

SRUTI

25TH ANNIVERSARY
COMMEMORATIVE SOUVENIR
SEPTEMBER 2011



A publication of
SRUTI-The India Music and Dance Society

www.sruti.org



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From Publications and Outreach Committee

Dear Friends,

This special Commemorative Souvenir comes to you as we continue with Sruti's 25th anniversary celebrations. It is filled with congratulatory messages from supporters, well wishers and some artists who have performed under the auspices of Sruti. We have a letter from current President, Uma Prabhakar, along with letters from past Presidents as they reflect on their association with Sruti and share their experiences. They have all played an important role in bringing Sruti to its current stature as a premier presenting organization and we recognize them along with the many volunteers who have served on various committees through the years.

We have articles in the Souvenir by founding members and others that give us a feel for the environment that led to Sruti's inception and growth. We also have articles from renowned artists T.M.Krishna and Shashank Subramanyan and we thank them for their contributions.

We have included photographs of concert events and some personal moments that the Board members have shared with the visiting artists. We also have listing of this year's programming and information about some of the upcoming events.

We recognize the funding agencies and the Silver Jubilee Sponsors who have made this year's programming a great success. We thank Kibow Biotech and all the advertisers for their support.

The Publications and Outreach Committee is very excited to release Sruti25 Commemorative CDs on this occasion. This 3 CD set in MP3 format has nearly 25 hours of the most creative musical pieces by various artists carefully chosen from the concerts presented by Sruti over the past 25 years.

A special thanks to Anil Chitrapu for his help in the Souvenir cover design and formatting, as well as his help in creating artwork for the Commemorative CDs.

We would also like to recognize all those who have contributed to Sruti publications over the years and thank them for their support. We keep our membership informed and engaged through our newsletters, website and Facebook.

We hope for your continued participation. Please join us as we offer our congratulations and best wishes to Sruti on its 25th anniversary.

Publications and Outreach Committee

Gayathri Rao (Chairperson)
Sundari Balakrishnan
Prabhakar Chitrapu
Sunanda Gandham
Rungun Nathan
Lakshmi Radhakrishnan
M.M. Subramaniam
Kiranavali Vidyasankar
V.V. Raman

SRUTI Board of Directors 2011



Top row

Uma Prabhakar (President), Raji Venkatesan (President-Elect), Usha Balasubramanian (Treasurer), Ravi Pillutla (Secretary)

Bottom row

Ramaa Nathan (Resources and Development), Gayathri Rao (Publications and Outreach), Ramana Kanumalla (Marketing and Publicity), Raghunandan Parthasarathy, Sunanda Gandham

From Sruti President



SRUTI

The India Music and Dance Society

135 Brochant Circle, Blue Bell, PA 19422

Tel: (215) 616-0486

Email: srutiphila@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.sruti.org>

Board of Directors

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Uma Prabhakar

President-Elect
Raji Venkatesan

Treasurer
Usha Balasubramanian

Secretary
Ravi Pillutla

Directors
Ramana Nathan
Gayathri Rao
Ramana Kanumalla
Raghunandan Parthasarathy
Sundara Gandham

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Usha Balasubramanian
Rajee Padmanabhan
Raghunandan Parthasarathy
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Prabhakar Chitrappu
Sundara Gandham
Ranganathan
Lakshmi Radhakrishnan
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Kranavalli Vidyasankar
Raman Visweswaran

Marketing and Publicity
Ramana Kanumalla (Chair)
Raji Venkatesan
Ravi Pillutla
Raghunandan Parthasarathy
Anwesha Dutta

I offer my heartiest congratulations to SRUTI, The India Music & Dance Society, for a very successful and brilliant 25 years of presenting the best of classical Indian Music and Dance in the Philadelphia area.

I have had the privilege and pleasure of being associated with this organization since it was first started in 1986, by a group of ardent and avid music and dance connoisseurs, and have myself served in various capacities on several boards since. From smaller humble beginnings, SRUTI has now blossomed into a full fledged vibrant organization that enjoys a visible presence in both the US and in India and, and has earned a name as a premiere presenting organization promoting classical Indian arts in the Tri-State area of PA/NJ/DE. In the past 25 years, SRUTI has presented some of the finest and most sought after artists to our community here. It is well known that leading artists from India and US also look forward to performing at SRUTI programs.

The firm foundations laid by those who first started SRUTI have been lovingly nurtured and further embellished by those who later took on leadership positions and worked tirelessly as volunteers to bring it to its current state. SRUTI organizers who are known for their generous hospitality are also well versed in the classical arts as are most of our audiences, and this has been largely instrumental in the selection of the best artists and for bringing interesting thematic presentations. Through SRUTI, we have successfully fostered among the local community, interest in preserving our classical Indian arts as is evident by the numerous youngsters who have taken to eagerly and seriously learning and performing these arts, while being also involved in the management and attendance of concerts. Additionally, these youngsters have also taken on leadership roles within the organization and have introduced high quality interviews with the visiting artists. This ensures we will have enthusiastic future ambassadors and leaders who will continue to help Indian Classical Music & Dance thrive and flourish in the US in the years to come.

It is of course my singular honor and pleasure to serve as the President of this prestigious organization during the 25th year with a Board of highly talented and unique individuals with tremendous experience. We have worked very hard this year to bring together an extravaganza of the best in Indian classical music and dance and we hope that Sruti patrons enjoy the fruits of our labor. I would like to take this opportunity to wish SRUTI the very best and hope it will continue to serve as an inspiration to all in the years to come.

With warm regards,

Uma Prabhakar

President, SRUTI, 2011



Established in 1986, SRUTI is dedicated to bringing Indian Classical Music and Dance to communities in the Delaware Valley. SRUTI is a registered tax-exempt not-for-profit organization under IRS section 501(c) 3.
Tax ID: 23-2454367

Congratulatory Messages

Tom Corbett (Governor, PA)



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
HARRISBURG

THE GOVERNOR

GREETINGS:

It gives me great pleasure to offer my warmest greetings and congratulations to Sruti, the India Music and Dance Society, as they celebrate 25 years of providing the best of Indian Classical Music and Dance in the Greater Philadelphia area. This is truly a great accomplishment.

As you actively live out Sruti's mission by presenting exceptional concerts, workshops and events, you are truly enhancing the overall cultural experience in our community and our country. Pennsylvania thrives on the multi-faceted cultural heritage that continues to promote this great nation. Multicultural arts truly bring us together and help enrich our lives and communities.

As Governor and on behalf of all Pennsylvanians, I congratulate Sruti on this momentous occasion and I hope it will serve to enhance the awareness of Indian music and dance forms in Philadelphia and surrounding areas.


TOM CORBETT

Governor
August 2011



Patri Prasad (Chairman, CIO)



COUNCIL OF INDIAN ORGANIZATIONS IN GREATER PHILADELPHIA

NON PROFIT ORG. REGISTERED WITH IRS 510 (C) (3)

Dear Madam President

On behalf of Council of Indian Organizations I convey my warmest congratulations to you as you spearhead the celebrations of SRUTI's silver jubilee. Since its inception 25 years ago, SRUTI has been dedicated to serving the community in the greater Philadelphia area through its many musical and cultural programs. These events are one of the most vibrant aspects of the cultural life for our citizens and residents of Indian origin. We are witness to unparalleled access to the best of Indian Classical Music and Dance.

This is no small achievement considering the amount of effort and coordination required to host these programs year after year. That kind of dedication and commitment reflects the quality of work which has enriched the cultural landscape of our area.

On a personal note, we are very happy to have the privilege of a very memorable association with SRUTI since its inception. We cherish it forever.

Thank you for your selfless dedication to the community and for continuing to contribute to its vitality.

Best wishes for continued success as you work to achieve your goals and objectives that make a positive difference in the lives of our community.

God Bless You all.

Sincerely

Patri Prasad
Chairman
Council of Indian Organizations in Greater Philadelphia.

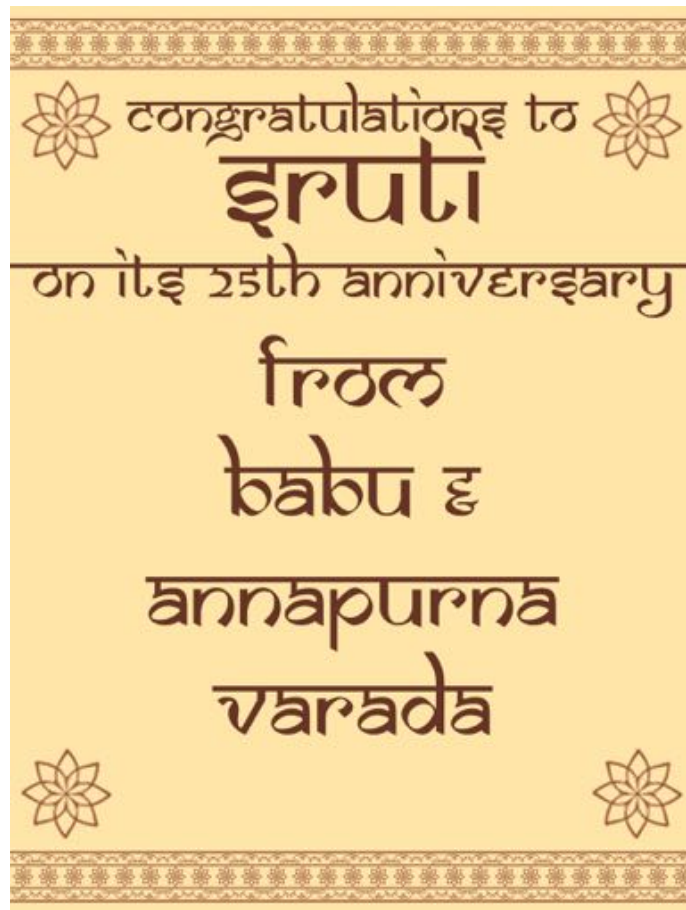
Steve Vibhute (President, CIO)

Dear Members of the SRUTI Board,

Please accept my heartiest congratulations on behalf of CIO executive committee and CIO Board upon SRUTI, The Indian Music and Dance Society, completing 25 years of providing the best of Indian Classical Music and Dance in the Greater Philadelphia area. This is truly a great accomplishment. We are really proud that SRUTI is a member organization of CIO. We Indians in this area are lucky to have SRUTI to fulfill our appetite for great Indian music. You are truly enhancing the cultural experience and making a difference in our community and our country.

We wish you best luck for all future endeavors of SRUTI and look forward to continued support to Indian musical culture.

Thanks
Steve Vibhute
President
Council of Indian Organization
Greater Philadelphia Area



Nand Todi
(President, Bharatiya Temple, Inc.)



Bharatiya Temple, Inc
Bharatiya Cultural Center

Address: 1612 County Line Road, Chalfont, PA, 18914
P.O. Box 463, Montgomeryville, PA 18936
PH: 215-997-1181 www.b-temple.org



Executive Offices

Nand Todi - President
Raja Balachandran - Vice President & Treasurer
Vijal Rathod - Secretary

Board of Directors

Raja Balachandran 215-679-2827
Mahesh Joshi 215-641-7434
Paula Patel 215-656-0782
Vijal Rathod 215-641-8091
Ira Sagarin 215-679-4567
Namish Singhania 215-666-1598
Dhruv Sheth 610-275-7473
Parvatan Thiyagamo 215-634-9171
Nand Todi 215-679-0408

Committee Chairpersons

Religious Committee
Nand Todi 215-679-0408

General Administration
Vijal Rathod 215-641-8091

PR & Communication
Raja Balachandran 215-679-2827

Capital & Construction
Ashok Sood 215-540-0079

Maintenance
Paula Patel 215-656-0782

Fundraising
Namish Singhania 215-666-1598

Educational
Brenda Adams 215-342-8286

Cultural Programs
Flornath Dasgupta 215-842-1499

Health & Human Services
Akhilraj Sarma 215-914-0554

Senior Citizen Group
Hemant Shetty 215-667-1711

Youth Group
Poonam Gidvani 717-443-8218

Women's Group
Alankrita Kalia 610-275-5522

Bharatiya Vidyalaya
Harpreet Sharma 215-561-0145

July 14, 2011

Re: Sruti 25th Anniversary

Uma Prabhakar

President

Sruti, The India Music and Dance Society

Blue Bell PA 19422

Dear Uma Prabhakar:

We would like to extend our hearty congratulations on your 25th year anniversary. This is a great accomplishment for the Sruti organization as a whole and specifically for the volunteer community of Sruti.

At Bharatiya Temple and Cultural Center our goal is to preserve and enhance our religious and cultural heritage through Unity, Diversity and Education. In that spirit, Bharatiya Temple and Cultural Center is proud to have been associated with Sruti from time to time for various cultural functions in our temple. We hope to continue our partnership over the coming years as a service to our community in the Greater Delaware Valley area.

We wish Sruti well in the future and hope that it serves our larger community in the area for many years to come.

Best Regards,

Nand Todi

President.

Elizabeth Sayre (Philadelphia Music Project)



August 16, 2011

To the board and staff of Sruti, the India Music & Dance Society:

On behalf of the Philadelphia Music Project, a program of the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, and outgoing Director Matthew Levy, I would like to congratulate Sruti on the occasion of its 25th anniversary.

Simply put, the high quality and variety of Indian classical music programming your organization has brought to the greater Philadelphia area during its lifetime has been astounding.

We are looking forward to more great offerings from Sruti in the next 25 years, and wish you all success in taking your achievements to new heights.

Our best wishes to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Sayre".

Elizabeth Sayre
Program Specialist

Philadelphia Music Project

The Pew Center
for Arts & Heritage
1608 Walnut Street
18th Floor
Philadelphia
PA 19103

267 350 4960 Tlx
267 350 4998 Fax

pmppc@wharton.upenn.edu
philadelphiainmusicproject.org

The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage
Global Network
Heritage Preservation Program
Pew Fellowships in the Arts
Philadelphia Cultural Management Institute
Philadelphia Cultural Initiative
Philadelphia Music Project
Philadelphia Theatre Initiative

Lenny Seidman
(Painted Bride Art Center)



Congratulations to Sruti on its 25th anniversary from the entire staff of the Painted Bride! Throughout your existence, you have enriched this region with the finest Carnatic and Hindustani music from the South Asian subcontinent. Though I'm a tabla player, I had been studying Carnatic music throughout the '80s in order to expand my knowledge of rhythm via the South Indian rhythm system. The Sruti presentations of South Indian concerts that I saw added immensely to my overall Hindustani/Carnatic perspective which has since become core to my composing, performing and teaching. So on a personal level, I will always be grateful to Sruti.

Coincidentally, I had begun the "World Music" series at Painted Bride Art Center in the same year as Sruti was born. Eventually we began partnering and co presenting concerts at the Bride. These concerts have always taken on the identity of a "special event" for the Bride, and working with the Sruti staff has been consistently professional and cordial. We look forward to many more partnerships in the future and hope that Sruti continues to play its vital role in Philadelphia's cultural landscape for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Lenny Seidman, World Music/Jazz Curator at the Bride

Priyadarsini Govind
(Bharatanatyam Exponent)

Congratulations to SRUTI on successfully completing 25 years of service in the field of arts. I have performed for SRUTI and I have found your organization very professional and warm wherein all the volunteers selflessly commit their time and energy to ensure the success of every programme. I am sure that SRUTI will continue to flourish and nourish Indian art and culture in the many years to come.

My best wishes to you.

Love

Priyadarsini Govind

Malladi Brothers - Sree Rama Prasad & Ravikumar
(Carnatic Vocalists)

As SRUTI, The India Music & Dance Society in Philadelphia celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, it is our pleasure to congratulate and compliment this organization on its tremendous and untiring efforts in continuously promoting and presenting Indian cultural arts in the Philadelphia area over the last 25 years!

SRUTI is a well recognized and admired organization in the Indian classical music and dance circles and is known for the professional nature in the manner they conduct their programs. We have presented several concerts for this organization over the years and have greatly enjoyed performing for the audiences there and also the warm friendly interactions with the various volunteers of SRUTI and look forward to continue these interactions in the years to come.

A special feature in this organization is they give very good opportunity to the youngsters, in presenting themselves as an anchor, speaker, singer and instrumentalists in different roles and nurture their talents.

During our last visit in 2009, we were very much pleased with the way they interacted with us after the concert and during the concert. The organization also shows special interest in educating the audience and teaches them how to appreciate chaste Carnatic classical music.

Here's wishing SRUTI many many more years of success and all the best in accomplishing their mission of promoting the Indian Classical Arts in the USA.

Rama Ravi
(Carnatic Vocalist)

To gather a sizeable audience while striving to maintain exacting standards in the realm of fine arts is a tough proposition. Yet, this has been the cardinal principle of Sruti since its inception. Thanks to the impeccable tastes of the founder members and others running this organization, some of whom I happen to know, this goal has indeed been attained.

The ease with which I could establish rapport with the audience while performing under the auspices of Sruti as well as from the kind of questions posed to me during my lecture-cum-demonstration, I came to realise that I was performing to a highly discerning audience. Nothing could be more rewarding to a musician than to perform to a receptive audience.

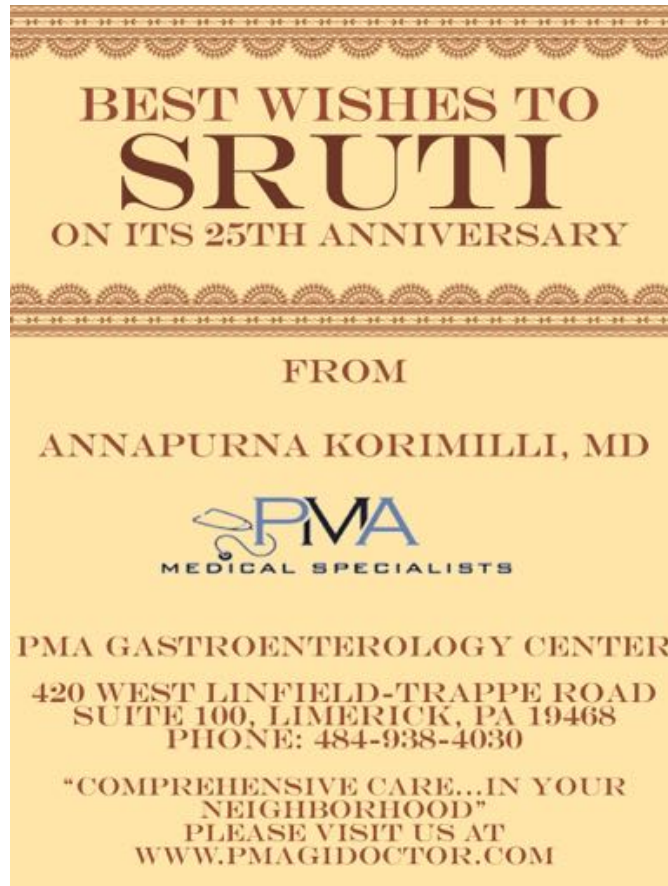
I should like to extend to Sruti in its Silver Jubilee year, my hearty felicitations on crossing a milestone, possibly, the first of many more to come.

Vijaya Siva
(Carnatic Vocalist)

25 years of existence is not uncommon for a reasonably well-managed organization. But to work with unflinching enthusiasm even in the 25th year is rare and Sruti Philadelphia needs to be lauded for this achievement. Their regard for music and musicians remains blemish less and it makes it comfortable and warm for musicians to have a relationship with them. My heartiest greetings to Sruti on this occasion and look forward to greeting them on many more such occasions.

