community hall in Broomall, PA. At lunch time, the general conversation turned towards the lack of regular classical music or dance programs in the Greater Philadelphia area. Indeed, during the previous years, as part of the Festival of India programs or otherwise many well known artists had visited U.S. and given performances. Among them were Lalgudi Jayaraman, Maharajapuram Santhanam, Padma Subramanyam and T.N. Seshagopalan. None of them had performed in the Philadelphia area. The big question was why?

We should hasten to point out that it was not as if there were never any concerts in this area. Some dedicated individuals, notably T.N. Bala, had expended Herculean efforts to bring reputed musicians to this area. Inevitably they were few and far between. Dance programs were fewer still.

To explore the question more fully and find solutions, Mani offered to call "a meeting of minds" gathering of people who had organized programs or were interested in such activities.

About 20 persons met on a warm July afternoon at Mani's place in Broomall. The consensus among the gathering was that only a structured organization with its own bylaws and elected Board will be able to arrange programs in a consistent, professional manner.

The group elected an interim committee with Mani as convener and consisting of T.S. Venkataraman (Secretary), K. Ramakrishnan (Treasurer), Usha Ari and Indira Rajan as members at large. Simultaneously a by-laws committee was constituted with H. Y. Rajagopal as chair. C.P. Ramaswami and A.K. Srinivasan were the other members of this committee.

At the recommendation of the interim committee, the name SRUTI, The India Music and Dance Society was adopted for the proposed organization.

As the group went about the organizational efforts, they were looking for a big name artist to help them get going. The late Sangeetha Kalanidhi M.L. Vasanthakumari was scheduled to tour U.S.A. and SRUTI jumped at the opportunity to present one of the foremost musicians of the day as its inaugural program. It took place on 14 September 86, ten years ago to this day. It was an unqualified success. The audience of over 200 attested to the fact that SRUTI was fulfilling a felt need.

True to its name, the second program was a Bharatanatyam program by Jothi Raghavan of Boston. Her program also underlined another part of SRUTI's mission, namely to present talented artists resident in N. America.

SRUTI decided in its first year itself to celebrate Thyagaraja Aradhana as its first event of a calendar year. At this day long program, anyone who can sing or play an instrument is given an opportunity to perform one of that great composer's songs. In addition, each year SRUTI also recognizes a highly talented artist in this vicinity and invites that person to perform with suitable accompaniments. [Vicinity here extends upto Pittsburgh and N. Carolina.] Many children and young artists also keenly participate each year. Occasionally one among the youth is also chosen to give a short concert.

Among the other guidelines that SRUTI adopted right from the beginning were: set admission rates to primarily meet the expenses of a program, start programs punctually, make available recordings of concerts using quality cassettes at reasonable prices.

As with any fledgling organization SRUTI went through "teething" troubles, including skepticism among some and even open antagonism. It was hardly possible to break even on a concert. Only the seed money provided by Life Membership helped the organization to keep afloat.

Meanwhile, the by-laws were adopted in December '87. The by-laws contain the following mission statement: (1) promote and foster the classical music and dances of India, and (2) bring together, in a spirit of cooperation and unity those people of the Delaware Valley that are interested in these arts and effectively serve their common interests.

The first full fledged Managing Committee (MC) was also elected at the same meeting. Following this article is a list of all Managing Committees Through the years.

SRUTI was registered as a non profit organization in the state of Pennsylvania in May '88. The IRS recognition came later in December '92, thanks to the efforts of the Resource Committee and the Managing Committee. SRUTI gratefully acknowledges the volunteer contribution of the services of Mr. Kumud Gandhi,

4.4.3 Kshetrayya (1992)
Ari Sitaramayya

Today, when a Kuchipudi or Bharathanatyam dancer performs a Padam, there is a good chance that it is to a composition of Kshetrayya. Kshetrayya's Padams are in simple language, laden with romantic expressions and provide excellent opportunities for the dancer to exhibit her talent in Abhinaya. Kshetrayya is one of a very few composers who contributed greatly both to music and dance. In addition, his life's story is remarkable for other reasons also. He chose early in life what he wanted to do and stuck to his decision in spite of tremendous adversity. Also, Kshetrayya is one in the line of Desi Telugu poets (people who wrote in non-sanskritized Telugu or old Telugu) who wrote for ordinary people. Even when ridiculed and challenged by the scholars of the day, he remained committed to his style of writing in simple and elegant Telugu and impressed even his detractors with his poetic prowess. Finally, the appreciation his poems enjoyed from kings, courtisans and common people in his life time, the rejection they suffered from purists in late 19th and early 20th centuries, and the popularity they enjoy today in concert halls reveal the fluidity of our culture and morality. Let me share with you what I learnt about Kshetrayya in my readings.

Kshetrayya's original name was Varadayya. He was born around 1595 AD in Muvva, near Masulipatnam. In Muvva as well as in the nearby Kuchipudi, temples served as centers of education in music, dance and languages. Like the other Brahmin boys of the day, Varadayya received instruction in Sanskrit, dance, Vedas etc. Some dance teachers of that time barred women from learning and performing dance, but others continued to teach the dance to Brahmin boys as well as to girls from the Devadasi and Rajanarthaki communities. While in his teens, Varadayya was deeply in love with a Devadasi girl called Mohanangi, probably a classmate. However, he married his maternal uncle's daughter, Rukmini, around 1615 AD. The infatuation with Mohanangi continued and Varadayya probably attended every performance Mohanangi gave at the local temple as a Devadasi. On one occasion, Varadayya made advances to her in the temple yard. In a moment that changed his life completely, Mohanangi spurned his advances and suggested that he prove himself worthy of his family by writing songs in praise of the Lord or some such scholarly activity rather than waste his time trying to entice her. Varadayya was heartbroken. His love for Mobanangi was sincere and deep. His strong desire for physical union with Mohanangi was evident in the Padam he wrote "Inni vidhamula pujinchera saami! Inthi nanu gurchumi" in Mukhari Ragam, Chapu Thalam (Lord, I will worship you in many ways; please unite me with this woman). Some scholars think that divine intervention was responsible for turning Varadayya into a lyricist. It is more likely that his love for Mobanangi was such that he was not able to accept the rejection by her and chose to devote his life to writing and singing about his love. But if he chose to make Varadayya the hero of his lyrics his Padams would not have been accepted by the people at large. Instead, he made Muvva Gopala, the deity in the temple of Muvva, the hero of his songs.

Varadayya's lyrics caught the attention of Devadasis. His singing and their dancing to his Padams was not appreciated by the elders of the village. There was also a story that he was romantically involved with a widow. In response to a social boycott by his community, Varadayya chose to leave Muvva around 1620 AD and went on a pilgrimage to various temples in the south. The tearful farewell was found in the Padam "emani thelupudu nelaguthalludu! nemichethune cheliyaa? Bhamaro yuriki bayaluderedivella premarneera nasarni pilichicheppina maata " in Anandabhairavi, Triputa talam (What can I tell you about the conversation we had when he called me just before leaving the village? How can I tolerate this? What shall I do?). The journey took him to Bellamkonda, Bhadrachalam, Yadugiri, Srisailam, Hampi, Vijayanagaram, Hemadri, Pamidi (Anantapur Dt), Palakonda (Cuddapah Dt), Tirupathi, Thiruttani, Thiruvallu and finally to Kanchi around 1625 AD. The most ardent admirer of Varadayya at that time was Thupakula Venkata Krishna, the Telugu king of Chenji, near Tanjore. He encouraged Varadayya to visit the Telugu Nayaka kings of Tanjore (Raghunatha Nayaka) and Madura (Thirumala Nayaka). According to the legend, the uninvited appearance of Varadayya in his court angered Raghunatha Nayaka, who questioned Varadayya why he, Varadayya, came to him. Varadayya's response is in the following Padam: "Thamuthaame vathurarthulu! kramamerigina dhathakadaku rammannaraa! karnalambunnachotiki bhamarambul nachyuthendra Raghurayanrupaa"(Raghunatha Nayaka, Beggars go the philanthro-

ness of his appeal.

His music is a synthesis of South Indian culture and is as great as any form of Indian culture. Its Telugu is as simple almost as the Telugu of the girl that goes home in the evening, singing, with her bundle of fresh cut grass. But from such slim footing Tyagaraja's music rises tall as the world. Its tradition is Tamil, the tradition of Alwars and Nayanmars. Its grammar is Camatic, that is to say, South Indian. Its culture is Indian in its vision. Its spirit is human, the spirit of man, the top of creation, communing with his creator. Everyone in South India can understand it, can feel its rhythm, can follow its spirit and feel at home in it. Tyagaraja, more perhaps than any other single musician, has preserved for us our one great live art with an appeal both deep and wide.

The language of religious music sometimes manifests an undefinable power to reach deeply into individuals and bring out the best human qualities, fostering understanding and feelings of kindredness in people otherwise estranged. While German philosopher Gottfried Leibniz thought of music as "unconscious counting," this accounting leaves out ' -song's potency to educe refinement. A European composer and theorist of music wrote in 1739: "It is the true purpose of music to be above all else a moral lesson." Perhaps we should think of Tyagaraja as an illustration of this; he was a persuasive master expressing through mandalas of exquisite sound and conscience a sense of unity and justice, making life more bearable and meaningful regardless of the brutal realities of the times. Tyagaraja could wield the old ragas and discover new ragas able to displace fearful events in the memory of his listeners. His music is an intangible but nevertheless real and important power -- something sheltering and shared, an artful exercise of specialized smarta conscience anchoring standards of creativity and religion in a time when intense changes inundated his region in wave after wave.

Temple complexes in South India have walls, which at times might be used as protective fortifications from hostile forces. The Maratha kings not only kept armies to repel danger, but also to defend community, and remain on top. To be fair we must add that these rulers also tried to patronize Hindu saints and singer-scholars, and to promote culture in many forms. Maratha rulers recognized that defense and force alone could not provide viable relationships to a society, or bring out cooperative goodwill, altruism and creative spirituality. King Sarabhoji knew memorable beauty could bring a king auspicious fame. But he found that Tyagaraja's vision was not an item available for exchange. Tyagaraja, for his part, should be judged as a singer. A singer should not be expected to recruit armies, or confront social problems in the way people of other regions at later times think proper. A singer should sing.

Figuratively speaking, in the "spiritual temple" of the whole Hindu community the central sanctum sanctorum or garbhagriha ("womb-house") is tended by inspired saintly geniuses, too popular and mainstream to be called mere esoteric mystics. Living turned toward the holy, these saints comprise the creative inner heart of Hinduism, the part which helps vivify the whole; they are the conscience keeping the powerful concerned with justice, and giving the lowly the strength for joy.

Dr. William Jackson is a Professor of Religious Studies at Indiana University. He is the author of several scholarly books on Thyagaraja, including 'Thyagaraja: Life and Lyrics'.

CPA, in obtaining the IRS recognition of its non-profit status.

1988 was a watershed year for SRUTI. The flute concert of N. Ramani was sold out. Maharajapuram Santhanam's concert attracted a large audience. And more than 700 people attended Padma Subrahmanyam's Bharata Nrityam program.

This last program was a huge financial success. However, the MC had underestimated the enormous popularity of this great dancer. They originally had booked a hall with air conditioning and a capacity of nearly 300. But within a few days of the announcement of the program, requests for tickets far exceeded that number. In a hurry they booked another auditorium with a much larger capacity but unfortunately without air conditioning. With the day of the program being one of the hottest days of the century, the audience were not able to fully enjoy the program of a great artist.

This was a very hard lesson to learn, but learn they did! Under the leadership of Mani Subramaniam, P. Swaminathan, Anand Kuchibotla, Renuka Adiraju and Dinakar Subramaniam. SRUTI has since presented many sold out programs during the last ten years to the full satisfaction of the artists and the audience.

