

# SRUTI RANJANI



**Sruti**  
The India Music  
& Dance Society,  
Philadelphia

[www.sruti.org](http://www.sruti.org)



திரிபுரம் கிராமம்  
மு கார்  
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கிருஷ்ண ராஜ மண சந்திரன் அருண்

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## From the President's Desk

Dear SRUTI Member,

Welcome to the 2019 issue of SRUTI Ranjani. We are just completing a busy year with numerous performances during the spring, summer, and fall seasons. Our events this year were a mix of instrumental, dance, and vocal programs. The focus this year was to showcase both established and upcoming artists in our events.

Program highlights of this year:

- We had a successful start in 2019 with our community event, Thyagaraja Aradhana, which was followed by a vocal concert by Gokul Chandramouli with able support from Kamalakiran (violin) and Vijay Ganesh (mridangam) at Hindu Temple, Delaware.
- The Spring season started off with a grand veena concert by Dr. Jayanthi Kumaresh, supported by Pramath Kiran (tabla) and Jayachandra Rao (mridangam).
- Sangeetha Kalanidhi Sanjay Subrahmanyam vocal concert with S. Varadarajan (violin) and Neyveli Venkatesh (mridangam) was well attended by people from the tri-state area.
- Good Bharatanatyam recital by Dr. Janaki Rangarajan in early May, which was followed by a workshop on the next day.
- Vidushis Ranjani & Gayatri had an excellent interactive Q & A session for the SRUTI audience with a grand concert the next day. They were ably supported by Charumathi Raghuraman (violin) and Sai Giridhar (mridangam).
- We ended our spring season with a composer's day event in May, with community participation and a Bala Bhavam vocal concert, followed by a group rendition of compositions of Mysore composers and the grand vocal concert by Amrutha Venkatesh, who was supported by Rajeev Mukundan (violin) and Arjun Ganesh (mridangam).
- During the summer, we collaborated with the Hindu Temple, Delaware to present a Kuchipudi dance drama – Rukmini Kalyanam by the Dr. Vempati Chinna Satyam troupe. In participation with Philadelphia Ganesh Festival as part of cultural activities, we presented a vocal concert by Sankari Krishnan, supported by Charulatha Ramanujam (violin) and V.S. Raghavan (mridangam).
- Our fall season started off with a vocal concert by Kiranavali Vidyasankar with Bhargav Tumkur (violin), Vinod Seetharaman (mridangam) and Srihari Raman (mridangam).
- Our continued support and partnership with Community Music School helped us present a grand sitar concert by Purbayan Chatterjee with Gayatri Asokan (vocal), Anirban Chakraborty (harmonium) and Ojas Adhiya (tabla).
- Additional fall concerts included one by Vijay Siva, supported by R.K. Shriramkumar (violin) and J. Vaidyanathan (mridangam). Our season ended with a concert by Sangeetha Sivakumar with support from H.N. Bhaskar (violin) and Poongulam Subramaniam (mridangam).
- Few additional highlights were our success in getting monetary resources with grants from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, as well as from Citizens for the Arts in Pennsylvania to revamp and modernize our website [www.sruti.org](http://www.sruti.org) and bring it to the next generation.

None of the above activities would be possible but for the support from our board members and committee members (resources, publications, marketing) at all events. In addition, all the families continued to support us by hosting artists, event day support, and organizing post-concert dinners.



I would like to thank our sponsors, partners, collaborators, and support staff at the venues who helped us tremendously in making these events successful. I would also like to recognize the support of our audiences, SRUTI board members, committee members, and families. We continue to be a very cherished organization with a long history and others look upon us for leadership and good governance traits.

A special thanks to Joe Baldino from MRS who manages the audio at our events. Some of the artists now know him so well that they ask if he will be there for the concert.

It has been a privilege to serve this organization for the past four years in different capacities and I will always cherish the wonderful memories and friends this opportunity has given me, and I am thankful to the SRUTI community for this wonderful opportunity.

I wish you all a very happy new year and prosperous 2020!

***Shankar Muthuswami***

*President*



**Thyagaraja Aradhana group renderings (*above and below*)**



## From the Publications and Outreach Committee

Dear SRUTI Supporters and Rasikas,

Another wonderful year has passed with some spectacular concerts and exciting events and we hope you were able to partake in the offering of established artists this year. This SRUTI Ranjani contains the customary set of reviews, presenting reminiscences to those who attended the concerts and offering a glimpse of what happened for those who missed it. We also present an article, written at our request, by renowned vocalist Ramakrishnan Murthy on his experience singing at the Tiruvarur Teppam festival. It is a wonderful behind-the-scenes read of the artist's own day-long experience. Photographs for this article were sourced by Shri R.K. Shriramkumar.

We mourn the loss of and pay tribute to two great musicians who have performed for Sruti in the past – Shri Kadri Gopalnath and Shri Ramakant Gundecha.

The cover page is designed and created by Balaji Raghothaman, Director of our Resources Committee. It presents a look inspired by music that has been passed on through the generations. The handwritten lyrics shown on the cover are for two kritis rendered at Sruti concerts - *endraikku siva krupai* in Mukhari and *mundu venuka* in Darbar, by Ranjani & Gayatri and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, respectively.

We have made good strides in our continuing effort to preserve our concert recordings for posterity. We have dozens of concert recordings to work with. The preservation process has involved collecting the digitized versions (from the early 2010's), CD's (most of the 2000's), and the audio cassette tapes before that. Since we have already been recording our concerts in a digital format for the past five years, it has been easier to create the master recording by digitally splitting the songs appropriately. As many rasikas may know from the "olden days", mastering recordings from audio cassette tapes take longer because of the manual nature of the process — though this process is always a good opportunity to unwind and listen to a concert. We are still looking for some of the cassette recordings from the late 80's and the 90's.

In addition to our audio artifacts, we are also looking for flyers, souvenirs, and other printed material that we have generated over our past 33+ years in an effort to create a living memory of SRUTI. Our goal is to provide a near complete database of all our media artifacts for posterity. We are currently in the collection and preservation mode which will then progress to the presentation mode. This will dovetail well into our iterative website upgrade activity.

We are always looking for articles and contributions to our periodicals, so, if you have been thinking of a topic or have found some answers to an arts-related question that has piqued your interest, do not hesitate to take your ideas to your keyboard and send an article to us. We can always find a spot for it in our publications and welcome articles from young ones as well as seasoned rasikas.

We thank all the reviewers and authors for their contributions to this periodical. We also thank Balaji Raghothaman and Srinivasan Raghavan for their concert photographs that appear here.

***Dinakar Subramanian***

*On behalf of the SRUTI Publications and Outreach Committee*

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## A Tribute to Saint Thyagaraja

*Arun Mahadevan*



Gokul Chandramouli performed the annual concert at Sruti's Thyagaraja Aradhana, accompanied by Kamalakiran Vinjamuri on the violin and Vijay Ganesh on the mridangam. The team of US-based artists treated the audience at the Hindu Temple of Delaware to a musically enriching afternoon. Vocal concert by Gokul Chandramouli, March 23, 2019

Gokul began the concert with a brisk and lively rendition of palukavEmi nA daivama in pUrNachandrika. This was followed by a beautiful rendition of the rare kriti yagnAdulu in jayamanOhari. The kalpana swara exchange between Gokul and Kamalakiran that followed was a highlight in sarva-laghu exposition, with the raga being thoroughly explored by both artists.

An exploration of SuruTTi was next, where this reviewer particularly enjoyed Kamalakiran's reply, which was full of tonal modulations that brought out the sowkhyam of the raga beautifully. The alapana was followed by the kriti bhajana parulakEla.

Keeping up the stream of rakthi ragas, a detailed exposition of sAvEri followed. Gokul presented the kriti daridApulEka, with the line "valachi padamula nammitE" being explored through a detailed neraval. The swara prastAram that followed was one of the highlights of the concert, with Gokul and Kamalakiran engaging in an imaginative kuraippu, featuring a foray into khanDa naDai. The artists' masterful command over the exchanges speaks to their years of practice and experience.

After a soulful rendition of seetAvara sangeetha gnAnamu in dEvagAndhAri, Gokul took up Thyagaraja's raksha peTTarE in bhairavi as the main piece of the afternoon. The bhairavi alapana that preceded the kriti was a nuanced

exposition, with well-chosen phrases building on each other to explore the raga in all its grandeur. The kriti, followed by neraval and kalpana swara at “sItA karamunu paTTi celagina doraku”, was rendered at an unhurried pace, with due respect to the majesty of bhairavi. Vijay Ganesh showed his class with a relatively short mOhra and kOrvai to end the piece. Gokul concluded the concert with haridAsulu veDalu in yamuna kalyani.