Kannan Ranganathan
(Former Sruti Secretary, currently residing in CA)

Congratulations to Sruti for a remarkable achievement for 25 years. From 1991-1994, I served on the then newly formed Library Committee; it was an exciting time during which we put the initial framework in place for the Sruti Ranjani Periodical. I was fortunate to work amongst revered elders and talented artists in the greater Philadelphia community as well as be exposed to the stalwarts and up and coming youngsters from the Indian Carnatic scene. Although only a part of Sruti for three years, I am proud to have been associated with this community and carry with me a lifetime of experiences, memories, and insights developed during that time. My family and I wish Sruti every success for its next 25 years.



From Past Presidents

M.M. Subramaniam (President: 1986-1987;1988-1989;1992-1993)



Twenty five years is a significant milestone for any organization, especially for one that serves solely the fine arts loving segment of a community. All the more so, since the organization is run completely by volunteers who give hours of their time.

Prabha and I are privileged to have been associated with SRUTI since its inception. While Prabha has been working mostly in the background I had the honor of being the convener and later twice its president. I have also served SRUTI in many other capacities. Thus it gives us great gratification to see SRUTI celebrating its silver jubilee this year and be part of it.

In all our participation, one facet that I have observed and admired is the total commitment and dedication of every one that I have worked with, whether they were members of the Managing committee/Board of directors or members of one of the satellite committees. This is the main strength of the organization and largely accounts for its success.

I'm sure SRUTI would have a great future and celebrate many more milestones.

**Panchanadam Swaminathan (President 1990-1991)
Viji Swaminathan (President 2002-2003)**



Greetings:

For twenty-five years, Sruti has transported audiences in the Greater Delaware Valley with the classical music and dances of India. Having been part of Sruti since its inception in 1986, we are very happy and excited to join in celebrating its success on this 25th anniversary.



Much indeed has been accomplished at the hands of many dedicated teams steered by visionary presidents of Sruti. Beginning in 1986 when a handful of music lovers came together to form the India Music and Dance Society, Sruti has crossed many major milestones to grow into a mature, professional and highly respected organization run entirely by volunteer efforts. A strong foundation laid by the framers of Sruti's by-laws has helped Sruti to function effectively for a long period of time. With little or no experience in running a non-profit organization, managing committees in the initial years overcame challenges with great skill and perseverance and passed on the valuable lessons learnt in the process. Since then, steadfast, incremental improvement and growth have been the keys to Sruti's development. Member by member, concert by concert, Sruti has grown stronger. We have learnt to leverage precious funds, discovered the advantages of partnering, acquired good marketing skills, and attracted many new and active members of all ages - all without compromising what Sruti was created to do!

Looking back twenty five years, there is no doubt that Sruti's success has been the sum of many big and small efforts by many dedicated volunteers. In addition to the efforts by the Board members to present high quality programs, those by the Resources Committees and the Library committees (whose leaders are now members of the Board) have been instrumental in making Sruti a well-known organization. Many high quality programs by internationally well-known artists would not have been possible without the funds obtained through efforts by the Resources Committees. High quality publications have added to the Sruti's resume as more than a presenting organization and helped Sruti reach out to the community. Sruti's website, which has seen a major overhaul in recent years, is indeed something to be proud of.

Throughout the years, a constant factor in shepherding Sruti to its success has been the unconditional support of some life members who have served the organization in many different capacities since its inception. It is also very gratifying that many relatively new members have come forward to take positions of responsibility on the Board. The involvement of teens and young adults in Sruti's activities goes to prove that there is no need to fear that Sruti, in time, may run out of supporters.

Hand in hand with preserving the best practices of the organization, we feel that Sruti could do more to promote Indian classical music and dance in the area. In recent years, there has been an increased interest in the Indian classical arts among the non-Indian population and there are many promising students and well-established musicians who are doing a commendable job as educators in universities across the country. Inviting them to perform at Sruti and including them in its activities is in the best interests of Sruti. This will eventually build Sruti's audiences and result in better exposure among the mainstream population. Sruti can also play a significant role in education. While a few of the Indian arts are already being taught at universities in the area, Carnatic music has not been a part of the curriculum. Sruti should strive to work with a local university to fill this void and to establish a chair for Carnatic music to promote the art in the area.

Again, as we reflect on the last 25 years, we look back with pride at what Sruti has accomplished. Through the years, Sruti's accomplishments have been recognized by the community and by many granting agencies. We personally find a great satisfaction in that like us, there are many who feel a 'sense of belonging' to the organization and that we played a small role in spearheading the organization towards what it is today – a mature, highly respected organization run by highly professional, dedicated volunteers. As we look to the future, we are filled with joyful anticipation knowing that Sruti will accomplish even more. We are confident that Sruti is here to stay for our children and grandchildren. This is not just because Sruti is run efficiently, but because of the very nature of what it has to offer. We have no doubt that the Classical music and dances of India will always have a vibrant and robust community to support them and like other classical arts, will always be culturally 'relevant'.

Renuka Adiraju (President 1994-1995) *A Brief Retrospective*



When my husband and I moved to Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, from the Pittsburgh area in 1990, our life became rather hectic due to many new changes. We were also seeking to connect with an arts/cultural community so we could meet some like-minded Indian folks. My mother alerted me to an advertisement in the *India Abroad* newspaper about an organization called *Sruti* that presented classical Indian music and dance programs in the Philadelphia area. We joined right away and began to eagerly await the black and white concert announcement flyers and newsletters via snail mail!

I remember writing a letter to the editor of the newsletter and that was the entry point for my

involvement with *Sruti*. The committee at the time encouraged me to participate more actively. At the next event, during which elections were taking place, I understood what that advice meant! After much persuasion, I very reluctantly took the vice-president's position. As my luck would have it, the president, Anand Kuchibotla, moved out of town on very short notice! I immediately adopted a 'don't even think about it' response but, once again, with the persuasive support of a few core members, I ended up being the president. The rest of the committee consisted of: Paul Narayanan, vice-president; Ramana Kanumalla, treasurer; Ranga Sudhakara, corresponding secretary; S.G. Ramanathan, recording secretary; Sundar Subramaniam and Prabhakar Chitrapu, members-at-large. Ramana Kanumalla chaired the Resources Committee while Uma Prabhakar, Prabhakar Chitrapu, and Sundar Subramaniam steered the Library Committee.

Almost all of us were first-time office-bearers who didn't even know each other well. Half of us lived in NJ while the other half was from greater Philadelphia. Despite these and other challenges, we worked enthusiastically to meet *Sruti's* goals. In fact, many 'firsts' occurred during our tenure: I would become *Sruti's* first woman president; *Sruti* presented its first exclusive Hindustani music concert, a beautiful vocal performance by Smt. Malini Rajurkar; *Sruti* presented the most number of programs that year than ever before.

The concert lineup happened to be fresh and exciting: promising young faces on the Karnatic music scene such as Unnikrishnan, Sowmya, Sanjay Subramaniam Santhanagopalan, Ravi Kiran, Bombay Jayashri; well-known names such as Hyderabad Brothers; and veterans such as Chitti Babu; Our committee also took on the herculean task of hosting the first major dance drama, *Jaya Jaya Devi*, to be presented by *Sruti*. It was an ambitious undertaking but we pulled it off with aplomb. On a personal note, I will never forget hosting some twenty dancers at my house for that event! For some events, such as the Hindustani concert and the *Jaya Jaya Devi* program, we needed to reign in significant additional contributions and even some of our non-Indian friends enthusiastically supported us with their generosity.

My driving force was the conviction that *Sruti* needed to bring in young, new membership and volunteers; expand its programming repertoire; and strive to establish name recognition in the Philadelphia arts community. Our committee achieved all three of the larger, mission-based objectives. The demands as well as the rewards placed on my life through my involvement with *Sruti* have been significant. Just as it is the case with any *Sruti* committee member, without the help of family, I could not have fulfilled nor enjoyed my responsibility. Taking care of the home front when we hosted artists and meetings or when I would be away on *Sruti* business, taking care of my daughter Shreya, who was merely 3 years old at the time, helping with publicity and fundraising, and encouraging me to continue being positive and motivated whenever I was overwhelmed, were all ways that my parents and my husband have supported me in my endeavor to engage with *Sruti*.

Having grown up in South Carolina in the seventies, the lack of exposure to Indian culture, especially classical music and dance, had been a constant sore spot for me. The opportunity to be associated with *Sruti*, therefore, has been an invaluable learning experience on many different levels. *Sruti* seems to be carrying out well its mission among the larger community. Even in the decade since I was president, there has been a seachange in access to communication technology and resources. The backbone of a community organization is the community, however, and I hope *Sruti's* future boards continue to foster a fundamental appreciation of India's performing arts heritage and sincere cooperation among its volunteers.

Dinakar Subramanian (President 1996-1997)



Having been involved with the organization since the early 90s it gives me great pleasure in congratulating Sruti as we celebrate its 25th year. It is indeed heartening to witness the growth from being a small organization founded by a few like-minded people to that which has grown slowly and steadily with good governance and strong volunteerism to become a notable presence in the area.

As we move forward to the future we are positioned in a musical era where we are able to avail ourselves of a growing crop of wonderful artists who are not only of very high quality but who are promoting and propagating Indian music and dance with great passion both in the US and in India. It is also clear that Sruti has grown to be a strong organization with such a track record that artists have fond memories of and are happy to perform for us. It is my earnest wish that Sruti continues its stellar work - not only to provide quality music and dance to the Greater Delaware Valley but also to continue its journey to build itself as a mainstream organization in the area for many more decades to come.

Sudhakar Rao (President 1998-1999)



Congratulations to Sruti on its 25th anniversary and establishing itself as a premier presenting organization in the Philadelphia area for Indian classical music and dance events. I am fortunate to be part this wonderful journey for about 20 years, having been on the board in various capacities including the Treasurer, Director of Marketing and President and helping out on other committees. For the past 25 years I have enjoyed the concerts, had the pleasure of meeting some very talented artists and also worked with hard working and dedicated people.

I believe Sruti's success has been primarily due to the efforts of the volunteers who over the years have provided the management effort needed to sustain the growth of the organization and stay focused on its mission. We have faced quite a few challenges during these years but have managed to overcome them and build the organization into one that we are all proud of. I would like to congratulate everyone who has contributed to this success and hope the organization will continue to build on its accomplishments.

P. Narayanan (President 2000-2001)

Sruti at 25 ... A time to look back



It's 11 PM on a Sunday night; long past the deadline I had been given by Sruti to pen some reminiscences from my days as its President. The years have rolled by, and my memories are now a jumble of images from my tenure first as Vice President, later as Treasurer, and then President, thus spanning three Boards, for about six years. Shakespeare, in *Julius Caesar* wrote, "The evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones". He was, in effect, saying that good experiences are soon forgotten and only the bad ones remain in memory. To the contrary, after all these years, I can only remember the good things that happened, not the bad ones, not that there were no bad ones. Here are some of the good ones.

Back in the mid-90s, with the quick and unconditional support of the then Board led by Renuka Adiraju, I completely revamped our audio system -- the purchases included new JBL speakers, microphones, cables and a gadget called the "snake" that was designed to reduce wire clutter. I color-coded the equipment so that connections could be made quickly. This was the time when the Board members were also the audio technicians, the movers, and the custodians of the equipment! I created an "audio system user manual" along with a wiring diagram so anyone taking over later could quickly figure the connection sequence. While the manual is probably no longer needed, I am very happy to see that all the improvements made then are being used for the enjoyment of Sruti's audiences even today.

In the late 1990s, it was the beginning of the Internet. We started with a humble presence as sruti@aol.com which subsequently morphed into sruti.org. I managed to get from the public domain, a bitmap of Nataraja, which, after some judicious cropping, became the logo for Sruti and has been in continuous use since. Kishore Pochiraju created our first web presence and designed an online application for kids and adults to register for the Aradhana, and, of course, we have not looked back since. Applying for the grants from the Pennsylvania Council for the Arts (PCA) was both a pleasure and a challenge, with M.M. Subramaniam providing crucial advice on the strategy to use. Coping with the unusual timelines used by the PCA toughened us for the over-all grant-getting process. I remember recasting Sruti's chart of accounts to be consistent with the format used by the PCA. With the Resource Committee we applied for grants successfully from organizations that no longer even exist, and created relationships with new ones. For example, Ramana Kanumalla and I got the first grant from Dance Advance that let us bring Priya Govind to the US for the first time, a relationship that has endured to this day.

Sruti's tenth anniversary was a watershed event for all of us. We had embarked on an event on a scale unprecedented at that time, and had the audacity to ask Pandit Ravi Shankar to perform for us. To our eternal delight he accepted and proceeded to give a memorable performance with his daughter Anoushka, then a teenager. The day after the concert, the couple, who had seemed to all of us to be aloof and distant until then, came to our home for lunch. The entire Sruti board was there as well as some Sruti friends, and when Panditji arrived with his wife Sukanya, and Anoushka now dressed as a typical American girl, they could not have been more cordial. They ended up spending the entire day at our place and everyone was ecstatic with the musical conversations that ensued and the general mood of celebration. The tenth anniversary event also produced the greatest surplus ever for Sruti and put it on a strong financial footing thereafter.

Our family had the pleasure of hosting many artistes during those years. Alarmel Valli, T.M. Krishnan, T.N. Seshagopalan, M.S. Sheela, Hyderabad Brothers, Padmavathy and Jayanthi, M.S. Gopalakrishnan, Dr. Narmada, *Lakshmi Prabhavam* artists, and *Living Tree* artists are some names that come to mind. Interacting with these artists at a personal level is something that, I am sure many other Sruti volunteers have written about. My family's experiences were no different. Our children, in particular, were enriched by these experiences as well as by their work in Sruti's activities, including stuffing envelopes, making copies of recordings, selling tapes, etc. As many Sruti Board members can attest, when a member of the family gets elected to the Board, the rest of the family is also drafted. While I was nominally the Board member, my wife Vasantha probably spent an equal amount of time supporting the Sruti activities in various ways.

As I finally see that I am about to meet my deadline, I want to close by saying how much I treasure Sruti's existence amongst us, and the privilege for my family to have been associated in its service. Nowadays, when we come to Sruti events, I am proud to see that the traditions of professionalism and program quality have been maintained and even enhanced by the successive Boards. Looking back, we can easily see how far our Sruti children have come in their artistic development and have already made their name in various forums in the U.S and India. Sruti has brought great artists to them to serve as role models and has provided a stage for the kids to perform every year. The service that Sruti and its volunteers have rendered to the music/dance aficionados hardly needs elaboration here. I wish Sruti many more years of success in serving our community and our children.

Prabhakar Chitrapu (President 2004-2005)

25 Years of Sruti – My Personal Raga/Saga



I do recall discussions before Sruti started – in friends' homes and over social dinners. Someone said 'Sruti' was being considered for the would-be organizations' name. Why 'Sruti' – I wondered. Was it not related to the Indian philosophical concept of 'Sruti & Smruti' – referring to that which is heard and that, which is remembered?

Since those days, Sruti and I came a long way in these past 25 years. Against the constant drone of Sruti's sa-pa-sa, I weaved my own raga, enriching myself in musical knowledge and personal friendships. What started out as casual responses to sporadic requests to translate one or two Telugu kritis grew into a rich nourishment to my writing skills and ignited my interest in Carnatic music. Thyagaraja's kritis and life, in particular, began to fascinate me and Sruti provided a great context to pursue this interest with passion and with inputs from friends, professional contacts and artists, many of whom were scholars of and disciples of direct disciples of Thyagaraja himself. I was exposed to the music of stalwarts whom I had never heard of before and I am grateful for introduction of artists such as Voleti Venkateswarlu garu etc. All this, I owe to the people that made up the institution that bore the name of the drone - the other Sruti.

With my wife, Uma, being part of the first elected Managing Committee in 1986-87 and my son, Anil, being part of the first Youth Committee in 2010-11, I served in various capacities in between: From a being on the Editorial Committee of the first Thyagaraja Aradhana Souvenir in 1989 (along with A. Srinivasa Reddy and Uma Prabhakar), to the Board of Directors that redefined the structure of Sruti Board during 2004-05. I was the President of the organization during the later period and had the privilege to work with the best possible set of people. There were organizational challenges during this period too, but the Board was so cohesive, thoroughly democratic in its operational processes and functioned with such integrity that I feel proud to have been a part thereof. The Board was made up of: M.M. Subramaniam (Vice President), Usha Balasubramanian (Treasurer), Kishore Pochiraju (Corresponding Secretary), Rungun Nathan (Recording Secretary), Ponnal Nambi (Member-At-Large), Jeya Sankaran (Member-At-Large). In addition, there were 3 committees, namely: Resource Committee (Viji Swaminathan-Chairperson, Balu Balakrishnan, Nandakumar, Usha Balasubramanian and M.M. Subramaniam); Library Committee (T. Sarada-Chairperson, C. Nataraj, Prasad Lakshminarayan, V.V. Raman and Kishore Pochiraju); Technical Committee (Rungun Nathan-Chairperson, P. Swaminathan, S. Sankaran and Srinivas Pothukuchi). I do feel a deep sense of gratitude to all these people and in no less measure to the General Body for giving me the opportunity and responsibility to weave another raga for Sruti!

Of the achievements of our Board and Committees, perhaps the most significant was the restructuring of the Board, which I had alluded to above. Until our time, the entire Board was elected every two years, which sometimes caused a discontinuous transition. There was the concept of a Transition Committee that was made up of key members of the outgoing Board and lasted 3-6 months, but did not always serve the purpose fully. So, our Board proposed a different structure where part of the Board would be elected one year, while the remaining part would be elected the following year, thus providing continuity between successive Boards. In addition, the position of Vice-President was replaced by that of President-Elect, and the Chairpersons of Standing Committees, namely Resource, Library and Publication & Outreach Committees, were made members of the Board, for better coordination of these functions. This structure was proposed to and accepted by the General Body, so that the new structure was put in place right after our term, starting in 2006, with Usha Balasubramanian as the new President.

Lastly, but perhaps the most importantly, we had presented a good galaxy of concerts, with some first

timers, including music concerts by Yesudas and L. Shankar. We also presented a Kathakali dance program called “Daksha Yagna” – the mythological story where Sati, Siva’s consort, burns to ashes the Yagna of her proud father, Daksha, conveying the eternal message ‘Pride is always self-destructive’!

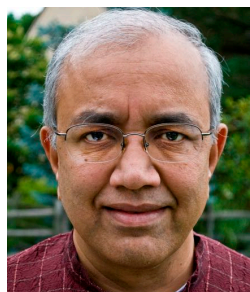
Usha Balasubramanian (President 2006)



Over The last 25 years Sruti has become part of my family. I had the pleasure of serving as a Sruti President for a term. I have also been identified as treasurer serving different boards. It has truly been a pleasure to get to know many accomplished people of our Sruti community by sitting at the front desk. It is truly a wonderful community that we have here. Your overwhelming support both by your presence and monetary contributions made Sruti thrive this long. I wish Sruti all the best in the future and hope to be a part of it from time to time. I would like to see our next generation the youth group and the new comers to the area take more active role in the organization. There is a lot of hope with our youth group so actively involved with Sruti.

With Warm Regards
Usha Balasubramanian

Ramana Kanumalla (President 2007)



Many times in life it is all about being at the right place at the right time. Back in the spring of 1994, my good friend Anand Kuchibhotla who was the then President of Sruti coaxed me in taking up the position of Treasurer at Sruti. It was during the same period that our family bought a house in the Blue Bell area and we were looking to make new friends. My decision to take up this volunteer position was one of the best things that happened to me, Santi and our three kids Sangita, Harsha and Veena.

The wonderful seventeen-year ride has helped strengthen our ties to the community and enjoy the fun company of folks with common interests, year after year. In addition all my kids took to learning Carnatic Music and were able to attain a reasonable level of proficiency and a great interest in this divine art form. This year all three of them have been actively involved as Sruti Youth Group members. Volunteering for Sruti has always been a complete family effort involving all five of us and my parents. Whenever new career opportunities presented themselves to us, being part of Sruti, its activities and the friendships always was a factor in our choosing to stay in the area. Our family volunteered for Sruti’s 10th Anniversary celebrations and now has the good fortune to be a big part of the 25th Anniversary celebrations. If you are reading this and looking to volunteer, get involved in Sruti’s activities and be a part of our area’s finest and classiest institution.