The list of artists who have performed under SRUTI's reads almost like a Who's Who of Indian classical music and dance artists. They include:
Musicians: Balamurali Krishna, Bombay Sisters, Chitti Babu, Hariprasad Chaurasia, Lalgudi Jayaraman, Bhimsen Joshi, N. Ramani, N. Ravikiran, U. Srinivas, M.L. Vasanthakumari;
Dancers: Rohini Bhate, the Dhananjayans, Sanjukta Panigrahi, Padma Subrahmanyam, Chitra Visweswaran. SRUTI also presented outstanding dance dramas including Bharata Kalanjali's Sangamitra, Vempati Chinna Satyam's excerpts from Ramayana, and the highly acclaimed Jaya Jaya Devi.

The artists residing in N. America who have performed for SRUTI include T.N. Bala (Havertown, PA), Ramya HariShankar (Bharatanatyam, Los Angeles), T. Sankaran (Mridangam, Toronto).

All these programs have helped establish SRUTI firmly as a premier organization to present classical music and dance music in the Delaware valley and beyond. People travel from North Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Baltimore, and Washington D.C. areas to attend some of the high profile events presented by SRUTI.

SRUTI is a well structured organization. An elected MC carries out all the tasks involved in planning of events including the choice of artists, scheduling etc. A Library Committee maintains the master tapes and makes copies of the concerts which are available to the members of the community. The Library committee is also responsible for SRUTI RANJANI, the quarterly publication of SRUTI. More recently, a Technical Committee was formed to assist the Library Committee in recording and creating master tapes of concerts. The MC also appoints other committees when needed to carry out specific tasks. One such committee, the Tenth Anniversary Gala Committee has coordinated all the activities connected with the celebration of the tenth anniversary.

While all the committees mentioned above are ad hoc committees appointed by the MC. the Resources committee (RC) is a statutory committee consisting of the Vice President, the Treasurer and 3 other appointed members. It functions in an advisory capacity to the MC. It develops long range plans and makes recommendations regarding fund raising and other activities needed to improve the financial and other resources of SRUTI.

The efforts of the RC of past years have resulted in SRUTI gaining recognition by IRS as a non-profit organization. This in turn has helped SRUTI being recognized by and receiving grants from The Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, The Philadelphia Foundation, and The Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily News.

SRUTI whenever possible coordinates its activities with other cultural groups in the area. It has worked with the Tamil, Telugu associations and Triveni, the Kannada Association of the Tri-State area. Some of SRUTI's programs have been cosponsored by the arts department and/or student associations of Drexel University and Villanova University.

If today SRUTI has attained its high stature among lovers of Indian classical music and dance from India, it is all due to the dedication, tremendous hard work of its leadership and the many individuals and families who have willingly volunteered their time and services. They all deserve our sincere appreciation.

As we look forward to the second decade, we hope that SRUTI will not only continue to enhance the cultural environment of Philadelphia area but also grow in many directions. The membership should reflect interest of every branch of Indian classical music and dance. We also hope to see a larger number of Hindustani music aficionados among the audience in Carnatic music programs.

We join the well wishers of SRUTI in wishing it many decades of service to classical music and dance forms of the Indian subcontinent.

M.M. Subramaniam and H.Y. Rajagopal are two of the founder members of SRUTI.

4.1.3: 10th Anniversary dedication to Sruti (1996)

Composed by T.N. Bala

RAgam: mOhanam TAlam: Adhi

मोहनम आदि

पल्लवि

श्रुति स्तापन द्शब्धि सम्पूर्ण

शुभ मोहन मुहुर्त वैभोगमे

अनुपल्लवि

श्रुति मधुरम् मृधु स्वरमधुरम् राग

लयमधुरम् नादामधुरम् मधुरम्

चरणम्

रागस्वरालय रसिकजनाश्रित

थ्यागमनोभाव दशवर्षाब्धीह

नादसागर स्पीतसभारूप

गीतनात्यकला नायकपोशक

अध्यम कालम्

जनसमूहप्रिय मणिजनादिनुत

धिनकरानन्ध स्वामिनाथादि

वनिथ रेणुका सेवकि सहित

पुनिथकार्य सम्पूर्णानन्दमय

model of society is also found in Roman thought, and in medieval conceptualizations, such as those found in John of Salisbury's Polycratius. Society is like a body; "Let the eye be an eye, the hand be a hand." Though this view often put the peasants at a disadvantage, it was a means which evolved to conceptualize the whole.

In India the social order is traced to the Vedic origin myth of the Cosmic Person; in Europe the body analogy was the rhetorical device or reasoning means most commonly used to persuasively convey a rational understanding of society as organism -like-- a living hierarchy of interrelated parts, each with his place in the total scheme, each a link in the great chain of being. Especially from the 12th to the 16th century in many European works society is analogized in body imagery: "Invoked in every economic crisis to rebuke extortion and dissension with a high doctrine of social solidarity," the analogy of the human body provided a rationale. "Bitter realities of the social order were thus made palatable the whole edifice of feudal society -- class privilege, class oppression, exploitation, serfdom. But these things cannot, it is thought, be treated as simply alien to religion, for religion is all-comprehensive. They must be given some ethical meaning, must be shown to be the expression of some larger plan ... [Hence] a functional theory of society [emerged; namely,] Society, like the human body, is an organism composed of different members. Each member has its function: prayer, defense, merchandise, or tilling the soil. Each must receive the means suited to its station, and must claim no more. Within classes there must be equality ... "

The idea that society is like the human body writ large is thus a pervasive archetypal idea, a primary vision of humanity's wholeness. Inherited injustices, whether within India's caste system, European feudalism with its kings and bishops, free-trade capitalism with its robber barons and captains of industry or Marxist socialism with beaurocrats and workers, all are subject to correction by the human conscience seeking justice. The world in which Tyagaraja strove saw new merchant classes rising, both in Europe and in India; it saw war with Muslims and the ascendancy of British power, as well as decline of the rajas. Hence, it saw the gradual disintegration of the Hindu social order ordained by brahmanic ideology.

From the distance of two centuries we imaginatively stand, as it were, at the gopuram or gateway to that historical situation and suggest what seems to have been involved in Tyagaraja's response. Tyagaraja refused to acknowledge the British in songs, but he was resolutely preservative of important indigenous musical elements which had been accu-mulating in Tanjavur and elsewhere in South India for centuries. His way was an insistence that foreign rule did not mean loyalty (bhakti) to Lord Rama's rule was now a thing of the past. His songs reaffirm the way of other earlier saint singers whom he echoes. They criticize hypocrisy, and promote spiritual values which bhakti inspires.

Tyagaraja is often pictured in paintings in the Haridasa attire of the singer-beggar, which he is supposed to have commonly worn. He practiced unchchavritti, strolling, singing and receiving alms. Tyagaraja's appearance in these pictures memorializing him offers a clue. Victor Turner has suggested that a simple mode of dress "signalizes that one wishes to approximate the basically or merely human, as against the structurally specific by way of status or class." Tyagaraja voluntarily chose the dress of the haridasa, literally the "slave of God," rather than that of the king's companion -- developing the "powers of the weak."

Tyagaraja the renunciate-householder, the other-worldly music yogi, shared a sense of outsiderhood with the poor, and he offered communitas in his works, first in the music itself, which is a world~dissolving flow of bhakti, and secondly in namasiddhanta's free access to the divine and to liberation through praise and repetition of the holy name. This sadhana or discipline was open to all, "regardless of caste, sex or status." Another brahman, whose songs are sung by all classes in India, Rabindranath Tagore, wrote of "The tiller, the weaver, the fisherman, [who] all sustain the world with labor," saying that he desired to enter their "intimate precincts." "I know that the song basket is empty/ if filled with trinkets when links/ are gone between life and life./ And I know my failure, whenever/ my song has been incomplete,/ whenever it has missed the all." Tyagaraja's songs succeed in catching "the all" with their life-linking power, even if he did not personally train lower caste disciples. As one South Indian earlier in this century put it, Tyagaraja was singular in the wide-

with a sense of the holy. They meant to him survival of the heritage he valued most in a chaotic world.

Various ideas of justice stand behind the organizational logic of enduring societies. The rationale for the system which perpetuated the inequality of different castes in India is often found reflected in popular religion. For example, a recent study shows how ancestral spirit veneration served to reproduce at the level of religious imagination the social hierarchy in Bengal. Such practices which ritually enact or narratively elaborate on hereditary status and its continuation in the invisible world of spirits, reveal how unequal hierarchical relations are reproduced generation after generation over long periods of time. In Tanjavur it is noteworthy that in the annual procession, a major part of the Seven Shrines festival, a parayar (low caste man) with a royal parasol leads the procession line, reminding all of the myth depicting the Vedic god Indra becoming a varayar. This practice affirms and helps reproduce the hierarchical system of inequality by giving the representative parayar great honor one day of the year. It is a recognition of the large part played by the low castes of society in the delta economy. The parayar remains a parayar, though his connection with the high god Indra is ritually celebrated. In outward display even the lowly receive their due; "Every dog has his day" or even the poor enjoy days of feasting.

The orthodox explanation of the rank and relations among castes in India is ancient and widespread. In the fountainhead of brahmanic ideology, the Big Veda, the myth of the sacrifice of the Cosmic Being, Purusa, tells how the different segments of society come into being. First, purusa, is said to be all creatures and all existence.

The Person has a thousand eyes, a thousand heads, a thousand feet. Encompassing earth on every side, he rules firmly established in the heart.(1) The person, too, is all this, both what has been and what is to come ... (2) One fourth of him is all-existences, three-fourths in the empyrean undying.(3) ... [When the gods sacrificed purusa to generate the universe and all beings] when they divided the Person, how many-fold did they arrange him? The Priest (brahmana) was his mouth; of his arms was made the Ruler; (raianya) His thighs were the Merchant-folk (vaisva); from his feet was born the Servant (sudra)The rest of creation -- moon and sun, fire, sky, and so on, also came from appropriate portions of the original cosmic Person. All come from the primordial sacrifice of purusa, and it is said that the generations are all bound by dharma of birth, karma and rebirth. Bad deeds are said to bring low status, and doing one's own birth-determined work leads to perfection, Krishna declares in the Bhagavad Gita. The lower castes often are not persuaded to this view. And Gandhi and others have worked to rid India of injustices and inhumane attitudes based on birthrights, and to improve matters by land reform, and legislation to insure opportunities. I am not an apologist for caste injustices or tinkathia or indebtedness exploitation schemes in which the poor are bound in fruitless dependency.

It is sometimes said that the old brahman ideology formed the "glue" for the social system. But a living society is more like an organism than like a collage or patched pottery. The ideology in original intention was therefore more like unifying lifeblood and coordinating nervous system, made up of fibres of ritual, symbol and rationale derived from the religious order. In this view, because of the law of karma, each member of society was suited to birth at his or her level of dharma. The priest, the ruler, the merchant and the servant played complementary roles in this ideal scheme, with nature's law of just deserts ordering the body politic. A large part of the caste system was profession-based, like the guild system in Medieval Europe: families of crafts people, members of trades. The different limbs of society were all integral parts of the same Purusa. The Western world held and developed a remarkably similar rationale for aristocratic and feudalistic social organization. In Platq's Republic the mix up of work, one member of society performing another's function, is injustice, while each person performing in the community the function which best suits his or her nature, is deemed justice.

Later, Gnostic concepts of the human community envision a fall from a higher realm, by which an originally undivided "Human Form Divine" becomes divided into conflicting functions, each an incomplete part of humanity, and each with a dominant tendency or talent -- "intellect", "desire", "craftsmanship", etc. This organic

pallavi:
Sruthi sthApana daSApthi sampooraNā Subha mOhana muhoorththa vaibOhamE

Anupallavi:
Sruthi madhuram mruthu swara madhuram rAga laya madhuram nAdAmrutha madhuram madhuram

charaNam:
rAga swarAlaya rasikajanASritha thyAga manObhAva daSavarshApdheeha nAdha sAgara sangeetha sabhA roopa geetha nAtya kalA nAyaka pOshaka

Madhyama kAlam:
janasamooHapriya maNijanAdhinutha dhinakarAnandha swAminAthAdhi vanitha rENuka sEvaki sahitha pu-nitha kArya sampoorāNā nandhamaya

(Free Translation of the song, "Sruthi Sthapana")
Hail, as we celebrate the auspicious and beautiful occasion of the completion of the 10th year of the institution of "SRUTI"!

