



Sruti
The India Music
& Dance Society,
Philadelphia

www.sruti.org

SRUTI RANJANI



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From the Publications & Outreach Committee

Dear Sruti Ranjani Readers,

The SRUTI Publications & Outreach Committee (POC) is pleased to present to you the 'Sruti Ranjani', SRUTI's annual publication, for the year 2017.

We hope the magazine will give you a bird's eye of the successful and eventful year that just concluded. You can relax during the holidays by reading the concert reviews, along with other interesting articles. There is an absorbing trip down memory lane through concert recordings, as well as a story on the modern evolution of some Carnatic instruments. We also have a couple of contributions from our youth group, keeping up our tradition of involving the younger generation in our activities.

Our grateful and heartfelt appreciation to all the contributors of articles and photographs that have appeared in this and other SRUTI publications this year.

We wish you a wonderful Holiday season and very happy, peaceful and prosperous 2018.

The Sruti Publications & Outreach Committee

Please accept our apologies for any errors or omissions you may find. The articles and reviews in this magazine are published with a spirit of openness of communication and freedom of expression and the opinions contained herein do not necessarily reflect the views of SRUTI, its board, or its members.

Concert Pictures taken by Srinivasan Raghavan, Srikant Raghavachari and Balaji Raghothaman

Cover design and execution by Balaji Raghothaman

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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.

From the President's Desk

Dear Sruti Member,

Welcome to the 2017 issue of Sruti Ranjani, our yearly premier publication. As we look back on the year, Sruti team can be proud of achieving a successful year-long season with quality programs, multiple dance performances, and a good mix of vocal and instrumental music. The focus of the year was to provide opportunities for the younger artists in their 20s and 30s to demonstrate their excellence to the Sruti audience and the efforts were fruitful achieving high audience satisfaction ratings and very positive feedback.

We had a successful start to the year with a well-attended Thyagaraja Aradhana headlined by the main concert by Sangeetha Swaminathan. She delivered an outstanding performance with several people suggesting we need to get her back for a full concert in the not-too-distant future.

The spring season continued with a balanced mix of youth and experience, vocal and instrumental with Amritha Murali and O.S. Thyagarajan delivering excellent vocal performances with Thiruvurur Vaidyanathan leading Vibration – an innovative percussion based ensemble.

Fall season Saturdays were packed with 5 events in quick succession. For the first time, we delivered two world class Bharatanatyam performances in the same season, the first - Margam by Shijith Nambiar / Parvathy Menon that received high praise from the audience and second - a breathtaking “Jwala” performance by Mythili Prakash. Special highlight of Jwala was the lighting managed by Eileen Cooley of Los Angeles who flew in with the dance troupe and worked very hard with the venue engineers to deliver an amazing show.

Three vocal concerts by the young and talented musicians – Padma Sugavanam, Sandeep Narayan and Ashwath Narayanan were very well received by the Sruti audience and community.

Other highlights of the year included:

- Several outreach programs were conducted including at Cosmopolitan Club of Philadelphia, Global Philadelphia Association World Heritage Celebration, Hello India! Celebration at Penn Museum and Diwali: Festival of Lights at Reading Terminal Philadelphia. Special Thanks to Arathi Narayan who helped us with some of these outreach initiatives!

- A special committee was formed to review the Sruti bylaws. I would like to thank the Bylaws Review Committee consisting of Mani Subramaniam (Chairman of the committee), Sunanda Gandham, Paul Narayanan, Sudhakar Rao and Vidyasankar Sundaresan for their diligent and exhaustive work throughout 2017 for a comprehensive review of the bylaws and providing valuable recommendations for improvement.
- Resources committee expanded its reach and applied for funding from a large number of corporate and philanthropic foundations that did bear some fruits. But, several of these institutions favor disadvantaged communities over our applications and we are looking for more of a support from our own community in the form of donations and “Concert Patron” support in the future years while continuing to apply for whatever external funding we can obtain. We have also just submitted a fresh LOI (Letter of Intent) for a future project to the Pew Center for Arts and Heritage, an organization that has been a major source of funding for Sruti in the past few years.
- Our investment committee has been reviewing our investments at TD Ameritrade on a quarterly basis and fine tuning as needed. The US-Only ETF based portfolio is structured with a conservative bias while having a good exposure to growth opportunities.
- We are continuing with the Bala Bhavam initiative started by the Sruti BoD in 2015 led by Santi Kanumalla, and have relaxed the geographical boundary restrictions for providing opportunities to additional youngsters.
- Our marketing efforts with email, web and social media are yielding good results and our high resolution event photographs by Srikant Raghavachari, Srini Raghavan and Balaji Raghothaman are continuing to increase our Facebook exposure. Several artists love our Sruti photos and are sharing them widely.

In order to bring together such a wide array of programming and the various duties that come with it, we needed a dedicated group of volunteers. In this aspect, we were blessed with a highly driven group of board members who put their heart and soul into the organization. I would like to thank Srikant Raghavachari (President-Elect), Santi Kanumalla (Treasurer), Dinakar Subramanian (Secretary), Shankar Muthuswami (Director, Resources and development), Srinivas Raghavan (Director, Marketing and Publicity), Balaji Raghothaman (Director, Publications and Outreach), Uma Sivakumar (Director 1) and Srini Rao Donthineni (Director 2). None of our achievements would have been possible without their valiant efforts. I would like to thank all of them for their hard work and unstinting support. Thanks are also due to Subha Narayanan, Raji Dinakar, Nandini Rao, Mira Srikant, Gita Shankar, Anu Donthineni, Ramana Kanumalla, and Pitchumani Sivakumar, for their involvement in various Sruti activities and for their support. I would also like to thank the members of the board and their spouses and Sunanda and Sanjay Gandham for helping in hosting and transportation of artists. I would also like to thank the members of the resources committee, publications committee and the marketing committee for their excellent efforts throughout the year.

The Sruti board would like to thank the Sruti Youth Group for all their contributions this year. In addition to taking advantage of the various opportunities to perform on the Sruti stage, they have helped out with website and document preparation, introductions of Bala Bhavam participants and several other tasks.

I would be remiss if I did not place a note of appreciation for MRS, our audio engineering contractor, and to Joe Baldino in particular. We have thrown a lot of different challenges at them, in terms of venue acoustics, artist temperament etc., and they have come through with flying colors each time, providing a consistently high audio quality, while all the while maintaining a smiling face and a good rapport with the artists.

It has been an absolute privilege to serve the organization and the community. Few things in life can come close to the satisfaction of a well-organized concert, when everything else falls into place, and everything else also falls into insignificance, as the divine sounds of the stage take over, and we are wrapped in unmitigated bliss. In the end, that is what it is all about.

I would like to thank you all for this opportunity to serve. A strong programming lineup is taking shape for the next year under Srikant's leadership. I would like to congratulate the incoming board and wish them the very best for a successful 2018.

Nari Narayanan, President



About the Cover

Good art-work should be like a well told joke - it should not need a long accompanying explanation. Having said that, a few pointers about this year's cover design may pique the reader's interest.

This was an attempt to portray a metaphorical bridge between the cultural heartland of southern India and the Philadelphia region. The temple outlined in the picture is the Thyagaraja temple in Tiruvarur, the town associated with all three of the major composers. It connects to the Philly skyline through the Ben Franklin Bridge. There are also other such intertwined geographical and cultural markers in the back cover. You can spot the Liberty Bell on the ox in a paddy field, and a Bharatanatyam dancer in Valley Forge. The Cauvery Delta and the Schuylkill River are thus enmeshed, just as the Indian diaspora merges into the American melting pot while still maintaining its cultural heritage. There is also an aspiration that we will not just be passive recipients, but make significant contributions back to the mother culture as well, as a lot of budding Indian-American artists have started to do.

The 'musical note carpets' for each composer are in fact rough approximations of staff notations of pallavis from one of their own compositions – extra credit if you can spot the kritis, though I make no claims to the accuracy of the notation.

This was just a whimsical attempt to create a cover design that is somewhat off the beaten track for Sruti. I hope the readers will take it in that spirit and enjoy it for what it is, and not take it too seriously. And don't judge the book by its cover!

Balaji Raghothaman



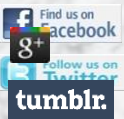
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The Role of Sahityam in Sangeetam

Viewpoints from seven authors, collected by T. Sarada

I. T. Sarada

Sahityam and lyrics are practically inseparable in Indian music as we know it. While Western Music as a performing art evolved to a high level of sophistication without depending on lyrics, they also developed another class like choral music, operas or story telling and song cycles. Appreciation of this type is purely a cultivated taste.

Confining this article to our music we also have two kinds, Classical and Popular Music. Folk songs, songs for special occasions and needs and film music all belong to popular type. In these cases music is just a vehicle to convey an idea, a mood, or to lighten the burden of repetitive work. Hence the lyrics take a lead role while music is merely meant to enhance the effect, draw and hold attention. In Classical music on the other hand the lyrics are there to make the music more rounded and drive it, so to say, to an intellectual level. Carnatic music has been able to develop into unique hearing and learning experience because of the intermingling of Sahityam and Sangeetam. From the prehistoric or Vedic times the interdependence of these two and their importance have been documented with poetic eloquence and prose.

The question we are discussing is, when we go to a concert, do we need lyrics to enjoy or appreciate music to the fullest. The answer will depend upon individual preferences. When one does not understand the language or can not follow the words does it make a difference if the singer can convey the spirit, essence and emotions? Do we enjoy highly proficient instrumental music as much as we enjoy vocal music? The answer to me is yes. Going back to very old times, for example, Nadhaswaram by Tiruvavadudurai Rajaratnam Pillai, or veena by Karai kudi Sambhasiva Iyer or flute by T. R. Mahalingam kept the audience spell bound. There are numerous examples of instrumental musicians who evoke similar experience in the modern era starting with Lalgudi Sri Jayaraman, Sri Ravikiran et al. Lyrics, per se, may not be necessary for music appreciation. Not knowing a language or hearing mis pronounced words need not distract the purpose of attending a concert. It is the combined Chemistry of the music, the musician, the mood, and the accompanying instruments that leaves a lasting memory of a concert.