C. Nataraj (President 2008)

Two musically wonderful decades (and a little more) with Sruti



I became a life member of Sruti in 1988 soon after I moved to the Philadelphia area. I was immediately impressed by the professional organization, the quality of the concerts, and the caliber of people who were part of the Sruti community. Later on, I served as a treasurer for two years and discovered the mysteries of how to make it work even when we could hardly meet the expenses just from the ticket revenue. Strategies would include proposals to grant agencies, and pursuing collaborations with other organizations such as Kannada, Tamil and Telugu Associations that would help spread the risk and losses. Later, I served as the President-Elect in 2007 (with Ramana Kanumalla) and as President in 2008 with an excellent and supportive Board of S. Vidyasankar, Venkat Kilambi, Srinivas Pothukuchi, Revathi Sivakumar, Sridhar Santhanam, Vijaya Viswanathan, Seetha Ayyalasomayajula and Ramaa Nathan. We worked together to organize a wide diversity of concerts by leading artists in vocal, flute, veena, violin, nadaswaram as well as bharathanatyam. We had a blast!

Sruti is truly an excellent and thriving organization. If there is an admittedly trivial thing I would like to see change in Sruti, it would be this. In an annual ritual at the general body meeting, criticism is leveled against the Board for frivolous reasons. My committee endured baseless brickbats thrown by a small number of unreasonable people. After donating enormous amounts of time, money and effort, and pulling off a large number of well-received concerts by top artists, establishment of successful and amicable collaborations with American and Indian organizations, and all with a profit on the books, such treatment is gratuitously unfair. My committee harbored no resentments since we characterized it as an internal family squabble. In contrast, a majority of the Sruti community is certainly most supportive. In any event, it is an unseemly event that I would like to see disappear especially as it could discourage volunteers and donations, both sorely needed by Sruti.

In my humble opinion, Sruti of the future can be even grander by supporting diverse genres and pursuing educational initiatives. Certainly over the years there have been many attempts to do so. The current year is a very good example of diversity of programming that I hope will establish a baseline for the future. Sruti's charter does not exclude Hindustani music or North (or East) Indian dance forms for example, and neither should the programming. Collaborating with American organizations (Painted Bride, for example) would bring in more mainstream audiences to Sruti events. Broadening the scope of Sruti's programming (without cheapening it with crass popular material) would attract a broader swath of Indian and American connoisseurs. We should also strive to increase attendance by broadening the geographical diversity of the artists.

In the final analysis I truly appreciate Sruti - the organization and the community - for enriching me and my family's cultural life, and I hope that I have done my own bit to contribute to it. My children have been themselves attracted to Indian classical music due to the influence of the Sruti community. Sruti is certainly one of my top reasons to live in Philly.

Vidyasankar Sundaresan (President 2008)
A Rewarding Association



Indians who have immigrated into the United States tend to organize ourselves socially along the same linguistic and religious lines as in India. In parallel, almost every major American city also has an organization dedicated to classical music. The north-south divide in Indian classical music continues in most of these organizations too. More often than not, most Indian music organizations in this country tend to be largely dominated by one man or family at the head, perhaps aided by a small group of trusted friends in the form of a committee.

It was, therefore, a very pleasant surprise to me when I discovered Sruti when I moved with my family to the Philadelphia area in the year 2005. Being married to Kiranavali, a professional Carnatic musician, it was a foregone conclusion that Sruti concerts would be a key component of my cultural life in this area. However, I must confess that initially I was in two minds about getting involved with Sruti at an administrative level. Within a year of observing how the then board of directors and various committee members functioned, my hesitations were readily set aside. Not only were we warmly welcomed by the Sruti community, it also became clear to me that Sruti is an organization that has a solid basis in the culture of Indian classical music and dance as well as a democratic mode of functioning. Yes, differences of opinion arise, as is natural in any group of human beings, but the secret to a strong organization is the availability of a forum to air these differences and resolve them in a democratic manner. Sruti does a wonderful job on this score, thanks to the sound principles on which the organization is based and run.

I readily accepted a nomination as Sruti's Director of Publications in 2007 and with some trepidation as President-Elect in 2008. Looking back, I am glad that I got an opportunity to serve as Sruti's President for a year and to participate in genuine teamwork. My board members not only cooperated with me to the fullest extent, but also took on a substantial part of every possible responsibility as the year progressed. I can confidently assert that my personal association with Sruti has been a very rewarding one and that we have made some true friends for life over the last five years. Although I have been involved with Sruti only during the last fifth of its 25-year existence, I feel like an integral part of the organization. Observing how the current Sruti board has outdone itself in conducting the 25th year celebrations and being part of the festive atmosphere of this year's concerts has been a wonderful pleasure.

Jayatu jayatu Srutis sangeeta maataa jayatu jayatu tannaamaakeyam samsthaa!

Venkat Kilambi (President 2010)



Sruti conjures a vision of a passionate and dedicated community that has supported the Indian Classical dance and music for over twenty five years. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to have served on Sruti boards for many years ending with being the President for 2010. I realized earlier on due to my limited exposure to classical music and dance that my contributions would have to be more in terms of management and introducing new ideas big and small to make the organization better. I was fortunate to work with passionate and dedicated individuals who brought their own strengths to the organization making it a strong and decentralized team that could achieve more than the sum of its parts. My belief stemmed

from the conviction that decentralized teams with clear sense of role, responsibility and goals would achieve a lot more.

We managed to execute on a large number of organizational changes over the years that has made Sruti one of the best-governed non-profit organizations run by volunteers. We introduced

credit card processing, on line ticketing, marketing through social networks, brand new web designs and marketing themes, cleaning up the bylaws, member services, audience surveys after each concert, youth participation, consistent financial budgeting and reporting. The result of these changes ensured that our audience experience and their feeling of belonging to the community heightened considerably.

The year 2010 was a challenging year because of the economic downturn and lack of grants from funding agencies. We also had the double challenge of planning for the twenty five year celebrations and presenting our spring and fall concerts. I was very relieved that the team pulled this off with excellent results and over the top feedback from the community for this year was truly gratifying.

We had virtuoso performances through the dance recitals of Nrityagram, Godavari and Shijith Nambiar & Parvathi Menon providing us all a beautiful visual treat. This was complemented with mesmerizing instrumental programs of L Subramanian and Nirmala Rajasekhar. The vocal concerts of Salem Sriram, Unnikrishnan, Vijay Siva, Veena Sahasrabuddhe and the Malladi brothers were all out of this world and gave great pleasure to all of us. We squeezed in a lecture/demo in memory of D.K. Pattammal by Kiranavali Vidyasankar, a chamber concert of rising young talent Sri Ranjani in July and a workshop by Veena and Hari Sahasrabuddhe on Hindustani music fundamentals that was well structured and informative. Aradhana at the beginning of the year and the Sruti Day finale show run by the Sruti Youth shows the burgeoning talent in our community that will sustain Indian Classical Music and Dance for the future generations.

Sruti has been a beacon for our young ones that grew up with the organization. The talent that is abounding in our community is the envy of many. In many ways we have created the future ambassadors for Indian Classical art forms for future generation in keeping with our traditions.

Sruti has always strived to nurture and grow the community attracting mainstream audience steadily. It makes me proud that in the Philadelphia area and across the eastern seaboard we are an organization that is looked up to for Indian Classical Dance and Music. There is tremendous respect for Sruti in the many organizations across the US and the fact that we routinely get grants and support from varied bodies speaks volumes for Sruti.

Personally Sruti has touched me in many ways. It has brought me a lot closer to new set of friends with common interests and made me keenly appreciate our cultural heritage and the numerous artistes in India and the US that work hard to nurture these great art forms. I have learned many new skills in cultural event management and more importantly working in a social setting with volunteers carry heavy workloads both in and out of Sruti.

My vision for the future is that Sruti continues to become the community that grows and nurtures future generations and propagates our great Indian Classical Dance and Music forms for the enjoyment and fulfillment of wide and diversified audiences in our region.

Managing Committees/Boards of Directors and Other Committees

We recognize and thank the various people that served Sruti over the past 25 years in the capacities of Managing Committees/Boards of Directors and other Committees.

1986-1987

Convening Committee	
Convener	M.M. Subramaniam
Secretary	T.S. Venkataraman
Treasurer	K. Ram Krisn
Member-at-Large	Usha Sitaram
Member-at-Large	Indira Rajan

1988-1989

Managing Committee		Resources Committee
President	M.M. Subramaniam	T.S. Venkataraman
Vice-President	T.S. Venkataraman	T.S. Govindan
Corresponding Secretary	Uma Prabhakar	Prabha Maruvada
Recording Secretary	P. Swaminathan	H.S. Aswathnarayana
Treasurer	K. Ram Krisn	
Member at Large	H.Y. Rajagopal	
Member at Large	Srinivasa Reddy	

1990-1991

Managing Committee		Resources Committee	Library Committee
President	P. Swaminathan	Sitaramayya Ari	M.M. Subramaniam
Vice-President	Indira Rajan	Prabhakar Chitrapu	Swarup Raman
Corresponding Secretary	N. V. Raman	Hema Ramamurthy	Padmini Venkataraman
Recording Secretary	G. Shridar/ Anand Kuchibhotla		
Treasurer	Prabha Maruvada		
Member at Large	H.Y. Rajagopal		
Member at Large	Lalitha Krishnan		

1992-1993

Managing Committee		Resources Committee	Library Committee
President	M.M. Subramaniam	P. Swaminathan	Lakshmi Govindan
Vice-President	Anand Kuchibhotla	Meena Seth	G. Shridar
Corresponding Secretary	Viji Swaminathan	N.V. Raman	Srinidhi Sampath
Recording Secretary	Kannan Ranganathan		Dinakar Subramanian
Treasurer	Sudhakar Rao		
Member at Large	Shoba Sharma		
Member at Large	S. Sankaran/Ponnal Nambi		

1994-1995

Managing Committee		Resources Committee	Library Committee
President	Anand Kuchibhotla/Renuka Adiraju	M.M. Subramaniam	Uma Prabhakar
Vice-President	Renuka Adiraju/ P. Narayanan	Padmini Venkataraman	Prabhakar Chitrapu
Corresponding Secretary	Ranga Sudhakara	Sudhakar Rao	Sundar Subramaniam
Recording Secretary	S.G. Ramanathan		
Treasurer	Ramana Kanumalla		
Member at Large	Sundar Subramaniam		
Member at Large	Prabhakar Chitrapu		

1996-1997

Managing Committee		Resources Committee	Library Committee
President	Dinakar Subramanian	M.M. Subramaniam	Viji Swaminathan
Vice-President	Meena Pennathur	Renuka Adiraju	Uma Prabhakar
Corresponding Secretary	S.G. Ramanathan	Ramana Kanumalla	Sumathi Saranagan
Recording Secretary	Praba Subramaniam		Shrivas Sudarshan
Treasurer	Paul Narayanan		
Member-at-Large	Ponnal Nambi		
Member-at-Large	Srinivas Pothukuchi		

1998-1999

Board of Directors		Resources Committee	Library Committee
President	Sudhakar Rao	Ramana Kanumalla	Uma Prabhakar
Vice-President	Prabhakar Chitrapu	Dinakar Subramanian	M.M. Subramaniam
Corresponding Secretary	A. Srinivasa Reddy	P. Swaminathan	Rama Gundu Rao
Recording Secretary	Vasanthi Raghavan/Poornima Narayan		Viji Swaminathan
Treasurer	Usha Balasubramanian		
Member at Large	Santi Kanumalla		
Member at Large	N. V. Raman		

2000-2001

Board of Directors		Resources Committee	Library Committee
President	P. Narayanan	Ramana Kanumalla	Viji Swaminathan
Vice-President	S. Rajagopal	Ravi Pattisam	M.M. Subramaniam
Corresponding Secretary	Kishore Pochiraju	Dinakar Subramanian	Srinidi Narayan
Recording Secretary	Sivakumar Gopalnarayanan		Jeya Sankaran
Treasurer	C. Nataraj		Hema Ramamurthy
Member at Large	Rama Gundu Rao		
Member at Large	H. Ramakrishna		

2002-2003

Board of Directors		Resources Committee	Library Committee
President	Viji Swaminathan	Akkaraju Sarma	P. Swaminathan
Vice-President	P.K. Prabhakar	Dinakar Subramanian	T. Sarada
Corres. Secretary	Ved Murthy Sarvotham		V.V. Raman
Recording Secretary	Rungun Nathan		
Treasurer	Chitra Chandran		
Member at Large	Mani Lakshminarayanan		
Member at Large	Balu Balakrishnan		

2004-2005

Board of Directors		Resources Committee	Library Committee
President	Prabhakar Chitrapu	Viji Swaminathan	T. Sarada
Vice-President	M.M. Subramaniam	Nanda Kumar	C. Nataraj
Corres. Secretary	Kishore Pochiraju	Balu Balakrishnan	Prasad Lakshminarayan
Recording Secretary	Rungun Nathan		Kishore Pochiraju
Treasurer	Usha Balasubramanian		V.V. Raman
Member at Large	Jeya Sankaran		
Member at Large	Ponnal Nambi		

2006

Board of Directors		Resources and Development Committee	Publications and Outreach Committee
President	Usha Balasubramanian	Uma Prabhakar (Director)	V.V. Raman (Director)
President-elect	Ramana Kanumalla	Rama Gundu Rao	Sundari Balakrishnan
Secretary	Sujatha Patri	Ramana Kanumalla	Rangaprabhu Parthasarathy
Treasurer	Venkat Kilambi	Ramaa Nathan	Rungun Nathan
Dir. of Res. and Dev.	Uma Prabhakar		
Dir. of Publ. & Outr.	V.V. Raman		
Dir. of Markt. & Publ.	Jeya Sankaran		
Director 1	Ponnal Nambi		
Director 2	Ravi Pillutla		

2007

Board of Directors		Resources and Development Committee	Publications and Outreach Committee
President	Ramana Kanumalla	Uma Prabhakar	Vidyasankar Sundaresan
President-elect	C. Nataraj	Ramaa Nathan	V.V. Raman
Secretary	Sridhar Santhanam	Usha Balasubramanian	Rungun Nathan
Treasurer	Venkat Kilambi		
Dir. of Res. and Dev.	Uma Prabhakar		
Dir. of Publ. & Outr.	Vidyasankar Sundaresan		
Dir. of Markt. & Publ.	Srinivas Pothukuchi		
Director 1	Revathi Sivakumar		
Director 2	Ravi Pillutla		

2008

Board of Directors		Resources and Development Committee	Publications and Outreach Committee
President	C. Nataraj	Ramaa Nathan	Vijaya Viswanathan
President-elect	Vidyasankar Sundaresan	Uma Prabhakar	V.V. Raman
Secretary	Sridhar Santhanam	Vidyasankar Sundaresan	Rungun Nathan
Treasurer	Venkat Kilambi	C. Nataraj	
Dir. of Res. and Dev.	Rama Nathan	Venkat Kilambi	
Dir. of Publ. & Outr.	Vijaya Viswanathan		
Dir. of Markt. & Publ.	Srinivas Pothukuchi		
Director 1	Revathi Sivakumar		
Director 2	Seetha Ayyalasomayajula		

2009

Board of Directors		Resources and Development Committee	Publications and Outreach Committee	Marketing and Publicity Committee
President	Vidyasankar Sundaresan	Ramaa Nathan	Sundari Balakrishnan	Sudhakar Rao
President-elect	Venkat Kilambi	Uma Prabhakar	Gayathri Rao	Mallik Budhavarapu
Secretary	Seetha Ayyalasomayajula	Usha Balasubramanian	Jeya Sankaran	Srinivas Pothukuchi
Treasurer	Chitra Chandran		Rungun Nathan	Venkat Kilambi
Dir. of Res. and Dev.	Ramaa Nathan		V.V. Raman	
Dir. of Publ. & Outr.	Sundari Balakrishnan			
Dir. of Markt. & Publ.	Sudhakar Rao			
Director 1	Raji Venkatesan			
Director 2	Srinivas Pothukuchi			

2010

Board of Directors		Resources and Development Committee	Publications and Outreach Committee	Marketing and Publicity Committee
President	Venkat Kilambi	Ramaa Nathan	Sundari Balakrishnan	Sudhakar Rao
President-elect	Uma Prabhakar	Uma Prabhakar	Gayathri Rao	Mallik Budhavarapu
Secretary	Ravi Pillutla	Usha Balasubramanian	Rungun Nathan	Srinivas Pothukuchi
Treasurer	Usha Balasubramanian	Ramana Kanumalla	Sunanda Gandham	Venkat Kilambi
Dir. of Res. and Dev.	Rama Nathan	Seema Pai	V.V. Raman	
Dir. of Publ. & Outr.	Sundari Balakrishnan		Jeya Sankaran	
Dir. of Markt. & Publ.	Sudhakar Rao			
Director 1	Raji Venkatesan			
Director 2	Sunanda Gandham			

2011

Board of Directors		Resources and Development Committee	Publications and Outreach Committee	Marketing and Publicity Committee
President	Uma Prabhakar	Ramaa Nathan	Gayathri Rao	Ramana Kanumalla
President-elect	Raji Venkatesan	Usha Balasubramanian	Sundari Balakrishnan	Raji Venkatesan
Treasurer	Usha Balasubramanian	Rajee Padmanabhan	Prabhakar Chitrapu	Ravi Pillutla
Secretary	Ravi Pillutla	Raghunandan Parthasarathy	Sunanda Gandham	Raghunandan Parthasarathy
Dir. of Res. and Dev.	Ramaa Nathan	Viji Swaminathan	Rungun Nathan	Niranjan Raman
Dir. of Publ. & Outr.	Gayathri Rao		Lakshmi Radhakrishnan	Anwesha Dutta
Dir. of Markt. & Publ.	Ramana Kanumalla		M.M. Subramaniam	
Director 1	Raghunandan Parthasarathy		KiranaVali Vidyasankar	
Director 2	Sunanda Gandham		V.V. Raman	

“By-Laws Committees”

In addition to the above listed Committees, committees were formed to review the by-laws and propose modifications to adapt and grow the organization.

1986-7	1996-7	2004-5	2010
H.Y. Rajagopal	M.M. Subramaniam	Sudhakar Rao	P. Narayanan
C.P. Ramaswami	Swaminathan	H.Y. Rajagopal	Dinakar Subramanian
A.K. Srinivasan		T.S. Venkataraman	Ramana Kanumalla
		Bala Balasubramanian	

Sruti

Sitaramayya Ari

Though we Indians speak different languages, we have a unifying and proud heritage in classical music and dances. The regional associations make a valiant effort to arrange dance programs and concerts in Karnatik music. However, the small numbers in each of these organizations and the difficulties they face in reaching out to a larger audience limits the number of such programs. Financial limitations make it impossible for individuals to invite a top-ranking artist to perform in our area. There was a need in the Delaware valley for an organization to fill the cultural needs of people who love classical music and dances. SRUTI filled that void very ably and effectively since September 1986. The organization was founded in Spring 1986 by a group of people drawn from different regional associations by M.M. Subramaniam as its convener. Its objectives were to arrange classical music and dance programs, with artists from our area as well as those coming from India, and to serve as a common ground for all with interest in music and dance. Since I had the good fortune of being associated with the organization from the beginning, it is difficult to be unbiased, but it is fair to say that SRUTI has done remarkably well in meeting those goals in such a short time.