This reviewer particularly enjoyed the choice of songs and ragas, which allowed Gokul to fully capitalize on his rich voice and showed his classical approach to music. Kamalakiran’s sensitive accompaniment was no surprise to many in the audience, who have been listening to him since his early years. Vijay Ganesh provided excellent support by augmenting the vocal and violin and still showing his own expertise. Overall, a highly enjoyable concert and a fitting tribute to Saint Thyagaraja.

*Arun Mahadevan is a carnatic vocalist and a postdoctoral scholar at the University of Pennsylvania.*

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## **Jayanthi Kumaresh**

*Manasa Suresh*

On April 13, 2019, SRUTI hosted a veena concert by Smt. Jayanthi Kumaresh, supported by Sri Jayachandra Rao on the mridangam and Sri Pramath Kiran on the tabla.

The concert began with a Sahana ragam outline and the familiar Karunimpa varnam in Adi thalam, setting a serene tone for the concert. The combination of mridangam and tabla percussive support brought a novel and beautiful tone to the piece.

Next came an outline of the not-oft heard Rasaali ragam, followed by the Thyagaraja krithi Aparadhamula Norva. The sarvalaghu kalpanaswarams showcased the beauty of simplicity and brought out the shape of Rasaali exquisitely. Smt. Jayanthi explained that she had learned this piece directly from veena exponent Sri S. Balachander, who passed away 29 years ago on that date.

Following this piece was a soukhyam-filled Shankarabharanam exposition with a beautiful balance of traditional phrases juxtaposed with creative insights. The tranquil alapana was aptly followed by Thyagaraja’s Bhakthi Bhikshamiyyave, in which Thyagaraja asks Lord Rama to give him the “bhiksha” of devotion, leading to satvikam, or peace. The kalpanaswarams that followed the piece were peppy and showed excellent camaraderie between the three artists on stage, especially during the koraippu at the upper shadjam. Smt. Jayanthi’s immense control over the instrument in terms of varying tonal quality and volume accentuated the performance.

Next was a Sriranjani ragam exploration that began with some unconventional phrases employing many straight notes rather than gamakam-laden, showing a very different angle of the ragam. Smt. Jayanthi presented the uncommon Sri Dum Durge, in Khanda Chapu by Mutthuswami Dikshitar, showing her mastery over the instrument by playing upto tara sthaayi shadjam in one particularly beautiful phrase. In this piece, Sri Pramath Kiran brought out a surprise by picking up the mohrsing and showcasing his multiple talents. The koraippu exchange between the three artists was particularly innovative and enjoyable.

Following this piece was a beautiful Hamsanaadam ragam and a ragamalika thanam with forays into Saveri and Varamu. Smt. Jayanthi presented a pallavi in Misra Chapu with a succinct neraval and trikaalam, followed by the



thani avarthanam. Sri Jayachandra Rao and Sri Pramath Kiran, who had thus far excelled in their supportive roles were given the opportunity to showcase their immense mastery over their instruments and innovative rhythmic expositions. Jayachandra Rao's misra nadai explorations were particularly memorable, while Sri Pramath Kiran brought back the mohrsing into the thani avarthanam, bringing a new dimension of rhythmic exploration to the section. This exploration, followed by the joining together of all three artists for the final korvai, was the perfect ending to this piece.



Smt. Jayanthi then played a small, beautiful outline of Behag, followed by an upbeat folk composition of Sri Ganesh and Kumaresh. The concert concluded with Shyama Sastri's Kamakshi Loka Sakshini, in Madhyamavathi.

With full-length veena concerts being a rarity in the concert circuit, it was indeed a pleasure to listen to Smt. Jayanthi Kumaresh and her team. The soothing music as well as the incredible chemistry between the three artists made it a pleasure to watch as well as listen to.

*Manasa Suresh is a Carnatic vocalist and a science teacher based in Philadelphia.*



# Bharatanatyam Dance Recital by Dr. Janaki Rangarajan

Vasanthi Nagaraj



SRUTI presented a dance recital by Dr. Janaki Rangarajan on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Overall, Janaki's performance was very graceful. She is definitely a promising talent and new face in this exclusive field. Blessed with great stage presence, she uses her agility and long strides to showcase her passion and mastery of the art form. Her education from prestigious gurus like Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam has accentuated Janaki's understanding of the art form and her performance on the stage.

Janaki began her performance with a rare *stuti* in praise of Lord Siva, "Pancha Mukha Siva". The energy and representation of the five forms was very well presented. The choreography by Smt. Nandini Sharma was well balanced to showcase the *nritta* and *abhinaya* aspects of the Siva *stuti*. The sculptural poses rendered by the dancer were truly remarkable.

Janaki then went onto to perform a Swati Thirunal Pada *varnam*, "Nin ne naan nambi nean". This is a composition of Madurai Muralidharan in praise of Anantha Padmanabha swami in Thiruvananthapuram. The *naayika* pleads to the Lord to accept her for she has left everything for Him. She questions his reasons for ignoring her. "Are you avoiding me because I do not meditate like the sages; is it because I have not performed Agni pariksha like Sita; can you at least let me have the dust from your feet; you reside in the oceans, while I wallow in this cycle of birth and death; can't you even spare me a look?" In the *charanam*, the dancer pines for the Lord to give her a fleeting glance, to acknowledge her presence. She is pining from the incessant attacks from cupid's arrows and longs for a mere glance of the lotus eyed Lord. Janaki, with complete control of *thalam* and rhythm, performed the *korvais*, or *jatis*, to near perfection. Her *abhinaya* was very deep and conveyed the *bhakti* aspect splendidly.

Next, Janaki performed Jayadeva's eighth *astapadi*, portraying the undying love of Radha and Krishna for each other. This was set in Behag raag and misra chapu thalam. Janaki's communicative expressions were at their best in this piece. Sitting in one place, she conveyed the entire *abhinaya*. Her body language, expressive eyes,





gestures, and bhakti for the Lord was visible throughout the performance.

Instead of choosing a typical lullaby to follow, Janaki chose a rare contemporary English poem; she had the poem translated into Malayalam and set in raagamaalika and thalamaalika. She used her platform to educate children to stand up for what is right, speak up for the less fortunate, and use their God given gift of life to serve society. This new composition by Nandini Sharma was aptly choreographed.

Janaki concluded her presentation with a *Taraanna*, using quotes from Sufi saints, Kabir, Amir Khusru, and Rumi to showcase the universal language of love and the invisible thread that unites us all in this world. Prophets may be many, but the message is the same: universal love, brotherhood, and respect for all. Realizing the supreme Truth should be the goal of all beings; music and dance allow us to express our devotion to that *Brahman*.

I was very impressed with Janaki's sincerity and hard work to keep the art form alive and accessible to all. Remembering the audience and keeping them interested is essential for the success of any performance. Janaki definitely won the hearts of young, upcoming artists and the respect of the connoisseurs with her performance.

Our best wishes to "Nadanamamani" Janaki Rangarajan.

*Vasanthi Nagaraj is a Bharatanatyam dance teacher in the King of Prussia area and is a keen connoisseur of Indian classical music and dance.*



## **Dr. Janaki Rangarajan Dance Workshop**

*Arathi Narayan*

SRUTI organized a dance workshop by Dr. Janaki Rangarajan for senior dancers/dance teachers in the Philadelphia area during the month of May 2019. It was an excellent workshop and I was glad to have had the opportunity to attend it.

The dance item that we learned as part of the workshop was a keerthanam on Lord Nataraja - Ta Tai Endraduvar. This is a composition of Sri Gopalakrishna Bharati in Ragam: Sindhu Bhairavi and Talam: Adi. The choreography was by Dr. Janaki Rangarajan. Janaki is known for her unique style, creativity and immaculate movements. Janaki's choreography uses some of her Guru Dr. Padma Subramaniam's karanas and other elements of her style. All of this was evident in this dance item that we learned. Getting a grasp on the intricate movements and karanas in this dance was quite a challenge for some of us. However, by the end of the workshop when we performed the entire dance, we did feel the energy of the Supreme Being dancing forcefully, while his matted red locks with the beautiful moon swayed away. I felt a rush of contentment and bliss while performing the entire item. I was very happy to have been in the same space as Janaki and to have learned this beautiful and energetic choreography.

Thank you to SRUTI for bringing this dance workshop to the dancers in our area. I am looking forward to more such workshops in the future.

## Exhilarating Concert by Sanjay Subrahmanyam

*Prabha Subramaniam*

It has been a long time since I reviewed a Sanjay Subrahmanyam concert. So, when Dinakar Subramanian, Director of Publications, asked me to review another Sanjay concert, I happily agreed.

For the last several years, Sanjay has been one of the brightest stars in the Carnatic music firmament. In January 2017, The Madras Music Academy awarded him the prestigious Sangita Kalanidhi title. It was a well-deserved recognition of his achievements in the music world. The reasons for that recognition were evident in his concert on 27 April 2019 organized by Sruti at the Delaware temple in Hockessin, DE. S. Varadarajan accompanied him on violin and Neyveli Venkatesh on mridangam.