(Professor Sambhamoorthy's six volumes on South Indian Music and his books on Great Composers offer very many useful concepts and ideas on the topic.)

II. T. Parasaran

In Carnatic Music Sangeetam with Sahityam is very fulfilling to the Rasika. Sahityam gives a lot of scope for the artist to express the moods or Bhavam of the composer. Identifying ourselves with the Bhavas gives us a joy which can not be quantified. Instrumental music is not half as satisfying as vocal music. This is much like Western Classical Music where we appreciate the melodies and harmony. But here too the operatic version is very appealing compared the symphonic repertoire. This is because we identify ourselves with the mood of the music. This is much like people who do not know the language of the Sahityam, still appreciate it because of the Bhavam which the singer shows when he or she sings a Sahityam. I believe this shows the significance of Sahityam in Music.

III. M.M. Subramaniam

Music can be broadly divided into two genres: classical music, sometimes referred to as art music, and popular music. The latter includes film music as well as light classical music. Words/lyrics are essential in popular music in order to convey the emotions ingrained in the music. Classical music is more abstract and lyrics may not be important in that genre. In fact, there is a whole oeuvre of music that does not contain a single word: instrumental music of Western classical music. Carnatic music (CM) is of a different class. Along with Hindustani music, this class of music is referred to as raga music; i.e., combinations of notes with subtle gamakas. However, thanks to the genius of the Trinity, who imparted the various nuances of a raga in their kritis, lyrics have taken a more prominent role in CM concerts. Note that these lyrics are composed in all four South Indian languages as well as Sanskrit, and very few people understand all those languages. Thus, one wonders how many in the audience of a typical CM concert follow the lyrics, let alone process them as they are presented. Indeed, when we hear the same kritis played on an instrument by Chitra Vina Ravi Kiran or flute by Ramani, we only appreciate the music inherent in them. Also, till a few decades ago, the most important part of a CM concert used to be the RTP that is abstract raga music, sans serious lyrics, at its best. Hence, I posit that although many kritis are presented in a typical CM concert, it is the raga aspect in them that is primary.

IV. Chitra Chandran

A good song should have both good music and good lyrics (Sahityam). Without music, lyrics are like poetry. There can be music without the lyrics like the western classical pieces written by great composers like Beethoven, Mozart, and Bach etc. The orchestra brings out the melody and rhythm of the music. The importance is given to the music.

In South Indian Carnatic music, lyrics are important. The composers communicate their feelings of love and devotion to God, and a range of other subjects through these words set to beautiful melodies. Whether it is vocal or instrumental the artists bring out these emotions in their performances. Even though there are no words, the instrumentalist follows the lyrics and the listener is able to recognize the song. The answer to the question, whether lyrics are important depends on the genre of music. A lover of music appreciates and enjoys both forms.

V. Prabhakar Chitrapu

In my opinion, sAhityam and Sangeetam do not need each other. For example, there is beautiful poetry and drama, with no Sangeetam there. Similarly, there is wonderful instrumental music in both Hindustani and Western classical music with no accompanying words.

However, if they do come together, I believe each can enhance the other medium of expression. Certainly ideas expressed in a poetic composition can be conveyed more effectively by introducing time, rhythm, melody and melodic variations in it. For example, the temporal elaboration & expansion in nAnATi bratuku greatly facilitates the effectiveness of the communication of the meaning and mood of the song (philosophical and vairAgya). The rhythmic tempo of Balamurali Krishna's renderings of rAmadAsu kirtanas such as pAhi rAmaprabhO produce a sparkling cheer to the song. And, so does the melodic flow of the Bhairavi rAgA become the soul/heart of the body that is syAma Sastri's Amba Kamakshi song. Just as a physical person shines by his/her personality/character, so does this song get a tenderness and devotion by the Bhairavi

rAgA. Finally, the emotional intensity created by melodic variations is perhaps nowhere better exemplified than in the sangathis of jagamELE paramAtma in tyAgarAja's nagumOmu kriti.

Conversely, does sAhityam aid Sangeetam or does it pose constraints/restrictions for the free expression of music? On a cursory thought, it used to seem to me to be more restrictive than providing additional ways to enhance the expressive capabilities of pure music. After all, does not the AlApana offer a great degree of freedom to express a rAgA compared to the rAgA being bound within the constraints of the lyrics?

On further reflection, it appeared to me that lyrics can actually help produce more sophisticated and more elaborate melodic phrases and idioms. It does this, I thought, by the words and sentences of the composition essentially serving as 'guard rails' for melodic expansion. While it is true that in the open field of melodic elaboration, one could theoretically create arbitrarily elaborate musical expressions, one is limited by one's capacity to do so. By relying on a composition, instead, one can enhance one's ability to develop far more complex and elaborate musical phrases and pathways.

To illustrate the point, I would compare the complexity of a pallavi rendering in, say rAgA durga/Sudha-sAvEri, in an RTP to the complexity of the musical phrases painted by the lyrics of a composition such as dArini telusukonTi of Tyagaraja. Whether it is the opening lines of the kriti or the caraNams that follow, the elaborate musical melodic trajectories in that kriti have never been matched by any free form elaboration of Sudha-sAvEri - at least in my experience!

VI. Alli Natesh

They say music belongs to your soul. Sahityam brings life to the song. It connects the heart to the music, if the singer understands the meaning of the words in the Sahityam and sings with that insight, it will transform the experience of the audience. Although a robot can also produce the right sound which could technically satisfy you, it won't satisfy you on a deeper level. Audience can get a true blissful experience when the performer and the performance become one which can happen only when there is a true understanding of the Sahityam.

VII. Panchanadam Swaminathan

Is lyric (hence the underlying language) critical while rendering or performing music is often a point of passionate discussion (sometimes to the extent of turning into animosity) among music enthusiasts. The language of music (whether it is Karnatic, Hindustani, Folk, Jazz or Rock etc.) is the symphony of notes which contains the sound in harmony so that one can enjoy. Again the appeal of different genre of music is subjective depending on the taste of the listener. It is important to note that the language of music is expressed on an instrument as well. Number one priority of any composer is the music and not the lyric. Many times lyric is adapted to fit the music. Often self-proclaimed puritan tend to attach more importance to the lyric and start debating that the performer should do just justice by enunciating the lyrical content as well without which it is not considered a good performance. This is the case especially, when the listeners are familiar with the language of the lyric, they tend to attach more importance to the lyrical integrity (or beauty if you want to call it) than the engulfing music. Such people should be content with poetry where lyric is absolutely important and music is secondary.



Vignettes of SRUTI Tyagaraja Aradhana Day, March 2017:

Top to Bottom, Left to Right: (1)Tyagaraja Portrait, (2) Singing of Pancaratna Kritis led by Kiranavali Vidyasankar, (3) Utsava Sampradaya Kritis led by Dinakar Subramanian, (4) Bird's eye view of the Pancaratna group.

Wonderful Kalyani at Thyagaraja Aradhana

by Dinakar Subramanian

It was a nice afternoon at the Delaware temple in Hockessin where we all sat down to enjoy the traditional Aradhana concert for 2017. Sangeetha Swaminathan was performing with Kamalakiran Vinjamuri on the violin, Vijay Ganesh on the mridangam and Vinay Mallikarjun on the Kanjira. Sangeetha, a disciple of Sudha Raghunathan, started with the sedate (Sangita) vidulaku mrokkeda in mAyAmAlavagowLai where Thyagaraja salutes the maestros of music. She performed the neraval at the usual - kamalA gowrI followed by kalpanaswarams.



The tentativeness in the first song disappeared when Sangeetha rendered the beautiful bhairavI kriti - cetulAra srngAramu - a song that is usually played on the flute at the Thyagaraja Aradhana in tiruvaiaAru. Sangeetha rendered the brisk sangatis in the pallavi with great control. What followed was about 8 minutes of a brilliant AlApanA in vasantabhairavI essentially elevating the ragam usually represented by a quickly sung nI daya rAdA and bring the audience to a meditative state. In fact, I thought Kamalakiran was absolutely masterful in the improvisation for this ragam. The thirteen minutes of vasanthabhairavI ragam from both are worth listening to repeatedly. Sangeetha did render nI daya rAdA - one of the shortest pallavi lines of a kriti and concluded with some elaborate kalpanaswarams.

rItIgowlai always invokes a sense of mercy for me and Sangeetha indeed did that through nannu viDici kadalakurA where Thyagaraja beseeches rAmA not to move away from him and abandon him. Well into a zone of enjoying this concert, I was eagerly awaiting a good raktI ragam and Sangeetha then offered a very powerful AlApanA in kalyANI where she showed her mastery through some brilliant madhyama kAla phrases. Kamalakiran again elevated the whole mood with extremely mellifluous bowing eliciting appreciation from the vocalist many times. Young Kamalakiran, who has played on the Sruti stage many times has really matured into a violinist with depth and nidAnam (deliberation).



Sangeeta Swaminathan at SRUTI concert, March 2017, Delaware Temple

Sangeetha then sang Thyagaraja's majestic E tAvunarA. She brought out all the nuances of kalyANI with the neraval at srI karuDagu tyAgarAja karArcita where she and Kamalakiran exchanged delightful vilamba kAla and madhyama kAla sancharams and kalpanaswarams. The whole rendition of kalyANI was very satisfying and bliss-inducing. The tani followed and what was notable was its length. Vijay Ganesh and Vinay

did a great job and played a tani for longer than the song which I felt pushed the norms of a typical Carnatic concert format.