The number and quality of dance as well as music programs SRUTI organized in the last three years makes Delaware valley a good place to live. The first program of SRUTI, a concert by M.L. Vasanthakumari, was well attended and gave a confidence to the organization that their efforts are appreciated. Subsequent programs by Jothi Raghavan, Sheela Ramaswamy, Vairamangalam, Lakshmi & Chandrika Kurup, Lalgudi Srimathy, Kadari Gopalnath and others and more recently the elegant performance by Padma Subramaniam go to show that the organization is serious about its commitment to foster classical arts in this area. However, there are still avenues to be found. For example, when SRUTI makes effort to organize a concert by a local artist, attendance is poor. Since talented people in our area have to be encouraged also, the art lovers in this area have to make an effort to help SRUTI in fulfilling this goal.

SRUTI's effort to bring people together from different regional organizations has also been well responded to. Tyagaraja Aradhana was organized in February 1987 with the cooperation of Kannada, Tamil and Telugu associations and has since been an annual event symbolizing that cooperation. Let us hope that this will continue for many years to come.

Looking back, I cannot but realize that SRUTI is only 3 years old, but has grown to be remarkably mature and responsible organization doing a much-needed service to the Indian community in the Delaware Valley.

Reprint of an article published in "Thyagaraja Aradhana Souvenir", 1989. Sitaramayya Ari is one of the early Life Members of Sruti and is presently a Professor of Biochemical Sciences in Oakland University, Detroit, MI.

Beyond Music and Dance – The Organizational Challenges

Sudhakar Rao and Panchanadam Swaminathan

As Sruti celebrates its 25th anniversary it is quite natural to look back at its long journey to this day and reflect on its accomplishments. For a period of twenty five years Sruti has presented the finest and the best that Indian classical music and dance can offer. The concerts presented over the years indicate a distinctive trend on the part of Sruti to present more south Indian classical concerts, which may be a reflection of the background of individuals who have supported the organization. However, for those of us who have been part of the organization from the early years there are wonderful memories of some great concerts by artists of both Hindustani and Carnatic music. The pleasure and satisfaction derived from the experience of live concerts overshadows all the labor that goes into arranging the concerts.

Sruti has established itself as a premier organization in the Philadelphia area for presenting music and dance from India. Getting to this stage has not been easy for Sruti. This may be a good time to reflect on the challenges that were overcome in bringing the organization to this stature.

The process of arranging and presenting an artist in a concert may seem quite straightforward. If you have been part of one such event you quickly get a feel for what is involved. But to take it to a level where a certain standard is maintained and repeated at each concert for a period of 25 years is quite an accomplishment. What is more remarkable is that all this was achieved with a group of volunteers who have spent countless hours over the years helping the organization.

The mission of Sruti is simple – to present and promote Indian classical music and dance in the Delaware Valley. As the population of people of Indian origin increased the need for cultural events from the Indian sub-continent also increased. Prior to SRUTI, music concerts were arranged by individuals as and when artists travelled through the Philadelphia area. In 1986 during a Bharata Natyam recital by Ramya Harishankar, a few music enthusiasts decided to form an organization managed by an elected group of volunteers. The first music concert under the banner of SRUTI was performed by Sangeetha Kalanidhi M.L. Vasanthakumari in September 1986. The by-laws of SRUTI were adopted by the first general body meeting held in December 1987. The committee members consisting of president, vice president, recording secretary, corresponding secretary, treasurer and two members at large were elected to take office, starting January of 1988 for a period of two years.

One can look back and admire the thinking of the individuals who founded the organization. The concept of a non-profit volunteer organization was not new. But the decision to form an organization run by people elected by the general body of membership rather than one administered by a self appointed group of individuals is significant. The membership-based structure where all the members have equal stake in the organization has encouraged energetic and enthusiastic groups of volunteers with innovative ideas to come forward in taking the responsibility of running the organization. One of the challenges facing a member run organization in general and SRUTI in particular is the management style of elected individuals who take the leadership position every two years. With a constant turnover of the elected members of the board every other year Sruti has realized its share of different styles of governance. Yet it is interesting to watch how the organization has maintained its focus on the mission and continued to grow with each group bringing in the changes needed to make the organization successful.

Since its inception 25 year ago, Sruti has attracted nearly 300 families to become its life members. There have been quite a few that availed of the annual membership plan. The steady stream of individuals particularly the younger generation, who are becoming members, bodes well for the future of the organization. The degree of support by the members and the community at large can be gauged by the size of the attendance at the concerts. Though Sruti's board of directors cannot boast of sold out concerts every time there is a trend that has evolved over the years that gives them a sense of what to expect at various concerts. The interest in the classical music and dance has slowly picked up amongst the youngsters. With quite a few music and dance teachers available in the area young boys and girls have taken a serious interest in these art forms and their attendance at the concerts provides a good measure of the success of Sruti's mission to promote these art forms among the younger generation in the community.

The trend in the attendance and participation in the community events like the Thyagaraja Aradhana and Composer's Day shows large number of youngsters participate in these programs. This is in contrast to the trend in early years of Sruti when more adults and senior citizens participated in these events. Throughout its existence Sruti has encouraged the youth to be active in the organization. The past couple of years have seen a very enthusiastic group of youngsters that has actively participated in helping out on concert days, writing concert reviews and conducting interviews with the visiting artist.

The biggest challenge for any organization to stay in business comes from its financial strength. Having started with almost no capital it was always important for Sruti from the early years to focus on making the ends meet for each concert. Each concert was viewed individually as a project and the ability to present an event was based on its potential to generate revenue to offset the expenses in presenting the event. This business model worked well for most of the events but there were occasions when Sruti could not present big concerts due to challenges in raising enough revenue. It was in 1992 that Sruti obtained the non-profit status from the IRS. The 501(c3) status enabled Sruti to raise funds through grants that are available through public and private entities in the state of PA. Thanks to organizations like the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Sruti was able to solicit funds to offset some of the concert expenses. There were quite a few cultural events that were financially successful, like the Bharata Natyam performance by Padma Subramanyam (1988), Jugal bandhi by Balamuralikrishna and Pandit Bhimsen Joshi (1990), dance ensemble Jaya Jaya Devi (1994) and the tenth anniversary event by Pandit Ravi Shankar (1996) to name a few. These events gave the much-needed financial boost that helped Sruti to embark on larger productions. Sruti for the past decade has been very successful in getting grants from agencies like the Philadelphia Music Project, the Dance Advance and Sam Fels Foundation to name a few more.

Sruti has been presenting its programs in auditoriums in public schools, colleges, community colleges, temples and churches ever since it was formed because it could not afford to own its own sabha or theatre or a music hall. This dependency on the public auditoriums has posed lot of challenges in presenting an event starting from availability of a particular hall for the event, getting help with housekeeping, setting up and managing the much needed sound system for the concerts and the event day management. Since the beginning, every aspect of the production management has been performed by volunteers and board members of Sruti. For some of the bigger concerts Sruti was able to get additional funds to hire professional help for managing some aspects of the events like sound and lighting management and producing music CD's. In spite of all these challenges Sruti has managed to present the concerts in a very professional manner.

Audience development and attendance at the concerts has been a perennial challenge. When Sruti was formed in 1986, there were not many organizations in the Delaware Valley presenting Indian classical music and dance. Now there are quite a few organizations in the Delaware Valley presenting classical music and dance. This has resulted in splitting the audiences among these organizations. In addition there are conflicts in scheduling concert events when more than one organization competes to schedule an event on the same day and time. This is a considerable challenge in raising revenue in the form of ticket collections for the programs. The focus for Sruti in audience development has shifted to a more effective marketing and publicity strategy. Sruti has generally been following an event based strategy for marketing and publicizing the concerts. The early days saw more effort on publicity through direct mail, print media, networking or putting up posters at businesses frequented by the Indian population. There was not much discussion in terms of long term marketing strategy. More recently Internet, email and social network have provided a very cost effective way to publicize the events. With various marketing tools and funding available Sruti has started focusing on a marketing strategy which is not only aimed at publicity but also towards outreach programs.

Lessons learned from the challenges that Sruti overcame during the past twenty five years provide a good foundation for the organization to build on. Three key areas of challenges that Sruti would continue to face in the coming future will be in financial support, audience development and production management. As mentioned above the generous grants from funding organizations have been a good source of revenue to offset partially the concert and organizational expenses. However, with so much uncertainty in future economy and the availability of public funding hanging in the horizon Sruti cannot afford to depend on

granting agencies for its continued financial support. It is critical for Sruti to be looking inwards to build the financial strength from its members and patrons and work with more realistic budget. The focus should be on maintaining the quality of the events rather than quantity (presenting too many programs) with innovative marketing strategy. The first half of the 2011 concert season has demonstrated that quality programming with an effective marketing would result in sold out concerts.

With Sruti continuing to grow in organizational strength and presenting high profile programs, it is important that it has a place of its own to maintain at least a skeletal office and other equipment on a permanent basis. This is critical for future development and growth of the organization.

Sruti has to develop strategies to attract dedicated group of audience for its programs. With so many competing programs sponsored by other organizations in the Delaware valley, co-sponsoring events with sister organizations with similar goals will help towards creating sustained audience. Sruti has been successful in the past in co-sponsoring several big events with other Philadelphia based organizations. In addition, the existing outreach programs should be pursued aggressively to reach out to audience who are not necessarily from India. The potential to present a combination or fusion of Indian and Western music (classical jazz for example) or dance provides an opportunity to attract a larger audience and create an opportunity to expose the art form to a newer audience. Sruti has generally focused its attention on the traditional classical genre. With artists in India and abroad exploring new innovative or contemporary styles based on classical music or dance there may be an opportunity to develop a larger audience base for events that have a wider appeal both for the western audiences and the younger generation of Indian origin. Besides getting more audience to concerts, such collaborative work helps spreading the Indian music and dance deeper into the non-Indian community at large. This kind of fusion or in other words influence from foreign music into Indian art forms especially to music and dance has been there since time immemorial as far back as second millennium B.C.

It is gratifying to see the past leadership of Sruti continue to attend these events and also provide advice and constructive feedback to board members. As we look forward to perhaps the next twenty five years the question that needs to be answered is *"Are we satisfied with where we are or do we want to prepare Sruti to meet the challenges of the future?"*

Sudhakar Rao was the President of Sruti during 1998 and 1999. He is a former Treasurer and Director of Marketing and has served on the Resources committee and chaired the By-Laws committee. Panchanadam Swaminathan was President of Sruti during 1990 and 1991. He is a former Secretary and has served on the Resources and Library Committees.



*Sruti thanks the following organizations
for their generous financial support
for the 25th anniversary programming:*

*Philadelphia Music Project
Sam Fels Foundation
Presser Foundation*

From Past Sruti Programs

















Sruti Programs 2011

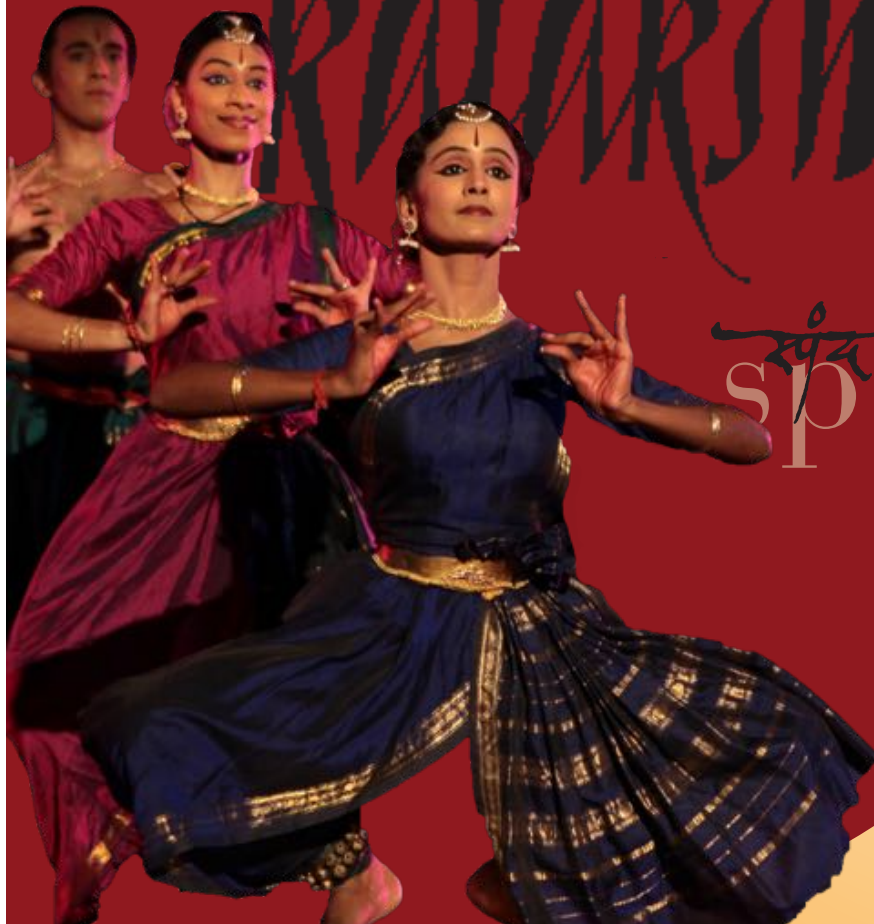
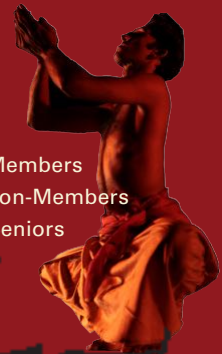


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'Introduction to Bharathanatyam
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10:30 AM
Meet and greet with
Sruti community
7:30 PM

Nov 18 Public performance of 'Sacred
Earth'
8:00 PM
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With Sruti as mother and Laya as father...

Narayanaswamy Sankagiri

Up until now, through this column, I have been sharing *my* experiences in America. For this year, I felt like writing something new to my readers and started collecting the experiences and opinions of *others* - Indians, whites, blacks, people with extraordinary energies, ordinary people, individuals and organizations. Since these constitute different aspects of the American life and experiences of different people, the perspective will also be different. I am hoping that readers will find in such writings an even more rich reading experience.

The Indian community in America has been establishing various institutions in order to maintain their language, culture and traditions. For example, Telugu speaking readers are probably familiar with the names of institutions such as TANA (Telugu Association of North America), Silicon Andhra etc. In all large cities, people of different languages, depending on their numbers, are establishing cultural organizations such as Telugu Cultural Samithi, Tamizh Sangam, Gujarati Samaj, etc. Some of these societies have already celebrated silver jubilees and are on their way to golden jubilees.

Now, there are Indian fine arts, that transcend language, such as classical music and dance, and there are even people that are passionate about these arts. Although not in such large numbers as language-based organizations, such arts patrons in large cities like New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Philadelphia, have come together and established organizations to provide a platform for Indian classical music and dance. One such organization, compactly named as Sruti, was established in Philadelphia (first capital of America and a historic city in the eastern state of Pennsylvania and on the banks of the Delaware river). The tag line was "The India Music and Dance Society". In 2011, Sruti is conducting its silver jubilee. They have planned a variety of special programs spread over the entire year. In this context, I chatted with the founding leaders, the current president and youth representatives, about the 25 year long journey of nurturing Indian classical arts in the American life. The essence of their experiences and ambitions is this month's special to the readers of *paalapit't'a*.

Dr. M.M. Subramaniam. Neither tall nor short but of a medium height and lean frame, bald head, nimble eyes and face with a friendly smile. Abundant love of Carnatic music. At home, in a car, and nowadays even in a pocket, music has to be flowing for him. Although not formally trained in music, he has enough knowledge of the art to teach even scholars. At nearly of seventy years of age, unabated enthusiasm at the mention of music is his hallmark. Sri Subramaniam recently retired after teaching Computer Science at various universities and working for many years as a scientist in the Computer research department of Boeing company. Discussing about Sruti with him is really a fond reflection of 25 years of Sruti's past. That is because he was the founding president of Sruti.

During the early days.

"We conducted the first concert in 1986. (It was) M.L. Vasanthakumari's vocal concert. Her accompanying artists were Kanyakumari on the violin and Ramnad Raghavan on the mridangam. Even though it was the first concert, there were no hiccups in the arrangements. We had organized it in a local school auditorium. We were able to start the concert at the advertised time. The audience fully enjoyed the concert. That evening seems crystal clear to me even today", he said, reminiscing about the first concert.

"During those days, there was no organization presenting Carnatic music concerts in Philadelphia. Artists from India on a concert tour of America would not perform here. Listening to music live is quite different from listening to cassettes and tapes. For the aficionados of music, live concerts are essential. Some local notaries and wealthy people would arrange concerts in their homes, if they could schedule an artist of their liking. However, news about such happenings would not reach all those interested. It seemed that there was a strong need for an organization that would offer good quality concert experiences to all lovers of Indian classical music across the entire city. Hence some of us friends got together and took the steps to start this organization. Sruti, having begun like this, was registered in 1987 as a not-for-profit organization."

I asked Sri Subramaniam about the structures of the society and the rules and laws governing it, to which he responded as follows: "some 80 members joined the organization when we announced its formation. First,

when we registered the organization, we formed a Managing Committee with myself as the president, T.S. Venkataraman as vice president, Ramakrishnan as treasurer, P. Swaminathan & Uma Prabhakar as secretaries and H.Y. Rajagopal & Dr. A. Srinivasa Reddy as members-at-large. Right from the beginning, we incorporated democratic procedures into the structure of the organization. Within a year of the establishment of the organization, by-laws were completely formulated. Since then elections have been held regularly without fail”

Time does not always stay the same. Whether it is people or organizations, they will not always be the same. What kind of changes did Sruti see in these 25 years? As the first President, what are the changes you are seeing in today’s organization? “Looking back, the growth and changes in the organization that happened during the past 25 years give me great satisfaction. To some extent, we (i.e. Sruti) have been lucky. But largely, the remaining, more than 90%, of the success is mainly due to foresight, planning, teamwork and the democratic values. These created a feeling among the membership that this is *our* organization. From that time until now, each and every person that worked in any committee always kept in mind the fundamental mission of Sruti. Furthermore, developing good relationships with local Government agencies, Indian & non-Indian organizations and striving to create win-win situations became an integral part of Sruti’s functioning.”

“At present there are more than 250 dues-paying members. But the amounts from their dues would not suffice to run the organization. Hence, we approached various donors, business houses, other cultural organizations and granting bodies for financial support. For instance, the State of Pennsylvania through its Council on Arts has been funding Sruti for many years. Similarly, Sruti has been working with some non-Indian organizations in the city of Philadelphia,” said Subramaniam in reply to my question about the running of Sruti.

During the Silver Jubilee celebrations..

Dr. Uma Prabhakar is an expert on the application of nanotechnology to the cure of cancer. She is working as a consultant to the National Cancer Institute. She started as a secretary in the first Managing Committee and in the subsequent years participated in the growth of Sruti by serving as member of various committees and as President-Elect. She was elected to be Sruti president for this silver jubilee year.

When asked about how it feels to be the president at the time of these auspicious celebrations, Uma responded as follows: “The undertaking of the presidency during this year is as thrilling as it is a big responsibility too. I will try with all my energies to live up to the trust that the organization’s members have placed on me – I constantly pray to God to give me the necessary energy. It is my ambition to shape this year as an unforgettable experience in Sruti’s history by arranging good programs and special events throughout the year. It is not only mine, but that of our committee members also. Working with me on these celebrations are the other members of the Board of Directors; Raji Venkatesan, Usha Balasubramanian, Ravi Pillutla, Ramaa Nathan, Gayathri Rao, Ramana Kanumalla, Raghunandan Parthasarathy and Sunanda Gandham, all of whom are enthusiastic about our venture. With their experience and support, we are confident that we would be very successful.”