Sanjay is endowed with a powerful voice capable of traversing the three octaves with ease. His music is purely classical. He brought out all these qualities at the concert.

It was clear from the moment Sanjay opened his concert that he was in great form. From the Sahana varnam that he rendered in two speeds to the mangalam, there never was a dull moment.

He followed the varnam with a couple of less often heard kritis – Karikalapa mukham in Saveri of Dikshitar and Marachite nyayama in Hamsadwani of Patnam Subramanya Iyer. [I have given the complete concert songs list at the end of this review.]

A few years ago, at a concert in Chennai, I had heard Sanjay render a brilliant alapana in Darbar followed by Mundu venuka, a Thyagaraja kriti. Remembering that occasion, I had requested, through the organizers, that he render the kriti again for the Sruti audience. Sanjay graciously included that piece in the concert, minus the alapana. The kriti was rendered exquisitely.



Sanjay is well known for presenting Tamizh kritis by lesser-known composers. Kamakshi katakshi in Vasantha by Tiruvarur Ramalinga Pillai was his choice that day. *[Note: Some authors attribute this kriti to Subbaraya sastri.]* He preceded the kriti with a superb alapana in that ragam.

Sivakama Sundari, a composition of Papanasam Sivan in Mukhari is unusual in that it has an atheetha eduppu; i.e. the song begins before the beat. As if to make it more interesting, Sanjay started the rendering from the anupallavi.

Nannu brovamani cheppave, a composition of Bhadrachala Ramadas is popularly sung in Kalyani. Sanjay presented that keerthana in Yamuna Kalyani!



Sanjay has a reputation for sometimes choosing a relatively minor ragam for RTP. However, in this concert, he chose Karaharapriya, one of the so-called big six ragams to the delight of many like me who prefer mainly major ragams for RTP. The pallavi was in an unusual talam: khanda ekam spanning two avartams.

Sanjay followed the RTP with a variety of songs mentioned in the list ending with the traditional mangalam.

Varadarajan is one of the top violinists of the day. His Karaharapriya was particularly delightful. He and Venkatesh have been Sanjay's regular accompanying artistes for many years. Their great coordination and teamwork were fully evident during the entire concert.

It was an exhilarating concert, and the large audience listening in total absorption demonstrated their thorough satisfaction by offering Sanjay a long, standing ovation at the end of the concert.

*Prabha Subramaniam is a founding member of SRUTI, an established singer, music teacher and an avid rasika. She and her husband Mani Subramaniam currently live in Laurel, MD.*

*See the concert set on the next page...*

## Sanjay Subrahmanyam Concert Set, April 27, 2019:

1. Karunimpa (varnam) – Sahana – Adi
2. Karikalapa mukham – Saveri – Rupakam – Dikshitar
3. Marachite nyayama – Hamsadwani – Adi – Patnam Subramania iyer
4. Mundhu venuka – Darbar – Adi – Thyagaraja
5. Sivakama Sundari – Mukhari – Adi – Papanasam Sivan
6. Kamakshi katakshi – Vasantha – Adi – Tiruvarur Ramalinga Pillai
7. Nannu brovumani – Yamuna Kalyani – Chapu – Bhadrachala Ramadas
8. RTP – Karaharapriya – Khanda eka (Ragamalikai swarams in Yadukula kambhodhi, Ananda bhairavi, Begada, Dravida kalavathi, Surutti
9. (Tamizh) noolai padi – Behag – Rupakam – Bharathi dasan
10. Daasara – Bageshri – Purandara dasa
11. (Virutham) – Ragamalikai
12. Navasudha rasam – Kapi – Swathi tirunal
13. Pagaivanukkarulvai – Ragamalikai – Bharathiyar
14. Virutham
15. Idhuvo tillai – Sindhu bhairavi – Gopalakrishna Bharathy
16. Mangalam



*Sanjay Subrahmanyam, interacting with the audience after the concert*



# Kamalalaya Anubhavam – A Visit to Tiruvarur

*Ramakrishnan Murthy*



Tiruvarur and the Thyagarajaswamy Temple for which the town is famous, holds a special place in the heart of those deeply into Shaiva Siddhanta, architecture, art, and of course Karnatik Music. It is after all, the birthplace of the hallowed Trinity of Karnatik Music, namely Shri Kakarla Tyagabrahmam, Shri Muttusvami Dikshitar, and Shri Shyaamaa Sastrigal. It is said that those who are born in Tiruvarur attain mukti, or liberation.

The Thyagarajaswamy temple tank, known as Kamalalayam, is one of the largest temple tanks in all of India, with an area of 16 acres. Among the many specialties of the temple complex is that the temple itself and the temple tank are equal in size. The temple chariot is also considered the biggest in Asia. Immediately after the chariot festival in the month of April is the float festival, which happens in July. Both festivals are of great prominence. Devotees from the

entire state of Tamil Nadu and even India come to immerse themselves in the festive spirit and have a glimpse of the majestic Tyagarajaswamy, his consorts, and his vehicles.

It is in this special atmosphere that I had the privilege to present a concert in July 2016, during the Float Festival. It was a surreal experience, to say the least, and doubly special because I had the opportunity to perform alongside my Guru Shri RK Shriramkumar on the violin and one of my mentors, Shri K Arun Prakash on the mridangam.

As we arrived in Tiruvarur that morning, we quickly got ready, finished our breakfast and were chaperoned to the temple for darsan. Somehow, there wasn't much of a crowd in the temple and we were able to spend a couple of blissful hours singing in front of the deities to our hearts' content and wandering in the vast and beautiful expanses of the temple premises. Little did we know that this quiet setting would be completely unrecognizable later in the evening. More on that later.

As we walked through the massive corridors from shrine to shrine, Shriram Anna, in a wistful mood, shared with me the significance of the several compositions that were composed here, and how the great composers must have gone into rapturous heights of devotion and inspiration as they sang their works. As he talked, I silently wondered whether these temples are great in and of their own, or if they are such hallowed places because of those great souls who came to the temples for worship but ended up blessing the town, the people around, and the temples themselves



by their presence; I concluded it must be both. All the time we were there, I couldn't help but think, with goosebumps rising, that I was walking through the same paths that those mahaans must have walked a couple of centuries ago.

We woke up from our naps later that afternoon after a hearty lunch, and the three of us started discussing the plan for the night's concert (concert start time: 9 PM!). I quickly found myself overwhelmed, as there was so much material available for us to select from, but not nearly enough time (we were told that the concert duration was about 2 hours) to do justice to everything, or to even choose what to include and not include; such was the beauty and enormity of the great composers' work relating to this temple. We finally agreed to just go with the flow and make a tentative list of compositions that might work. The same town and temple complex that we had seen just that morning was literally unrecognizable as we were escorted by van to the tank. Teeming with people, police officers and barricades everywhere, it was literally a moving sea of people. Despite having performed for several temple festivals in and around Kerala and Karnataka, I had never ever seen anything of this magnitude; it felt the whole of Tiruvarur **district** had showed up and gathered around the perimeter of Kamalalayam for a glimpse of the Lord and his ship taking a ride around His water body. We were told later that the speakers that had been placed all around the tank and temple ensured that over 20,000 people heard the concert.

After being guided around the massive hordes of people, through the security lines, and finally to the steps leading up to the tank, the three of us slowly got into the boat. Yes, that's right, the boat WAS the stage! Our concert was to take place on the boat itself as it traveled one lap around the tank's perimeter. To describe that moment after we settled ourselves and looked at our surroundings would be a futile exercise; that was how magnificently indescribable it was. We froze upon gazing at Kalyanasundareshwara Swamy, the processional image that is used for festivals, and stood transfixed upon His festive attire, bedecked with exquisite floral arrangements and smiling blissfully. Each corner of the boat was manned by a team of able-bodied men who would manually row us around the tank. I could only imagine what level of fitness they must have to tirelessly row the boat around the massive tank, without respite. In the decorative lights and under the gaze of the resplendent moon, we could see the water quietly flow and the thousands of people around the tank hoping to catch a small glimpse of Kalyanasundareshwara in all his divine splendour.



Memories of our concert that day are a bit hazy to me. I do recall however, that I was trying my best to focus on the music and not get too carried away with the various emotions that were hitting me as I sang. The atmosphere, the acoustics, the weather, the fact that I was singing literally 5 feet away from such an ancient and powerful physical representation of the Supreme, were so perfect that I thought, and still think, that those 4 hours I spent performing with Shriram Anna and Arun Anna were from some figment of my imagination, and not reality. I do remember I sang Kamalambam Bhajare in Kalyani (with neraval at "kamalApura sadanAm mrdugadanAm," on Shriram Anna's advice) and many other pieces on the various deities in and around the Tiruvarur temple complex. The person who had told us earlier in the day that the concert duration would be around 2 hours or so had grossly underestimated the amount of time it would take to make a full circle around Kamalalayam.