Sangeetha concluded the concert with a Sanskrit kriti namO namo rAghavAya in dEsiya tOdi that is said to be one of Thyagaraja's early compositions. According to a lec-dem by Prof. S. Ramanathan, Thyagaraja is claimed to have composed this song when he was 8 years old actually writing the script on the wall much to his father's delight. All in all, a very satisfying concert of a fine selection of Thyagaraja kritis.

Dinakar Subramanian is a music lover and a long time Sruti supporter.

Vocal Concert by Amritha Murali

Review by Revathi Subramony



Amritha Murali in concert, April 2017, Agnes Irwin School

Vidushi Amritha Murali gave a thoroughly fulfilling vocal concert on April 8, 2017, accompanied by Sri. R. K. Sriramkumar on the violin and Sri. Arun Prakash on the mridangam. Having enjoyed Amritha's previous concert for Sruti in 2014, I had been looking forward to hearing her soulful music again.

Amritha began with a peaceful rendition of the shloka Sadguru Gajasya Vani in Shankarabharanam, and this serene tone continued throughout the concert. Next, she sang Vidulaku mrokeda in Mayamalavagowla, a beautiful composition in which Saint Thyagaraja reflects on his musical predecessors. Amritha's seemingly-effortless flow of sarvalaghu kalpanaswarams in Mayamalavagowla was impressive, and Arun Prakash's brisk mridangam playing built up the tempo. After a short sketch of Sriranjani came the popular Thyagaraja krithi Marubalka, with niraval in the line "Darinerigi santa silli naati." Well-supported by RKS on the violin, Amritha created so many beautiful variations in just the first word "darinerigi". The piece concluded with energetic kalpanaswarams and koraippu.

Kalyani was next. Amritha started her alapana in the higher Shadjam and developed it beautifully with long, well-proportioned phrases, including many varjam patterns. Her combination of slow and fast sangathis created the perfect feeling of sowkhyam that one wants to experience at the end of an alapana. Amritha then sang

Syama Sastry's Thalli ninnu nera, her slow tempo bringing out the meditative mood of the piece. One often hears niraval in the line "Shyamakrishna pari paalini," but Amritha instead chose the line "Kamithartha prada kanja lochani." I thought this was a good choice of nereval line as it afforded a more relaxed pace for bringing out the raga bhavam, and Amritha took full advantage of this.

Amritha went onto sing Yavvare Ramayya, in Gangeyabhooshini, which was preceded by a short alapana, bringing out the essence of this vivadi raga. Shriramkumar's alapana clearly demonstrated his depth of knowledge. Amritha's rendition of this krithi was appealing without any unnecessary frills. Subsequently, she presented Dikshitar's masterpiece Soundara rajam in Brindavana Saranga in a slow kalapramanam with the rich bhavam that this krithi demands. Arun Prakash's soft strokes on the mridangam added the perfect balance. Velayya daya villaya, a beautiful, fast-paced Tamil composition by Kavi Kunjara Bharathi in Saveri, was a refreshing change of tempo after Soundara rajam.



The main ragam of the evening was Bhairavi. Amritha elaborated upon her alapana with classic elongated phrases interwoven with many rapid sangathis, both of which brought out the essence of this majestic raga. RKS' haunting Bhairavi alapana was rich in azhutham and bhavam; I especially loved how he subtly incorporated phrases from the Bhairavi Swarajathi. After the alapana, Amritha sang the Thyagaraja composition Rakshabettare, with extensive swaraprasthara in the Pallavi line. And Arun Prakash played an excellent thani, which was unfortunately rather short and left the audience wanting more! Arun Prakash prides himself on playing purely to support the vocalist and this was evident throughout this concert. He played very sensitively and the rhythmic sounds he created were deeply satisfying. After the thani came a rendition of Swamimukhya Prana Nee, a Purandara Dasa krithi in Yadukulakamboji on Lord Hanuman that was beautifully tuned by Amritha's guru RKS.

The highlight of the concert was the RTP in Varali, and RKS actually composed the Pallavi as well. Set to Tishra Jhampa Talam in Mishra Nadai, the Pallavi line was "Raghavara li rama mushavEshara Ati vegame brova"; Amritha explained how the raga mudra had been cleverly woven into the line. After a flawless execution of thanam by both Amritha and RKS, they launched into a spirited pallavi full of ragamalika swarams, which reminded me of a relay race! I was impressed by how adroitly Amritha transitioned from "GRSN" in Varali to "RSD" in Atana. Continuing in a similar vein, RKS pivoted from "SD" in Atana to "SND" in Poorvikalyani, and Amritha turned the "PDPS" of Poorvikalyani into its counterpart in Anandabhairavi. After a brief sojourn in Neelambari by RKS, Amritha transitioned back to Varali. What an enjoyable RTP!

Despite being a young vocalist, Amritha Murali showcases pure classicism. Her manodharmam is inventive and intellectually satisfying to the listener, but she knows how to balance tradition and innovation; her music never becomes overly experimental. Blessed with great gurus, a melodious voice that is aesthetically appealing over a wide range, clear diction, and strong manodharmam, Amritha has a promising future in Carnatic music.

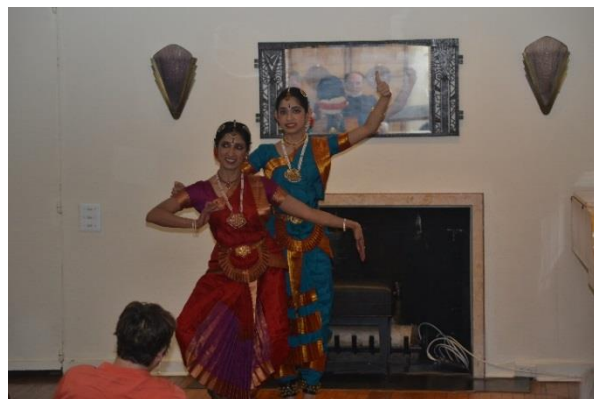
Revathi Subramony is a Carnatic vocalist, teacher and music enthusiast and lives in Exton, Pennsylvania

Enriching Outreach Experiences

Arathi Prasad Narayan

We, at Natyaarathi School of Dance had the opportunity to perform two separate outreach activities on behalf of Sruti. I would like to share the wonderful experiences with you here.

First, I performed a lecture demonstration at Cosmopolitan Club in Philadelphia in March 2017, in a gathering of highly successful professional women – doctors, businesswomen and the like. It was a very memorable experience. The audience was very warm and welcoming, as well as enthusiastic. My lec dem was for about an hour, where we also performed 3 dance items, and after which we all had a tasty sit down Indian dinner. We showcased Bharatanatyam as an art form. My daughter accompanied me in demonstrating the techniques and dance items.



Arathi and Nisha at the Cosmopolitan Club



At the Global Philadelphia World Heritage Event, Sep 2017

The second event was at the Global Philadelphia World Heritage Celebration, in September 2017. This time we were a group of 5 dancers who performed in front of many distinguished guests including Jake Tapper (CNN anchor) and Jim Kenney, Mayor of Philadelphia. The event took place at the Crystal Tea Room of the Wanamaker Building where about 500 guests attended the event. It was a great opportunity for my dancers (8th, and 10th graders) and myself to dance and showcase our culture. We performed 4 dance items for about 30 mins total.

I would like to thank Sruti for giving us these outreach opportunities that help us demonstrate our rich Indian heritage and culture to mainstream USA. Natyaarathi students have immensely benefited from these events. They have started developing a deeper passion and understanding for Bharatanatyam, having performed for a diverse audience. As a Guru, these events encourage and motivate me to develop creativity in choreography and presentation.

Arathi Prasad Narayan lives in Downingtown, PA with her family. She is an experienced Bharatanatyam dancer and runs the Natyaarathi School of Dance.



O.S. Thyagarajan in concert, April 2017, Delaware Temple

Towards the Modern Carnatic Instrument

Balaji Raghothaman

The story of Carnatic music has been written by many stalwarts and geniuses. While the composers and practitioners are widely known and praised, there are many other unheralded contributions to the development of the art. One of them is the perfection and the improvement of instruments. Apart from the rigorous requirements of the musical form, in terms of pitch, resonance, rhythm, timbre and the texture of sound, the designers of these instruments have to deal with daunting climatic variations and sheer wear and tear. Most of the carnatic instruments are still predominantly made out of natural materials such as wood, but there is an increasing trend towards the modernization of the instruments within the confines of the existing design. The use of Teflon instead of ebony for the sliders on a chitraveena, the use of fiberglass instead of jackwood in some other veena designs, are some examples that come to mind. In digging a little more, we came up with two very contemporary instrument design efforts and we wanted to share their stories here. Though these endeavors have happened (are happening) in different parts of the world – Bengaluru and Atlanta, respectively – they share a common thread between them, namely the inspiration, determination and resourcefulness of the people involved.

SRI Mrdangam : The Vegan Alternative



The SRI Mrdangam

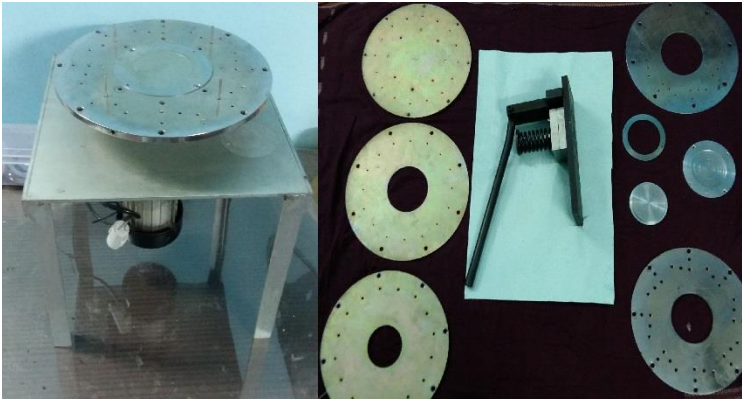
First we go to Bengaluru, where we meet Dr. Varadarangan, a wireless researcher by profession and a concert musician and musicologist by passion. Around 2010, he became aware of the horrible practices used in the leather industry to extract the skin of animals necessary for mrdangams and other percussion instruments. The trivial reaction of stopping singing in concerts did not seem adequate to him, and he decided to do something proactive. Below is a synopsis of my conversation with Dr. Varadarangan about his noble endeavor.