What are the various plans for the celebrations? “This year is going to be full of gala events. Not one, not two. The celebrations begin with the annual Thyagaraja Aradhana, celebrated in March. What used to be a one-day event was expanded into a two-day program this time. Throughout the day, local musicians and students of music gave individual presentations. There were also some nice dance performances. The celebrations reached a climax in the evening with a concert by the Toronto Brothers (Ashwin and Rohan). From then onwards are concerts throughout the year - Dr. Mangalampalli Balamurali Krishna, Amjad Ali Khan, Madurai T.N. Seshagopalan, Bharatanatyam program by the Kalakshetra troupe, Kuchipudi dance by Shanta Shivalingappa, are but a small sample of the programs to come. Finally, in December, the celebrations would end with Sruti day when local artists would perform.”

Dr. Uma was a secretary in the first Managing Committee and now is the President of Sruti. In the interim years, she served in various positions in different committees. How was all that feasible? “The main reason is the love for our arts. To enjoy for oneself and to make it available to others are two main motivations. While working for Sruti, I had the opportunity to receive many outstanding artists; my children were able to

meet them for a few days. The interactions with these artists were of great value for my children. We cannot get such experiences any other way. Hence from those days to the present my enthusiasm for Sruti and for serving the society has only been increasing. In fact, I'm even more enthusiastic about the future of Sruti now than I was at the first concert. Another angle is that the organization is not static. While the original mission remains the same, to implement it we have to come up with a variety of new ideas and concepts. New members are joining the organization and some of them show enthusiasm to serve in the committees. This way, we are always presented with new concepts and the activities always continue to be ever-green. Importantly, during the past few years, Sruti has worked closely with other non-Indian cultural/arts organizations. Thus Sruti has established itself as a premiere platform for presenting Indian classical arts in the American society. This is a matter of pride for all of us."

"Indeed, you are planning such a grand plan for the silver jubilee, with artists like Balamurali, Amjad Ali Khan etc. Set aside the difficulty of getting dates for their concerts - they are also not inexpensive, are they? It would be very costly to conduct such programs - how do you manage it?" True, these programs would be easy to come by. So saying, she continued as follows: "Of course if the programs are to be of high quality, correspondingly the budget for them would also be high. But in such matters, one cannot be bound just by the weight of the purse. We should go for funding depending upon the set goal. There is no other way. As already mentioned, we are trying by applying for grants from the state of Pennsylvania as well as some other arts funding institutions. We have also increased our efforts to get corporate sponsorship for programs of high profile artists. In addition, we are inviting individual arts benefactors in the community to donate generously and support our programs. So far, the indications are quite optimistic. But the programs ahead are huge - nothing will happen without the grace of the One upstairs? None of us ignore this."

My next question was: "Does the audience for Sruti's events consist purely of Indians? Or do other Americans also attend them?" Uma replied: "It is definitely an intention of Sruti to offer Indian classical arts to non-Indians as a contribution from the first generation immigrant community. Generally, Indian cultural activities take place some school auditoria in the suburbs where many Indians live. In contrast, Sruti has been arranging at least some of its programs in the heart of city, at various universities and other arts oriented venues. More people attend the programs in the university areas due to the natural curiosity about other cultures. Apart from these, we also obtained addresses of members of many other cultural organizations in the area and send our notices to them. We also work jointly on a mutually cooperative basis with Drexel University and prominent cultural organizations like the Painted Bride, Annenberg center of the University of Pennsylvania, and the Kimmel center. Due to all these efforts, the number of non-Indian members has been increasing. But one thing I notice is that dance programs, concerts of big name stars, instrumental music attract larger audience than vocal music."

Young generation & New generation - The Rising Wave

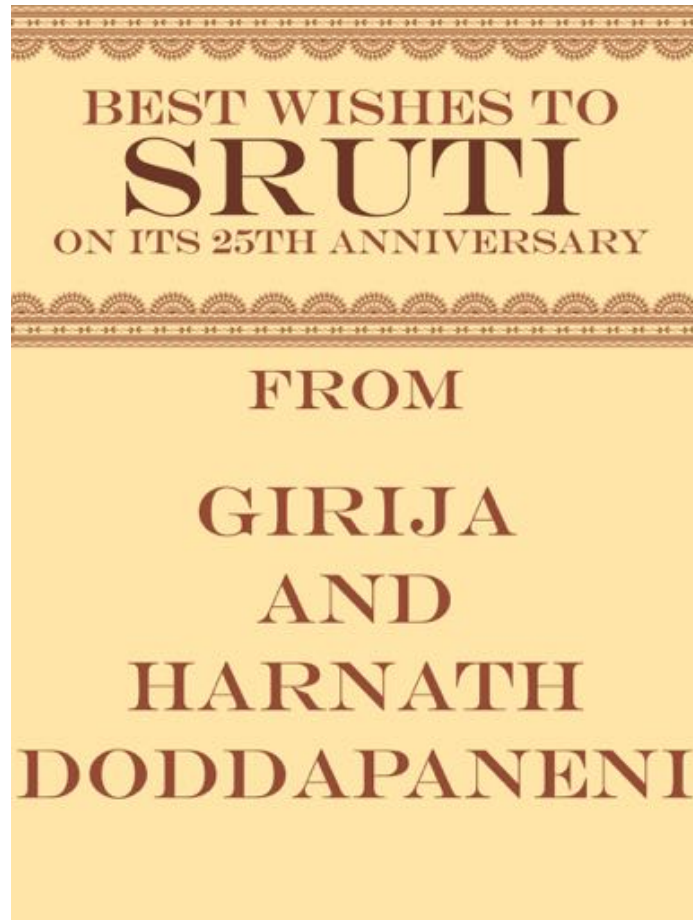
It is only the youth that would help any organization move forward. It is the all the more vital for organizations like Sruti. It is one thing for people born and raised long time ago in India, immersed in the music of the land, having settled in America to fund organizations for their own pleasures. It is quite a different thing for children of Indian immigrants born and raised in America who on the one hand consider themselves as Americans and yet want to learn and perpetuate the culture and classical traditions of India. To what extent has Sruti been successful in imparting these values to the youth here? In this connection, Uma and Subramaniam spoke about their efforts. "As mentioned earlier when well known artists stay for a few days at the house(s) of committee members, their respective children from the young ages move with the artists and get to respect the depth of the art forms. Apart from this, youngsters are given larger roles in organization of events. Also many of the office bearers are quite young. But they were born and raised in India. Children born and raised in America have recently started getting greater part in the running of the organization. A youth committee has been formed as part of governance. Last December's Sruti day celebration was entirely planned and implemented by the youth committee. Furthermore, at the end of each program, the youth committee members interview the artist(s) who performed that day. These interviews can be viewed on the YouTube over the Internet. To prepare for these interviews, the youngsters do all the research on their own giving them chance to learn a lot about the art forms. Nowadays, through Skype and other technological devices the modern youth have the opportunity to learn directly from top ranking musicians in India. Wherever they may live when they grow up, we don't have any doubts that these youngsters would, to the extent possible, seriously propagate the classical art forms of India."

Since you claim that many Indian-American girls and boys are becoming finely trained in dance and music, are you providing a place for such local talent also in Sruti programs? When asked this question, Sri Subramaniam responded sharply: "Talent is Talent! Actually, I don't like the label of local talent. In fact, there are many boys and girls raised in America and Canada who have mastered the Indian music and dance art forms. That is why in our very first event of this year, we featured the Toronto Brothers. Furthermore, every year at the annual Thyagaraja Aradhana and the Sruti Day celebrations we arrange programs by artists resident in this country. One of Sruti's missions is to provide a platform to these youngsters who have learnt from senior musicians/dance gurus of India.

There are some more organizations in America promoting the classical art forms of India. Among them, Sruti in Philadelphia has established for itself a special place. It is shining as the premiere institution in the city and its environs for classical art forms of India. On behalf of paalapit't'a, best wishes to Sruti committee and its members on the occasion of its Silver Jubilee celebrations.

Some Internet Links: www.sruti.org; www.youtube.com/user/srutiyounggroup

Narayanaswamy, popularly known as Nasy, has a PhD from Drexel University and currently lives in the suburbs of Detroit, MI. He frequently contributes articles in Telugu to the magazine paalapit't'a in Hyderabad, India. This article is reprinted with permission. The English translation is by M.M. Subramaniam and Prabhakar Chitrapu.





SRUTI & Philadelphia Ganesh Festival

Indian classical music and dance forms have served as a common thread bonding millions of Indians together. Deeply coupled with Hinduism, especially with the *Bhakti* sect, devotional Indian music has been nurturing us from the childhood. Its presence can be felt every where; in folk music and Bollywood alike.

SRUTI is a leading light amongst various associations of Indian Americans in greater Philadelphia and is doing a great job over past 25 years in trying to strengthen this common thread. As Hindus settle in United States in large numbers, the colorful tapestry of this country is made even stronger when we strengthen this common thread and share it with our

Every year, Philadelphia Ganesh Festival invites 2 young graduates of Indian music to perform *Sangeet & Nritya Seva* to Lord Ganesha at this esteemed festival. SRUTI helps us identify such young artists.

American brothers and sisters. Indian music is one such a rare heritage that we all, especially our children in North America should be proud of.

SRUTI has been blessed with patronage of community. SRUTI's leader volunteers have dedicated their life for organizing concerts of professional & upcoming artists from India and USA. Over 350 concerts that SRUTI has organized in past 25 years is a glowing testimony of their dedication. SRUTI is also deeply involved in offering Indian music education to our children. This service by SRUTI is very commendable and deserves hearty congratulations for job well done.

We, Indian Americans rarely find spare time to understand and attend the

programs of other lingual groups. We gather together only when calamity or natural disaster strikes our home land. Philadelphia Ganesh Festival therefore took the mission inherited from Lokmanya Tilak to unite Indian Americans by presenting them a great opportunity to come together every year, not just for a day but for 10-days to celebrate the birth day of Lord Ganesha. Hindustani & Carnatic music, folk music, bollywood music, dramas, classical dance dramas are the main stay of this festival. Every year, all shades of Indian Americans, Telugus, Tamils, Punjabis, Hindi, Marathi, Kannada Bengali, Gujarati etc. come to enjoy each other's programs and bind together at this festival. SRUTI has been integral & active part of this Largest and First Public Ganesh Festival of North America where 11 organizations join hands to strengthen the common thread that binds us together.

SRUTI and Philadelphia Ganesh Festival share this common mission to spread awareness about Indian music. Every year, we invite 2 young graduates of Indian music to perform *Sangeet & Nritya seva* to Lord Ganesha at this esteemed festival. SRUTI helps us identify such young artists. We are happy to complement SRUTI's mission thru Philadelphia Ganesh Festival.

Our music comforts us, just as our spirituality and faith does, when going gets tough and we face real world problems. More people from our community should attend classical music concerts. One should not be shy or afraid of listening to classical music just because we do not understand the *Taals & Raagas*. I tell from my own experience. I am not afraid or ashamed to try & enjoy classical music for few hours. Usually I am a back bencher in the concerts. That helps, you can enjoy as you like and no one notices you if you appreciate loudly even at 'wrong'



places. Children should not be shooed away during the concerts. Even when a short musical piece reaches their ears knowingly or unknowingly, later in their life a keen interest can develop. Absorption without cajoling, makes a deep impression and one begins liking the music. Let's all the novices like yours truly, make a resolve that in the 25th anniversary of SRUTI and during upcoming Philadelphia Ganesh Festival, we will spare few hours along with our children and enjoy Indian classical music and dances.

On behalf of Philadelphia Ganesh Festival's leaders & volunteers, hearty congratulations to SRUTI patrons, SRUTI president Mrs. Uma Prabhakar and SRUTI executive committee members on the 25th anniversary.

Going further, if all Indian associations in Philadelphia work together, we can realize our common dream of setting up Indic Senior 55+ residential campus where a decent community center will facilitate summer camps, adult & child day care, music and drama concerts and education regularly.



Mukund M Kute, is an entrepreneur based in Philadelphia with business in USA and India. He lives in North Wales PA with his wife, Dr. Neelima Kute and 2 children, Achyut & Kavita. Recipient of CIO's 2010 Community



Service Award for his *seva* work, Mukund, along with Shri. Nand Todi of Bharatiya Temple started Philadelphia Ganesh Festival in 2005. He is also involved in community work with India Development & Relief Fund (IDRF) and Philadelphia Marathi Mandal.

Making of a Music Maestro

Shashank Subramanyan

I often come across a lot of enthusiastic parents and children seeking advice on various aspects of their musical journey. For long I was thinking of consolidating the obvious conclusions that I have derived with my own experience as a student and performer from my childhood and until the present. The views expressed here are purely personal and not intended to hurt anyone. It is hoped that the facts as stated by me will open up a healthy debate and with the pure intention of helping the up and coming artists.

Needless to say the article is not based on any scientific data or statistical analysis. It is a very well known fact that the South Indian Classical Music has been developed over several centuries with the contribution coming from innumerable great souls. During my stint as a student from the age of one and until now, some startling facts have worried me and with great difficulty our family has had to maneuver and sort out the issues confronted during student days and also during my days as a performer. I have got a feeling that unlike in other professions like Engineering, Medical and various other fields, the demand for South Indian Music has been par below the minimum and sometimes very disappointing. It is a matter of shame and ignominy that even highly talented musicians need to solicit opportunities from concert presenters. This trend in my opinion has not changed in the last three decades. The reason, I know for sure, is not the artist or the concert organizers and it is the limited number of people who patronize this art. I am sure many will agree with me that this form of Music is predominantly supported by a few communities and that too by a very small percentage of members belonging to these communities. In my view, even these numbers are dwindling by the year.

In a situation like this, it takes a lot of courage and determination for the parents to dedicate and encourage their children to take up Music as a profession. A lot of issues haunt both parents and students right from acquiring skills and finding a deserving place for their hard earned musical assets. It is here that, because of the intense shortage of performance slots and financially viable platforms, nepotism, favoritism, corruption and other unfair practices creep into the system. A time has come when everyone involved in this system has to wake up to the realities and reassure persons embarking into this very uncertain and risky career. Mediocre talents / musicians are promoted, many times, unfairly in name of musical lineage, based on the community and their sub sects or their deep connections to those who matter in the industry. It has been heartburn for many right thinking people to witness some poorly equipped musicians patronized beyond what they deserve and at the same time ignoring some of the truly talented performers coming from several geographical locations. Witnessing such poor performances sometimes gives an impression that many of them even lack the most basic fundamental requirements of a performer like accurate pitching or understanding of basics in rhythm. Let not anybody mistake that the number of people attending a performance is an indicator of the artist's quality. I am wondering if it is possible ever to have Institutions or bodies that could evaluate performances and grade artists with absolute sincerity and promote artists in proportion to their talents.

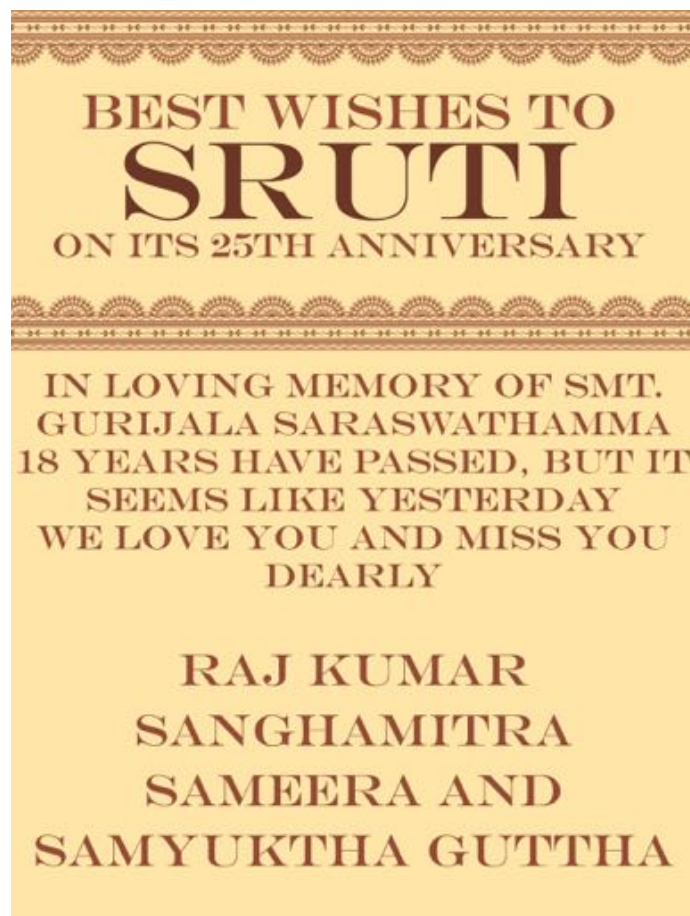
It is my dream to witness people from various communities and walks of life starting to appreciate this great form of art making way for increasing the number of opportunities for all aspiring artists thus reducing the scope for unfair practices occurring often in the present times. Often one may wonder why the numbers of musicians who are super specialized are on the decrease. The reason, I am sure, is not the paucity of talents in any given society at any given time. The reasons in conclusion are the limited venues, unscientific teaching by many, lack of financial support and consequent manipulation of the field by some of the people sitting in the realm of affairs. Needless to say, availability of enormous sponsorship money has resulted in mushrooming of the so called organizations where many a time the prime intention is often personal gains than propagation of good music. It is high time that the funding agencies introspect and inspect if the funds that were generously donated reach the deserving musicians. The need of the hour is to establish organizations that could monitor and evaluate artists and performances genuinely, and provide some kind of a benchmark for the sponsors and concert promoters to implement. This is bound to infuse confidence in parents and children wanting to pursue music with the intentions of becoming good and successful artists more on the same lines as in other fields where possibilities of a dignified survival is assured. All our efforts should be to make this sacred art form and the industry to be more transparent, fair to all concerned and a

scenario where organizers and artists coexist with dignity, equality and mutual respect.

The title of this article, Making of Maestros, is relevant to the facts presented in an ideal situation. Nevertheless, the formula for those who wish to pursue Music career intensely need to follow the very well known path – to pick children young, right assessment of the talent and aptitude, finding the right teacher /s, creating an apt environment and to train and practice intensely spread over several years. However, the training in music and acquisition of knowledge needs to be a continuous process incorporating and acquiring knowledge of music and rhythm from various music traditions, local or foreign and especially in today's context.

I would like to end this article by stating that I have personally enjoyed my journey, so far, in music and have had the immense support of the all the right thinking people from all essential components of this system for which I indebted to and grateful. I wish success to all aspiring parents and children who intend to pursue Music and hope that this article will throw some light on the difficult path they need to tread to realize their dreams.

Shashank Subramanian is a leading flutist in Chennai, India. He has performed a number of times for Sruti. He wrote this article especially for this souvenir.



Centred upon centuries

T. M. Krishna

From the 15th century many treatises have documented and explained various aspects of music that give us a perspective of changes and developments. Below are some of them. Svaramela Kalanidhi of Ramamatya (1550), Sadragachandrodaya of Pundarikavittala (1583 approx), Ragavibhoda of Somanatha (1609) and Sangita Sudha authored by Govinda Dikshita (1614). Govinda Dikshita was a musician, scholar and a very important minister in the court of the Nayaks of Thanjavur.

Even today we have many towns that are named after him like Ayyampettai and Govindapuram. Govinda Dikshita held Vidyaranya, a scholar of the 15th century (Vijayanagara region) in great esteem and through Govinda Dikshita we learn about the treatise Sangita Sara attributed to Vidyaranya. Govinda Dikshita's son Venkatamakhin authored the Chaturdandi Prakashika, which is probably the most important treatise in the Mela era. Following Venkatamakhin, his descendant Muddu Venkatamakhin is attributed to have authored the Ragalakshana (early 18th century). The Maratha rulers of Thanjavur were also major contributors to musicology including Shahaji who authored the Ragalakshanamu (1684 - 1711) and Thulaja who authored the Sangita Saramruta (1729 - 1735).