I remember Arun Anna telling me he didn't know what was happening during those hours on Shri Tyagesa's Teppam, but just that he felt that he was in another world, one in which we had all merged with the Divine.

I thank Mr. Ram Thyagarajan of Arooran Sugars and Mr. N. Murali, President of the Madras Music Academy for giving me this opportunity of a lifetime.

*Ramakrishnan Murthy is a well-known musician based in Chennai. He has performed several times for SRUTI.*



## **Innovative, Enlightening and Lifting Tapestry of Indian Classical Music**

*Kamakshi Mallikarjun*

*Editor's Note: With the recent passing of Shri Ramakant Gundecha, the SRUTI community has been fondly remembering their concert during our 25<sup>th</sup> year celebration. We share here a review of that concert, held on September 4, 2011.*



Attending Sruti's Indian Classical Music Appreciation Workshop, by the Malladi and Gundecha Brothers on the preceding Friday, deeply heightened my level of anticipation for this concert. The level of camaraderie and deep understanding that these eminent musicians had for each other's style of music was evident in every facet of the workshop – from the extremely interesting explanations and counterpoints of the different musical styles to their friendly banter.

By presenting this innovative concert and accompanying workshop, Sruti gave us the opportunity to not only listen to a most enjoyable concert but also expand our horizons and learn about a new musical form. For some in the audience, it might have been their first exposure to Carnatic or South Indian classical music; for others it might have been their first time listening to Hindustani or

North Indian classical music; and even for those familiar with both styles, the Dhrupad style was probably new. On their website, Dhrupad.org, the Gundecha Brothers explain that

*"Dhrupad is the most ancient style of Hindustani classical music that has survived until today in its original form. The word Dhrupad is derived from DHRUVA (North Star) the steadfast evening star that moves through our galaxy and PADA meaning poetry. It is a form of devotional music that traces its origin to the ancient text of Sam Veda."*

And as the performers explained in the workshop, this also makes Dhrupad more allied with Carnatic music because both are predominantly devotional in nature. Also, the Dhrupad format has Sanskrit verses making it comparable in some ways to a South Indian kriti or song. Another interesting point is that the Pakhwaj accompanies Dhrupad

singing and the Pakhwaj also seems more aligned with the South Indian drum – the mridangam from the way it is played to its rhythmic sound.

And so, at the very outset, it became clear that a lot of careful thought was given by the musicians as they sought to bring together a “confluence of these two distinct styles” and every facet of the concert illuminated this even more.

Let’s delve into the concert. It was held in the lovely auditorium of the Independence Seaport Museum in Philadelphia. Once the performers were introduced, they sat in an arc on the spacious stage, flanked by Shri Neyveli Narayanan (mridangam) on the left and Shri Akhilesh Gundecha (Pakwaj) on the right. Shri H.N. Bhaskar (violin) was next to the mridangist and next to him were the two Malladi Brothers (Shri Sreeramaprasad and Shri Ravikumar) and next to them were the two Gundecha Brothers (Shri Ramakant and Shri Umakant) and the vocalists also wore color coordinated orange kurtas. Behind them were the two tanpura players. And there were also 3 electronic sruti boxes in front of the musicians. The acoustics were wonderful. Thankfully, the sound balancing was just right – particularly important that it was not too loud given the number of musicians on stage.



The concert began with an invocatory sloka **Chaitanya Sarva Bhootanam** sung by the Gundecha brothers in raga **Bhupali**, followed by the Malladi brothers singing a slokam that started with the words **Brahmi Brahmasuthou** (*“sloka words composed by a Sanskrit scholar Srinivasa Sarma from Vizianagaram”*) in the allied raga **Mohanam**. This was followed by the Malladi Brothers singing the Mohana **Adi tala varnam** meticulously in two speeds with each of the lines repeated twice. The Gundecha brothers then sang **Shankara Sut Ganesh** in Bhupali.

As the sloka Chaitanya Sarva Bhootanam enveloped the auditorium, it made my heart soar even more because I had learnt at the workshop from Shri Ramakant that this is the sloka that they had sung as the prayer when Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi was given the Kalidas Samman award in 1988 in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

The second item comprised of the allied ragas of Abheri or Karnataka DevaGandari and Bhimplas. First the raga Alaap/Alapanai was explored alternately by the Gundecha and Malladi Brothers as well as by Shri H N Bhaskar on the violin. It was extremely interesting to see the contrasts in the two styles with Bhimplas unfolding step by step gradually and leisurely from the lower octaves then mid and then higher scales while the holistic snapshot of Abheri was revealed in the first iteration itself. And when listening to the Bhimplas alaap, some of the key points made in the workshop also became clearer - “that every movement of the note should be properly defined”; the minimalist Dhrupad approach that demands greater discipline because unnecessary embellishments and even certain type of

gamakas are avoided focusing on the ‘purity of sound’. On the other hand, was the display of incredible vocal dexterity by the Gundecha brothers, the pristine sruthi sudham (adherence to pitch), the beautiful glides from one note to the other including their signature, traversing effortlessly from the depths of the lower octave all the way to the top.

Melodic contrast was offered in the singing of the Abheri Raga and Thyagaraja’s composition **Nagumomu** by the Malladi brothers, highlighting the fact that very rarely is a note sung without oscillating it in Carnatic music. The key strengths of the Malladi brothers shone through as they sang this popular kriti - robust voices, their clear diction, depth of bhavam, solid musical foundation, imaginative improvisations. This was followed by the rendition of **Kunjanme Racho Ras Adbut Gat Liye Gopal** by the Gundecha brothers.

The tempo continued to build with the next item which focused on **Kalyani** and **Yaman** and followed the same pattern of the raga alaap followed by the song. This time it was the sparkling **Amma Ravamma** kriti and the Dhrupad Morat **Man Bhaye**. Amma Ravamma is usually sung to the tala Khanda Chapu which was slightly morphed to Khanda Ekam (5 beats). (*Smt. Kiranavali Vidyashankar clarified for me that K Chapu is a more recent trend; that originally it was Khanda Ekam and two cycles of K Chapu will fit in one cycle of Khanda Ekam*). The Dhrupad was set to a matching cycle of 10 beats (Sool Taal). During the improvisation the Malladi Brothers did Neraval for the line “tāmarasa daḷa nētru tyāgarājuni mitru” while the Gundecha Brothers did improvisation alternately for multiple lines - ‘morat man bhaave’ as well as ‘tum bin ab kaun rakhat re mero dhyān’. This helped to contrast the two styles again because Neraval or improvisation is done only for a particular line and only in certain songs in a Carnatic music concert while the improvisation of each of the lines is a foundational element of Hindustani music. Kalyani and Yaman are themselves very lilting ragas and it were even more fascinating to hear the back and forth bhava laden explorations done with razor sharp precision by the artists. The crescendo came with a volley of swaras by the Malladi Brothers matched by the Hindustani alaap that uses certain Sanskrit syllables by the Gundecha brothers.

*(From the Dhrupad FAQ on dhrupad.org, “Dhrupad alap employs the following dhyān shlok: Hari on ananta narayana tu hi tarana taarana.”)*

After a brief intermission, the Malladi brothers sang a short and sweet Vararagalaya in Senju Kambodhi ragam, followed by the Gundecha brothers singing Sandhya Sanjeevani in raag Sivaranjani. It had a very interesting line of syllables.

*(Googling yielded the lyrics in the program notes of a Gundecha Brothers concert for the Asia Society)*

*Sandhya sanjivani sur samadhi rupini  
gayatri trivarg dhatri savitri trilok yatri  
mahamantra mahayantra mahatantrini  
rahoyaga krimaradya rahstarpini  
**om lum vam ram rhim yam***

This was followed by the piece de resistance of the evening – a Ragam Tanam Pallavi in Mayamalagowla and its allied Bhairav. After a more elaborate raga elaboration, came the Tanam by the Malladi brothers and the Gundecha brothers countered with Nom Tom improvisation. The musicians indicated that they were paying “obeisance” to their Gurus via this Pallavi, whose words were “Vande Sad Gurum Manasa Vachasa Sirasa Sada”. Shri Sreeramaprasad began the raga exposition of Mayamalavagowla with so much bhavam; Shri Ramakant’s phrasing (almost like metaphorical hooks connecting the note all the way back to the prior note) was equally evocative; Shri RaviKumar’s transitions were scintillating especially in the higher octaves; Shri Umakant’s voice modulation was incredible. In this piece, the violinist Shri H N Bhaskar provided sensitive accompaniment to both sets of artists in



addition to his own improvisations that were done in Mayamalagowla. Not only were the handoffs between the vocalists and violinist seamless, each of the artists seemed to take their improvisation to the next level and win rounds of applause from the audience, culminating in a standing ovation before the Tani Avaartanam started.