Sruthi, how sweet it is! Think of soft notes? How sweet it is! Think of melody and rhythm? How sweet it is! Think of the nectar of the sound of music? How sweet it is! How sweet it is!!

Oh! Be it a temple of melody and rhythm! Oh! Be it patronized by all music lovers! Oh! Be it with a sense of "Thyaga" (on this occasion of the 10th year of dedication)

Oh! Be it an ocean of celestial music! In the form of a "Sabha" Oh! Be it an abode for all those practicing the art of music and dance!

Those like Mani, with love for and venerated by the community, along with service-minded Dinakara, Anand, Swaminath, and Renuka have successfully carried out the "blessed" task, the bliss of marking the completion of which we HAIL!

T.N. Bala is a well known composer and teacher of Carnatic music who resides in Delaware Valley.

4.1.4 SRUTI—20 Years And Growing (2006)
T. Parasaran

When Raman asked me to write about my experiences with SRUTI since its inception, I was quite overwhelmed because I thought that without any formal training in music my comments would be pedestrian at best. Anyway here it is. After graduating from the University of Pennsylvania in the early 60's I returned to the Philadelphia area in 1979. It was my good fortune that the Indian Community in this area is culturally very active and SRUTI happens to be one of the top organizations in this sphere.

I have tried to attend as many of the excellent concerts organized by SRUTI right from its inception, most often with my sister, Sarada who lived in Connecticut, those days. The very first concert of MLV in 1986 was memorable not only because of her inimitable style but also because it was the first concert our mother attended in this country. The fine dance performance of Padma Subramaniam and our first taste of Carnatic Music on Saxophone by Kadri Gopalnath stay fresh in the mind.

The day long Thyagaraja Aradhana of the early years and even now have been sources of great joy for us what with high caliber of music of some of the youngsters like the Adipudi children. There were also many budding artists and elder singers. We heard so many new Kritis and Kirtanas and their meanings and Bhava

were enthusiastically imbibed by us. We made it a habit of bringing books on Sri Thyagaraja and his songs and followed some of the singing diligently. Not the least we made many friends of kindred spirit. Concerts of stalwarts like Ramani, Balamuralikrishna, Santanam, Nedanuri et al during the early 90's were well attended. However some of the concerts did not probably break even. The prices were quite affordable and all the concerts were held during weekends and yet the attendance was poor; this used to be baffling. In fact we are sure that it has been agonizing for all the organizers whose tireless efforts do not seem to be well rewarded in this respect.

The following programs in the 90's still stand out as super performances. Jugalbandi of Bhimsen Joshi and Balamuralikrishna, Mandolin performance by U. Srinivas, Vijaya Siva in SRUTI for the first time, Chitti Babu's only Veena concert in collaboration with the Telugu Association and Ravi Kiran's Chitra Veena. Similarly some of the out-standing dances in the nineties were Sanghamithra, the dance Drama of Dhanajayan's troupe, Sam-jukta Panigrahi's Odissi, a beautiful dance performance, Krishnam Vande by International Dance Academy and a performance by Chitra Visweswaran. We also had the superbly conceived and executed dance program "Jaya Jaya Devi" of Lalgudi Jayaraman. M.S. Sheela, T.V. Sankaranarayanan, Sanjay Subramanian, Bombay Jeyshree and NityaShree are some of the other leading artists who gave concerts here in late 90's.

I have to say that it has been a rare gift to the local SRUTI members that we could all watch up-close great artists, the footwork and Abhinaya in dances; mention should be made of dance performances of Shobha Sharma, Adyar Lakshmanan, and Dhananjayans (who will forget his Nandanar?) Alarmel Valli, Raja and Radha Reddy, Daksha Yagnam and other such performances. Equally thrilling were the opportunities to listen to great North Indian Sastritya Sangeet in our own back yard so to speak.

While we could not attend any of the workshops that SRUTI arranged in the area I have heard much praise for these from people who attended these.

It is commendable that with very limited resources and only with volunteers we have such remarkable activities and concerts to please all members. Another example of the volunteer effort is the SRUTI publications. SRUTI Ranjani, the book edited by Viji Swaminathan, SRUTI Ranjani, (the annual issues,) the quarterly SRUTI Notes and the special Aradhana issue every year have all been vital parts of communication with the members. Currently we also have a website that any organization can be proud of. They are user friendly, are updated in a timely fashion and are informative. Without volunteers none of these would be possible.

All told SRUTI has come a long way. There is still a wistfulness regarding a hall and/or a place to call our own. We do have a good sound system and have professional quality recordings, cassettes and CD's. I would like to end this with a wish list. If we can increase our attendances, if we can get more active participation from younger audience, if we have our own base and build a library then we can rest a bit on our laurels. To follow one of my favorite sayings which is the motto of my Alma Mater, Annamalai University in Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu, let us move to greater heights, "With Courage and faith".

T.Parasaran is a retired chemist who is interested in listening to all classical music forms and especially Carnatic music because of his origin from Tiruvarur !

lishments like swara sahitya. And all later composers have faithfully followed this pattern. This alone is a major accomplishment. Clearly South Indian music reached its zenith in his compositions.

I have barely touched on the greatness of Thyagaraja. Indeed, volumes have been written on his compositions and even more would be written. One can boldly assert that there never has been a greater composer and it may be many, many centuries before another one is born. I would like to join all the music lovers of Greater Delaware Valley in paying homage to this great composer while we celebrate the Thyagaraja aradhana today.

An ardent admirer and lover of Carnatic music, Rasikan has been a regular contributor to Sruti Notes and other publications of Sruti.

4.4.2 Understanding Tyagaraja's Niche in Society
Dr. William Jackson

The task of the historian is to explore and understand the totality of evidence in the case at hand, and to discern whole patterns which enable comprehension. This task ideally transcends bias. It is desirable neither to allow fascination and enthusiasm for the high culture of the brahmins to blind one to the rest of the social system, nor to demonstrate one's empathy with the peasants by developing animosity toward the upper castes. The world historian, as William McNeil wrote, can balance the emphasis on conflicts, by cultivating "a sense of individual identification with the triumphs and tribulations of humanity as a whole," and thus develop a more global or ecumenical history which better understands humanity's commonality and has "room for human diversity in all its complexity." Partial focus breeds distortion and self-righteousness.

There are some aspects of life shared by all in a traditional society, offering a shared cultural destiny and unity of outlook. For example, in traditional India, most women wore the same form of dress -- the sari -- though some were cotton and others were silk; Similarly, concepts of dharma and karma provided a cohesive view for many in society. In the Kampan Ramayana it is said that the king governs and protects the larger world just "as a peasant nourishes his patch of land." The peasant is the little man who gives to the king the fruits of his labors on that land-patch. The king is the "big man" who pays his revenues to the cosmic person or supreme being, by distributing the fruits of his realm's "patch" to brahmins, who worship and specialize in relating to the absolute, promoting culture and prosperity, and enhancing royal honor. Both king and peasant are beholden to the giver of life, their common divine reference point beyond this world of limits and changes. The organizing principle here is a kind of fractal-pattern logic with self-similarities at different scales. It reflects a cosmic pattern of religious rationale, existence in a whole context of meaning: a continuum of conscious-ness which links peasant, King, and God in an ordered lifeway.

For bhaktas of South India it is significant that Tyagaraja's father had a dream which was thought to be divinely inspired. It directed him to live in Tiruvaiyaru, and that he communicated this dream to the king governing that area, who is also said to have had a complementary dream. This shows that the family's establishment of a home in that village was not to be thought of as the result of a king's will but was part of a divine plan which people wish to recall as ultimate. It shows that the king acted not on his own initiative, but was subserviant to the deity. The king wanted to be recognized as a patron of respected artists and holy men, and as a humble devotee himself Tyagaraja turned his back on this patronage which had fed his father and music guru, and he returned to the original deepest source of brahmanic authority: renunciation-- the ideal of being in the world but not of it, living beyond self-interest and attachments. He signals this by dedicating his works to Rama, and to bhakti saints from earlier times such as Purandaradasa and Bhadracalam Ramadas, not to kings. He did not want to appear as an indebted dependent or amusement for the king. It seems he felt called by a higher sense of mission than his father and music guru did. He longed for divine patronage, and sang innumerable songs to King Rama, pleading in most of them "Protect me, accept me as subject, O Divine Guardian." Tyagaraja's lifeway and work-means were ways preserving links

4.4 Profiles

4.4.1 Is Thyagaraja really great? (1990)

Rasikan

Sometime back, I remember reading Leonard Bernstein's book, "The joy of music". In it, Bernstein discusses why Beethoven is held in such esteem by western musicians. He imagines two music lovers going through an argument on the merits of various composers. One of them asserts that for sheer melody in western classic music, no one comes close to Mozart. As for innovations and path-breaking compositions, Bach reigns supreme. And for rhythm, western music cannot compare to Indian and other Eastern music. So, what is great about Beethoven? To this, the other person counters by arguing that it was Beethoven who not only exhibited the best attributes of the composers before him, but took the western music to heights never before reached. In fact, the romantic style introduced by him is a major milestone in western classic music.

Is there an analogy in South Indian classical music, *vis-a-vis* Thyagaraja.? Let us follow Bernstein's analysis. The major components of Carnatic music are: raga bhavam and talam with poetry and lyricism being some of the other components. Are Thyagaraja's compositions the best in any of these categories?

For sheer *raga bhavam*, the delineation of all elements of a major ragam in a single composition, Muthuswamy Dikshitar is peerless. As examples, just rendering *Balagopala (Bhairavi)*, *Sri Dakshinamurthe (Sankarabharanam)* or *Amba Neelayadakshi (Neelambari)* is equivalent to rendering an elaborate alapana in the respective ragams. Only Kshetragna's padams come close in depth or *raga bhavam*. With few exceptions like *Endara mahanubhavulu (Sri)* Thyagaraja's songs do not bring out all the facets of a ragam. So, if you are keeping score, it is 1 for other composers., Thyagaraja ?; well not quite zero.

Now to talam. Thyagaraja did introduce many innovations. He composed songs in which the *eduppu* is not only a quarter or half *matra* from *samam*, but even one and one half matras from the samam - e.g. *Gana murthe (Gana murthi)*, *Enta nerchina (Suddha Dhanyasi)*. But when one thinks of tala complications interwoven into a composition, Syama Sastri's name stands out. His intricacies in chapu (both 3+4 and 4+3 varieties) are simply astounding. So, here again Thyagaraja is not the unanimous choice for uno numero.

As for lyrics - honestly who cares? That is the thought that prevails when we hear the words mangled by many contemporary singers. More seriously, I have hard many Telugu scholars downplay his role in Telugu literature - there have been greater poets. For bhakthi laden music, the heart rending compositions of Bhadrachala Ramada would surely find a place at the top.

So, the basic question: "why is Thyagaraja really great?" remains unanswered. Or is it? Simply stated, while some may have excelled in a single aspect of compositions, Thyagaraja was superb in all of them. It is more than that. It was he who introduced the beautiful concept of *sangati*; e.g. *Dharini (Suddha saveri)*, *Rama nee samana (Karaharpriya)*. Many of his compositions provide nice spring boards for elaborate neravals; e.g. *kan-tiki sundara (Chakkani margamu - Karaharpriya)*, *veda sastra (Enduku peddala - Sankarabharanam)* and scores of others. He excavated and brought out the beauty of a number of ragams which were unknown before him; the most outstanding example being *Karaharpriya*. As already noted, he made many innovations in weaving the talam into his compositions.