Mr. Varadarangan was familiar with the vibration properties of the loaded membrane due to his physics background. He had also come across Sir C.V.Raman's seminal paper [1] on the acoustic properties of the mrdangam and had absorbed the essence of the analysis. It postulated that the primary reason for the unique sound of the mrdangam is the presence of harmonic overtones. Only one western instrument, the tympani, shares this feature, though its sound texture is quite different. The inspired analysis of Raman had not been put to practical use yet, an effort that Varadarangan took on himself.

After learning the mrdangam-making process from a professional, he started experimenting with synthetic material for the drumhead. The biggest challenge was the karane / sadam, which is a critical piece of the design. In current instruments, it is a delicate mixture that degrades after every few hours of playing time, and has to be repaired, somewhat like the Pennsylvania roads after every winter. He experimented with rubber, fevicol with iron filings etc., and finally landed on the right kind of material that gave him a good 'sustain' tone. There was still additional work to be done to come up with the right method to shape the material, since it was very sticky and unfriendly to use. The last step to the drumhead construction was the creation of the multiple layers, bolstered with sticks.

The replacement of the wooden shell with synthetic material was the next activity that Mr. Varadarangan undertook. Though he had already satisfied his goal of replacing animal skin, he was now taken in by the promise of the entire instrument being rugged and eco-friendly (depletion of trees/ forest cover being a major concern). The first fiberglass materials he used for the shell turned out to be too influenced by temperature fluctuations and

hence would go out of tune easily. He researched the topic, and found out that it is the chemicals used in the fiberglass process that impact the expansion coefficients, and impact the expansion coefficients, and he hit upon the right set of chemicals to use. The outcome is a shell that is extremely resistant to variations in temperature and humidity, comparable or better than the wood shell.



Tools for the manufacturing process

The last aspect of his design was to fashion a proper tuning mechanism for the mrdangam. After looking at the hoop system used in western instruments, he concluded that this was not workable for him, and he invented a new clamp system, wherein the clamps are attached to the drumhead in precise holes cut using a laser cutting machine. He fashioned 16 such clamps, to match the number of adjustment points available in a conventional mrdangam. The result is that a practitioner can tune the mrdangam down to an accuracy of 1 Hz very

easily. The tools that he created for some of the processes such as casting the karane, and making the drumhead, can be seen in the photos.

He did a lot of stress testing on his design, placing extreme tensions on the drumhead, and even fashioning a mechanism to deliver 350,000 consecutive impacts to it, and the mrdangam has passed all these tests.



Dr. Varadarangan

Thus, after many years of sustained and dedicated efforts, the final product was made available to the Carnatic fraternity from November 2015 onwards. The response has been very good, and the word has been spreading. Numerous mrdangists now use the SRI mrdangam as their main practice instrument. I spoke to Vinod Seetharaman, who is based in Detroit and is well known to us in SRUTI. He has been very pleased with its performance, and he uses it extensively for himself and for his students. Vinod was kind enough to give the author a video demo of the instrument in action, and it was impressive indeed. Some other mrdangists, like Ramkumar (a disciple of Umayalpuram Sivaraman) has completely switched over to it even for concerts. Quite apart

from its original motivation, it looks like the killer application of this invention has been its extreme durability. According to Varadarangan, there are at least 4 mrdangists who have completed more than 100 concerts without having to re-do the karane or much re-tuning (the average karane lifetime for the conventional instrument is about 4 to 5 concerts).

The 3D-printed Flute

From Bangalore, we take a long journey to Atlanta, to meet Mr. Ram Mallappa, a software engineer who originally hails from Jog Falls in Karnataka. Ram has been learning the flute for several years. I spoke to him at length regarding his journey to creating his own flute. The story is not unlike the travails of an early garage-based high-tech startup.

The flute as an instrument was born many thousands of years ago, probably as a hollow bone with holes. The wooden flute used now is predominantly made from bamboo. Experts postulate that, the original discovery was likely through accidental observation by humans. Bamboos have naturally hollowed out stems, and in addition, insects bored holes into their exterior, creating a natural flute that ‘sang’ in the wind. Man started

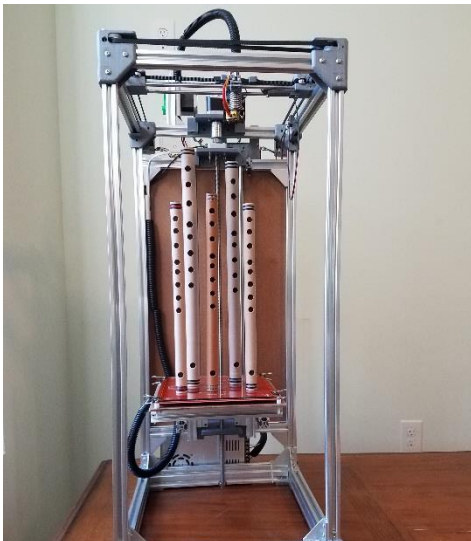
attempting to recreate this design with other types of wood, but bamboo was (and continues to be) the only straight cylindrical light-weight natural material available, so it became the default for flute construction. The biggest difference between the flute and other instruments like the veena, is that the latter can be constructed by fashioning different pieces of wood and joining them together to specifications, but the flute is monolithic and is completely at the mercy of the base material quality.

When Ram started learning to play the flute, he found it very difficult to find good quality instruments. The thickness of bamboo and diameter of the bore in the bamboo, the spacing and diameter of holes, all have to be in perfect balance to make a well balanced flute. Success rate for flute makers with bamboo is very low, less than 10-15%. Each flute that Ram bought had a different defect – either the Ma or the Pa is out of tune, or the tAra stAyi was impossible to play.

After a few frustrating years, he started learning the mechanics and the acoustics of the flute from published research papers from universities. He specifically mentions Theobald Boehm, a 19th century German flute-maker who meticulously documented his processes for making the western flute. The western flute has been perfected over a number of years, but the Carnatic musicians are not able to take advantage of this instrument. Unlike the violin, which can be directly incorporated into a Carnatic playing style, the western flute is quite different from the Carnatic flute and unsuitable in many ways. The opening and closing of the holes is through pressing of keys, rather than directly by the fingers. The key-lever mechanism is designed to completely close or open the holes, and there is no partially opening – this works well with the general tendency in the western canon of playing precise tones, and does not fit well with the philosophy of gliding notes that is fundamental to gamakas in Carnatic music. A few ragas like Shankarabharanam and Kadanakuthoohalam, and a few types of compositions like nottuswarams could be played satisfactorily on the western flute, but anything like a kalyani or thodi of any complexity was impossible.

Thus began Ram's journey to build his own flute. He tried to start with bamboo, but he reached a dead end quickly, mainly due to the fact that the type of bamboo required for the flute does not grow natively in America. There are also severe import restrictions on biological material, as well as all the logistical issues with processing the material and shipping it across oceans. He also went through a phase, somewhat humorous in hindsight, where he was walking around the premises of his local Home Depot with measuring calipers in hand, sizing up their bamboo-based Tiki Torches for consistency in diameter, much to the amusement of the shop personnel!

Giving up on bamboo, he went to PVC pipes and started fashioning some flutes. Through a combination of experimentation and rigorous study, he started classifying, quantifying and understanding the behavior based



3-D Printer built by Mr. Mallappa



The 3-D printed flute

on the physics of the acoustic waves, their wavelengths and their traversal through closed and open parts of the pipe. Some of these were derived from mathematical formulae, but others were from empirical observations. There are also complex interactions between notes, i.e., if he adjusted the hole spacing or size in order to change one note, it has an impact on many other notes. So he had to recalibrate and compensate at each small step.

After understanding how to make a good flute with PVC, the next step was to create consistency. In general purpose manufactured PVC pipes, there was too much of an error in the thickness and diameter, so they could not be relied upon. Ram started contacting pipe manufacturing companies, who were ready to make it to his rigorous specifications, but demanded that he buy at least truckloads of them in order to make the business case. At this point a few different friends suggested that he try 3-D printing of the pipes, so that he can do small quantities to precise specifications.



Mr. Ram Mallappa

Ram started reading up about 3-D printers and contacting manufacturers. Around this time (2013), 3-D printing was still not fully mature, and the tallest object that could be printed was 8 inches, whereas a typical flute is 18 inches. A company was ready to build him a custom 3-D printer, but at the cost of \$25,000. So Ram, true to his tenacity that we are now familiar with, went about learning all about 3-D printers and then creating his own! He took 2 years and a lot of learning of varied subjects like stepper motors and software tools before he completed his first one. But due to the size required, he found that it had a higher than acceptable error margin. So he used his first printer to build parts for his second and more precise 3-D printer. Finally,

he was able to build his first flute using 3 separately manufactured pieces that were then put together. Being an acutely eco-aware person, the final material that Ram arrived upon for his flutes is called organic plastic, made from plant-based materials such as potato start, tapioca seeds, corn shells etc. While it is durable like PVC, it is also completely bio-degradable.

Around this time (2015), his teacher was pushing him to do his arangEtram, since he had been learning for many years. Ram ended up performing his arangEtram concert completely his own 3-D printed flute. His teacher had mentioned this whole effort of Ram's to the president of the World Flute Society, and as a result, Ram gave an invited talk at the World Flute Convention at the University of Wisconsin at Euclair, WI, in Nov 2016. He has been using only his own flute for all his music, and his daughters have been using them for learning as well.