The Pallavi was set to Adi tala. The mridangam and pakhwaj accompaniment, individually and together, embellished it even more. The Tani Avartanam had the same level of contrast and balance just like the rest of the concert, with the pakhwaj having more of a bass or deep sound than the mridangam. The surprise was that the percussionists started with reciting the rhythmic syllables. Shri Neyveli Narayan demonstrated this first and played a pleasing tani and this was followed by Shri Akhilesh Gundecha whose intonations and modulation of the rhythmic syllables had a sweet ebb and flow, almost like singing.

The final item was a super-fast Shankara Girijapati in Malkauns sung by all the vocalists and this was also set to Sool Taal. At the tail end the Malladi brothers sang the Mangalam sloka Shri Kanthaya.

An apt description of this wonderful concert would be that it was just like an aural ‘Samanvaya’, that I attended as part of the Maximum India Festival at the Kennedy Center in DC,

The review of Samanvaya (‘Coming Together’) by Donald Hutera in the Times (Edinburgh) helps highlight this point:

*“Indian classical dance genres rarely, if ever, meet and mingle on stage. Alarmel Valli and Madhavi Mudgal’s collaboration Samanvaya flew gracefully in the face of tradition by juxtaposing the respective performance styles of these two world-class dancers. The dancers, each radiating a mature beauty, danced together like spiritual sisters.”*

In this day and age of ubiquitous Indian music concerts in the Delaware valley, a big Kudos to Sruti for putting so much thought into the diversity of its 25<sup>th</sup> year programs and collaborating with the Philadelphia Music Project to arrange such a unique concert that similarly juxtaposed the beauty and grandeur of Carnatic Music and Dhrupad. As the pendulum swung back and forth, it helped the audience get a feel for the unique format of this concert where as part of the same item, the musicians were alternating between the two styles. On one hand, there was true synergy between the two evenly matched teams of artists who were listening to each other with such enjoyment; on the other hand, the purity and distinct characteristics of each musical thread was also being preserved truly weaving an aural multihued tapestry of Indian Classical music right before us as we listened.

And ultimately, as the concert progressed and we were immersed in the dual melodies, all we saw and heard were “The Brothers” just as promised in the workshop!

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*Photos in this article courtesy of Prabhakar Chitrapu.*



## Amrutha Venkatesh on Composer's day

*Balaji Raghothaman*



Amrutha Venkatesh, accompanied by Rajeev Mukundan on violin and Arjun Ganesh on mrdangam, performed on May 18, 2019, at the Bharatiya Temple. At the outset, kudos are due to Amrutha for braving her leg injury and continuing the US tour, shuttling across the country in crutches. It was creditable to see her accompanists helping her in every way possible. It was a testament to her professionalism and their team camaraderie.

Amrutha started with a short hamir kalyani alapana followed by the varnam by Sri T.R. Subramaniam.

The next number, 'AdikkonDAR', was a brisk and charming exposition of mAyamAlava gowlai. The song depicts the mythical dance of shiva and connects it to the thEr (chariot) procession in chidambaram. The singer captured the swaying cadence of the caranam (Ara navamani mAlaigal Ada) really well. The kalpanaswarams that immediately followed only accentuated the impact.

An elaborate alapana in bhairavi was next, accompanied by the dikshitar magnum opus cintayamA, one of the celebrated pancalinga kshetra kritis, this one being about the kAnchi shrine. Amrutha showed her strong command of the lower octave which is normally associated with a good rendition of bhairavi. Rajeev also excelled on the violin in the nereval in "mangalakara mandahAsa vadanam".

To contrast this majestic piece, she folowed up with a brisk and short "niravathi sukhada".

As her main piece, she tackled "sarOruhAsana jAyE", one of the navarAtri kritis by swAti tirunAl, in pantuvarAli. Her affinity to, and familiarity with, the swati tirunal repertoire - through her tutelage under Rama Varma - was very evident during this soulful number. There were several deft touches in the 'tarikatom' phrases in the cittaiswarams that added color. Overall it was a rendition that left the audience in a very peaceful trance. Arjun Ganesh performed a tremendous tani to conclude.

The RTP in Hindolam, was of a high standard, with the Pallavi phrase being 'maal maruganai muruganai ninaindhidu maname'. The pallavi ended with a delightful raga sequence of begada, varali and kapi.

The concert concluded with a purandara dasa kriti 'ramakrishnaru manege bandaru', and the evergreen dhanashree tillana.

Throughout, Amrutha was seamlessly supported by Rajeev Mukundan and Arjun Ganesh and deserve their share of credit for a successful concert. Amrutha Venkatesh has made big strides and has impressed the Sruti patrons on both occasions she has performed for us. Hopefully she becomes a regular fixture at Sruti, and hopefully at better venues.

*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.*

## Bala Bhavam – Himavath Jois

*Sanjana Narayanan*



When Vishal Sowmyan sprinted into the Bharatiya Temple performance hall at ten minutes past nine on Saturday, May 18, the whole audience breathed a sigh of relief.

Composers Day had been scheduled to open with a one-hour Bala Bhavam vocal concert by Himavath Jois. But due to a last-minute snafu the morning of the concert, there was no one to play violin. Thankfully, Vishal was able to fill in.

The performers – Himavath, Vishal, and Srihari Raman on mridangam – maintained perfect composure. Himavath opened the concert with Dikshitar's classic Siddhi vinayakam in

Shanmukhapriya, sensitively accompanied by Srihari Raman on mridangam. Following the krithi was a series of brisk swarams at the madhyamakala line Prasiddha gananaayakam.

Next, Himavath sang Ranganayakam in Nayaki and Nannu brovu lalita in Lalita (both aptly named). Lalita was the main ragam of the concert. Himavath's alapana featured clever, fast patterns at Da, and Vishal's was equally lilting and full of bhavam. Listening to Himavath and Vishal effortlessly exchange niraval and kalpanaswaras, it was hard to believe that their musical rapport was completely on the spot – until that morning, neither one knew that they would be performing together! Throughout, Srihari's accompaniment and thani avarthanam were full of energy and attuned to the mood of the piece.

Antharangadhalli in Mohanam and a thillana in Hamirkalyani made a playful change of pace and an enjoyable conclusion to the concert.

*Sanjana Narayanan is a student of Carnatic vocal music and a junior at Harvard University majoring in computer science.*



# Kadri Gopalnath – A Musical Legend

*Panchanadam Swaminathan*



On October 11, 2019, connoisseurs of world music in general, and carnatic classical music in particular, lost one of the world class performing artists, Padmasri Dr. Kadri Gopalnath (popularly known as Kadri, named after his native place Kadri in the Karnataka state, India). Hailing from a renowned family of nadaswaram performers (his father was an accomplished nadaswaram player) Kadri was born with musical abilities imbibed genetically. Providence was it that he witnessed a performance of the Mysore Palace band on the alto saxophone that struck a chord of lifelong love towards the instrument.

Kadri Gopalnath was born in Sajipamuda, a village in the state of Karnataka, India, on Dec. 6, 1949. He was the eldest of eight children. His

father, Thaniyappa, earned only a modest living as an astana vidwan of the local temple, while his mother, Gangamma was taking care of the family of 8 children. In the early years he learnt to play Nadaswaram from his father which helped him later in perfecting his techniques while playing saxophone. Late Sangita Kalanidhi Sennangudi Srinivas Iyer, correctly observed that nadaswaram players contributed a lot in perfecting the raga alapana techniques which even today many vocalists use it as a model. Living in poor pecuniary circumstance he managed to secure an alto saxophone on second hand market. Like Ekalavya, he figured out how to play the carnatic music notes on the instrument and started playing various ragas. Later under the tutelage of maestros Gopalakrishna Iyer of Kalaniketana of Mangalore and Sangita Kalanidhi Tirupanithura V. Gopalakrishnan (popularly known as TVG, an accomplished vocalist, violinist and a mridangam vidwan) he perfected his techniques and took the world of music like a storm.

It is known that several western jazz performers including John Coltrane and others took to Indian classical music for novel fusion ensemble. Kadri learnt quite a few tricks from jazz players and completely improvised the instrument to play the most intriguing carnatic music gamakams and sangathis extremely well. His fame spread across the globe with frequent appearances at music festivals in Europe, USA, and Canada and around the world. He is credited with numerous albums released internationally. In a review of a concert by Gopalnath, The London Times wrote, "(Gopalnath's) soft, legato, flurries meshed perfectly in an unusual grouping of violin, Jew's harp and mridangam drum". The Illustrated Weekly of India took a similar view, claiming "(Gopalnath's) music would make a stone melt". Attracting international attention, he began to tour throughout the world, performing at jazz festivals in Berlin, Prague, France and Mexico. In 1994, Gopalnath became the first South Indian classical musician to perform in the BBC Promenade concert.