Thyagaraja perfected the kriti format consisting of pallavi, anupallavi and charanam with the later part of the charanam having the same dhatu as the anupallavi. Almost all his compositions exhibit this basic three anga format [He himself strayed away from this mold in his pancharatna kritis (which by the way, are in a class by themselves), bhajana/utsava sampradaya kritis and a few others, notably *Brochevar evare (Sri ran-jani)*, *Sri Raghuvara (Kambhodhi)*]. His contemporary, Syama Sastry, used this structure with some embel-

4.2 Music

4.2.1 Nada Sudha Tarangini (1992)

—Nenduri Krishnamurthy

Music is the cultural heritage of humanity. It is the soul and symbol of universal fraternity. A study of music history enables us to understand the aesthetic sublimity and the ethical fragrance it has radiated through the valuable renderings (songs) of the saint poets, the Trinity of South India in particular. It is believed that the sapthaswaras originate from the five faces of Lord Siva which are called *Sadyojatha, Ag-hora, Thathpurusha, Eesana* and *Vamadeva* . (Sadyojathadi Pancha Vaktraja SA RI GA MA PA DA NI vara sapthaswara vidya lolam). Lord Thyagaraja has given the name *Saptha Swara Vidya* to music.

Nada Sudha (the nectar of Nada) is the very source of Vedas, Puranas, Agamas and all Sastras. Ragam is Kodhandam, the celebrated bow of Sri Rama; the Sapthaswaras are the seven bells which adorn his bow. The hard, soft and idiomatic styles of the sahitya (Duranayadesyamulu) are the three strands of the bow's string. Ceaseless motion (gathi) is the arrow. The chosen words spoken by Rama are the beautiful Sangathis. Therefore the worship of Nada which Thyagaraja adored is the only perennial wealth of Ramabhakthas. Thyagaraja succeeded in attaining Lord Rama's kind grace through Nadopasana. Nada is the incarnation of Rama and Nada is Rama. One is the universal Brahman, and the other is the cosmic sound - the creator and the created. Music is the language of friendship. It provides the greatest solace which no material acquisitions could ever give. It is an art which gives infinite pleasure to the mind and the heart. It is not a mere amusement or pastime, but it is a way of life leading to divine pursuits and philosophical heights which are the final and finest of life's achievements. Music is international and knows no barriers by race, religion, caste, creed or color. Musical fraternity is a universal phenomena and perhaps it is something common to the cultures of all civilized countries.

Thyagaraja was the greatest tone poet and the saint composer was kind enough to transmit the musicological wisdom for posterity. The truths enshrined in the upanishads were presented by him in an attractive manner and it is for this reason, his works as a whole are called Tyagopanishad. This is the divine charm of his compositions. These compositions have the combined grace of genius and devotion.

Nada Sudha Tarangini is a trust founded by myself with other dedicated music enthusiasts. The sacred aim of this trust is transmission of the most valuable traditional learning skills and classical techniques to the future generations mainly with a spirit of selfless service and not solely on commercial lines.

Nada Sudha Tarangini is the media for me to propagate our traditional musical heritage to the fullest advantage of the musical fraternity of the present and future. Success of this venture depends on the cooperation and constructive encouragement that I receive from all concerned always from all sides at home and abroad.

Nedunuri Krishnamurthy was the recipient of the Music Academy's foremost honor - Sangita Kalanidhi, in 1992. He has been instrumental in popularizing Annamacharya kritis. SRUTI supporters may remember the wonderful concert that he gave for SRUTI in April 1991.

4.2.2 On the Origins and Early History of the Sitar (2000)
- Allyn Miner

The sitar is the most famous instrument of North Indian classical music, so it is surprising that details about its origin and early history are not readily available even in India, let alone in the West. As a student of the sitar in India during the 1970s I became fascinated by the stories of the sitar players of past generations and was eager to find out more about the history of this wonderful instru-ment. I found that there were a number of popularly held beliefs about the age and the source of the sitar, but soon found that many of these ideas were contradicted by other accounts. I was fortunate enough to receive funding for an extended project of research, and the work became my dissertation for a Ph.D. in Musicology from Banaras Hindu Uni-versity (1982). Today I believe the subject of India's musical history is important not only for the sake of intellectual curiosity but for helping to illuminate the social and cultural complexity of India's past. This is es-pecially so in view of periodic social and religious ten-sions centered on issues of cultural history. Below I am pleased to present some of the basic points about the his-tory of the sitar and I hope this material will stimulate music lovers to think about music and society,

It is a widely held belief that the sitar was invented or introduced into India by the 14th-century poet-musician Amir Khusrau. Amir Khusrau (1253-1325), born of a Central Asian father and an Indian mother, was a renowned poet in the service of the Emperor in Delhi. In his prose and poetry he expresses deep admira-tion for Indian culture and music. We know from his writings that he was competent in Persian music as well, and he de-scribes a number of Persian instruments in his poems. He ; is often credited with the invention of the sitar, the tabla, and khyal vocal music, and is thought to have introduced new ragas into Indian music as well. While he may have made some contributions to Indian music, however, no-where in his writings do the terms "sitar" or "tabla" appear. In fact, these instruments do not appear in any writ-ten or pictorial source in India during his time. What's more, they do not appear until a date more than three hun-dred years after Amir Khusrau's death.

Written mention of the sitar first appears in the Muraqqa-i Dehli, a Persian-language work describing the city of Delhi in 1738 during the rule of the late Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah. The Muraqqa-i Dehli tells us that the leading musician of Delhi was the vina (bin) player Na'mat Khan. Na'mat Khan is still remembered by performers today as the creator of modern khyal vocal compositions, and is better known by his signature name "Sadarang." The Muraqqa-i Dehli tells us that there was a player of the sitar in Delhi, and that he was Na'mat Khan's brother. The book does not give his name, but some later oral sources tell us that Na'mat Khan's brother was named Khusrau Khan. It is probable that the sitar had entered India undocumented be-fore the 18th century,

The small three or four-stringed "setar" was a Persian and Central Asian instrument and was probably circu-lating in northwest India for some time before it reached Delhi. A regional sitar tradition in Kashmir may date to before the 18th-century. Piecing together the evidence, we must tenta-tively conclude that the sitar first appeared in Delhi in the first half of the 18th century, brought from the northwest. Na'mat Khan's brother, Khusrau Khan, made the instrument known in the Delhi court. It is not difficult to see how this man could have later been mistakenly identified with the 14th-century Amir Khusrau. An added factor would have been a general popular desire to attribute a long history to the sitar in India.

Once introduced in Delhi, which was the urban model for sophisticated life in North India, the sitar quickly spread to other cities. More easily played than the difficult bin (the North Indian or Rudra vina), the sitar was taken up by all categories of musicians. It was first used in accompaniment to singing and "nautch" dance: ...nautch girls accompany the recitative with slow and graceful movements, beating time with their feet, on which little silver bells are hung to the music of the saringee and sitar (Smith).

the dancer who explicates the verses with the help of gestures and expressions. The orchestra is made of mainly the *thoppi madalam* (a special drum) and a pair of cymbals. Ottanthullal is believed to have been devel-oped by a genius by the name of Kunchan Nambiar who lived in the 18th century. The story goes that Nambiar, who used to play the *Mizhavu* (the percussion instrument) during a *Chakyar Koothu* performance was caught taking a nap and was fired by the angry dancer. Nambiar is said to have then developed Ottanthullal overnight to present to a highly appreciative audience the very next evening. Although the truth behind the reason for the origin of Ottanthullal has been questioned, Nambiar has tried to bring out through this dance form, the social conditions of his time, including class disparities and the whims and weaknesses of the rich and influen-tial members of society.

This dance form has make-up that looks similar to that of Kathakali. A single presentation may last up to two hours in length. The dancer dances and simultaneously sings and this requires intensive training, a flexible body and a strong communicative voice. The dancer has also to rely on a good memory so he can remember and recite long verses. The emotions presented in this dance form are mainly bravery, humor, irony, anger and devotion. The erotic element is altogether absent. The dancer wears a long tape of white and red colored clothes wound around the waist to form a knee-long skirt. The vest is decorated with colored beads and glass as well as with ornaments. The face is painted green, the lips red and the eyes are highlighted with black dye. The headgear is extensive and very decorative. Bells are worn on the legs just above the calf. Unlike Kathakali or Koodiyattam, Ottanthullal does not use curtains for entry and exit or background scenes and props.

No account of the classical dances forms of Kerala can ever be complete without explicitly mentioning the important role that the Kerala Kalamandalam has played in the very existence today of these various art forms. Established by the outstanding poet scholar, Vellathol Narayana Menon along the banks of the river Bharathapuzha in Cheruthuruthy, a small village in Trissur district in 1930, this institute has played a major role in not only preserving Kerala's dance art forms, but also in training young talent and recruiting the best in Kerala to carry out the training. It also brought increased patronage and resurrected both Mohiniattam and Kathakali from near-extinction.

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“Dakshyagnam” by Kala Mandalam, Sadha-nam, Margi, and Kottakal (2005)

characters that do not have masks have specific facial colors predominantly dark green, flesh tint and deep rose. The characters of Krishna, Arjuna and Garuda wear dark blue vests and the other characters wear red vests.

The word Kathakali literally means "story play". This is a form of dance-drama which also originated in the seventeenth century in Kerala. It is believed that one of the Rajas of Kottarakara wrote the first play for Kathakali. This art form requires several years of rigorous training to attain complete control of the body and expression of emotion so as to be able to render all its nuances through facial expressions and hand gestures. Kathakali is a group performance that takes place on a temple premise or at the house of a local landlord in a temporary *pandal* (canopy) and is based on the two epics, Ramayana and Mahabharatha as well as on stories from the Puranas. The only source of light on stage during a traditional Kathakali performance is usually a big bell metal lamp placed at the center of the stage. Here again, *Kelikottu* is at about 6 PM using the *madalam*, *chengila* and *elathalam*. *Arrangukeli* announces the beginning of the performance. This consists of a pure drumming sequence and is usually followed by the *Thodayam*, a piece of abstract dance that is also invocatory in intent. This piece is performed by the junior performers in the group with very little make-up. The recitation of the *Vandanaslokam* (prayer song) is followed by *Purappad*. The intent of this piece is to introduce the main character of the story in full costume and make-up. Next comes the *Melappadam* which is a musical piece to introduce the vocalists and the drummers. The main story is then enacted which may last well into dawn. The culmination of the performance is marked by *Dhanasi* which is a pure dance number. Dance passages known as *Kalasams* or pure dance sequences are used to enhance the bhavas. There are several kinds of characters in Kathakali. These include: *Sathwika* (the hero), *Kathi* (the villain), and *Minukku* (females). Kathakali requires elaborate face make-up that has an established color code. Each character is instantly recognizable by their characteristic makeup and costume. The faces of noble male characters are predominantly green. Characters of high birth that have an evil streak are given a green make-up with red slashes on the cheeks. Extremely angry or excessively evil characters wear red make-up and a flowing red beard. Hunters have a black make-up base. Women (played by men) have yellowish faces. The materials that comprise the makeup are all locally available. The white is made from rice flour, the red is made from Vermilion. The black is made from soot. The makeup is so elaborate that it looks like a mask.