There ends our recounting of the story of two remarkable people, whose tireless work, passion and ingenuity has made a noticeable impact on the Carnatic world. For Dr. Varadarangan, Mr. Ram Mallappa, the stories continue to evolve, and we look forward to their further accomplishments. They and others of their ilk are also partly responsible for the flame of Carnatic music burning bright well into the future.

[1] "The Indian Musical Drums", Proceedings of the Indian Academy of Sciences, 1935

[2] www.karunyamusicals.com

[3] <https://youtu.be/wpTgwUVJ6hQ> : Video of Ram Mallappa's talk at Univ. of Wisconsin

Dr. Varadarangan is a musician living in Bengaluru, India, where he has quit his full-time occupation as a Director of Research at Melange Systems, a wireless company, and started Karunya Musicals, under which umbrella he works full-time on his passion, the SRI mrdangam. He is also a concert-level vocalist as well as a musicologist of considerable repute.

Mr. Ram Mallappa lives in Atlanta with his family. He is a software engineer developing mobile applications. Apart from the efforts described above, he has also developed a mobile app called the Carnatic Tuner.

Balaji Raghothaman is a music-lover first, and incidentally a current board member and past president of Sruti. He performs R&D in wireless technology, and lives in Chester Springs, PA with his family.

Not Missing a Beat - Vibrations Concert Review

Pitchumani Sivakumar

Rhythm is accorded a high status in Indian classical music, and Rhythm was showcased in all its splendor by Tiruvarur Sri Vaidyanathan and his group at the “Vibrations” concert presented by Sruti in collaboration with Crossroads Music during the Spring of 2017. The remarkably talented and internationally acclaimed group comprised of Tiruvarur Sri Vaidyanathan on the Mridangam, Sri Raghavendra Rao on the Violin, Sri N. Guruprasad on the Ghatam, Sri N.Sundar on the Tabla along with rising star, G.Abhilash providing the vocal interludes. Sri Vaidyanathan lived up to his reputation as a true torchbearer of the Tiruvarur School, unleashing some powerful strokes on the Mridangam right through the program and ably coordinating and motivating the team.

The concert started with a delightful rendition of “Om ennum Pranava” in Ghambera Nattai that benchmarked the quality of music to be expected for the remainder of the evening. Next up was a unique and rarely heard krithi, Nandeesham – a composition of Dr. Balamuralikrishna in Rishabapriya. Abhilash rendered this kriti with a lot of passion and verve embellished by the deft and delectable strokes of all the percussion instruments. Sri Raghavendra Rao is undoubtedly a violinist par excellence, but it was his compositional prowess that stood out in the next piece in Thilang. Together with the co-artist, Sri Rao delightfully traversed the madhyama and gandhara notes bringing out the exquisite beauty of this raga. Care was also taken to demarcate this from opening Ghambeera Nattai by effectively portraying the lower Nishadham in Avarohanam.



The Vibrations Ensemble, April 2017, St. Mary's Church Hamilton Village

The thilang treat was followed by a beautiful rendition of Abheri in both Hindustani and Carnatic style. “Aadikondar”, the Muthu Thandavar Krithi in Mayamalava Gowlai depicting the dance of Shiva, was an excellent choice to bring out the unison between melody and rhythm and the rendition promptly entranced the audience as they tapped and swayed to the drum sounds. Abhilash then rendered a magnificent Kaapi alapana leading in to the main piece for the evening. The extended Tani Avarthanam that followed showcased percussion at its highest and most pristine order. Simple, subtle yet wonderfully woven mathematic patterns combined with the rapport among the percussionists created a vibrant atmosphere. The triplets of “thaka dhimi thakajonu” with the audience encouraged to square away the avarthanam with their hands clapping on “dheem dheem dheem” ensured the presentation was engaging and interactive. Sri Sundar’s gumkis on his Dagga was beyond words and gelled seamlessly with the solkattus on TV’s Mridangam and Guruprasad’s ghatam.

The concert ended with the evergreen and patriotic song, Parukkulle Nalla Nadu by Mahakavi Subramania Bharathiyar, followed by Bhagyada Lakshmi Bharamma refreshingly rendered in Bowli as opposed to the normal Madhyamavathi. Sruti excels in presenting multiple dimensions of our wonderful music and a rhythm-focused program featuring an artist of Sri TV’s caliber was truly a positive, enriching and fulfilling experience.

Dr. Pitchumani Sivakumar is an ardent classical music lover and mridangam teacher in King of Prussia, PA.

Fitting a Square Peg in a Round Hole?

On Learning Carnatic Music in America

By Sanjana Narayanan

When I arrived at college over a month ago, one of the first orientation events was the Extracurricular Activities Fair. All the student organizations on campus had set up a dizzying array of posters and flyers. No freshman could pass by a club booth without being cajoled into signing up. As an Indian-American, I was pleasantly surprised to be surrounded by upperclassmen from the South Asian Association, the Hindu organization, and three different Indian dance troupes (Bhangra, Bharatnatyam, and Bollywood). A week later, I learned that the most popular campus show of the year is Ghungroo, which features Indian music, dance, and theater.

Indian culture has become increasingly integrated into American life. So learning Carnatic music in the United States today is not the Herculean effort it used to be – but it is by no means easy.

There are two main difficulties. First, Indian culture in America overwhelmingly focuses on Bollywood, which has a catchy mass appeal that Carnatic music often lacks. This problem will not be solved anytime soon – popular music will always be more readily accessible than its classical counterpart – but there are plenty of Carnatic opportunities in the United States for students who are passionate enough to seek them out. Take, for example, the Cleveland Thyagaraja Aradhana, which attracts the most esteemed Carnatic musicians from India and draws children from all over the country to compete. Many regional Indian music organizations, like CMANA in New Jersey or Sruti in Philadelphia, are offering more and more opportunities for youth performance. And thanks to today's technology, young Carnatic musicians are more connected than ever before, and they organize their own music festivals and fundraisers.

Moreover, teachers are invaluable to the process of learning Carnatic music. While there are undoubtedly more music teachers in India than in the United States, the rise of the Carnatic music scene in America is also fueling a rise in the number of qualified teachers. With Skype and FaceTime, distance is no longer an issue – we can take music lessons no matter where we or our teachers are in the world!

However, the second problem with Indian-Americans learning Carnatic music is far more formidable. There is simply no replacement for studying an ancient Indian art form in its natural context, amidst the jumble of Tamil and Hindi and Telugu that you hear every day on the street, the majestic temples around every corner, and the sounds of Shankarabharanam wafting from the radio. Here in the U.S., we simply have to accept that our understanding of Thyagaraja's lyrics may always be more studied than intuitive, that there may always be a jarring contrast between the typical college dorm room jamming out to showtunes and the cluster of kids at a Carnatic concert, trying to imitate a particularly tricky Ranjani Gayatri bhruga. This disparity forces Indian-American students of Carnatic music to live in two worlds at the same time.

But I prefer to think of this issue in another way. Living in the United States, we can take advantage of the rich musical traditions of both the East and the West; we can learn Carnatic singing alongside classical piano, for instance. Maybe it is a dissonance, but I believe it is a melodic dissonance, beautiful in its incongruity.

Sanjana Narayanan is a freshman at Harvard University studying computer science. She has been learning Carnatic vocal music from Smt. Kalyani Ramani for the past seven years. Sanjana has won awards in several music competitions conducted by the Cleveland Thyagaraja Aradhana and the Carnatic Music Association of North America (CMANA). She has also given many concerts in the Northeast and India for organizations such as iCarnatic, SRGMPDN, and Brindavani. In her free time, Sanjana loves to read, write, and play piano.

A pleasing musical garden – Padma Sugavanam in Concert

Review by Balaji Raghothaman



Padma Sugavanam concert, Community Music School, September 2017

The first concert of the fall season for Sruti was given by Smt. Padma Sugavanam, accompanied by Vinod Seetharaman on the mrdangam and Kamalakiran Vinjamuri on the violin. It was also the first time that Sruti used the Community Music School in Trappe as the venue. It was a cozy auditorium, perfect for a medium sized event like this one.

Padma started with a bang, with the classic tOdi varnam ‘erAnApai’ composed by Patnam Subramanya Iyer, another native of tiruvaiaAr, the breeding ground for many of the foundational composers of carnAtic music. The varnam was delivered with the right mixture of briskness and deliberation, and with her authoritative rendering, Padma made it clear that we were in for a polished performance that day.



She followed up with an annamAcArya kriti ‘annivibhavamula’, in valaji, a pleasing pentatonic rAgA that is a janya of cakravAkam, without its ri and ma, and normally thought of as a ‘morning’ raga. The hindustAni equivalent of this rAgA is kalAvati. Padma’s delivery of the kriti showed her mastery of the rAgam very clearly. The kriti invokes Lord Venkatesa and his various attributes. Padma skipped the second caranam, and after singing the 3rd caranam, she returned to the 1st one for neraval around the line “vEdAntakOTla vibhuDitaDu nAdabrahmapu nAdamitaDu” followed by kalpanAsvaram.

The next piece was a weighty rendition of ‘hiranmayIm lakshmiIm’ in lalitA, preceded by a substantial alApanA. Kamalakiran excelled on the violin in this piece as well as others. LalitA is one of those meditative rAgas, where the madhyamam holds a lot of power, and Padma brought this out beautifully in her neraval and kalpanasvaram segment.

After a brief transitional piece, a pApanAsam sivan kriti in yadukula kAmbhOdi, the artist launched into her kalyAni alApanA, followed by nidhi cAla sukhamA, the well-known kriti composed by tyAgarAja. This is one of those piece-de-resistance compositions that have been embellished through polishing and perfecting by

many generations of musicians. The audience did get the feeling that she did justice to its grandeur, though there is always room for more.

The kalyAni was followed by a brief item, a swAti tirunAl sAhityam called paramapurusam in lalaitapancamam. The interesting choice to sing this rAgam in the same concert as the lalitA is perhaps justified by the fact that this is a rare rAgam, with only 2 or 3 known compositions.