Kadri Gopalnath is survived by his wife, Sarojini Gopalnath; sons, Manikanth, Guruprasad; a daughter, Ambika Mohan; and six grandchildren.

I came to know Kadri closely in 1996 when he performed for Sruti. In that concert, his renderings of Saint Thyagaraja's 'Maravairi Ramani ...' in nasika bhushani and 'Kamalabda Kula ...' in brindavana saaranga are still vivid in my memory. I hosted him along with Sangita Kalanidhi Kanya Kumari (violinist) and Guruvayur Dorai (mridangist). My son Sumanth was learning to play Jazz on the alto saxophone at that time. Sumanth's guru Sri T.N. Bala has taught him how to play carnatic music notes on the instrument. Seeing Kadri playing saxophone Sumanth took a liking to learn advanced lessons from Kadri. That is how our friendship started and grew stronger over the period till his end. I remember a verse of Kalidasa taught by my Sanskrit teacher which goes like this.

स्थिरोपदेशां तां उपदेशकाले प्राक्तनजन्मविद्याः नक्तं महौषधिं आत्मभासः इव प्रपेदिरे।

Permanently imbibed (musical) knowledge acquired from providence came to him (Kadri Gopalnath) at the time of learning (music) just like hidden luminescence of herbs shine automatically at sunset. Western sax players with whom he played jazz ensemble truly called him 'the king of sax'. He is known for his sense of humor and modesty. Kadri was well recognized internationally and decorated with several awards and titles. I have witnessed and appreciated his popularity among jazz musicians in US and Canada. His contribution to the world of carnatic music is original and not many instrumentalists can claim this type of contribution.

Despite his contribution, he was not recognized by the music academy of Chennai. When I reviewed the list of recipients of Sangita Kalanidhi since its inception in early 1929, Kadri's contribution to music is definitely on par with those awardees if not better than some of them. I am sure the committee (of music academy) entrusted with the selection uses more subjective criteria (mostly non-musical) and some objective criteria in the selection of a candidate for the award. Probably Kadri did not meet their subjective criteria. In the final analysis, it is academy's loss in missing out recognizing a deserving musician. While he was alive, he never really cared for it. I am going to miss him very much.

*Dr. P. Swaminathan is a life member and past president of SRUTI. He is a connoisseur of Carnatic music and a frequent contributor to SRUTI Ranjani.*



*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.*

## Serene Kamboji at the Ganesh Festival

Dinakar Subramanian

SRUTI, in collaboration with the Philadelphia Ganesh Festival, presented a Carnatic vocal concert by Smt. Sankari Krishnan at the Bharatiya Temple, Montgomeryville on a Tuesday evening in September as part of the celebrations. She was accompanied by Smt. Charulatha Ramanujam on the violin and VS Raghavan on the mridangam.



Sankari is a long-time student of Shri Lalgudi Jayaraman and I was eager to hear her concert. A very popular and lilting varnam composed by Lalgudi in *bahudAri* started the concert that I thoroughly enjoyed. *siddhi vinAyakam* in cAmaram (Shanmukhapriya) was sung very well with some lovely poruttham swarams that the Lalgudi school excels in.

After the first two songs, Sankari and team settled in well. She sang a lovely kriti composed by Lalgudi Gopala Iyer (Shri Jayaraman's father) in *madhyamAvati* – *thuNayagum engaL kula deiva gaNapathiyai thozha*. Continuing with the topical theme of singing songs on Ganesha or his brother Kartikeya, Sankari delivered a brisk Papanasam Sivan kriti *padumanAbhan maruga* in *nAgaswarAvali*.

She then started on a bhairavi alapana which prompted me to wonder what the main piece would be. But a quick alapana gave way to the Lalgudi pancharatna kriti – *lalithE srl pravrdhE* in *bhairavi* made popular by Lalgudi Jayaraman. She chose to elaborate on the non-mudra charanam starting at *teliyani bAluDa*. A comprehensive set of kalpanaswarams completed this kriti.

kAmbhOji was the piece de resistance and the raga alapana was delivered deliberately with great depth both by Sankari and Charulatha. I was enjoying the ragam, steeped in all its nuances. The Thyagaraja kriti *Srl raghuvarApramEya* was sung in a nice slow fashion which was quite a welcome change to the popular faster rendering many of us have heard by Shri DK Jayaraman. Sankari took her time with this kriti and sang the charanams in a single speed which was extremely enjoyable. Kalpanaswarams that brought out the essence of this rakthi ragam embellishing this piece. Charulatha added equal weight to this kriti by asserting her vidwat during the kalpanaswarams.

Charulatha lent a steady hand throughout the whole concert with her balanced playing and great poise. VS Raghavan, a young mridangist, ensured that he was heard throughout the concert and his playing was enjoyable when it was nuanced. He gave a spirited tani to round out the Kamboji. Sankari completed the concert with a few tukkadās –



the highlight of which was the *misra shivaranjanI* Thillana with some unique graha bedha swarams composed by Lalgudi Jayaraman.

Being part of the multi-day Ganesh festival, the concert was a short and crisp one (under 2 hours). The kAmbhOji kept ringing in my ears though.

*Dinakar Subramanian is a long-time supporter of SRUTI, was a past president and has served in various committees. He is an avid rasika and a musician.*

## Leveraging Thukkadas

*Panchanadam Swaminathan*

On September 14, 2019, Sruti, India music and dance society presented a vocal performance by Smt. Kiranavali Vidyasankar. She was accompanied by Bhargav Tumkur on the violin and by Vinod Seetharaman and Srihari Raman on the mridangam. She started the concert by rendering 'Yeppadi Paadinaro ...' a composition by Suddhananda Bharati in Karnataka devagandari. When many of us in the audience were wondering whether the concert was already over, she broke the ice with an explanation of what was going to happen during the rest of the concert. She lectured on traditional concert format set by accomplished early performers based on personal and spiritual belief. Some of the traditions were set by folk singers, temple devadasis. The simple folk songs were also popularly called thukkadas and sometimes as derogatory. She also maintained that how one can break away from tradition by properly choosing and rendering thukkadas only during the whole concert. That is what she did on that day.



After rendering the ever popular 'Yeppadi Paadinaro ...' she recited 'Teriyave...' in *Anandabhairavi*, a composition by Appar, one of the nayanmars, 'Vanga Kadal...' from Andal's Tiruppavai in *surutti*. Andal was a passionately in love lord Vishnu and refused to marry anybody other than Lord Narayana. She composed exquisite poetry expressing her longing for lord Vishnu in Tamil titled Tiruppavai. Many performing artists have set her poems to music. She went on to discuss the poetry (known as vachanas in Kannada language) composed by yet another female devotee from the state of Karnataka viz. Akka Mahadevi who was known for her passionate love for Lord Chenna Mallikarjuna.

Jayadeva's ashtapadi describing the love between Radhaa and Krishna, is beautifully choreographed using tribhangi postures in odissi dance form. Kiranavali presented one of Jayadeva's ashtapadi 'Shrita Kamala...' in *bhairavi* raga. She later presented a composition of Annamacharya 'Ramachandruniki...' in *dwijAvanti*, Arunagirinathar's tiruppugazh in *purvikalyAni*. Purandaradasa's classical composition 'Yaake Hrudaya...' in *shubhapantuvarali* was well rendered by Kiranavali.

She presented a pada varnam by Kshetrageya and beautiful Tamil composition by legendary poet Subbarama Iyer 'Yaarukkahilum...' in *bEgada*. Following this, she went on to render compositions by Sadasiva Brahmendra, 'Bhajare Yadunatham ...'(pIlU), Thyagaraja's 'Sompaina Manasuto ...' in *Ahiri*, some folk tunes in kavadi sindhu composed by Annamalai Reddiyar, a Javali by Dharmapuri Subbarayar in *bEhAg*, a bhajan 'Vishveshvara...' in *sindubhairavi* by Swatithirunaal, patriotic song 'Paarukulle..' in *jOnpuri* by Subrahmanya Bharathi, a tillana by Ravikiran in *kalyana vasantham*. She concluded the concert after rendering Dikshitar's 'Maamava Pattabhirama...' in *manirangu* and a mangalam by Purandaradasa. She presented a total of twenty-three compositions/thukkadas spanning over three hours.

A music concert, in general and a Carnatic classical music concert in particular, is where the performing artists portray their skills using the symphony of notes vocally or instrumentally. The format as well as the content of the presentation is purely left to the imagination and ingenuity of the performer with audience satisfaction as the ultimate goal. However, in real life, things are not as easy as stated. Many factors come into play while choosing the format, rating based on the prevailing consumer survey, demographics of the audience and importantly attracting large audience which heavily depends on the artistic quality of the performance more so than just the format. Essentially format of the music concert plays only a secondary role. Quality of the music performed plays a vital role. In support of performing only non-traditional thukkadas in a Carnatic music concert, I strongly suggest leveraging the lyrical beauty combined with impressive musical melody of the thukkadas. This will certainly be a step in the right direction for revolutionizing the concert format. A small number of 'quality' thukkadas is much more important than sheer quantity of the thukkadas. This can also attract more audience when one is trying to shy away from the traditional music concert format like starting with a varnam, mangala shloka, one or two major krithis by the trinity followed with an RTP, thukkadas and tillana etc.