Mohiniattam is a semi-classical dance form of Kerala. It is essentially a solo dance, performed by women. The word *Mohini* means a maiden who steals the heart of the onlooker. The word Mohiniattam literally means 'Dance of the Enchantress'. This form of dance was originally called *Dasiyattam* because it originated as the temple dance performed by *Devadasis* and portrayed feminine love in its many forms - maternal, devotional and also carnal. In the main pieces of this art form, *lasya* (grace) and *sringara bhava* (facial expressions of beauty and love) are given more importance than *Nritta*. The white and gold costume, the traditional hairstyle and the highly graceful movements in medium tempo, contribute to the aesthetic effect of this art form. Mohiniattam is characterized by distinct swaying movements of the upper body. The eyes play an important role in accenting the direction of the movement. The basic dance steps of Mohiniattam are the *Adavus* - *Taganam*, *Jaganam*, *Dhaganam* and *Sammisram*. Mohiniattam is mentioned in some eighteenth century texts, but it appears that the art form was revived during the reign of Maharaja Swati Tirunal, a 19th century ruler who was a great patron of the arts. Under Swati Tirunal, Mohiniattam became popular as a solo dance tradition with musical compositions set to the Carnatic style of music and a distinct repertoire. Over the past few decades, the repertoire of Mohiniattam has been developed and expanded by dedicated performers who have ensured that this beautiful dance style retains a distinct identity among the classical dance styles of India. Apart from mythology, Mohiniattam contains a range of themes from nature. The language used in the lyrics is an aesthetic mixture of Malayalam and Sanskrit called Manipravalam

Ottanthulal is known for its simplicity of presentation style among all the classical dance forms of Kerala and evolved as part of social reformation. It is a solo performance combining dance and verbal recitation. This type of performance is frequently staged during temple festivals. Mythology combined with distinct humor, satire and social criticism form the basis of this art form. The accompanying musicians sing the verses with

In this role the early sitar shared with the sarangi and the tabla a reputation of social disreputability that attached to courtesan music in the 19th century, Gradually, however, as it was taken up by professionals who applied the techniques of the revered bin to it, the sitar attained the respectability of a solo instrument. Within less than a hundred years of its first introduction in Delhi, it had become North India's most popular instrument. In 1834 the writer Captain Augustus Willard writes: The Sitar is very much admired, is used by both professional men and amateurs, and is really a very pleasing toned instrument in the hands of an expert performer (Willard).

Eventually, as techniques became more and more advanced, the sitar came to replace the bin as the foremost solo instrument for classical music.

The story of the sitar's acceptance in North India illuminates the social history of the time. Music and musical instruments from Persian, Central Asian, and Turkish sources entered North India via different routes between the 11th and the 16th centuries as did many other aspects of material and intellectual life from West Asia. Language, dress, food, painting, textiles, and religious, political and social ideas come immediately to mind. Some elements survived in nearly original form, others disappeared entirely, while many more took various forms as they were adapted to the regional environments of India. The sitar first came as the small four-stringed Persian instrument. Indian musicians modified it to suit their musical requirements. The narrow neck was widened and lengthened, the silk frets were replaced with raised metal bars, and the narrow bridge was replaced by a flat platform bridge. All of these changes were based on the physical features of the Indian bin, the most admired instrument of India's courtly past. The instrument and its music thus were a brilliant combination of old and new, a microcosm of North Indian culture.

A solo classical style of compositions and improvisations for the sitar, called "gattoda," was first created in ; the late 18th-century by Masit Khan, a Delhi musician. We know very little about him, but he is credited with giving a foundation of dhrupad court music to sitar playing. His style of slow and medium-paced compositions (gat) and variations (toda) was further developed by musicians in Jaipur and other centers, especially in Rajasthan. It became known as the "Masitkhani" or "Delhi baj" (style) and exemplified a courtly style of refined sophistication. One of the greatest players of this style was the sitarist Amritsen (1814-93) who impressed musicians and audiences wherever he went. His patron, Ram Singh of Jaipur, when asked by the Gwalior Maharajah to let Amritsen move there, replied "If you take Amritsen then take me also." (Sastri)

To the east in Lucknow and Banaras in the mid 19th century, a second gat style emerged whose best known composer was Ghulam Raza Khan. This colorful and by some accounts corrupt figure was a favorite of the Lucknow ruler, Nawab Wajid Ali Shah. The Nawab was a fervent patron of arts and entertainment in a period when the rising British power left many hereditary rulers politically weak. The Nawab supported a host of singers, instrumentalists, and dancers in his court and lavished attention and wealth on them. The British Resident's opinion of the Nawab's behavior was unfavorable: "the present King has, from the time he ascended the throne, manifested a determination to take no share what-ever in the conduct of affairs; to spend the whole of his time among singers and eunuchs, and the women they provide for his amusement" (Sleeman)

Ghulam Raza was eventually exiled for misconduct, and Nawab Wajid Ali Shah was deposed by the British in 1856, but he had given a tremendous boost to the development of new styles of music and dance. Amorous-themed thumri songs, kathak dance, and virtuosic tabla playing were highly cultivated during his time. The sitar styles of alap inspired by the music of the bin, and the fast and entertaining gats of Ghulam Raza based on thumri music were gifts of the eastern style or "purab baj" sitar players. In the 19th century the sitar exemplifies the intrigues and delights of the fading courts of North India.

Here creativity, luxury, and exuberant entertainment were celebrated on the backdrop of drastic political

change. After the breakup of the Lucknow court, many musicians moved to the large growing urban centers of business and education. Bombay and Calcutta became leading centers for music, and they offered new sources of support through re-cently founded English-style schools and public institutions. In the changed environment of public audiences and growing amateur interest, musicians struggled to adapt. Until now, music was a hereditary profession. Disciples were typically from within the family and the expected source of a musician's livelihood was the nurturing protection of the elite patron. Now, music began to be taken up by new middle and upper classes. Seen by them as an important aspect of their cultural heritage, music found a place in the large-scale "cultural renaissance" and the nationalist movements that were so important in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The sitar became an emblem of upper and middle class urban culture. Manuals on learning to play proliferated. The sitar was built in many sizes and shapes and was now available in different models, as appropriate to a variety of musical uses - from school learning to parlor music to theatricals to elite solo performance.

The sitarists who emerged as great figures in the early twentieth century were those who were able to carry their music to large public audiences and to use the technology of gramophone recording to their advantage. One of the most brilliant and successful sitarists of this period was Inayat Khan (1895- 1938), son of the great Imdad Khan (c. 1848-1920). Imdad Khan had been one of the earliest sitarists recorded by the Gramophone Company of England in 1905. Inayat Khan in turn traveled extensively around India, incorporated a number of the musical genres of the time into his playing, and synthesized it into the most innovative sitar music of the day. Many of the techniques that today's sitarists consider standard were contributions of Inayat Khan. His style of tans, jhala, and tihai, for example, were formative for 20th-century playing. His popularity was unprecedented because of the reach of his music through recordings.

As the sitar entered the era of Indian Independence and post World War II technology, it came to exemplify yet another stage of India's social history. Air travel, international exchange, the new media of radio and TV, and availability of new recording techniques were all factors in the introduction of the sitar to Europe and the U.S. In the hands of Pandit Ravi Shankar the sitar came to embody the "Indian sound" for millions of young people all over the world. Is it just a matter of chance that it was the sitar that carried North India's music to the world? The early history of this instrument shows it to have continually adapted to the environments changing around it. International success seems only a natural extension of this history. Thus as India itself has become a global power, the instrument continues to embody the history of the culture out of which it came.

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4.3.4 Classical Dance Art Forms of Kerala (2004)

Kala Menon

The state of Kerala is the narrow coastal strip situated in the southern most part of India. Bordered by the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea, it is well-known for its distinctiveness in language, attire, art forms and its humble yet exotic geography. It is the land where Ayurveda took its roots, where the influence of Sanskrit is obvious and where Adi Shankara, the exponent of Advaita philosophy was born. Kerala is a melting pot where several ethnic and religious groups such as Hindus, Christians, Jews and Muslims co-exist. There are at least about 35 different tribal people in this state. The state is a priceless repository of several different classical and folk dance art forms that not only represent preserved tradition but also the welcoming of outside influences.

Kerala has a long cultural tradition associated with the temple that has witnessed the evolution of the different classical dance art forms. *Kootham-balams* or temple-theaters are unique architectural institutions within the precincts of Kerala's temples that are marvels of structural workmanship that surpass their modern counterparts with respect to acoustics and illumination. The *Kootham-balams* are elaborately decorated with plantain trees, bunches of tender coconut and coconut leaves in preparation for a performance. The stage itself, however, is generally kept very simple. This is the theatre where kings and ministers, aristocrats, scholars, warriors, poets and intellectuals gathered to witness dance and music performances. Kerala has five main classical dance art forms: Koodiyattam, Krishnattam, Kathakali, Mohiniattam and Ottamthulal.

The only surviving link we have with the traditional Sanskrit dance-drama of India is the *Koodi-yattam* which has flourished in the *Koothambalams* of Kerala since before the tenth century A.D. *Koodiyattam* literally means "dancing together". It is *Kathakali's* 2000 year-old predecessor. Kulashekhara Varma Cheraman Perumal, an ancient King of Kerala, is believed to be the creator of this art form. It is strictly staged in accordance with the tenets of Sage Bharatha's *Natysasthra* and deals with the plays of eminent Sanskrit dramatists such as Bhasa, Harsha, Kalidasa, and Saktibhadra. Traditionally, the performers have been members of the *Chakiar* and *Nambiar* castes (temple castes of Kerala). *Chakiars* enact the male roles and the *Nangiar*s (women of *Nambiar*) take female roles. The actors and actresses render verbal acting in stylized Sanskrit and in Prakrit (a colloquial form of Sanskrit). Dramatic gesture language, chanting, exaggerated expressions of the face and eyes, together with elaborate head-dress and make-up are integral parts of this art form. A *Vidooshaka* (royal clown) humorously tells the audience in the local language, Malayalam, the thematic development of the text. Music is provided by the *mizhavu* drums, the small cymbals called *idakka*, *kuzhal* - an oboe like wind instrument, and the *shankha* or conch shell. Performances usually last several days, the first few days being devoted to introductions of the characters and incidents from their lives. The theme for the rest of the days is based on mythology.

Krishnattam, another form of group dance-drama is yet another fore-runner to *Kathakali* in its origin, and is performed in the well-known Krishna temple in Guruvayoor. It is based on the Sanskrit poem, *Krishnagiti*. This dance form is believed to have been created by a Zamorin king, Raja Manaveda, in the seventeenth century after a miraculous vision of Krishna at the Guruvayoor temple. The traditional performance lasts for eight days and is presented as a sequence of eight plays that cover the whole span of Krishna's life from his birth or *Avataram* to *Swargarohanam* or ascension to the heavens. *Kelikottu* is the first event of the evening carried out at around 6 PM by playing the drums (*maddalam*), cymbals (*ilathalam*) and the gong (*chengila*) at the East *Nada* or entrance to the temple to inform the neighborhood about the performance scheduled for the night between 9 and 10 PM. A lamp is then lit in the make-up room at dusk. The actors start their make-up with the actors sitting around the lamp. As soon as the Sanctum Sanctorum is closed at the end of all the daily rituals, the *Kali Vilaku* (a huge oil lamp) is lit in front of the performance area from the lamp in the make-up room. The musical instruments are now brought to the stage and the musicians take their respective positions. The text of the plays is sung in the soprano style by two main singers. The visual effect is enhanced by varied and colorful facial make-up with larger-than-life masks made of light wood and cloth padding. The

and grace, Smt. Rukmini Devi constructed, so to say, a well defined structure and gave the basic steps a beautiful shape. Each student was made to understand mentally each *adavu* from the starting position of the feet and hand gestures, to the finishing position and the stages through which the feet and the hands move during the process. So much so, each basic unit (*adavu*) became a well defined, finished product, like a geometrical construction with a touch of grace. The student was expected to execute this bodily, of course in three speeds, with grace and elegance. This systematic approach has helped as a guide line for the teachers and the taught and has also helped in maintaining discipline and a high standard. Besides, it has also brought about a uniformity amongst the students. Stress was also made on foot postures like *Ayata*, *Alida*, *Prenkana*, *Swash-kaek*. Other aspects on which stress is made are (One is at a loss to find the exact equivalents in English for these Tamil expressions):

1. *Kullukku Nadai* (gait with a graceful jerk)
2. *Azutham* (firmness)
3. *Valaivu* (bend)
4. *Saivu* (slant)

If assiduously practiced, this rigorous training enables the student to execute these movements in various combinations with facility and ease. These details, though apparently minor, add a tremendous lot of beauty and grace to the total presentation, be it an *adavu*, or an item. In essence, the *nritta* aspect is treated with special care with an emphasis on *angasuddham*.