The rAgam tAnam pallavi followed, in suddha dhanyAsi. It was by far the longest piece of the concert, almost an hour, but the audience did not at all feel the time passing by, and got caught up in the fantastic rapport between Padma and Kamalakiran. Vinod gave a tremendous tani avartanam at the end of this piece. The artists were seen to be truly enjoying themselves, and the crowd joined in with liberal smatterings of ‘aha’s being heard from the audience. The sAhityam for the Pallavi was composed by Padma herself, and it was a prayer to Varuna, the god of rain beseeching him to calm his fury down, a very relevant invocation in view of the hurricane Irma hitting Florida during the same weekend.

The tukkada section of the concert consisted of three numbers. First was a ugAbhoga (viruttam) followed by a purandara dAsa kriti in hamsAnandi. Next was a kAvadicindu by Subramania Bharatiyar, and finally a swAti tirunAl piece in hindi, in brindAvana sAranga.

Overall it was a memorable first concert by Padma Sugavanam for Sruti, and judging by the audience reactions, she will be likely be back for more in the future. The concert was followed by a Q&A session in which Padma answered questions from the rasikAs about various carnAtic matters. She showed herself to be a thoughtful, articulate and erudite person.

Balaji Raghothaman is a supporter of SRUTI and a rasika of the Indian fine arts, especially Carnatic music.



Audience Vignettes, 2017

Shijith and Parvathy

Review by Sunanda Gandham

After a seven year hiatus, Sruti audience were once again treated to the visual splendor of a Bharatanatyam presentation on Saturday, October 7, 2017 by the husband-wife duo Shijith Nambiar and Parvathy Menon who exemplify dancing with heart and soul in unison.

The evening started with a crisp rendition of an invocatory composition of Late Sri Mangalampalli Balamurali Krishna “Maha Ganapathim” by Deepu Nair. He was ably accompanied by Easwar Ramakrishnan on the violin, Nattuvangam by Udayasankar Lal, P.K Siva Prasad on the mridangam.

Following the tradition of Margam in Bharatanatyam style, the curtain opener was “Alarippu” set in Adi talam and in combination of misram and sankeernam, followed by a composition of Maharaja Jayachamarajendra Vodayar. This piece, on Lord Shiva, composed in ragam Gambheeranata and set to Adi talam, hails Him as the annihilator of the demon, Jalandhara. Interspersing this composition with Alarippu, that requires the crisp execution of hand and foot work, along with synchrony and perfection, the duo performed in an ever increasing pace ending with a speedy swaram, thus marking a great beginning to the recital.



Shijith and Parvathy,
Upper Merion Middle School, October 2017

Next was the main piece of the evening, a tAna varnam on Lord Krishna – “o’ vanajAksha ninne nammithi rA” by Prof. T.R. Subramanyam in rAgam behAg. The duo easily slipped into the roles of Lord Krishna depicting his various “leelas”: appearing in the gopika’s dreams to be with her in one episode and depicting “Rukmini apaharanam” in another. A graceful depiction of the immense love between the two characters was ably executed.

Next, was a padam performed by Parvathy, written by Sarangapani in rAgam sahAna set to misrachApu that shows the emotions of a gopika who is deeply in love with Lord Krishna but is now being given away in matrimony to another. She sends her love to Lord Krishna and requests him not to forget her. The self-consolation and assurance by the gopika that she will stay strong despite being separated from her love, Lord Krishna was touching and very convincing.

The next piece was a performance by Shijith to a very popular Tyagaraja composition, “nagumomu gana leni” in ragam Abheri and set to Adi talam. Shijith’s performance was every bit true to the lyrics of this composition in which Tyagaraja appeals to Rama, the lord of the universe, to take him into his fold and protect him. Shijith depicts Lord Rama as the ultimate protector who always fulfills the needs of his devotees. An episode from Ramayana in which, through her unflinching devotion, Sabari meets Rama and feeds him wild fruit but, not before tasting the fruit herself to ensure their freshness. Recognizing the depth of devotion and affection in that gesture, Rama blesses her. In another episode, Shijith depicted Lord Rama as Lord Vishnu saves Gajendra, the king of elephants from the deadly bounds of the mighty crocodile and finally grants him salvation. The humility and devotion of Tyagaraja as he pleads Rama for salvation through the intense interpretation by Shijith complemented by the soulful rendition by Deepu Nair brought tears to my eyes. This item was certainly the highlight of the evening as it was the main topic of the post performance discussions among the audience.

Next were excerpts of ashtapadis presented as a single piece from Jayadeva's Gita Govindam in rAgamAlika. Through the composition "yAhi mAdhava yAhi kesava", Parvathy, as a distraught Radha pushes her consort Krishna away for forgetting her for a whole day and night. Shijith, as Krishna, through the composition "Priye chAruslle" convinces her that she is the love of his life. The interaction between the two, delineating various shades of intense emotions of love was very effective.

The concluding item was a Thillana by Sri Veena Seshanna, in ragam Senchurutti and set to Adi talam. An energetic rendition and a vibrant presentation by the duo, interwoven with crisp jathis was executed with technical perfection.

The level of ease and comfort in interacting with each other, and in utilizing the stage may look seemingly natural but, is by no means an easy feat. Subtle, yet elegant lighting effects by Arun Murthy complemented the performance all the way to the end. The entire presentation was a feast to our sensory organs absorbing the bhakti, mukti and rakti bhavas.

Years of impeccably executed performances combined with their uncompromising dedication to the art, has elevated this couple as one of the top performers today. It is clear that through pure dedication, and passion for this art that Shijith Nambiar and Parvathy Menon achieve perfect synthesis on the stage but with a sense of simplicity and humility, which are extremely rare to find in the current day's classical dance arena. As such, we are extremely thankful for artists like them and look forward to welcoming them back to Sruti in the near future.

Sunanda Gandham is a long-time dedicated supporter as well as ex-President of Sruti. She works in the information technology industry, and also runs a school for Indian classical dances in Malvern, PA, where she lives with her husband and two children.



Sruti Bharatanatyam Performance

A review by Eesha Ampani

Bharatanatyam is a form of Indian classical dance that has been around for thousands of years. Bharatanatyam is very technical and demanding of the dancer, and it takes a long time to build up to the professional level. Shijith Nambiar and Parvathy Menon are two very talented, young dancers with plenty of experience. They performed at a concert held by Sruti that I attended.

The orchestra was composed of a violinist, vocalist, nattuvanar, and mridangist. These four musicians were very skilled and made the performance one of a kind. The music had a wide range, and each song sounded different and supported the stories that the dancers were telling. The musicians stayed on beat and were always focused and engaged with not only the other musicians, but with the dancers as well. The performance would not have been as exciting and entertaining were it not for the music.

The performance was composed of seven dances, with a small intermission in between. The dances were all very remarkable, and I stayed engaged through every one. The first dance was Alarippu, which means flowering bud. It is traditionally performed first in an arangetram or another dance performance. While there are different versions of Alarippu, all are focused on rhythm. The dances varied in length, and in one, the dancers performed for almost one hour! All highlighted the dancers' techniques and physical boundaries, and some

required a good deal of acting. In one of the dances, Shijith Nambiar and Parvathy Menon acted playfully by tricking each other and waking up the other from rest.

I really enjoyed attending this Bharatanatyam performance. Shijith Nambiar and Parvathy Menon danced very nicely and made me interested in attending other dance performances. Some dances had traces of humor in them, some anger, and some sorrow. Other dances were technically difficult and had the audience in awe at their talent. Shijith Nambiar and Parvathy Menon are two young dancers who, along with their orchestra, really astonished the crowd with their performances.

Eesha Ampani lives in Eastern Pennsylvania with her parents, older sister, and her pets. She attends The Wyndcroft School in Pottstown, PA and is currently in seventh grade. She started studying Bharatanatyam with Viji Rao when she entered fourth grade and continues to attend classes every Sunday morning. She enjoys watching dance performances and is also interested in acting and playing the piano.

What is in a raga – vadi or vivadi?

Review of Sandeep Narayan concert by Dr. P. Swaminathan



Sandeep Narayan in concert, Community Music School, October 2017

On October 21, 2017 Sruthi, India Music and Dance Society, presented a vocal concert by Sandeep Narayan, accompanied by H.N. Bhaskar (violin), Neyveli Narayanan (mridangam) and N. Guruprasad (Ghatam). Having listened to Carnatic music performance by stalwarts from India, over several decades Sandeep Narayan rightfully belongs to the third generation of musician par excellence born in USA. He gave an excellent performance demonstrating his pandityam gained through excellent tutelage under his guru Sangeetha Kalanidhi Sanjay Subramaniam.

He started the concert with a familiar ata tala varnam in kalyani. After this he gave a brisk rendering of Thyagaraja's krithi 'Daya juchuTakidi ...' in the raga ganavaridhi which is a janya raga of the 35th (vivadi) melakartha raga shulini. The dominant note in this raga is shutshruthi rishaba (R3) which gives its melancholic appeal. According to legend, this is one of the krithis composed by Thyagaraja during last days of his life. The genius of the saint was such that even at that ripe age (80) he invented new raga (unknown until then) ganavaridhi using the vivadi scale known for its melancholic appeal.

After a soulful rendering of ganavaridhi, Sandeep chose to perform one of the master pieces of Dikshitar in sankarabharanam. The edifice of music is built on the pillars of RAGA among which sankarabharanam has been in existence since time immemorial. This raga is labelled dhira-shankarabharanam to fit the katapayadi convention under Dikshitar paddati. Sankarabharanam literally means - the ornament of Lord Siva - the seven swaras described as Sarpa (S), Rudraksha (R), Ganga (G), Mrga (M), Pushpa (P), Damaru (D), NisAkara (moon) (N). This is a melakartha raga (mela 29) with a symmetrical tetra chords separated by a major tone. These features

provide lot of scope for the performing artist (whether vocal or instrumental) to create artistic improvisation with enjoyable niraval, kalpana swaras, graha bedam etc. The musical trinity had composed numerous krithis showcasing the different aspects of the major scale sankarabharanam. Dikshitar's composition 'Dakshinamurthe ...' in sankarabharanam, set to misra jhampa tala (cycle of 10 aksharas) is best suited for elaborate improvisation replete with sangathis and kalpana swaras. Sandeep demonstrated his erudition with effective alapana followed by soulful rendition of the krithi embellished with niraval and kalpana swaras.