What is 'tradition'? Merriam Webster's dictionary goes like this: "The transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation, or the fact of being passed on in this way". Theological definition goes like this: "a doctrine believed to have divine authority though not in the scriptures".

Looking at the history of Carnatic music, it is established beyond doubt that the musical trinity revolutionized the traditional way music was composed and performed then to what is being performed today. Their music was accepted without question because of the high music caliber whether it is a thukkadas or a major piece. I was overwhelmed with three hours of listening to thukkadas which I expressed to my wife on our way back home. My wife liked some aspects of the concert because she just learnt about the Shiva devotee 'Akka Mahadevi' from the state of Karnataka and thus disagreed with me. This resulted in a passionate argument between us until we reached home. However, she was also of the view that listening to 23 thukkadas over period of three hours was hard to digest.

If SRUTI is contemplating on presenting such program in future it is better to market it as 'Discourse on ...'. This way the audience will come prepared what to expect and won't be disappointed.

*Dr. P. Swaminathan is a life member and past president of SRUTI. He is a connoisseur of Carnatic music and a frequent contributor to SRUTI Ranjani.*



## Vijay Siva at SRUTI

*Gopalan Sridhar*

The patrons of SRUTI were treated to a classical feast by Vidwan Vijay Siva on October 19. He was accompanied by Shri R.K. Shriramkumar on the violin and Shri J. Vaidyanathan on the Mridangam. Vocal support was provided by Madhavan Gopalarathnam.



The concert started off on a bright note with the Viriboni varnam in Bhairavi. The rendition was uncompromising and polished with all three speeds included. The audience was spellbound by the virtuosity in the third speed on the charanam and broke into spontaneous applause as the swarams ended. The team spirit developed by years of playing together was clear from the start as the accompaniment was very supportive and unobtrusive.

This was followed by the Shyama Sastri composition in Kedaragowla “Parakela Nannu”. It was a very leisurely and measured presentation and a welcome change of pace from the speedy passages in the initial varnam. The neraval was at the charanam phrase Dharadhyakila and the responses by Shri RKS were splendid especially in the upper sthayi phrases. There was a quick round of kalpana swarams which were completely in tune with the tenor of the composition. It was interesting that he followed up the varnam composed by Shyama Sastri's guru Pachimiriam adiyapayya with one of Shyama Sastri's own classics.

Another classic of the trinity Maamava Meenakshi in Varali was next. The alapana was enthralling especially the phrases in the higher octaves. A short shloka preceded the kriti. He has always excelled in the chowka kala



presentations of Dikshitar kritis and this was no exception. The slow swara prastharam was keeping with the mood of the song and the faster paced swarams that followed complemented them allowing both singer and accompanists to demonstrate their imagination.

Madhyamavati alapana was next and the logical sequence would have been a Thyagaraja kriti to complete the Trinity but instead it was Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar's Parthasarathy Nannu Palimpa. Neraval was at Sarva Dharama Paripalaka and was well received by the audience.

Another Dikshitar Kriti Chetasri in Dwijavanthi followed and rendered with the usual slow speed excellence mentioned before. The ambiance became very meditative and the highlight was Shri JV's quietly assertive and appropriate percussion revealing his intricate knowledge of the kriti.

A brisk Pari pahimam paravasudeva in Jaganmohini (made famous by DKP) set the stage for the main kriti Swara Raga Sudha in Shankarabharanam. The vocal Alapana covered all the shades of the raaga with the violin accompaniment shadowing faithfully without being intrusive or interruptive. His own Alapana was very apt and concise and dutifully mirrored the singer's thoughts. The niraval was at Muladhara nada and the kalpana swaras were very pleasing in both speeds. Again, the highlight for the concert was the facility of singing in the upper octaves which was extensively employed in the manodharma for this piece also. Shri JV's tani avarthanam was as usual very crisp and brief but very entertaining and warmly received.

An RTP was next with Dhanyasi being the main raga transitioning into a Ragamalika for the Thanams and swaras. Interestingly during the thanam playing Shri RKSK's string snapped and he had to take a brief break from playing while he replaced the broken string. In the meantime, Shri Vijay Siva and vocal support started to sing the thanams in the Pancharatna kriti ragas and the violin joined in the Varali reply and seamlessly moved to Shriragam to complete the series. The lyrics were "Then pazhani vadivelane Theivanai manaalane". The other ragas were Bilahari, Khamboji, Shri raagam, Nalinikanthi.

The choice of Nalinakanthi was perfect as it led to the first raga in the Sharada Bhujangam which was followed by a viruttam sung in Charukesi, Ahiri and Behag leading into Aadum Chidamabaramo composed by Gopalakrishna Bharathi. Poonkuyil koovum Pooncholaaiyil Oru Naal in Kapi and the Thiruppugazh Paniyin Vinthuli Polave were the final two pieces of a very well-rendered post-main section and the prolonged standing ovation at the end of the concert summed up the evening perfectly.

Even though this team has performed for us many times in the past there is always a sense of freshness in every concert and we hope they will continue to visit us in the future.

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

what you said.....

*Great concert. Very nice venue: friendly and warm BOD, adherence to time - start in time and end in time; delicious bonus dinner and welcome snacks and beverages. So proud and happy to be part of the wonderful SRUTI community*

## Ranjani & Gayatri: Enchanting and Engaging

*P. Sivakumar*

The Sruti audience was treated to yet another stunner of a concert by the charismatic duo of Ranjani and Gayatri (RaGa) on May 11, 2019. The sisters were accompanied by Charumathi Raghuraman on the Violin and Sai Giridhar on the Mridangam. It is not without substance that one can scale the heights of stardom in Carnatic music. RG's concert was a testament to their potential that has propelled them into such stardom.



In an atypical but refreshing start to the concert, the sisters began with Deekshithar's Ramachandram Bhavayami set to Rupaka thalam. The krithi oozed the essence of Vasantha, with the duritha-gathi swarams at the end putting Sai Giridhar to hard work immediately and keeping him on his toes (or hands, rather) right through the concert. Purandaradasa's gem, "Dayamaado" in Reethigowlai followed suit and was sung poignantly revealing the sedate face of this Kharaharapriya Janya. The sisters then launched into a thorough exploration of Harikamboji, bringing out the total beauty of this ragam. The krithi of choice was Entharaa by Thyagaraja Swami. Neraval was done at "Seshudu Shivuniki" and the final korvai aligned with the eduppu drew instant applause from the audience. A soothing and impactful elaboration of Mukhari was followed by Neelakanta Sivan's masterpiece "Endraikku Siva Krupai" where he pleads for Shiva's grace for liberation from the wicked world. In keeping with the norm, the sisters started the song with the anupallavi and their involvement and attention to nuances was reminiscent of KVN's rendering from years ago. The loosener came in the form of a brisk "Vara Raga Laya", the Chenchukamboji ably sandwiching the Mukhari between itself and its parent, Harikamboji on top.

Next up was the main piece that turned out to be a Ragam-Thanam-Pallavi in Mohanakalyani wonderfully structured in Misra Jhampai thalam with eduppu after 7 mathras. The lyrics read "Raamanai Raghuv eeranai Nidhamum Nee Ninai". Charumathi, a rising violin star, marked her mastery by providing outstanding response to the multifarious subtleties in sangathis and mathematical permutations that the sisters engaged in. A garland of ragamalika swarams ensued in Kaanada, Lalit/shubapanthuvarali and Kaapi. Sai Giridhar presented a thundering thani unfazed by the complexity of the thalam and the 7-after eduppu. Viruthams have so much become an identity of sorts for RG's concerts. A tamil virutham, Naadum Nagaramum, was rendered by the duo in their inimitable style including the ragas Keeravani, Brindavana Saranga and Sindhu Bhairavi. The Sindhu Bhairavi at the end was an apt launchpad for Chandrashekaraa Isha that was rendered quite soulfully. The sisters then kept the audience absorbed with

delightfully rendered “Muddugare Yashoda” in Chenchurutti and “Krishna Nee Begane” in Yamunakalyani. The concert concluded with a trademark Abhang – the sisters choosing Eknath’s “Kazhi Javoon”, which they explained relates to the song of a Milkmaid crossing the Ocean of Life with Lord Krishna. Thanks RG & team for a great evening!

Sruti has a legacy of bringing the best of Indian performing arts to our area and RG’s concert was a clear indication of the highest standards that Sruti operates with. The concert was a total win-win in terms of quality, facility, attendance, engagement and impact.