(3). *Nritya*:- The *abhinaya* part comes much later in the training period of a student. The usual theme of 'Shringara' is dealt with subtly and suggestively. The Nayaki- Nayak bhava is given a philosophical interpretation, "The Jeevatma yearning to attain unison with the Paramatma." The pieces chosen for abhinayas are always deities of well known Kshetras and the Nayika of the Uttama type is the preferred choice. Emphasis on Bhakti Bhava is made. This is more so while teaching the young teenagers who were able to gain mastery over *Nritta*, but were not mature enough to understand the nuances of the Nayak-Nayaki theme. Themes for abhinaya, body movements, and other ideas not considered to be refined were carefully avoided. Care was taken not to expose the children, especially, to any vulgarity of ideas. This attitude was perhaps a great necessity in those days so that the art would gain acceptance amongst the people and an essentially conservative society.

(4). Choreography:- Smt Rukmini Devi's Choreographic works are matchless. Her dance drama productions stand testimony to this fact. She was the one who opened the eyes of the students to learn and appreciate the beauty of the sculptures, painting, etc., and its close link with the art of dance. In spite of this fact, she had reservations in incorporating those "Sculpturesque poses" in her choreography in the dime-a-dozen style. The various postures of Lord Nataraja, for instance, were taught to be dealt with care, awe and reverence. Perhaps, Brahma the sculptor of the human form fared badly as against man, the sculptor on stone. While the made to measurement madanikas, apsaras, Gods and goddesses that are found in all tile temples of our country are stunningly beautiful, sheer joy and treat for the eyes, the same when translated on to We human form, was not always all that appealing (but for some exceptions)!

Because of the great effort and pioneering work done by Smt. Rukmini Devi, the art of Bharatanatya has gained tremendous popularity and wide acceptance in the present day society. Perhaps some rigid views which were a necessity for the acceptability of art in those days, are irrelevant in the present day atmosphere. Perhaps an overstress on aspects like *angasuddha* deterred the growth of abhinaya; perhaps the choosiness of themes strangled the growth of the repertoire. These aspects could be reconsidered and modified in the present day context. However, the institution she struggled to build over 50 and odd years, has evolved a style of its own, a methodology of teaching which is worthy of merit, and should continue from one student generation to the next. Could this be called the Kalakshetra Bani?

Vasantha Vedam, a dance teacher from Bangalore, was trained at Kalakshetra and a disciple of Rukmini Devi Arundel.

4.2.3 The Differences between Western Classical and Carnatic Music (2002)

- Janani Prabhakar

What is music? It is defined as a "form of art with vocal, instrumental, or mechanical sounds having rhythm melody, or harmony"(Merriam- Webster). This definition can be applied to music around the world. The factors that make each form of music different are the themes, compositions, modes, and structures used in each particular art form. These varying factors make the music from the country unique and also help identify its people's culture and lifestyle. Being a student of both South Indian and Western classical music, the difference between these two art forms has been, for me, a very intriguing concept. The variations between the two forms, conflicting in their themes, composition, modes, and structure, help to bring out their individual beauty. Western classical music is "equally tempered" with 12 keys per octave; where as Indian classical music is "just tempered" with 22 keys per octave. In western classical music, an equally tempered key means that an octave is divided into twelve geometrically equal keys, each key separated by a specific ratio. This is not the case in Indian classical music where a lot of oscillations of the note and nuances are required while rendering the music. Hence twelve keys per octave are not sufficient. A just tempered scale is one where the octave is not divided into equal keys, but where the specific ratio that separates the keys is variable. This requires each individual key to be tuned separately. When playing a piano, which uses the "equally tempered" scale, the notes jump from one to another, while in Indian classical music, the notes flow through the frequencies and require many more keys to incorporate microtones like gamakas, which are not found in Western classical music. This is a major difference between Indian and Western Music. Another distinct difference between the two art forms is that Western classical music can be harmonious while Carnatic music cannot. Harmony is produced in two ways. One-way is when several instruments play different melodies simultaneously as in an orchestra. Harmony is also produced when two or more tones (chords) are played at the same time. By using chords, one can produce harmonious sounds. Chords, orchestra and harmony are absent in Indian classical music. Carnatic music is melodious. Melody is a "rhythmic succession of single tones organized as an aesthetic whole" (Merriam-Webster). Several notes are never played at the same time in Carnatic music. Western music is more harmony-based than melody-based; where as, Carnatic music is solely melody-based. In western classical music, the keys are labeled with letters of the alphabet. In Indian classical music, the keys are labeled with syllables. We call these seven syllables (sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, da, ni) "Saptha Swaras or Seven Notes. This notation is known as Solfege notation. It is a set of syllables that help describe musical melody. This same kind of notation is also found in Western Music which is given as do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti. Instead of singing notes like "C, C sharp, E flat," one can sing, "do, fa, la" instead. This makes it easier on the performer. The difference here is that the Solfege notation found in Indian classical music represents the keys; while in Western classical music they do not. They are merely substitutions for the keys. Music is an art that can take many shapes and forms in various countries. Learning Indian classical music helps me to understand the people and culture of India. Western classical music gives me a connection to the world in which I am growing up. The differences between Indian and Western classical music help to bring out their individual aesthetic beauty.

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Janani Prabhakar is a junior member of the library, committee. She is eleventh grade honor student attending Upper Dublin High School. She has been learning carnatic music for several years.

4.2.4 The Musical Works of Thyagaraja (2003)

Prabhakar Chitrapu

How many songs did Thyagaraja write? One comes across various numbers: Some claim that he wrote 22,400 songs, equal in number to the slokas in Valmiki's Ramayana. Others maintain that the number is around 1000. Still others say that only some 800 songs are available. So, I got rather curious and began to list all the songs systematically. I consulted the following well known books on Thyagaraja:

- [1] C. Ramanujachari, The Spiritual Heritage of Thyagaraja, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1981.
- [2] T.K. Govinda Rao, Compositions of Thyagaraja, Ganamandir Publications, India, 1995.
- [3] Bhavaraju Narasimharao, T.S. Parthasarathy, "Sangita Jagadguru Sri Thyagaraja Kirtanalu" (in Telugu), Triveni Publishers, Machilipatnam, 1988. Part-1,2,3
- [4] Kalluri Veerabhadra Shastri, "Thyagaraja Keertanulu," published by Swadharma Swaarajya Sanghamu, 10 Padma Rao Nagar, Secunderabad, AP & 95 Broadway, Chennai 1, 1975.
- [5] N.C. Parthasarathy, Dwaraka Parthasarathy, "Thyagaraja Kirthanalu", Part I & II, (in Telugu), Tagore Publishing House, Hyderabad, 1994.

I came up with a total of **710 songs**. I must mention that there are some factors that may render this number inaccurate. The first obvious factor is that my search may not be comprehensive. Secondly, there are several songs that are believed to have been composed by others - with Thyagaraja mudra! Why did they do this - to immortalize themselves in a wrong way? Who were these people - clearly they must have been very capable musicians that lived after Thyagaraja's death (1847) and we know most of them by name! The books referenced above claim a total of 23 songs whose authenticity is doubtful. They are: Abhimanamu ledemi (Andali), Diname Sudinamu (Latangi), Elara Sri Krishna (Kambhoji), Endu Bayara Daya Inakulathilaka Daya (Dhanyasi), Evarunnaru (Malavasri), Ganamurthe (Ganamurthy), Garudagamana (Gowri Manohari), Maaravairi (Nasikabhushani), Nata Jana (Simhendramadhyamam), Ni Balama Nama Balama (Anandabhairavi), Paraamukhamelara (Surati), Paripurna Kama (Hamsabhrmari), Parulanu Vedanu (Balahamsa), Raghunayaka (Hamsadhwani), Rama Namamu (Atana), Ranganaayaka (Sankarabharanam), Sarasa Netra (Sankarabharanam), Sarasiruha Nayane (Amritavarshini), Tarama Ni Mahima (Kalyani), Vanaja Nayanudani (Kedara Gowla), Vedalenu (Todi), Vinatasuta (Harikambhoji) and Nidu Charana (Simhendramadhyamam).

In any case, the songs available fall into some natural categories. In no specific order, we begin with the set of five matchless, monumental, demanding Carnatic music compositions, namely the **Ghana Raga Pancharatna Kritis**. Whether these were treated as such a set at the time of Thyagaraja is a valid question. The answer that I often come across is "No. They were first so treated by Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer in early 20th century".

Two musical operas written by Thyagaraja are available, namely **Nauka Charitram and Prahlada Bhakti Vijayam**. (He is said to have written a third opera "Sita Rama Vijayam" which is not available today). They contain 20 & 42 songs respectively. Nauka Charitram is a light-hearted account of how Krishna goes out on a boat ride with several Gopikas, when the boat gets caught in a storm. I do find this to be a very unique theme among all of Thyagaraja's works, in that it is rather secular in spirit and not heavy with devotion or vairagya. In fact, we even see traces of romance in some of the songs, which I found nowhere else in his compositions. Nice to know that Thyagaraja was also human!

Then we have the popular, relatively easier set of compositions called **Utsava/Bhajana Sampradaya Kirtanas**. How many songs form this set? My search came up with 29 songs in this category: They are - in sequence:- Hechcharikaga Rara (Yadukulakambhoji), Koluvaivunnade (Devagandhari), Sita Kalyana (Sankarabharanam), Napali Sri Rama (Sankarabharanam), Nagumomu Galavani (Madhyamavati), Jaya Mangalam Nitya Subha Mangalam (Ghanta), Jaya Mangalam Nitya Subha Mangalam (Nadanamakriya), Patiki Haratiire (Surati), Sobhane (Pantuvareli), Aragimpave (Todi), Pula Panpu (Ahiri), Badalika Dira (Ritigowla), Uyyala Lugavayya (Nilambari),

culture. And I am sure, this culturally rich society will live forever given the unstinted efforts by the younger generation.

Ramaa Subramanian is a Bharatanatyam dancer who has recently moved to the Delaware Valley. A disciple of Chitra Visweswaran. Ramaa is clearly multi talented as evidenced from her article above and she is also a teacher of Bharatanatyam



Chitra Vishweshwaran and troupe

4.3.4 Evolution of The Kalakshetra style (1996)

Vasantha Vedom

The history of dance known as 'Sadir' in the good old days which was renamed 'Bharata Natya' in later years, is well known. Smt. Rukmini Devi was one of the pioneers who made the bold venture to learn this art directly from the Nattuvanan clan. The spiritualness of this divine art was a great source of inspiration to her. She was able to perceive the greatness and richness of this art form and strove hard to pull it up from the quagmire into which it was sinking, and in the process had to face a lot of stiff opposition from then prevailing social communities. It was under such a scenario that an institution called 'Kalakshetra' was founded by her in the year 1936.

Rukmini Devi had learnt the art directly from her Guru Sri. Pandanallur Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai, as was the normal practice in those days. After having established the school, she felt the need for a format for training the students who sought admission in the school. This study has slowly led to the evolution of a technique or a methodology in teaching which has now come to be known as the 'Kalakshetra Style. '

The ideology on which the teaching pattern is based, can be summarized as follows:

(1) Basic Philosophy:- Kalakshetra has established a basic philosophy, the spiritualness of the art form, be it dance, music, etc., that Natyas akin to 'Yoga', that it should be given the excited status of the Vedas. This philosophy was inculcated into the young minds of the students. This stress on the spiritualness of the art is perhaps, a necessity, considering the degradation into which the art was drowned in those days, and also to make it more acceptable to the society which was greatly prejudiced towards this art. Hence, the entire training of the student was built on this philosophy.