All the above texts deal with various developments in music including the nature of svaras, the features of each raga in practice, the various classifications of ragas, the Vina etc. Some treatises deal with presentation aspects like Alapa, Thaya, gita and Prabandha. Many authors refer to older aspects of music even though the music they were discussing was far removed. The differences in opinion between various authors also leads to very sharp critiques like Venkatamakhin's very harsh criticism of Ramamatya. One constant fact remains that all the above texts do have a historical connection.

Finally we have the Sangraha Choodamani (approx. 1800) attributed to Govinda. Interestingly we do not have any information about this author or the source of this treatise. In fact this treatise never refers to older works and seems totally devoid of historical references even though the author mentions all the older ragas that have a history.

Ragas are described through the ages based on various aspects, like Graha (starting note of the melody), Amsa (tonic), Nyasa (ending svara of melody). After a while the word Graha starts referring to the tonic. Ramamatya talks about Uttama raga (raga with a lot of scope), Madhyama (relatively less scope) and Adhama (limited). The Ragalakshanamu of Shahaji gives us a new classification called Ghana (ragas which were probably sung faster with tight movements), naya (which had more glides and slower), Desi (which were foreign). The most commonly used classification is Upanga and Bhashanga. Originally Upanga and Bhashanga refer to the sources from which they were derived but, for the first time in the Sangita Sampradaya Pradarshini (1904), Upanga raga is defined as one that does not have a foreign note (Anyā svara) and Bhashanga raga is one that has an Anyā svara. Even in this treatise some Bhashanga ragas don't fulfil the definition.

Naming ragas

Treating ragas in terms of a Mela was possibly the most game changing approach in musical history and therefore it is important for us to understand its original intent and present state.

The idea of the Mela can be traced to the Svaramelakalanidhi of Ramamatya. Mela refers to a collection of seven svarasthanas (svara positions). All ragas are Janya ragas, and janya ragas that have a common set of svarasthanas are placed in the same mela. The name of the Mela was given to the raga among the group that was most popular. At this stage the raga that held the title for the mela did not need to possess all the seven svaras and though the mela was referred by its name, it was still a janya raga. The Svaramela Kalanidhi mentions 20 melas. Through the references in the Sangita Sudha we find that the Sangitasara seems to be the first work that uses the Mela-janya nomenclature with 15 melas and 50 janya ragas. The intention of the Mela system was to organise existing ragas that were in practice.

Later scholars started computing the maximum number of seven svara combinations they could derive (melaprasthara) based on the number of svara positions. Here each author computed a different number of Melas based on the number of svarasthanas they had theorised. For example the Sadragachandrodaya mentions a possible 90 melas while in the Raga Vibhoda there are 960 possible melas. Even though they come up with this computation they find that only a limited number of these were actually used in the form of a raga therefore for eg., Somanatha feels that 23 melas will suffice to classify the 67 ragas then in practice.

In the Chaturdandi Prakashika, Venkatamakhin comes up with a possible 72 melas based on 12 svaras and 16 svara names (as sometimes the same svarasthana can take two svara names depending on the raga). But he only mentions 19 melas, which occupy respective positions in the possible 72 melas. Of the 19, 18 are older ragas and one (Simharava) was his creation. Therefore all the above scholars computed a possible number of melas but considered them non-functional, as there were no ragas that fit in. The ragas mentioned were only those that were functional and evolved through the natural process of practice with the exception of Simharava.

There is also a battle about whether the mela name must be taken from the raga that has all the seven svaras (sampurna) and this does get established. This only means that seven svaras must be present in the raga but does not refer to the order of the svaras or arohana/avarohana. In fact this idea of arohana-avarohana had not even entered the raga concept.

In the Ragalakshanamu of Shahaji, we come across the term Melakartha given to the janya raga that is given the name of the mela. Even if a raga is called the melakartha it is still considered one of the janya ragas of the mela. A raga is still being considered a janya of a mela and not of another raga.

Later in the Ragalakshana of Muddu Venkatamakhin a drastic shift in the concept of Mela takes place. Muddu Venkatamakhin synthetically creates janya ragas for the remaining 53 non-functional Melas (19 out of the 72 already existed). Here for the first time a raga is created purely on svarasthanas. It is also at this stage that we first come across the terms arohana and avarohana to describe the characteristic of a raga. This might have been the result of the very synthetic process of trying to create a raga from the arrangement of svaras.

Here two schools of thought emerge. The Muddu Venkatamakhin tradition, which uses the terms Raganga raga (equivalent term to melakartha) and janya raga, adopts the opinion that the Raganga raga needs to be Sampurna in either arohana or avarohana but non-linear. Muthusvami Dikshitar gave form to most of these ragas through his compositions.

The other school established by the Sangraha Choodamani adopts the view that all the meladhikara (equivalent term to melakartha) has to be Sampurana in arohana and avarohana and importantly the svaras have to be in linear order.

Here 66 ragas were synthetically created and made functional as only 6 were older ragas. Thyagaraja seems to have given form to many of these ragas. The subtle but important difference in both schools regarding the linearity and non-linearity of the svaras in arohana and avarohana is a very important distinction. Finally the Mela-janyaraga classification is replaced with janakaraga-janya raga.


Therefore Mela started out as a way to organise existing ragas but moved to creating scales as ragas using the mela structure. Probably for the first time in musical history theory influenced practice. This is probably why many ragas in performance even today are only svara structures sans features that give a raga an organic form.

The writer is a Chennai-based carnatic vocalist. Reproduced with permission from www.thehindu.com/arts/music/article1108522.ece

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Accompaniments
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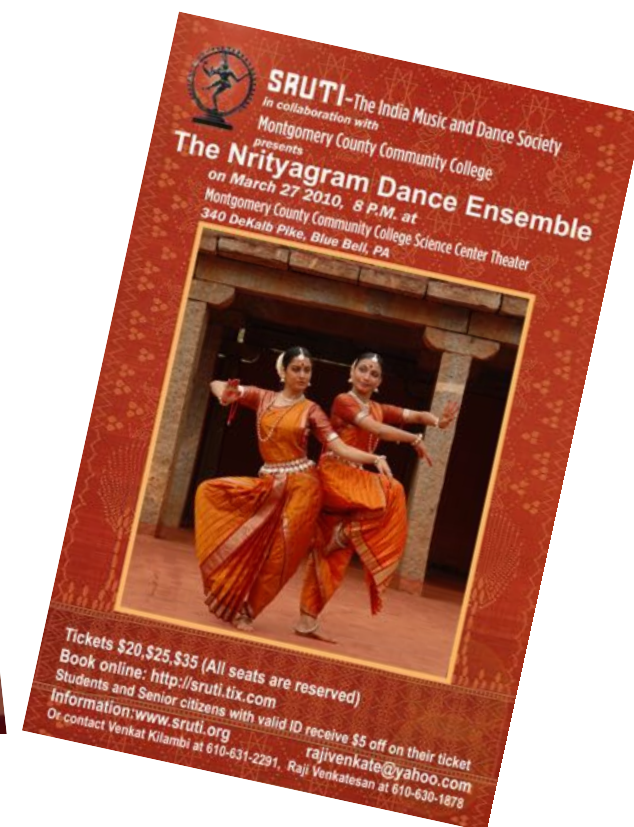
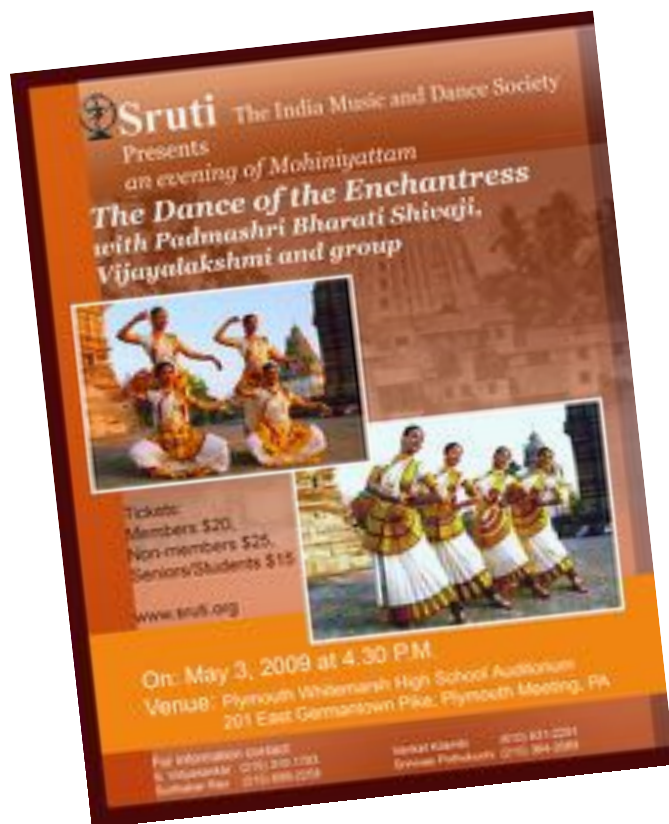



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ABOUT CARNATIC MUSIC

Kiranavali Vidyasankar

Carnatic music is one of the two major systems of classical music in India, the other being Hindustani music. The latter predominantly belongs to the north, east and western parts of India, while Carnatic music originated in South India. Before they evolved as two different streams of music, India seemed to have only one classical form of music that had its roots in the sacred hymns called the *Veda-s* (approx. 5000BC - 1000BC). The cultural, religious, political and regional changes of several hundred centuries caused the divergence of these systems, the most recent and powerful being the invasion of India by the Islamic civilization around the 13th century. Whereas the classical music of north India picked up Persian, Arabic and Turkic influences, the music of the more peaceful southern India remained relatively unaffected by these developments and evolved independently. Carnatic music remained closely tied to the Hindu *Bhakti* (devotional) traditions as also to the folk and classical cultures of the Dravidian people. As a result, the exposition, the relative focus on the various aspects of music, and the repertoire developed in divergent ways between the north and the south.

Carnatic music is a very dynamic system that takes in desirable aspects from other systems and adapts them without prejudicing its originality and individuality. For instance, the violin has been successfully adapted from the West, just as a few *Ragas* have been incorporated from Hindustani music. Some of the key terms you will come across as you read this piece are: *Raga*, *Tala*, *Raga Alapana*, *Tanam*, *Neraval*, *Kalpanaswaram* and *Tani Avartanam*.

The Carnatic Music System:

Carnatic music takes a three-pronged approach where melody, rhythm and lyrics are given equal importance. A noteworthy feature is that both classical music forms in India have developed as melodic systems as opposed to Western classical music, which is based on the principle of harmony. Equally important is the fact that since the concept of chords is absent, there is also no shifting of the tonic note. In other words, once we choose a pitch, we sing an entire concert using that as the base or the tonic note. Typically male vocalists choose a pitch between C and D, while female singers sing at a pitch between F# and A.

Melody:

Melody in Indian music is embodied in the concept of *Raga*. A *Raga* can be loosely described as a melodic scale that is embellished with ornamentations (*gamaka*) that are unique to Carnatic music. Some of the characteristic ornamentations are oscillations between two notes, glides, accents on notes and special kinds of microtonal emphases around particular notes. Several thousands of *Ragas* are theoretically possible but only a few hundred have been named and are in vogue.

Rhythm:

Carnatic music has been recognized one of the most advanced in terms of rhythmic sophistication. Not only is there an inherent rhythm (*laya*) to the various aspects of music, but we also express them physically through hand gestures (*tala*). Over the centuries, various *Tala* systems have come and gone. As recently as 200 years ago, we had the 108-*tala* system where the longest *Tala* had 128 units! However, this was replaced by the simpler 35-*tala* system, which we follow today. Another dimension to the rhythmic aspect is that one can find the common patterns of 4 and 3 counts, the relatively uncommon 7 and 5 count patterns, and also the quite rare 9 count pattern. These patterns are used for the external *Tala* count as well as the inner gait of the *Tala*. Using this broad base, endless arithmetical patterns are created to embellish the music both melodically and rhythmically.

Lyrics:

Prosody or lyrics (*sahitya*) is the other important part of Carnatic music. Devotional hymns were probably the first to be used as Carnatic compositions, but in time, more specialized compositions were created and these became the core of Carnatic music. Most of the well-known composers were adept at all the three aspects of music (melody, rhythm and lyrics), and have shown their proficiency through various types of compositions. Although the underlying theme of most Carnatic compositions is devotion to various Hindu deities, there are also compositions in other themes like philosophy, love and patriotism. The Carnatic pool has compositions in the four South Indian languages (Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam) in addition to Sanskrit. We also often borrow songs from other Indian languages like Marathi and Hindi and adapt them to our music system.

Creativity and Carnatic music:

One of the striking features of Carnatic music is the beautiful balance it offers in terms of compositions and creativity. It is as important to render compositions with discipline and perfection, as it is to make creative forays into the melodic or rhythmic aspects. One can almost find a 50-50 ratio between the two elements, although on closer observation, one will notice that it is more a matter of individual choice. Of course, the occasion, duration and context of the concert will also dictate the balance to a large extent.

A whole range of improvisational features is found in this music system. There is the *raga alapana*, a purely melodic exploration of the different facets of a *raga*, which precedes the composition. It could be a short sketch with a few defining strokes that bring the mood and color of the *raga*, or a much longer step-by-step building of the edifice of a *raga*. This would depend on the scope of the *raga*, and the placement of the song for which it is rendered. The *raga alapana* occupies an elite status in Carnatic music, and one's musical acumen is judged based on one's capacity to develop a *raga*. Usually in a concert, the main performer renders the *alapana* first and then the accompanying melodic instrumentalist gets his turn. Percussion support is conspicuous by its absence.

The next creative aspect is the *tanam*, and this also precedes the composition. The *tanam* is a different type of melodic improvisation that is distinguished by its rhythmic feel. This sense of rhythm is brought out by using special syllables or techniques (in the case of instrumentalists) to accent the phrases. Except in rare cases, percussion support is again absent. The *tanam* usually gets featured if the main piece of a concert is a *Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi* (more on this later). Unlike *raga alapana*, the *tanam* is typically developed in short phases such that the main performer and melodic accompanist take turns to display their creativity.

Neraval is the creative aspect that truly blends the three key ingredients of melody, rhythm and lyrics. A meaningful line is taken from a composition (or the *Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi*) and is then explored by both the main performer and melodic accompanist alternately. The accompanist takes care to preserve the mood that the main artiste tries to create. As both *tala* and percussion support are present, the performers can also indulge in some rhythmic variations within the basic framework of the original line. Slow and fast phrasings are typically interspersed, but the climax comprises continuous fast phrasings and also covers multiple octaves. During the climactic stages, if there is more than one percussionist, he also joins in to create the effect.

One of the most exciting and appealing of the creative aspects is *kalpanaswara* (literally means imaginative notes). This is yet another kind of improvisation using *swaras* or musical notes, and is taken up during the song or right after. Once again, both *tala* and percussion support are present. If *neraval* has already been done, *kalpanaswara* is appended to the same line. The *swara* patterns can be a random one involving a few aesthetic note combinations or a more structured one with arithmetic calculations. A musician can cleverly bring about small climactic finishes during different rounds, although a long musical and mathematical pattern is reserved for the final round. The thrill is enhanced as the main performer and melodic accompanist take turns to improvise, and oftentimes a great amount of skill and presence of mind are required on both their parts to be able to pick up the

thread without missing a cue!

Percussionists usually provide support for compositions as well as the *neraval* and the *kalpanaswara*, and in special cases, the *tanam* too. Additionally, they are given solo opportunities to display their creative talents, and this is called *Tani Avartanam*. Usually the *Tani Avartanam* happens at the end of the main piece in a concert, right after the last round of *kalpanaswara*, and is a purely rhythmic exercise. The *Mrdangam* takes the lead if there is more than one instrument providing percussion support. During the *Tani Avartanam* one will find the percussionists taking turns to exhibit their creativity (just as the main artiste and the melodic support do) using different rhythmic patterns, gaits and speeds. In the final climax all the percussionists join together to play as one and this is a much-awaited part of a concert.

Other creative aspects:

All this while we talked about those improvisational aspects that are centered around the song. Carnatic music has two other lovely avenues for indulging oneself creatively, namely the *Ragam Tanam Pallavi* and the *Sloka/Viruttam*.

The *Ragam Tanam Pallavi* is a very special piece that occupies the pride of place in a concert when it is present. The *Pallavi* is only a one-line piece, often composed by the musician himself, and also gives ample scope for him to weave all the other creative aspects around it. Not only can a musician reveal the creative range of his musicianship but also his depth. The *Pallavi* line can be set to any *raga* and *tala*, ranging from the simple to complex. Typically the musician renders this line in multiple speeds and gaits.

During the final stages of a concert, one may come across what is called the *Sloka/Viruttam*. A philosophical or devotional verse in Sanskrit/Tamil is taken up and rendered like a *raga alapana* usually in a string of *ragas*. The meaningful lyrics and the basic quality of a *raga alapana* lend a meditative and serene atmosphere to this part of the concert.

Ingredients of a Carnatic concert:

As with most other music systems, Carnatic music can also be better appreciated if one understands what happens in the concert. With the right blend of compositions and creativity, a Carnatic concert can satisfy a listener at all levels – emotional, intellectual and spiritual. The main performer would normally chart out the general direction of a concert keeping in mind the need to provide contrast in terms of *raga*, *tala*, composer, language and tempo. Different musical forms are also covered during the concert. He also tries to ensure that the creative elements of the music are distributed at various phases of the concert to prevent monotony. A variety of listeners with diverse interests can thus look forward to something in a Carnatic concert.

Some useful links:

<http://www.carnatica.net/appreciation-main.htm>
<http://www.sawf.org/Newedit/edit04302001/musicarts2.asp>
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ABOUT HINDUSTANI MUSIC

A DISCUSSION ON THE EXPOSITION OF A HINDUSTANI KHAYAL

by Arjit Mahalanabis

Introduction:

This essay has been motivated by several factors, the most important of which is a desire, on the part of the author, to see more cooperation in music between the North and the South. When a North Indian first encounters Carnatic music, the unfamiliar nature of the theory and rendering of the music itself may cause him to turn away from it. Indeed, in Holroyde's *INDIAN MUSIC: A VAST OCEAN OF PROMISE*, a well established Hindustani vocalist is quoted about Carnatic music, "...Their method of shaking the voice is anathema to us." (p.110). The heavier emphasis on gamakams in Carnatic music is something which is difficult for a Hindustani musician to deal with. However, in my own personal experience, repeated exposure to the music of the south leads to a gradual understanding of the system of Carnatic music and with this comes a deep appreciation and respect for this great tradition of classical music.

I have no doubt in my mind that when a South Indian is first exposed to the music of the North, he also goes through similar problems. For the Carnatic musician, Hindustani music lacks the vivacity, the lively pulsating rhythm of Carnatic Kritis. A South Indian friend with a great understanding of Carnatic music recently attended a Hindustani concert. The musician began with the usual slow paced Vilambit Khayal and my friend promptly fell asleep. "When I woke up," he told me incredulously, "he was doing the same thing he was doing before I fell asleep!" All this, of course, is a question of familiarity. It is natural to prefer what one has heard since childhood over what one has heard but recently. However, it is my hope that this essay will facilitate the appreciation of Hindustani music for those who have only been exposed to North Indian music recently.

Before delving further into the subject of the Khayal, I will give a brief history of how the Khayal developed into its modern day form along with very concise descriptions of other genres currently found in Hindustani music. The bifurcation in the music of India into the Hindustani and Carnatic systems can be attributed to the entrance of the Muslim invaders into Northern India. I will not repeat the details of this schism as it is well documented in a variety of books on Indian music. However, the effect of the invasion on the system of music in the North is extremely important. Prior to the coming of the Muslim hordes, the main musical form was the Dhrupa Pada or the Dhrupad as it is known today. The source of this type of exposition can be traced to the Vedas and was the intellectual property of Brahmins and Purohitas of the north. The new Muslim rulers, following a strict code of Islam, banned all musical forms in their territories. Music was associated with

decay and decadence and music praising Hindu deities was sacrilege.