After a swift rendering of a composition by Gopala Krishna Bharathi in purvikalyani, Sandeep presented a detailed exposition of Thyagaraja's 'sukhi eva ...' in kanada with an impressive alapana followed by the recital of the krithi, niraval and Kalpana swaras.

The piece de resistance of the concert is the RTP in latangi presented in dwi (2) nadai, different variations of jhampa tala. Most pallavis are presented in a talam with eka (1)-nadai. But dwi (2)-nadai, tri (3)-nadai and pancha (5)-nadai pallavis are also presented by experienced artists. Sometimes, artists change the tala of the RTP from the main tala to another which has same number of aksharas or a tala which has some number of aksharas, which when sung some integral number of times equals the number of aksharas in the main tala. Opinion on the use of such talas is mixed among stalwarts in the field. However, to present such variations the performing requires experience and expertise. Sandeep ably demonstrated his expertise. After rendering a few short pieces and a tillana in niroshtha composed by T.N. Seshagopalan, Sandeep concluded the concert after rendering Sivan's 'Karpagame ...' in madhyamavathi.

A small discussion on the vadi and vivadi ragas is in order. Venkatamaki is credited with the classification of (12) musical notes into 72 melakartha (mela for short) ragas (with seven notes in the arohana and avarohana). Out of these about 40 of them are labelled as vivadi melas and the remaining as vadi melas. A vivadi mela contains vivadi notes (dissonant swaras), meaning one of the notes clouds the presence of its neighboring note. Vivadi melas are those which contain one of the following notes: shatshruti rishabha (R3), suddha gandhara (G1), shatshruti dhaivata (D3) and suddha nishada (N1). There are 40 vivadi melas (and their janya ragas) which are supposed to have vivadi dosha. Some hardliners in the musical world were of the view that Venkatamaki could have restricted the classification to 32 melakartha excluding vivadi melas.

In the past performing artists were reluctant to perform vivadi ragas. On the contrary, the musical appeal of the vivadi ragas are special, more pleasing to the heart and soul of even the uninformed listener. The musical trinity did not care about vivadi dosha and composed innumerable compositions, like the ever impressive 'Paramathmudu ...' in vagadheeswari, melancholic 'Daya juchuTakidi ...' in ganavaridhi, 'Ganamurthe ...' in ganamurthy, Koteeswara Iyer's 'Edaiya Gathi ...' in chala nata and 'Sri Rama Saraswathi ...' in nasika bhushani etc. just to name a few vivadi raga compositions. Vivadi ragas are beautiful and should not be excluded from concert platforms because they are perceived to be "unmusical". Just in support of this, of late quite a few musical stars like Madurai Mani Iyer, Dr. Bala Murali Krishna, Kadri Gopalnath, Sanjay Subramaniam, O.S. Thyagarajan and Sandeep Narayan have popularized many of the krithis composed in vivadi ragas.

Sandeep, an upcoming star ably demonstrated his musical prowess by presenting several krithis stemming from different melakartha ragas as well as demonstrated his ability to handle multi tala pallavi. Having listened to his guru Sanjay Subramaniam ever since he came onto the concert stage, I cannot help from making the observation that Sandeep's body language on the stage reminded me of his guru. I am sure some of you will at least agree with me. H.N. Bhaskar's violin support was phenomenal. Both Neyveli Narayanan and Guruprasad provided a fantastic support which embellished the concert to a higher degree. In essence it was a memorable concert for me.

Dr. P. Swaminathan is connoisseur of music and dance. He was the past president of SRUTI. He is an ardent supporter of SRUTI. He frequently contributes to SRUTI notes publications

Down (USB) Memory lane

By Dinakar Subramanian

In celebration of the saint's 250th birth anniversary, I received a request from our President-Elect Srikant Raghavachari to curate a list of Thyagaraja songs presented by Sruti artists over the years. I set out collecting my tapes, CD's and MP3's of the past 25+ years. This process included obtaining the MP3's from many sources. For those who are curious, this process of creating MP3's from cassette tapes involves sending the output of the tape deck to a computer to be read by Audacity (a leading sound editing software application). Then the raw (unedited) file must be snipped at the right spot to remove unnecessary gaps or sounds in the recording. Some of the files I acquired needed to be spliced together or split since a single MP3 file had more than one song or a song was captured in multiple MP3 files. The tedium was easily overcome by what I ended up listening to while doing this project.

We have seen artists perform from their early career to after they are the top performers in the field. We have had stalwarts deliver stellar performances. We have several current and future Sangita Kalanidhi's who have performed for us. We have had accompanists return as main performers and many such variations. All of these have resulted in a familiarity between our audience and the artists that is intangible.

I look back at the whole process of creating the raw concert recording and ultimately delivering the presentable form to our Sruti audience. We used to record the concert on VHS tape and then generate our master. Our original form of delivery was cassette tapes which we used to buy by the hundreds since a typical concert would run into 2 or 3 tapes. We had tape duplicators that the designated Board member used to store at their residence. We used to have a primitive program to generate the tape sleeve with the details of the concert, make copies, cut them into the shape of the cassette cover and insert the copied tape and the sleeve. And of course we even offered the mailing service of tapes using padded envelopes.

I believe around the late 90's or early 2000's, we moved to providing CD's to our patrons and that changed the logistics a bit as we only had to create the master CD and we used to send out for copies to be pressed. Our creative juices then went to designing the CD cover which was done very professionally.



Cassette to CD to USB

In the USB drive that you will receive as a sponsor of Sruti for 2018, you will see some unique and obscure kritis like sadAmadim in gambIraVANI, lAvanya rAmA in poornashadjam, mapala velasika in asAvErI and many trusted favorites. I have tried to compile rare and eka raaga kritis and elaborate renditions of kritis in rakthi raagas rendered by upcoming and seasoned artists. While selecting kritis for this compilation, I looked at the CD covers and the cassette covers and observed the dates and the venues for the concerts. My mind then wandered to what I actually experienced at each event, each auditorium and the mood that a given concert gave me. These thoughts were

extremely precious and heartwarming to me and made me realize what a great organization we all have the pleasure of being associated with. In my reverie, I remembered the various interactions with the artists, the elation that many compositions and concerts gave me and made me travel through time. This reminiscing process also walked me through my own life progression and events in my life. I have always joked to my daughters - remember, we, as the audience have been recorded in every concert we are listening to (through our applause). This experience has been incredible - nostalgic, euphoric, exciting with plenty of aha moments.

As you read this, I urge you to think of the compositions presented and if you were lucky to have been there, re-enjoy them.

Dinakar Subramanian is a music lover and a long time Sruti supporter.

Crescendo of Artistic Fervor

A Bharatanatyam Performance by Ms. Mythili Prakash

A review by Ramaa Ramesh

The stage filled with magnificence and splendor as the arrival of 'Surya', the Sun God, was depicted by the slender danseuse, Ms. Mythili Prakash, with grace and grandeur, instantly capturing the hearts of the audience, the soul-touching Raga 'Vasanth' rendered impeccably by vocalist Aditya Prakash, as he chanted verses from 'Aditya Hrudayam', salutations to the Sun God himself, alternating with immaculate pneumonic utterance by Kasi Ayisola, formatted similar to a Kavuthwam, aptly chosen to set the stage for a strong entrance.

From the conceptualization to the execution, 'Jwala', a thematic Bharatanatyam dance feature presented by Ms. Mythili Prakash, accompanied by the musicians of her live orchestra, this was a sincere effort by young artistes (some of them American born), striving hard to conserve the Indian culture far away from home, with unique touch of originality, sprinkled with radiant hues of creativity. The entire theme conveyed the true story of the 'rising flame', as perceived by the choreographer - a story, telling the infinite journey of life and death, an eternal source of energy that can remain as a silent flicker or manifest into raging fire.



**Jwala by Mythili Prakash,
Montgomery Community College, October 2017**

In the first act titled 'Surya', the majestic appearance of the Supreme Cosmic energy, riding the chariot drawn by the seven horses, representing his powerful rays was further enhanced by the dexterous lighting design provided by Eileen Cooley. The concept of life happening everywhere with the dynamics of the Sun's rays was beautifully portrayed, lush green grass to plants and trees, creepers adorning them decoratively, nature's bounty at its best. A sudden shift of Raga to 'Malayamarudham', proficiently played on her violin, by the talented Anjna Swaminathan, swept the audience for a ride on the flowing rivers, demonstrated by the dancer with ease and virtuosity. As the singer engaged in a proficient 'Thanam' rendering, it added cadence to the visual expression of the rain drops, multiplying quickly, drenching the dancer as she skipped and bounced, carefully avoiding the slushy puddles. The winding down of that act with the chanting just as it had begun, drew one's curiosity towards what to expect next.

Act two, 'Jwala', commenced with a brisk 'Thisra Nadai', perfectly blending with Mahakavi Subramania Bharatiyar's lyrics 'Agni Kunjondru Kanden', his ideology brought to life by the fervor of the rising flames, the dancer prancing the entire stage in multitude of circles, denoting the dispersion of the raging fire. A tiny little spark growing into devouring flames, the amazing prowess of fire! Rohan Krishnamurthy stole the show with his percussive flair on the mridangam, playing a host of variations in unison, to augment the intricate footwork, cascading into a rhythmic ecstasy, a jugalbandi type of duo rendition between the dancer and the percussion. This act was cleverly concluded, luring the audience's attention to Ms. Prakash's nimble-fingered gestural manifestations of the unstoppable flicker, the spot light focused on her hands to let you savor those moments, before an abrupt stop, bagging an overwhelming applause.