(2) Nritta:- The student is first introduced to the basic exercises, i.e. the *adavus* which is the usual practice everywhere. While training had to be imparted to the students, it became necessary for the teachers to have a clear idea of the working or execution of each basic step or an *adavu*. Hence, with an expert eye for beauty

4.3.2 The Place of Music in Dance (1992)

Ramaa Subramanian

The test of a country's greatness, its culture and its civilization lies in its fine arts. Art is one of those ideas which evade clear definition, Being abstract in its nature, it does not lend itself to be expressed in concrete things which our logical mind can easily grasp. All the same, several definitions have been given, each having a bearing on some special aspect of culture in its most general sense. Goethe called it "the magic of the soul". Schiller thought of it as "which gives man his last dignity". Carlisle says "In all true works of art, you will discern eternity looking through time, the God-like rendered visible". Wagner, a famous German composer says that, "Music is a highest manifestation of the communal life in man". Many other poets and scholars have given similar descriptions of art

Viewed from this angle, India emerges as one of the most cultured nations in the world. Art in India has always been considered a path of realization of the ultimate reality. Art in India is a sacred vocation. It was considered a method of approach to God-head.

Dance is a composite art enfolding in its range several other fine arts as well. Of course, music goes with dance. There can be music without dance but no dance without music. Whether it is classical dance, war dance, folk dance or tribal dance, there is always some kind of music in the background. The term "Sangeetham" in Sanskrit includes vocal music, instrumental music and dance. Therefore, in Sanskrit, there is no need to mention music and dance separately.

The Natyasastra of Bharatha is the first available work which deals comprehensively with dramatarzy in all its aspects. Seven chapters of the work (Chapters 28 to 34) have been apportioned by Bharatha to music in the theatre. He gives a very detailed account of pure music which has formed the basis for greater works like the "Sangeetha Ratnakara" of Sarangadeva, The particular melodies that have to be employed for the production of particular rasas have been explained by Bharatha in his work. The depiction of rasas is very important for dance as the very purpose of dance is the production of casas, which is called "Rasothpathi" or "Rasanishpathi".

The above aspect inspired many of the finest musician composers to create exquisite specimens suited for dance. In olden days, patronage from the kings encouraged scholars, musicians and dancers alike. This atmosphere kindled the musicians to compose some of the best 'padas' from the melodic standpoint which are aptly suitable for rendering 'abhinaya'. These padas seem to be ideal for dance owing to the presence of emotional sentiment like spiritual love.

Great composers like Kshetrayya, the musical Trinity, Swati Tirunal, the Tanjore Quartet, Melattur Venkatarama Sastri, Purandaradasa, Jayadeva, etc., have been the architects of some of the scintillating pieces, captivating the imaginations of the dancers to choreograph. This leaves us with no choice but to believe in the ultimate truth - the inarticulate language of 'raga' has the unique power to express more by suggestion, the deepest and the subtlest of the feelings, which articulate words fail to comprehend. Examples of some masterpieces are the Todi varnam, "Roopamu Juchi", by Muthuswami Dikshitar, and the Huseni Svarajathi by Virabadrayya [Shobha Sharma danced to this piece in her performance for SEWAA on 16 Nov. Ramaa's review of the performance is published elsewhere. Ed.]

The place of music in dance remains unchanged in this contemporary world. The traditions still continue as the dancers of the twentieth century are seen performing to the splendid compositions like the Mohana Kalyani Thillana and Charukesi Varnam of the violin maestro Lalgudi Sri G. Jayaraman and Sri Balamuralikrishna's Thillanas and so on.

It is now in our hands to preserve these two art forms as they wade through the complexities of the modern

Lali Lali Yani Yuchare (Harikambhoji), Lali Lalayya Lali (Kedara Gowla), Rama Sri Rama Lali (Sankarabharanam), Lali Yugave (Nilambari), Sri Rama Rama Sri Maanasaabdhi Soma (Nilambari), Rama Rama Rama Lali Sri Rama Rama Rama Laavanya Lali (Sahana), Jo Jo Jo Rama (Ritigowla), Melukovayya (Bhouli), Meluko Dayanidhi (Sowrashtra), Raksha Bettare (Bhairavi), Janakinayakunaku Jaya Mangalam (Dhanyasi), Ma Ramachandruniki Jaya Mangalam (Kedaragowla), Patiki Mangala Haarathire Bhamalaara (Arabhi), Lali Gunasali (Kedaragowla) and Makulamunakihapara Mosagina Niku Mangalam Subha Mangalam (Surati). Please note that 3 of the above are also counted in Nauka Charitram or Prahlada Bhakti Vijayam operas.

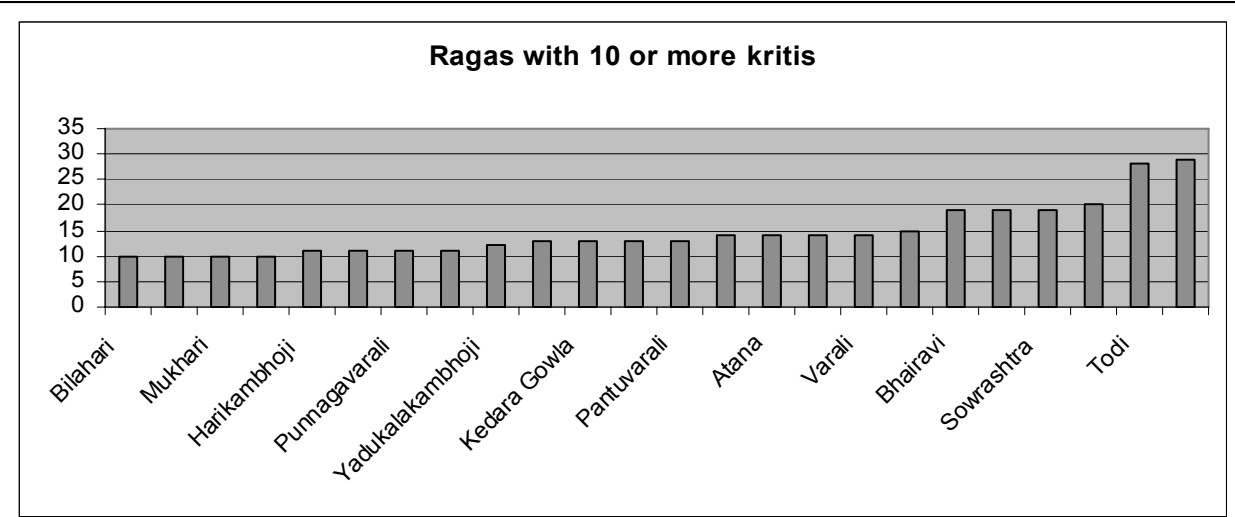
Next, there is a set of songs referred to as *Divya Nama Kirtanas*, which number a total of 75 according to Kalluri Veerabhadra Sastry. Most of them are about Sri Rama, with a couple being about Tulasi etc. In terms of musical sophistication and complexity, I would think they rank between Utsava/Bhajana Sampradaya Kirtanas and the 'formal kritis' (heavy weights!). They range from simple songs like Dasaratha Nandana (Asaveri) to stately ones such as Re Maanasa Chintaya, Sri Ramaam (Todi).

Among the remaining '*formal kritis*', one can identify a number of groups of kritis. For instance, there are the *Sthala Compositions* written when Thyagaraja was visiting various places (generally around temples). Among them are the well known Pancharatnas (sets of 5 kritis): Srirangam Pancharatnas in praise of Lord Ranganaju/Ranganatha; Lalgudi Pancharatnas in praise of Goddess Sri Lalitha and Lord Iswara (the Sanskrit name for Lalgudi is Tapas Tirtha, which appears in the kriti lyrics); Thiruvottiyur Pancharatnas in praise of Tripura Sundari (when Thyagaraja visited Vina Kuppayyar at Thiruvottiyur, 6 miles north of Chennai); Kovur Pancharatnas in praise of Lord Siva/Sundareswara (when Thyagaraja visited Sundara Mudaliar at Kovur, 15 miles south of Chennai). At a few other places, Thyagaraja composed songs in praise of the local deity, although not in sets of 5. For instance, he composed 3 songs in Kanchi, 2 songs in Tirupati and 1 song at the Parthasarathy temple at Thiruvallikkeni in Chennai.

There is another interesting collection of kritis on the Divine Sage Narada. They consist of: Narada Ganalola (Atana), Naradaguruswami (Darbar), Sri Narada Muni (Bhairavi), Sri Narada Nada Sarasiruha (Kaanada), Vada Narada (Vijaya Sri) and Narada muni vedalina in Patuvarali.

Of course, one can go on driven by one's own fancy and come up with various other classes of songs such as Songs about Rama, Songs about other Gods/Goddesses, Songs about People, Songs about his own Life, Songs of Longing and Pleading, etc etc. I shall not bore you with such exercises. But one class does seem to have some merit, namely *Songs about Music & Musicians*. Thyagaraja composed a number of beautiful songs about nature of music - swaras, tala, laya-, about musicians that he revered, about how music should be sung, about how it originates in the human body as well as the concepts of primordial form of sound and music, namely Nada. The ones that I could identify are: Nada loludai (Kalyana Vasantham), Nadopasanache (Begada), Nada Tanum (Chittaranjani), Nada Sudha Rasam (Arabhi), Swara Raga Sudha (Sankarabharanam), Vidulaku Mrok-keda (Mayalawagowla), Raga sudha rasa (Andolika), Samaja Varagamana (Hindolam), Mokshamu Galada (Saramati) and Vararagalaya (Chenchukambhoji).

Having spent this much time on getting an idea of the totality of songs that Thyagaraja wrote, let us now look at the *Ragas* that he composed in. According to my count, he composed in 215 ragas. I constructed the following graph to show some of the ragas in which he composed 10 or more songs.



It is interesting to see that Sankarabharanam tops the list, followed by Todi. Were these Thyagarja's favorite Ragas? In a conversation with Sanjay Subramaniam, he cautioned me about such conclusions: One must keep in mind that these numbers include simpler kirtanas (of which there are quite a few in Sankarabharanam) as well as heavy kritis. If one looks at the weightier compositions, Todi would be first.

Of the remaining, there are:

9 kritis each in Asaveri, Ghanta and Surati;

8 kritis each in Balahamsa and Dhanyasi;

7 kritis each in Huseni, Kambhoji and Saranga;

6 kritis in Nilambari;

5 kritis each in Desya Todi, Gowlipantu, Sri Ranjani, Suddhasaveri and Yamuna Kalyani ;

4 kritis each in Ahiri, Anandabhairavi, Kannada, Mayamalava Gowla and Narayana Gowla;

3 kritis each in Bangala, Devamanohari, Janaranjani, Jayamanohari, Kuntalavarali, Nayaki, Purnachandrika, Purvikalyani, Sri and Suddha Bangala;

2 kritis each in Abhogi, Amir Kalyani, Chakravakam, Chandrajyoti, Chayatarangini, Garudadhvani, Gowri Manohari, Hamsadhwani, Hindolam, Isamanohari, Jaganmohani, Kaanada, Kalavati, Kalyana Vasantam, Kannadagowla, Kantamani, Kedara, Khamas, Kiranavali, Kokiladhwani, Latangi, Malavasri, Nadanamakriya, Narayani, Nata, Natakuranji, Navarasa Kannada, Phalamanjari, Ragapanjaram, Ravichandrika, Salaga Bhairavi, Sama, Simhendramadhyamam, Sindhuramakriya, Suddha Desi and Vasanta Bhairavi;

and just 1 kriti in each of these ragas: Abheri, Amritavahini, Amritavarshini, Andali, Andolika, Bahudari, Bhavapriya, Bhinna Shadja, Bhouli, Bhupalam, Bhushavali, Bindumalini, Brindavanasaranga, Cenciruti, Charukesi, Chaya Nata, Chenchukambhoji, Chittaranjini, Churnika, Devakriya, Devamritavarshini, Dhenuka, Dipaka, Divyamani, Gambhiravani, Ganamurthy, Ganavaridhi, Gangeyabhushani, Ghurjari, Gopikavasantam, Gowla, Gowri, Gundakriya, Hamsabhrmari, Hamsanadam, Hemavathi, Hindola Vasantam, Jaya Narayani, Jayantasena, Jayantasri, Jhankaradhwani, Jingla, Jujahuli, Kaikavasi, Kalakanti, Kalanidhi, Kalgada, Kamala Manohari, Kapinara-yani, Kedaram, Kesari, Kiravani, Kokilapriya, Kokilavarali, Kolahalam, Kunjari, Lalita, Maaruva Dhanyasi, Malavi, Malaya Marutam, Manavati, Mandari, Mangalakaisiki, Manirangu, Manjari, Manohari, Manoranjani, Mararanjani, Margahindolam, Naadavaraangini, Nabhomani, Nadavarangini, Naga Gandhari, Naganandini, Nagaswaravali,

The dance drama *Bharati Khanda Bhartam* had a lot of folk dances. Its theme involved a social subject - the eradication of caste and creed. People cannot simply accept this subject and usually say "it was not in the classical idiom" -- just a phrase.