The result of these new restrictions was a mass migration of Hindu artists and scholars to the southern kingdoms, in particular the kingdom of Vijayanagara. In the north, those who remained behind were forced to practice their music covertly. However, as time passed, the Muslim rulers became more liberal in their practices and slowly music was brought into the courts. The revival of Dhrupad, however, is rightfully credited to the Hindu king, Raja Man Singh Toman of Gwalior. Under his patronage, a musical fraternity slowly emerged and became the basis of the present day Gwalior school or Gharana. His queen, Mrignayani, continued to support the musical arts after the king's death. Among the many musicians who flocked to her court was the young Tansen. (Holroyde, p.91-92).

Music in North India entered another dark period during the reign of Aurangzeb (1658-1707). An orthodox Muslim, Aurangzeb eschewed all music as being against the code of Islam. It is interesting to note that Aurangzeb was a skilled musicologist in his younger days. In later life, he adhered stringently to Islamic law. This dark period ended with the coming of the latter Mughal kings, in particular the reign of Muhammad Shah (1719-1748). It was in his court that the genre of Khayal came into vogue. Here, credit is usually given to Niyamat Khan, who was given the title of Sadarang, the ever colorful. A master composer, Sadarang wrote hundreds of bandish, songs consisting of two short stanzas. These are still used today in renderings of Khayal.

Components of A Khayal:

Now that we have completed a brief look at the historical circumstances of the rise of the Khayal, the question arises, what is Khayal? Here, we are given two alternatives of viewing Khayal; the philosophical view and the practical view. The former may be outside the scope of such an essay, considering the magnitude of the topic. The latter is more of interest to the novice. However, it is appropriate here to mention how the term Khayal arose.

Khayal can loosely be translated to mean imagination or interpretation, referring to the necessity of imagination in rendering a piece in this genre. It is said that musicians in the court of Muhammad Shah used to sing in a particular format. One would begin an exposition of a raga and would, after a while, point to another musician in the court and exclaim, 'Khayal karo.' The implication was that the first musician had given an interpretation of the raga and now he would ask his colleague to give his interpretation or his version of the raga.

Today the khayal consists of two to three movements. Theoretically, there may be as many as five movements. However, such a performance is rarely, if ever, heard in today's musical milieu. The movements are differentiated from each other on the basis of tempo or *laya*. The three major *layas* are the *vilambit*, *madhya* and *dhrut*, in increasing order of speed. Two other *layas*, namely, *arivilambit* and *aridhrut*, are also mentioned occasionally.

The structure of each of the movements is almost identical. The core of the movement consists of a *bandish*, a pre-composed song consisting of five to ten lines of text. These lines are divided, usually, into two stanzas named the *Asthayi* and the *Antara*. The melody of the *Asthayi* is usually set in the lower and middle registers. The *Antara*, similarly, is set in the middle and high registers. Occasionally, one may hear of two more stanzas called the *Sanchari* and the *Abhog*. These, however, are rarely sung in Khayal performance. The entire idea of the Khayal is to improvise on the raga using the *bandish* as the skeletal outline.

The meaning of the *bandish*, depending on the school, may or may not be of importance in the performance. In particular, the Patiala, Benaras and Mewati Gharana musicians usually pay a lot of attention to the proper pronunciation as well as import of the words, whereas, many musicians from the Kirana Gharana pay little or no heed to the actual text of the *bandish*. In general, the subject of these *bandish* vary from romantic and erotic texts to devotional descriptions of the gods and often, of a particular sultan or a Muslim saint.

The structure of the improvisation is also of importance. The Khayal opens with a gradual, leisurely unfolding of the raga in an *alap*, a free flowing treatment of the raga without any rhythmic aspect. Beginning in the middle register or the *Madhya Saptak*, the artist gradually descends into the lower register or the *Mandra Saptak*. Here, he touches all the notes of the raga, displaying characteristic phrases and key features of the raga. He then slowly begins his ascent into the *Madhya Saptak* and then the third octave or the *Taar Saptak*. He then gradually descends back into the *Madhya Saptak*, finishing the *alap* by ending on the tonic *Sa*. Musicians belonging to the Agra Gharana sometimes begin a second movement of *alap* known as *Nom Tom*. The concept of the *Nom Tom* is very similar to *Thanam* found in Carnatic music. I will not describe it here as it is not very common these days, even for Agra musicians, to sing this type of *alap* while rendering a Khayal.

An unfortunate practice of today's musicians is the complete or partial omission of *alap* before beginning the actual Khayal. Those who sing *alAp*, often do so in a very cursory manner. Such a treatment is meant

to simply help the audience identify the raga and is called an *Aochar*.

After the *alap*, the artist begins the first movement of the Khayal, namely, the *Vilambit Khayal*. Here the percussion instrument, usually the *tabla*, joins the artist. The artist begins by singing the entire *Asthayi* and returning to the first line of the *bandish*. Here, the improvisation in the Khayal begins. The artist weaves slow moving groups of notes and phrases around the words. He uses the actual note names, the syllable 'aa' and words of the *bandish* to improvise on the raga. As in the *alap*, the development of the improvisation is very gradual and typically moves from the *Mandra* to the *Taar Saptak* through various stages. The musician usually improvises on the words of the *Asthayi* until reaching the *Taar Saptak*. He then sings the *Antara* and performs similar improvisations on the words of the second stanza. Another rather unfortunate development in Hindustani music lately, has been the reluctance of artists to perform some improvisations on the *Antara*. This is extremely prominent in commercial releases. In such renditions, the *Antara* is sung once through and then the musician returns to the *Asthayi* and elaborates further on the *Asthayi*.

Upon returning to the *Asthayi* from the *Antara*, the tempo is increased by a factor of two. The artist, then sings faster passages of notes or *sargam* as well as passages sung using 'aa.' This form is called *aakar*. These fast forms of improvisation are labeled as *taans*.

There are several varieties of *taans* in Hindustani music. Often, it is possible to distinguish between artists of different Gharanas based on the types of *taans* that the artists use. However, some types are common to all the Gharanas. Among the more commonly heard *taans* is the *gamak taan*. This type can be heard in the successive, rapid repetition of notes, accompanied by a wavering from the repeated notes to notes which are nearby. Another type, known as *jabra* or the *kampana taan* is described as sounding like gargling. The *kut taan* consists of phrases in which the notes are not adjacent to each other. For example, *ni ga pa ma dha sa pa ni dha*, would be a type of phrase falling into the *kut taan* category (Holroyde p.280-282).

These are but a few of the hundreds of varieties of *taans* in Hindustani music. Some *taans* are kept secret by certain Gharanas as treasures which are released to a select few in very rare instances. For example, according to Pt. Amarnath of the Indore Gharana, the Delhi Gharana has in its repertoire a *taan* named *dhobee patanaa*. Apparently the *taan* sounds similar to the sound made by washermen or *dhobees*, as they beat the clothes they are washing against a stone (India Perspectives p. 27).

At the end of the taan section in a Vilambit Khayal, the musician changes the bandish to a faster paced movement, known as the Madhyalaya Khayal. Once again, a similar pattern of improvisation is followed in this movement. Finally, at the end of the Madhyalaya, he shifts to a very fast movement known as a Dhrut Khayal. In this section, the taans that are taken become more pronounced, whereas the slower development of the raga known as Vistar becomes secondary. The artist uses this section of Khayal to display his virtuosity and his ability to perform complicated passages of sargam and taans at very high speeds. At the end of the piece, the artist is able to cue the tabaliya that he is about to end by repeating the first half of the first line of the bandish three times in succession. This allows the tabla player to come to sam in unison with the vocalist, thus ending the Khayal performance.

Some Thoughts on The Links between Carnatic and Hindustani Music:

It is interesting to note that the forms of improvisation in the two systems of music are more or less the same. The Kalpanaswaram of the South has its counterpart in the Sargam of the North. Similarly, Neraval in the South can be compared to a special type of improvisation in the North known as Bol Bant. The only form which is not found in both systems is aakar. While this form is used in Alap and Vistar in Khayal, it is not found in the Carnatic Alapana, which makes use of other syllables.

The use of Sargam in Hindustani music is a relatively recent occurrence. The doyen of the Kirana Gharana, Abdul Karim Khanshab, had stayed in the south for some time to learn Carnatic music. It was he who brought this type of improvisation into Hindustani music from the South. It is said that when Khanshab first performed Sargam on the stage, a vidwan in the audience likened it to a talking harmonium!

Today, the use of Carnatic ragas for the exposition of Khayal is very common. Among those ragas which have entered the Hindustani repertoire are Abhogi, Kirwani, Hamsadhwani and Amruthavarshini.

The role of the tabla in Khayal is in striking contrast to that of the mridangam in Carnatic genres. It is my understanding that while the Carnatic musician sings the Kriti, the percussionists playing with him are free to improvise within certain limits. In the north, it is quite the reverse. Since a Khayal is mostly improvised, the tabaliya is usually asked to play a less visible role while accompanying the vocalist. His job is to keep playing a steady pre-determined series of bols on the tabla. This series of bols is known as the theka and basically serves the purpose of informing the vocalist of his position in the avarana of the tala. Thus, it can loosely be compared

to the talam that is put by the Carnatic vocalist while singing a Kriti.

Of course, this is not to say that the tabaliya does not improvise at all in the performance. In certain portions of the Khayal, the vocalist gives the tabaliya an opportunity to improvise on the tala by switching roles with him. The vocalist keeps a steady line by repeating the first line of the bandish over and over while the tabaliya performs his improvisations. It is extremely important to note that a proper performance of Khayal cannot be executed without the presence of a tabaliya! While Carnatic musicians have the advantage of being able to put talam and sing without a mridangam player, Hindustani musician cannot claim such an advantage.

Conclusion:

It is my sincere hope that this essay will be of some use to those who are knowledgeable about Carnatic music but are new to Hindustani music. Much of what I have written here has come through several years of listening and studying both systems of music. I leave it up to the reader to make a decision about the validity of what I've written as much of these observations are subjective by nature.

In the end, what strikes me most about Khayal is its capacity to reflect the motion of nature itself. The gentle waves of the sea lapping a sandy beach, the power of a lightning bolt unleashed in the darkest hour of the night, the quiet chirping of a cricket and the stentorian roar of a wild cat are all to be found within a Khayal. Indeed, a Khayal, by its very nature, is reminiscent of a brewing storm. The quiet tranquility before the coming of the storm is reflected in the Alap. Then suddenly, there is a sense of growing restlessness as the Nom Tom enters. Then the winds begin to gently rustle through the trees as the Vilambit Khayal enters. The wind picks up strength as the Madhyalaya is entered. Somewhere, wind chimes ring out into the air. They become louder and louder as the wind becomes stronger. Then the rains come in torrents flooding the earth with their life giving powers. The Dhrut Khayal begins and the taans appear as thunderbolts in the pitch black sky. The power of the lightning lights the earth for an instance as the taans shake the earth with their awesome intensity. The rain falls harder as the heavens open their gates fully. And when one cannot imagine that it will become any stronger the thunder suddenly crashes louder and louder and...The earth becomes enveloped in silence suddenly. The storm ends abruptly as the tihai is executed. The only reminder of the storm is the distant echoing of the thunder, somewhere in the mind and the memory.

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 Arijit Mahalanabis is an undergraduate student of computer science at Penn State and is very interested in both Hindustani and Carnatic music. He is an upcoming artist and has learnt Hindustani vocal music for several years.

COMPARISON OF CARNATIC AND HINDUSTANI MUSIC

Comparison between Karnatak and Hindustani systems of Music

Immaneni Ashok & Umesh Mokate

PART I

Immaneni Ashok

Importance of compositions in Karnatak music
 Gamakas (ornamentations) in Karnatak music
 Philosophical differences between the two systems
 Comments on creativity

Historical:

Karnatak system developed a lot during the period of bhakti movement. Music was used as a tool to express different modes of devotion to the Eternal. Tyagaraja expressed emotions such as love, anger and sorrow due to separation through his compositions. Dikshitar expressed tranquil mood through his compositions.

As you can see, the words, their meaning as well as pronunciation, play an important role in conveying the mood intended by the composer. Karnatak music is being preserved through the compositions of the great composers of the past; the subtleties of the ragas are crystallized in the compositions. For this reason, compositions are used as center pieces of a karnatak music concert.

In hindustani music, composition (especially bada khayal) is used only as a tool to elaborate the raga. For this reason, average listeners don't really care which composition is used by the musician.

Ornamentation of notes:

I think the most important difference is the embellishment of notes.

In hindustani, standard frequencies (12 note positions) are emphasized, and transition from one note to another is slow (on average) and smooth.

In karnatak, subtle srutis (frequencies inbetween the 12 note positions) are emphasized by use of simple and complex combinations of two or more notes. Fast oscillatory "gamakas" that use two successive notes of a raga are very common. Take two notes of frequencies A and B. When you

oscillate between A and B, you can spend a fraction of time, say f ($0 < f < 1.0$), at A and the rest of the time ($1-f$) at B. This combination will emphasize the srutis around the frequency $Af+B(1-f)$. The commonly used fractions are 0.25, 0.5 and 0.75. For any given raga, certain notes are sung plain, certain notes are sung with slight trills around the note, certain notes are sung with combination of their successive notes with oscillations of certain f . For example, take 'ri' of Mayamalavagowla and Gowla. Both use suddha 'ri' (it is called komal ri in hindustani). In Mayamalavagowla, 'ri' is usually sung with a slight trill or combined with 'sa' with an $f = 0.5$. In Gowla, 'ri' is *never* sung plain or with trill, but *always* combined with 'sa' with an $f = 0.25$ (that is, srutis very close to 'sa' are emphasized).

Philosophical Difference:

A hindustani listener finds it difficult to understand karnatak music because of apparent activity due to fast oscillations and trills. A karnatak listener finds hindustani music boring, because of apparent inactivity (I am referring to the alapbada-khayal part where lot of time is spent). The two systems of Indian music provide two different approaches to 'nada yoga' (discipline through sound), one through apparent activity and another through apparent inactivity. However, the ultimate goal of both the systems is tranquility. I use the word "apparent" because that is what it seems for an "untrained" ear. A trained ear can find lot of activity in the pure notes used in hindustani music: a note with perfect "sur" interacts with the tambura sruti rather dramatically; one can hear beats, subtle waves, big waves, and a combination of overtones or high frequencies; this gives feeling of floating on a ocean of sound waves. In the same way, a trained ear can find tranquility in midst of fast oscillations and trills of karnatak music.

As you can see, training of the ear is the key factor in understanding and enjoying music. The most sensitive your ear becomes, the more subtle aspects you can grasp from both the systems of music.

NOTE: I am *not* claiming that there is only activity in Karnatak music and only inactivity in Hindustani music. There is mixture of both types in both the systems. In general, one finds more activity in karnatak concerts due to emphasis on medium to fast paced compositions and due to emphasis on fast oscillatory ornamentations even in slow alaps and compositions. In Hindustani concert, lot of time is spent on slow development of a raag using bada-khayal. Of course, the drut part becomes fast towards the end, where there is too much activity at times.

Some comments on creativity:

A standard comment from a hindustani listener is that karnatak musicians are not creative because they just reproduce compositions. Karnatak listeners usually comment that hindustani musicians keep repeating the same phrases. What is creativity in Indian music?

In my opinion, an Indian musician is creative if he/she uses music as means to elevate consciousness of a "sensitive listener" (whose ear is sufficiently trained) from material world to tranquil world. This definition is based on the philosophical goals of Indian music. With this definition, a musician is not creative if he/she elaborates an alap or swara kalpana for an hour without touching the hearts of the listeners.

Many people these days evaluate musicians based on the "materialistic excitement" the musicians create. It is a pity that several talented musicians are striving to create such excitement, not bringing out the essence of Indian music.

PART 2

Umesh Mokate

History of Hindustani music
Ornamentations in Hindustani music
Improvisation in the two systems
Concert format in the two systems

History of Hindustani Music

It is not surely known what the form of music before two distinct styles - karnatak and hindustani - developed was, but many believe that Dhruwad was uniformly sung all over India before muslim invasion. This created Hindustani music in the north and Karnatak music developed in the south. In the case of Karnatak music, it so happened that great saints like Tyagaraga, Purandaradasa used this music as a vehicle to express their devotion. This is same as usage of music as a tool by great saints like Surdas, Meera Bai, Haridas, etc. who were great exponents of Dhruwad or the then present Hindustani music.

But in the Hindustani music the words in a composition were less stressed because of many reasons:

1. The compositions were sung in muslim court, so references to Hindu Gods were played down by not pronouncing the words clearly.

2. Different gharanas had competition and they wanted to keep their compositions as much a secret as possible. This was done again by not clearly pronouncing the words.

3. As the courts were the main patrons, compositions of artists like sadarang, adarang, manarang, etc. gained popularity (rather than the compositions of only saints) and got handed down the generations. In Karnatak music, since the patrons were mainly temples, the devotional compositions of saints got prominence and got handed down.

4. Since Indian music is handed down orally, mistakes are bound to happen unless extreme care is taken to preserve the words. In the case of Hindustani, words were played down for whatever reasons, so many times next generation got wrong words too. In the case of Karnatak music, since the compositions of the saints were greatly revered for the meaning, extreme care was taken to preserve the words.

5. In hindustani music the "sur" got prominence over word compared to Dhruwad music in which the words in the Dhruwad are clearly pronounced. This was because of the "kayal" singing. Here the artist is mainly concerned about exposing his imagination or perspective of the raag. Naturally this was very much on the abstract level where the rhythm and words were used just as a frame. This is how the Hindustani artists concerned themselves to creating abstract picture of a raag. So this is a peculiar development which did not occur in Karnatak music.

Ornamentations in Hindustani music

In Hindustani, the ornamentation is different than in Karnatak music. The most common being taking the "aas" of the higher or the lower note. Other common embellishment is very slow (compared to Karnatak music) "aandoan" like "re" in Bhairav or "ga" in Darbaari. Other embellishments are: meend, khatakaa. Sparingly the artist stays on a note and gives jerk to his throat muscles to produce nearby frequencies. Also "gamaks" are used; specially in fast speed like "sa sa sa, re re re, ga ga ga. ..." etc. But taking "taan" in "aakaar" is the most prominent feature of Hindustani music. There are many varieties of "taans" but a crystal clear taan like a chain of pearls is of utmost importance.

Improvisation in the two systems

Apart from ornamentations, the presentation of a raag has some similarities and differences in the two systems. In Karnatak music, the artist elaborates the raag in aalap first.

Then the composition starts. For most of the case, the tempo of the composition is supposed to remain constant throughout the composition. The "mukhadaa" of the composition is sung in different ways called "sangatis" otherwise the composition is sung as has been taught. The scope for improvisation comes when the artists pick a line from the composition and does improvise the raag. This is similar to using the words of the composition to develop a raag in Hindustani and is called "neraval" in Karnatak terminology. When this is done at fast speed it resembles like "bol-taan" of Hindustani music. This is followed by "kalpana-swaram" where the artist sings the solphages. Singing the solphage is the most peculiar characteristic of Karnatak music. This technique was adopted to Hindustani music only very recently by late Abdul Karim Khan and was criticized at first. This is the Karnatak music's counterpart for "taans" of Hindustani music. This may be followed by a solo on mridangam called "tanni-awarnatam". This is also a peculiar thing of Karnatak music -- in Hindustani music, accompanying instruments never perform a solo throughout the concert, they just accompany the principal artist.