'Agni' - from a radiant lamp denoting auspiciousness, to a burning funeral pyre representing loss, death, despair. The flame kindles varied human emotions, poignantly portrayed by the danseuse - joy and exhilaration to sorrow and desolation. Mourning in solitude, reminiscing over past memories, imagining the feeling of a touch, sad, angry, coming to terms, building courage within, giving strength to close family, realization of the cycle of life. These human sentiments well supported by chosen verses from 'Agni Suktam' acknowledged the power of the fire-God in a reverential prayer.

The performance segued into more of Bharatiyar's lyrical interpretations, a tribute to 'Shakti', the counterpart of Shiva, envisioned as one's creative energy, and the popular song, 'Chinnanajiru Kiiliye Kannamma', addressing new birth and beginning. The folk tune-like entry into 'Kapi' Ragam with 'Tharana' syllables was a musical treat. However, these two pieces seemed to test the intellectual perception of a mature 'Sruti' audience, leaving some of them baffled with contemplation, wondering if it was indeed a weak attempt by the choreographer to justify these inclusions in her thematic sketch.

A more appropriate fit was the next act 'Shraddha', featuring Lord 'Hari' as a beacon of light, saving Draupadi when humiliated by the Kauravas. The legendary Meera Bhajan ' Hari Tuma Haro' in 'Darbari Kanada Ragam' validated the hope within the human heart that 'Bhakti', faith in God will remove darkness, violence and oppression. The in depth detail of Draupadi's struggle to protect herself from shame and the act of countless disrobing which left Ducchāsana with tired arms, were performed with adequate flair. Though a commendable presentation, layered with impeccable 'Nritya' and moving 'Abhinaya', there were moments when the rasikas were yearning for a fleeting eye contact from the dancer in an effort to connect with her audience.

The finale in 'Yamun Kalyani' Ragam, sung passionately by Aditya, lent to a repetitive movement sequence involving high energy technique, fleeting steps from allied classical dance forms, intermingled with successive rhythmic iterations, urging the audience to internalize the journey of liberation along with the dancer. The culmination of a brilliant conclusion achieved a standing ovation, leaving the audience spell bound, with a secret desire of wanting a little bit more of the precious evening!

Ramaa Ramesh is the director of Nardhana Academy of Dance



Audience Snapshots

Ashwath Narayanan
A review by Dr. Gopalan Sridhar

The patrons at SRUTI were treated to a delightful concert on November 11, 2017 by Shri Ashwath Narayanan at the Community Music School auditorium in Trappe PA. He was accompanied by Rajeev Mukundan on the violin and Sumesh Narayanan on the mridangam. The concert lasted approximately 3 hours and clearly left a lasting impression on all those gathered.

At the outset, the stage was set for a cozy atmosphere because of the venue selected by the board members. The sound engineers did a fabulous job keeping the acoustics well-balanced throughout the concert.

The concert started with the Ata Tala varnam in Kalyani by Pallavi Gopala Iyer. This well-known varnam is a great starter and set the tone for the rest of the concert and immediately got the audience involved.

This was followed by the Thyagaraja kriti Manasa Etulorthune in Malayamarutham set to Rupaka talam. Ashwath saved all his energy for the neraval and swarams which were spectacularly vibrant. The neraval was done at Kalilo Rajasa Tamasa and he gave equal attention to both the slow and fast expositions. Presenting both speeds, Ashwath focused his efforts on the Tara Sthayi which is suitable for the nature of the raga. Rajeev was equal to the task and his returns were of equal length and virtuosity.



Ashwath Narayanan, Community Music School, November 2017

After the rapid ending to the Malayamarutham, it was time for a slower and more leisurely piece and he chose Annapurne Visalakshi by Muthuswamy Dikshitar in Sama set to Adi Talam. The pace chosen for the song was just perfect and intended to bring out both the beauty of the raga and the lyrics. In fact, Ashwath took the time to explain the Sthalam that the song was based on, correcting a common misconception that this song was based on the Goddess Visalakshi in Kashi. Dikshitar based this song on the Goddess Visalakshi at Kuzhikarai closer to his home town of Tiruvarur and Ashwath explained the parts of the song that confirm this. It was impressive that he took the time to research on this and share his knowledge with the audience.

This was followed by the Thyagaraja kriti Dhyaname Varamaina in Dhanyasi set to Adi Talam. The alapanas held a classical air through the use of standard prayogas. The end of the krithi featured a brief round of slow and fast swaras which served as a precursor to the main piece.

A couple of shorter pieces helped lend balance to the concert following the Dhanyasi. First was the Papanasam Sivam composition Karunanidhiye Thaye in Bowli set to Misrachapu talam. The diction and tempo of the Tamil piece coupled with Sumesh's subtle playing style made for a satisfying experience. Although the

singer performed two morning ragas, the presentation felt comfortable for the evening. The Muthiah Bhagavathar piece Raja Raja Rajithe in Niroshtha was next and he explained that Niroshtha literally means without the lips. The composer himself has been credited with inventing the Raga which does not include the notes ma and pa which would need the use of lips to pronounce. Additionally he also said that all the words of the song do not need lip usage which added a bit of color to the rendering. He seemed to thoroughly enjoy the presentation of this raga with a range of delightful and fast paced Kalpana swaras which is challenging for a Raga that is limited in notes and scope.

Nadopasana by Thyagaraaja in Begada was chosen as the main piece. Given the antiquity of the raga, proper respect was paid to all the accepted phrases in the Alapana and rendered with care by both the singer and violinist. The length was perfect to bring out the majesty of the Raga without creating tedium. Neraval and swarams were performed at Tantri Laya Swara Raga in both speeds and were fairly traditional. The tani avartanam that followed was thoroughly enjoyable and he was careful to reflect the mood of the song that preceded by starting with slow traditional phrases and working up to a blistering speed for the finale.

The concert then moved on to a small selection of lighter pieces. A Meera Bhajan Tum bin Mori kaun khabar le was followed by the evergreen Baro Krishnayya. The mridangam accompaniment was much softer and understated for these pieces which is in keeping with current tradition where an increasing number of bhajans and abhangs have started to be included in concerts. A Tiruppugazh in Purvikalyani was followed by a Thillana in Revathi composed by Lalgudi Jayaraman as the final piece.

The exuberance of youth anchored in deep tradition was refreshing and bodes well for the future of the art form. Ashwath has imbibed the KVN classicism but also seems determined to create a style of his own and clearly accomplished that during this concert. We certainly look forward to hearing more of him in the future.

Dr. Sridhar is a long time SRUTI patron and music connoisseur. He is also a pediatrician practicing in Reading, PA.



L to R: Joe Baldino and Kurt, both from MRS Audio, & Dan Flaumenhaft from Crossroads Music

A Collage of Accompanists



From Top, Left to Right:

Row 1: Sumesh Narayanan, Rajeev Mukundan, Rohan Krishnamurthy, Kasi Aysola, Aditya Prakash, Anjna Swaminathan, B.V. Raghavendra Rao;

Row 2: Neyveli R. Narayanan, N. Guruprasad, H.N. Bhaskar, G. Abilash, N. Sundar;

Row 3: Vinod Seetharaman, Kamaliran Vinjamuri, H.N. Bhaskar, Srimushnam S. Raja Rao;

Row 4: Mysore Srikanth, K. Arun Prakash, R.K. Shriramkumar;

Row 5: Vijay Ganesh, Vinay Mallikarjun



Some BoD and volunteer snapshots

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What you said



Survey Feedback from SRUTI Concert Attendees

SRUTI thanks all who responded to the surveys after each concert. Here are some excerpts. We appreciate and value your feedback and comments and do our best to implement your suggestions where feasible.

“Started on time. Allowed as many applicants as possible to perform. Very hard work on the part of the BoD. Kudos and very best compliments to them and other volunteers.” – about Tyagaraja Aradhana, March 2017

“Amrita is a very talented young musician. Her vidwat is of a high order, as she has proved in Chennai. Her music exemplifies pure classicism! RKS and Arun Prakash were fantastic!” – April 2017

“Spellbinding!! Sri OST is a traditionalist and a purist who lovingly distilled the beauty and passion of his namesake thyagayya's compositions- to treat us to an evening of incredible beauty! The renditions of old favorites like the "O ranga sayee" - brought back haunting memories of stalwarts like Semmangudi!” – April 2017

“Absolutely delightful Dancing in a soundscape created by wonderfully accomplished musicians. I was taken and surprised by the literal expression of mimed character acting in danced expressions around abstract statuesque stances. In my laymen's eye a highly accomplished choreography astonished minutely following predetermined embellishments of classical forms. Improvisation must have brought them forth and once established were flawlessly danced out.” – about Shijith and Parvarthy concert, Sept 2017

“Fantastic performance. Very well choreographed. High quality artists. Kudos to Sruti for presenting this second generation set of artists. Need to do more such presentations balancing with the more traditional performances as well. This was both traditional as well as incorporating contemporary aspects.” – about Jwala, October 2017

“First time artist for Sruti. Been wanting to hear him for a few years. Glad Sruti decided to present him now. Continue to present such bright future stars. Liked the venue. Very good acoustics and comfortable.” – about Sandeep Narayan, October 2017

Response of the year goes to:

“What pre-concert snacks do you prefer for 2018 events?”

“Vazhakkai bajji Aloo bonda Andhra Punugulu Mysore Bonda Anjaneyar Vadai Masala Vadai Mangalore Bonda Masala Vadai”

2018



Sruti
The India Music
& Dance Society,
Philadelphia



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Raja*

*Ramakrishnan
Murthy*

*Rama
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*Guitar
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