In the U.S. there are many dance enthusiasts but not enough teachers to teach them. There are also teachers with only limited experience.

As long as you don't commercialize the art it is okay. If someone who has learned dancing long time ago, starts to teach in order to inculcate interest in children, the effort must be appreciated. Of course, you must have a good teacher to expect good result.

After travelling in the U.S. what are you impressions?

If possible, we want to get more and more to the American, European and Canadian audiences, because that is where you have to break the barrier and tell them what Indian dance is.

What elements do you find in Western dance that you can appreciate?

A lot. First of all, there is the discipline, absolute mastery and control over their body and movements, which we have as Angikabhinaya. This is just one of the 4-fold elements of Indian dancing. What we have is the element of spirituality coming into the dancing.

Do you think that perhaps Indian dancers could do others forms of exercise to strengthen their bodies and improve their stamina?

Stamina comes to us with practice. For us, Yoga and dancing is enough.



SRUTI members with Vasanthalakshmi and Narasimhachari after their concert in 1991.

lovely item?

When you choreograph, it starts as an idea in you. You build it up into a story or choose the right theme. Everything on stage has to be done in movement - and movement that would be convincing. Almost each aspect is a challenge in itself to depict. When it comes to performance, in a dance drama, you work on a definite theme. You have to portray a definite character, and you have to think like that character. In a solo performance, it is more of the self and the soul coming out, because the themes are like that -- devotional.

Does a really good dancer need to be a choreographer to be a true artist?

In order to express yourself completely and wholly, you have to be a choreographer yourself -- at least to the extent of being able to communicate and express what your feelings are. Choreography, when you say it in that specific sense, would require a lot more skill and usually the dancer has to depend on others. But if you would like to concentrate on being a solo performer, it is enough - as long as you are aware of what you are doing and can, if necessary, choreograph. A lot of improvisation has to be done on stage, depending on your mood, the time available and the audience reciprocation. So when you have that freedom to improvise, unless you have the capacity, you cannot make use of it.

What aspects can a dance drama bring out more vividly than a solo performance, and what kinds of bhavas is each capable of arousing in the audience?

A dance drama is spectacular and arrests the attention. You don't have to imagine the characters; there are people for every one of them. Anyone and everyone can understand and appreciate them and hence their participation is more. But in a solo performance, a single dancer must be portray all characters. She must be good enough to engage the attention of the audience - especially during a long item like a Varnam.

How can the height to which a really good solo performance compare..

You cannot really compare them in that way. For example, when you read the story of the Ramayana to a five-year old child, her understanding of the story is different from that of a teenager, an adult, an elderly person or a scholar. When you enact the Ramayana on stage, you must be able to offer something to each one at their level. In a dance drama, you are able to do so. Whereas in a solo performance the person also must have the capacity to receive, especially when it comes to deeper themes like the Nayaka-Nayika expression. But when it comes to sublime enjoyment, it always comes down to the individual's capacity to understand and receive.

About future trends .. There is a mushrooming of students and teachers, dance dramas, performances on T. V. Does the better awareness include a better understanding of the finer nuances of the art form?

Technically, yes. All the students are more inquisitive and want to know what they are doing. We encourage them to ask questions. The audience itself has seen a lot more, whether they know more or not. One of the negative points is that they have preformed notions. They would have seen someone dance and liked it, or they would have been told that a particular style is the best. They refuse to see or accept anything else. They must be open-minded and go to performances with knowledge of the basics.

Dancers today are trying to stretch the limit of innovation. At the same time adherence to tradition is a strong instinct. How should they find a balance?

If what you mean by tradition is what has evolved, each style has its own distinct features. As long as you don't deviate from that, there is no limit to innovation. What those roots are, has to be clear in your mind. When you talk of tradition, take the example of Bharatanatyam, the adavu systems evolved just 150 years ago. But the dance style evolved 2000 years ago. Again, the Kuchipudi that we see now on stage is only 50 years old. We cannot say it is not traditional. Innovations are always welcome and required to improve the standard of performance.

In what area have you made your boldest experiment?

Nalinakanthi, Nasikabhushani, Navanitham, Pharaju, Pratapavarali, Purna Lalita, Purnashadham, Rama Manohari, Ramapriya, Ranjani, Rasali, Ratnangi, Revagupti, Rishabhapriya, Rudrapriya, Rupavati, Saramati, Sarasangi, Saraswati, Saraswati Manohari, Shadvidhamargini, Shanmukhapriya, Siddhasena, Simhavahini, Sri-mani, Sruti Ranjani, Subha Pantuvarali, Suddha Dhanyasi, Suddhasimantini, Sulini, Suposhini, Supradipa, Suryakantam, Swarabhushani, Swaravali, Takka, Tivravahini, Umabharanam, Vagadhiswari, Vakulabharanam, Vanaspati, Vanavali, Vardhani, Vasanta, Vasanta Varali, Vegavahini, Vijaya Sri, Vijayavasantam, Viravasantam and Vivardhani.

All the above analysis is based on the available number of kritis, which is 710. What if really Thyagaraja wrote 22,400 kritis? Our results might very well be turned upside down! So, we should be cautious in translating these results to Thyagaraja's personality and preferences.

Even if one would dispute the 22,400 number, there are 2 very specific issues that I want to bring to your attention. Thyagaraja himself in his own songs refers to (1) Sata Raga Ratna Malika and (2) Kirtana Susatakam. The first comes from the song "Raga Ratna Malika che" in Ritigowla raga. It refers to a garland of 100 kritis in 100 ragas. Do we know what songs and ragas these are? The second phrase comes from the song "Aparaadhamula noorva" in Vanali raga. In it, he pleads that he, who composed a set of 100 good songs, should be saved. Again, which are these songs? Is it possible that Thyagaraja is using these phrases in a loose way, saying 100 for 'many'?

Elsewhere I read that Thyagaraja composed in all 72 melakarta ragas. I have to recheck carefully, but I don't think my collection has them all. Are the others simply lost?

And then there is the question of the dates of various compositions. When did Thyagaraja write which song - date/month/year? At least do we know the sequence in which the songs were written? Which were during his early years, which during his middle age and which when he was a ripe old man? Other than a very few examples, my readings did not reveal much in this direction. Given that Thyagaraja had several students that faithfully copied down the lyrics and swaras of each end every song in a very systematic way, could they not have noted down the date of compositions in some corner? Or did they? I'd only love to know!

As is often the case, when one begins to ask hard questions about the great man that lived but only 150 years ago - when even photography was available in its early days! - I find myself with more questions than answers. Disheartening at first. But then... sometimes, is it not better to *think* about some questions rather than be *fed* with lots of answers? May be.

Finally, I must remind myself that real purpose of music is not to be written about, not to be thought about - it is to be heard. It is to be affected in one's body and mind and soul (if there is one). It is to be carried to higher heights of purity, excellence and inspiration. It is to feel the gratitude to Thyagaraja - the creator and to the Musician - for rendering it today; for Providence - for willing us to listen.

So, I started to make my own collection of renderings of Thyagaraja's songs - as many as I could lay my hands on, but all in vocal style, as I like to listen to the words as well. I did not want to be limited to only my favorite singer(s) - for, all trained musicians interpret and celebrate Thyagaraja in their own unique, scholarly and human ways.

So, I chose as many singers as possible. I ended up with 53 artists - some beginners and others veterans. They are: M.L. Vasantakumari, M.Balamuralikrishna, Hyderabad Brothers, Bombay Sisters, Maharajapuram Santanam, M.S. Subbulakshmi, Nagavalli Nagaraj, Indu Vasudevan, Jesudas, Sitalakshmi Madhavan, Sudha Raghunathan, Voleti Venkateswarlu, Srirangam Gopalarnatham, Nedunuri Krishnamurthy, Sanjay Subramaniam, T.M. Krishna, G.N. Balasubramaniam, D.K. Pattammal, Hyderabad Sisters, D.K. Jayaraman, Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar, K.V. Narayanaswamy, Musiri Subramania Iyer, Madurai Somasundaram, Sangeeta Sivakumar, Shankaran Naboodri, Madurai Mani Iyer, Nityashree, Balaji Shankar, T.N. Seshagopalan, Arai-kudi Ramanuja Iyengar, N.V. Parthasarathy, Raji Gopalakrishnan, Radha Jayalakshmi, Ashok Ramani, Savitri Ramanand, Rudrapatnam Brothers, Trichur Ramachandran, O.S. Thyagarajan, S. Gayatri, Sheela Ramaswamy, T.V. Shankaranarayan, Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer, Priya Sisters, Sugandha Kalamegham, Sowmya, Sriram



Ravikiran and Shashank—Lute and Flute (May 2005)



A tribute to M.S. Subbalakshmi—Concert by T.M. Krishna (April 2005)



Sandhya and Alyn Myner—Sruti Fund raising day (Oct 2005)



Dr. Balamurali Krishna's concert (June 2006)



Sowmya in concert (April 2006)



Sudha Raghunathan concert (Sept 2006)



Dr. Yesudas—Sept 11 2005



Kathakali—Dakshayagnam (May 2005)



U. Srinivas and Rajesh—Mandolin concert (May 2006)



Maharajapuram Ramachandran's concert (October 2006)



Kiranavalli Vidyashankar in concert (Sept 2006)



Kiranavalli Vidyashankar in concert (Sept 2006)



Thyagaraja Vaibhavam



Radha & Raja Reddy—Kuchupudi dance (May 2003)



Sruti members with Aruna Sairam—March 2003



Sruti members with Raja Reddy and troupe May 2003



Sruti concert (1996)



Sruti members with Ranjani & Gayathri—April 2003



Ganesh & Kumaresh with Sruti members—June 2003



Utsavasampradhaya Kriti presentation—2004



Thyagaraja Aradhana (2004) : Subbulekshmi & Kalyani Ramani



Vijaya Siva's concert—May 2004



Sanjay Subramanian's concert for Sruti (Sept 2004)



Workshop and concert Dr. N. Ramani at the International House (May 2004)



Kanyakumari and troupe (June 2004)



Sruti members with Dr. N. Ramani (May 2004)



Rhythm Ensemble—Umayalapuram Srinivasan (Oct 2004)



Shafaatullah Khan in International house—July 2004

Second Annual Sruti Day celebrations—December 2004



Thyagaraja Aradhana—March 2005 Various participants along with Savitha who gave the main concert



Ganesha on a journey in Gajamukha concert (Oct

Sruti Day (2004) -Celebrating local dance and music

Daksha & Prasuti—Kathakali (May 2005)



Board of directors (2004– 2005)

Newly Elected Board of Directors for 2006 (Dec 2005)



Various participants along with Balasubrahmanyam who gave the main concert (March 2006)