On the other hand, in Hindustani music a raag is presented as follows: The artist may do a short (or sometimes elaborate) aalaap. This is invariably followed by a "badaa khayaal" which is very slow in the tempo. At this slow speed, the artist elaborates the raag, gradually going from the lower notes to the higher notes. The "mukhadaa" of the composition is sung every time the artist comes to the "sam". When the upper "sa" is reached, normally then the "antaraa" of the composition is taken and elaborated in the "taar" saptak. The artist then comes back to madhya saptak and uses the "mukhadaa" again. At this time, the speed is doubled and "layakaari" is introduced which slowly develops into "taans". Not all artists double the speed - some do the layakaari in the same tempo. This is normally followed by a "chhotaa kayaal" or "drut" where another composition is taken. Here also the raag is developed but not to the effect as done in "badaa khayaal". Here the emphasis is on ornamenting the composition with various "taans" and playing with the beats like "tilhaayee". So as such, from the beginning the artist starts "improvization" where as in Karnatak music, after aalaap, real improvization starts in "neraval" and "kalpana-swaram". Another important characteristic of Hindustani music is the "pakaad" of a the raag. This is not so much emphasized for all Karnatak Ragas. The most peculiar aspect of Hindustani music is its strict adherence to "time of the day". One will never hear morning raagas in a night concert and vice versa. In Karnatak music this is not of so importance (may be because kritis are of more importance which are devotional in nature and one can sing a devotional song at any time!).

Concert format in the two systems

It is not a wonder now that that format of a concert in two styles are also different. In Hindustani, the concerts always starts with a "badaa khayaal" followed by a "drut" in the same raag (or sometimes in a raag very near to the present raag). Then one normally expects a composition in another raag in "madhya-laya" followed by a light piece (depending on the artist - some artists never sing sub-classical or light compositions.) or again a small composition in the same of yet another raag. This is normally followed by an intermission. Then again almost the same pattern repeats. It is not uncommon to hear light pieces like Thumari, Dadra, Tappa, Hori, etc. or seasonal raags towards the end. It is customary to end the concert with "bhairavi".

In Karnatic music, a concert usually starts with a varnam followed by a "ganapati" invocation. This is followed by few pieces or kritis in which the artists does some elaboration. But normally only one piece or "kriti" is elaborated at length as described above and forms the centerpiece of the concert. It could be a "ragam-tanam-pallavi" session. Now one may or may not have an intermission but this mostly marks the "second half" of the concert. Here one hears many compositions, less weighty in the presentation called "kirtana" (like Thumari in Hindustani). It is not uncommon to hear still lighter compositions and ragamalika (like bhajan, dadra, hori, chaiti, etc. in Hindustani). It is customary to conclude a concert with a "tillana" (Tanaran in Hindustani) and then Magalam. Use of ragamalika is very frequent in Karnatak music where as it is very very rare in Hindustani music. In Hindustani, while singing light pieces like thumari or Bhajan, is common to take liberty and introduce shades of one or more raagas to bring out different moods of the composition.

Immaneni Ashok works in the Department of CSE, University of Washington, Seattle and Umesh Mokate works for Microsoft Corporation, Redmond, WA.

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Program Notes

Saturday, September 3 2011

Master of the Sarod- A Hindustani Classical Instrumental Concert by
Ustad Amjad Ali Khan along with his sons Amaan and Ayaan



Amjad Ali Khan gave his first recital of Sarod when he was six years old, and it was the beginning of yet another glorious chapter in the history of Indian classical music. Amjad Ali Khan was born to the illustrious Bangash lineage rooted in the Senia Bangash School of music. Today he shoulders the sixth generation inheritance of this legendary lineage. After his debut, the career graph of this musical legend took the speed of light, and on its way the Indian classical music scene was witness to regular and scintillating bursts of Raga supernovas. And thus, the world saw the Sarod being given a new and yet timeless interpretation by Amjad Ali Khan. Khan is one of the few maestros who consider his audience to be the soul of his motivation.

In the case of Amjad Ali Khan, the term 'beauty of the Ragas' acquires a special meaning as he has to his credit the distinction of having created many new Ragas. It is love for music and his belief in his music that has enabled him to interpret traditional notions of music for a new refreshing way, reiterating the challenge of innovation and yet respecting the timelessness of tradition.

Amjad Ali Khan has the privilege of winning the kind of honors and citations at his relatively young age, which, for many other artistes would have taken a lifetime. He is a recipient of the UNESCO Award, Padma Vibhushan (Highest Indian civilian award), UNICEF's National Ambassadorship, The Crystal Award by the World Economic Forum and Honorary Doctorates from the Universities of York in 1997, England, Delhi University in 1998, Rabindra Bharati University in 2007, Kolkata and the Vishva Bharti (Deshikottam) in Shantiniketan in 2001.

His collaborations include a piece composed for the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Yoshikazu Fukumora titled Tribute to Hong Kong, duets with guitarist Charley Byrd, Violinist Igor Frolov, Soprano Glenda Simpson, Guitarist Barry Mason and UK Cellist Matthew Barley. He has been a visiting professor at the Universities of Yorkshire, Washington, North Eastern and New Mexico. He has been a regular performer at the Carnegie Hall, Royal Albert Hall, Royal Festival Hall, Kennedy Center, Santury Hall (First Indian performer), House of Commons, Theater Dela Ville, Muee Guimet, ESPLANADE in Singapore, Palais beaux-arts, Mozart Hall in Frankfurt, Chicago Symphony Center, St. James Palace and the Opera House in Australia.

Ayaan and Amaan Ali Khan are sons of Amjad Ali Khan and have received complete training from their father. Under the tutelage of their father, they have grown to be excellent Sarod players and accompany their father in Concerts worldwide. Many music connoisseurs claim that it is truly a proud and pleasing experience to see and hear them play in harmony with their father and together, they create magic.

Amaan Ali Khan is the elder son and disciple of the Sarod Maestro Amjad Ali Khan. Initiated into the fine art of Sarod playing at a very tender age, Initiated into the fine art of Sarod playing at a very tender age, Amaan accompanying his father to various music festivals in India and abroad, has today, carved out a niche for himself. His performances have evoked creditable applause. His precision in tunefulness and his bold and resonant strokes are all pointers to importance of tradition and continuity in Indian Classical Music. Amaan is considered as one of the finest young Sarod players and has attained a very special place for himself to all music enthusiasts. Amaan has been a regular performer at Palais beaux-arts in Brussels, ESPLANADE in Singapore, Chicago Symphony Center, Carnegie Hall and Kennedy Center in USA, Royal Festival Hall and Barbican Center in UK.

Ayaan Ali Khan is the younger son and disciple of the Sarod titan Maestro Amjad Ali Khan, Ayaan stepped into the world of music and the Sarod with confidence, clarity, consistency and technical mastery that he learnt at his father's knee. After giving his solo debut at eight, Ayaan has been performing concerts world wide ever since. He has given many solo performances and also assisted his illustrious father at concerts all over the world. Ayaan has won the hearts of music lovers both in India and around the globe. Ayaan has been making appearances at Carnegie Hall, Smith Sonian, Palais Beaux-Arts in Brussels, Chicago Symphony Center, ESPLANADE in Singapore, Summer Arts Festival in Seattle, Edinburgh Music Festival and the Royal Festival Hall in London. Ayaan has over seven recordings that include three solos. His recent recordings include Sarod for Harmony, live at Carnegie Hall and Strings Attached with Cellist Matthew Barley recorded at Royal Festival Hall.

Accompanying Artists:

Abhijit Banerjee, considered among the front ranking tabla players from India is one of the most sought after creative artists in the realm of Indian classical music. With nearly 20 years of professional experience Abhijit has crafted a unique style and creative approach which has brought him accolades and awards from all over the world for his sensitivity, skill and deep sense of musicality. Apart from his contributions to Indian music he has left his mark in a diverse field of crossover music both as a performer and composer. He has traveled extensively giving concerts, conducting workshops and attending seminars in the Universities and music schools. . In addition to a highly successful career in Indian Classical music his crossover work includes collaborations with musicians such as Ry Cooder, Larry Coryell and Trilok Gurtu. Abhijit founded his own touring ensemble TARANG performing his original compositions, and released CDs of the same title. He is also member of the Raga Jazz group, Arohi Ensemble.

Salar Nader, is one of the most sought-after young percussionists of his generation. At age seven, he began studying with the legendary tabla virtuoso Zakir Hussain. The boy showed such unusual talent that Hussain eventually became his guru, and today counts Salar as one of his most talented protégés ever. After high school, Salar began attending the jazz program at Diablo Valley College in East Bay and joined a variety of jazz combos playing tabla. Salar performs and records with Fareed Haque, an innovative jazz guitarist who has developed a unique audience for Indo-jazz fusion. He has collaborated with the celebrated Afghan novelist Khaled Hosseini on a stage adaptation of his acclaimed novel, The Kite Runner. He worked on the score, arranging and composing works entirely from the world of Afghan, Farsi folklore and ghazal. This work has received rave reviews and has provided one more amazing opportunity for this extraordinary young maestro to juggle.

Sunday, September 4 2011
Musical confluence of distinct styles- A duo vocal jugalbandhi
Vidwans Gundecha Brothers and Vidwans Malladi Brothers

About Gundecha Brothers



Umakant and Ramakant Gundecha are one of India's leading exponents of the Dhrupad style of music. They are among the most active performers of Dhrupad in Indian and international circuits. Their singing is effortless on every note, whether it is on a high or low note. They control the variations in their voices with exquisite appeal. The understanding between the two brothers while they are singing is uncanny and their

tunes are impeccable in rhythm. In their singing they reveal immense musical imagination and refinement.

This ancient style of classical Hindustani vocal music is a form of devotional music that traces its origin to the ancient text of Sam Veda and seeks to induce feelings of inner contemplation in the listener.

The significance of the Gundecha Brothers to Hindustani classical music is not that they belong among the few, though rising number, of those who have made the art of Dhrupad their vocation but that they exhibit a certain excellence in the style of their performance. Their vocals are strong, resonant and exquisitely shaped for time and tension, and their combined presence on the stage is not of two singers but of one Raga and one song. This is a subtle evolution of the art in the Jugalbandi format, which the brothers have developed.

The Gundecha Brothers have sung great Hindi poetry written by venerable Indian poets like Tulsidas, Kabir, Padmakar, Nirala in Dhrupad style. They have recorded about 25 albums. They are probably the most recorded dhrupad singers. They have also sung for many television channels in India and have been broadcasted on British, U.S., German and French, Japan and Australian Radio as well. As well as being an integral part of all of India's prestigious music festivals, the Brothers have also performed at many important international music festivals and institutions in about 25 countries in Europe, U.S.A, Australia, Japan, Egypt, Singapore, Bangladesh, U.A.E and Hong Kong.

They have set up a Dhrupad Institute outside Bhopal, India where they teach students from all over the world. The main objective behind starting this school is to train students who are talented, devoted and committed to the field of music but not able to afford the cost.

They have received several awards, most notably the M.P. Govt. Scholarship from 1981 to 1985, National Fellowship from 1987 to 89, Ustad Allauddin Khan Fellowship in 1993, Sanskriti Award in 1994 and Kumar Gandharva Award in 1998 by Govt. of Madhya Pradesh and Dagar Gharana Award by Mewar Foundation in 2001. Rajat Kamal - National Film Award for the Best Music Direction (2006).

About Malladi Brothers



Sree Rama Prasad and Ravikumar were born with a legacy and rich tradition accrued through their grand father Sri Malladi Srirama Murthy and through their father Sri Suri Babu, a disciple of Voleti Sri Venkateswarulu. They have received additional training from Sangeetha Kalanidhi Sripada Pinakapani and his well-known disciple, Sangeetha Kalanidhi Nedunuri Krishnamurthy who, realizing the potential of Malladi Brothers, took them under his guidance to represent his rich style of music. A large repertoire of Carnatic compositions and possession of vibrant and powerful voices have made Sree Rama Prasad and Ravikumar the most sought after young maestros. Their

musical intellect, melody & aesthetics provide for a most scintillating concert. They have sustained a classic and symbolic expression of Carnatic music, bagging awards from premier organizations including the prestigious premier National Youth Music Title of Sangeetha Yuva Puraskar by Sangeet Natak Akademi; Isai Peroli by Karthik Fine Arts, Chennai; title of Aasthana Vidwan of the Avadhoota Datta Peetham, Mysore, being the youngest to receive the honor thus far; title of Naadha Bhushanam from Shanmuganandha Fine Arts, New Delhi; title of Naadha Mani from Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham They have traveled extensively all over India and abroad (including several tours of Europe, the USA, Canada and Australia) promoting and preserving the rich traditional music they represent.

Accompanying Artists

A pakhawaj instrumentalist, **Akhilesh Gundecha** is the brother of renowned Dhrupad singing duo-Gundecha brothers. Known to often accompany them at concerts and recitals, Akhilesh learned pakhawaj under the guidance of Pandit Shrikant Mishra and Raja Chhatrapati Singh. He has a Master's degree in music from Khairagarh University, and as of 2006 is known to be working on his PhD.

Akhilesh Gundecha has played alongside Dhrupad masters such as the late Ustad Z.F. Dagar, Ustad Fahimuddin Dagar, Pandit Siyaram Tiwari, Asghari Bai, Dr. Ritwik Sanyal, and Bahauddin Dagar. Some of his solo performances have been at the Tansen Festival-Gwalior, Haridas Sangeet Samaroh Mumbai and Dhrupad Samaroh Bhopal amongst other festivals.

Today he is known to have toured more than 20 countries worldwide. In India he performs regularly on radio and television

H N Bhaskar is a versatile violinist and composer. He was first trained by his parents Sri H K Narasimha Murthy and Smt H N Rajalakshmi and currently is a disciple of violin maestro Padmashri Sangeetha Kalanidhi Sri M S Gopalakrishnan.

His first public performance was at the age of eight. He has given solo performances and accompanied several senior musicians like Sri T V Gopalakrishnan, Sri T N Sheshagopalan, Dr N Ramani, Sri Mandolin Srinivas, Smt Sudha Raghunathan, Smt Aruna Sairam. He has traveled all over the world for performances.

He has received many awards including the "Best Violinist" award from the Music Academy of Chennai during Music Festival in 2003. He has a melodious style of playing which has made him a popular accompanist for many leading vocalists. He is a versatile artist who can play many forms of music and has worked with several leading musicians of international stature.


Neyveli Narayanan hails from a family of music connoisseurs and started his musical career under the guidance of Shri S.K. Ganeshpillai. He had intensive training under the great master Tanjavur Shri Upendran and the legendary Shri Umayalpuram K. Sivaraman. An "A" grade artist of AIR, Narayanan has won many awards and has performed all over India and the world with leading musicians and continues to foster his rich heritage through his numerous students. Neyveli Narayanan will be playing the mridangam in the Jugalbandi concert.

Workshop/Residency Programs on September 2 2011.

1. In the first residency program. Maestro Amjad Ali Khan will be presenting a workshop with his sons on appreciation of Indian Classical Music starting with the fundamental importance of vocal Indian classical music even for instrumentalists, continuing with the basics of Raag and Taal in Hindustani Music and ending with an elucidation on the Sarod and its canvas. This workshop will be open to all students of classical music (Indian and Western).
2. Sruti will facilitate a workshop by Malladi and Gundecha Brothers on their collaborative work in finding a common ground between Hindustani and Carnatic Vocal Music.




These programs are supported by Pew Center for Arts and Heritage through the Philadelphia Music Project.



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Sun Sept 4
Vocal Jugalbandi
Gundecha Brothers
Malladi Brothers

Mon Sept 5
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Sun Oct 2
Vocal Concert
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Sunanda Gandham

Sat Oct 8
Concert "Heartbeat Ensemble"
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Vocal Recital
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followed by dinner



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Sat April 9
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Vocal Concert
Priya Sisters

Sat May 28
Trimurti Dance
Sonali Skandan,
Sonali Mishra,
Parul Shah

Vocal Concert
T.M. Krishna

Sun May 29
Dance Performance
Ramesh Ramesh
Vocal Concert
Kiranavali Vidyasankar
Vocal Concert
T.N. Seshagopalan



Sat Oct 22
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Suresh Shwagappa
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O.S. Thiagarajan

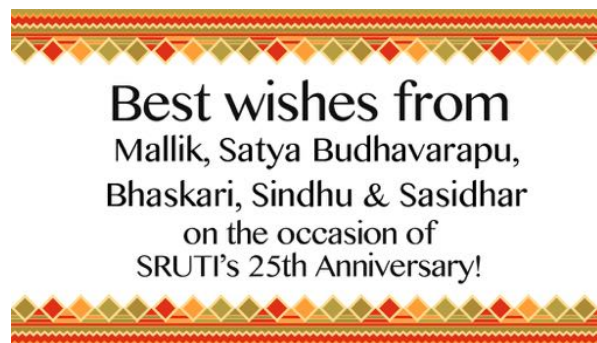
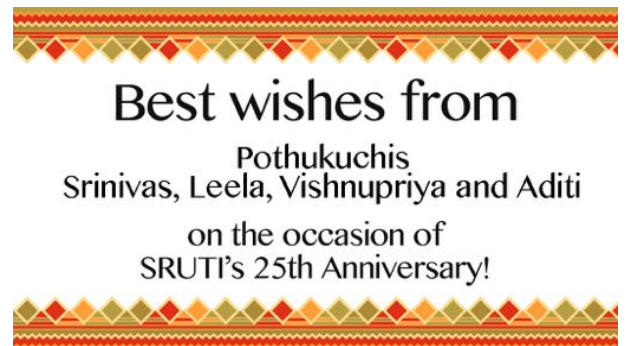
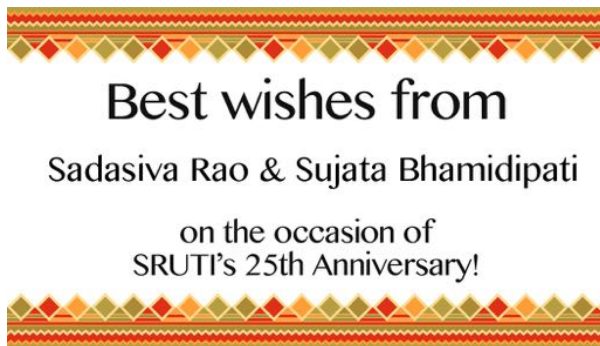
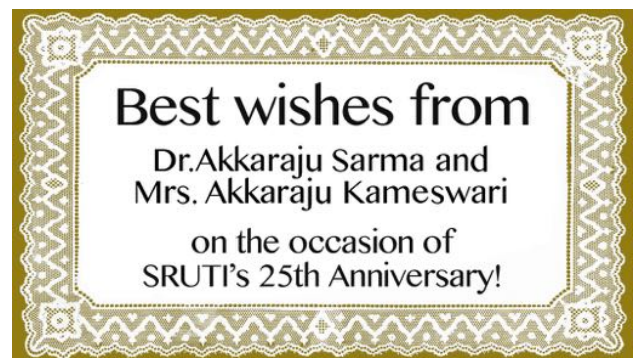
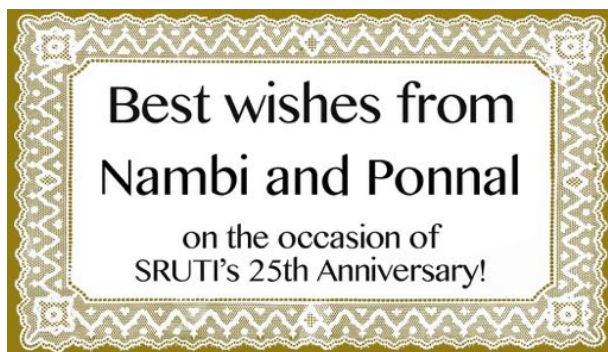
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