*Dr. P. Sivakumar is an accomplished Mridangam player, teacher and an ardent lover of Carnatic music. He has been a long-time member of the SRUTI community.*

what you said.....

*The entire performance was excellent. The camaraderie among the artistes was great and a pleasure to watch. It was a good auditorium, concert started and ended on time, and of course the artistes were fantastic. Speeches were short too, well-appreciated.*

### **SRUTI Musicians Group Performance on Composers Day**

*P. Sivakumar*

Several musicians from our own Sruti music fraternity joined hands to present a fantastic group recital of six wonderful songs, during our second annual Composers Day in May of 2019. The prelude to this program dated back to October 2018, when the renowned musicologist and erudite scholar, **T. S. Satyavathi** from Bangalore conducted an intense 4-day workshop focused on songs by Karnataka-based composers. The participants from this Workshop – *Amrutha Gopinath, Chitra Sundararajan, Gayatri Swaminathan, Kamakshi Mallikarjun, Lata Suresh, Rajee Padmanabhan, Ramya Ramji, Revathy Subramony, and Sudha Moorthy* – came together to demonstrate and share the learnings. They were accompanied on the violin by Vishal Sowmyan and on the Mridangam by Srihari Raman. It was quite spectacular to see the incredible talent of our local community musicians and their spirit of collaboration that shone right through the hour-long program. The rigor and commitment were evident from the fact that the singers went through multiple practice sessions despite their difficult and different schedules.

Jayachamaraja Wodeyar’s “*Sri Rajarajeshwarim*” in *Lalitha* set the tone for the concert. The krithi was rendered poignantly and soulfully. Next, a short alapana in *Khamas* was followed by “*Madhava Nannu Brova*” composed by Mysore Sadashiva Rao. “*Varalakshmi*” in *Gowrimanohari*, a composition of Mysore Vasudevachar was rendered sedately after a nice raga exposition by the singers as well as the violinist. Purandaradasa’s “*Rangana Nodirey*” was presented in *Ragamalika* with the ragas being *Brindavana Saranga, Sivananjani and Amruthavarshini*. *Khamboji* was the highlight of the program and Harikesanallur’s *Ratnakanchuka Dharini* was pleasing to the ears, as the group’s voices gelled in unison. Vishal’s violin accompaniment was laudable and Srihari Raman’s thani was well structured and crisp. The program concluded with the *thisra gathi Kaapi krithi* of Purandaradasa, *Kagada Bandidhey*. Real time reflections on Smt. TSS’s workshop were also shared by the participants.

Sruti is immensely proud of the remarkable local talents, and their passion and dedication that continue to be the pillars on which our legacy is built. Kudos to the entire team for putting up a great show.



## Rarity in Duality with Simplicity

*Rumya Venkateswaran*

*Kalakshetra* and *Bharatanatyam*. These two words put together are enough to summarize the caliber of an artist associated with them. Here, we were fortunate to have witnessed not one, but two artists, Viraja Mandhre & Shyamjith Kiran, a dynamic duo who certainly did not fail to uphold the high standards of their alma mater in the performance they gave on October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at the Hindu Temple of Delaware. The duo opened their performance with “Tejonidhi Lohagol”, a Marathi composition of Pandit Jitendra Abhisheki taken from the movie *Katyar Kaljat Ghusali*. Although this choice of song deviated from the traditional maargam most Bharatanatyam dancers follow, I believe the duo was rather successful in encapsulating the lyrics in a classical dance format to justify it was indeed a very good fit as an opening item! Using brisk movements and innovative formations, the artists illustrated sunlight as a collective symbol of enlightenment, spiritual awakening, and the natural beauty found in life.



After the opening number, Viraja and Shyamjith proceeded to present the main piece of the evening, “Innam En Manam” a Tamizh pada varnam composed by Lalgudi Shri Jayaraman. As a Bharatanatyam artist myself, I always look forward to watching a varnam in a maargam as it is the central piece for the performer, serving as a test of abhinaya and nritta combined. I must say, I was not at all disappointed! This varnam was very well choreographed and presented. The opening trikaala jathi of the varnam itself was brilliant, as were the subsiding jathis, and each korvai seamlessly flowed into the next. Both Viraja and Shyamjith beautifully complemented one another when it came to abhinaya. Viraja very subtly portrayed the mellow emotions of the pining heroine, whereas Shyamjith put forth a striking, yet controlled portrayal of Krishna, who was trying to alleviate the heroine’s pain, especially in the line “Kuzhal Udum Azhagaa Kanna Kurai Tiraayo”.

Following the varnam was Viraja’s solo number, “Yenna Sheiguve” a Tamizh padam composed by Shri S. Raghuraman in Sivaranjani ragam and Misra Chapu talam. In this piece, Viraja presented the idea of motherhood through the character of Kunti who questions, “Why is motherhood a badge of shame for me?”, as she refers to having born Karna. I was literally brought to tears at certain points watching Viraja so convincingly depict the various shades of shame, doubt, distress, and notions of sacrifice as Kunti. Her skill in abhinaya was apparent as she took us through a story of grief-filled emotions in this piece.

Next was Shyamjith’s solo piece, a Tulsidas bhajan on Lord Shiva in Sindubhairavi ragam and Khanda Chapu talam. Although appearing deceptively simple in its opening lines, the piece developed into a more complicated padam, taking us by surprise as we watched Shyamjith perform an incredible series of aerial steps and postures. His calm composure combined with just the right amount of stiffness in each posture proved a great combination as he portrayed Lord Shiva’s thaandavam. We could clearly see Shyamjith’s expertise in nritta here.

Once the solos were done, the duo moved on to perform a padam together, Jayadeva's Ashtapadi "Kshana Madhuna" in the lilting Kalyani ragam. Both Viraja and Shyamjith beautifully portrayed the love between Radha and Krishna as they minimized movement, communicating to each other only using their eyes. At several points, Viraja would stand in the front and Shyamjith would stand behind her as he took up the character of Krishna praising Radha. Although both dancers were not directly looking at each other, they were still able to talk to one another in an almost effortless manner. I cannot move on without praising the music composition for this Ashtapadi. The chosen Kalyani ragam was the perfect choice as it set the mood for the shringara rasa flowing through the lyrics.

Viraja and Shyamjith concluded their performance with a crisp thillana in the ragam Garudadhwani, a composition of none other than Shri M. Balamuralikrishna. This fast-paced piece was used to represent the jumping rhythms of our lives and the spontaneity that forms the basis of our thoughts. The choreography was quite spectacular, using a jugglery of movements in the three speeds in rare combinations. It was a great choice to end the performance on a jolly note!



Both Viraja and Shyamjith had an excellent stage presence as well as the ability to present a performance of this quality in such a fluid manner. I have seen many Bharatanatyam duos, but this one particularly stood out to me because of the simplicity of the chemistry they brought on stage. Not every movement was dramatized, nor did we see anything overly emphasized. The artists were very comfortable with each other as well as with the audience, and this enhanced the ambience which they created through their dance. I am humbled to have had the opportunity to watch and review this program, and I do hope Sruti continues to bring more of such artists to its platform in the future.

*Rumya Venkateswaran is a Bharatanatyam performer and Carnatic vocalist based in Coatesville, PA. She runs her own school, Shree Vindhyavaasini Institute of Performing Arts, through which she strives to instill the fundamental and aesthetic principles of the performing arts within her students.*

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## **Brilliant Kalyani by Sangeetha Sivakumar**

*Musicapriya*

It is a virtue to enjoy a concert by itself. Listening to a seasoned artist live for the first time also opens your mind about slowing down and savoring every moment of a concert. This is what I was feeling at the end of Sangeetha Sivakumar's performance at the Community Music School auditorium in Trappe, PA. She was accompanied by H. N. Bhaskar on the violin and Poongulam Subramaniam on the mridangam for the last full-fledged concert for SRUTI's 2019 season.



Harikeshanallur Muthiah Bhagavathar's daru varnam *mAthe malayadhwaja* in kamAs gave the cold evening a warm start. I made a mental note that in fact her guru Smt. Charumathi Ramachandran and her husband T. M. Krishna both started their SRUTI concerts with the same varnam in 1994 and 2005 respectively. The artists and audience soon reached a nice comfortable level with their interaction. Sangeetha presented a simple and essential AbhOgi, to then sing *sabApathikku vEru deivam* by Gopalakrishna Bharati. Many would have been reminded of the famous exchange between him and Saint Thyagaraja where GKB is supposed to have extolled Thyagaraja's greatness through the words – *krupAnidhi ivarai pOla*.

After Thyagaraja's popular *bAgayaneyyA* in candrajyOti, Sangeetha launched into this detailed exposition of kalyANi. The upper sthayi phrases were brilliant and HN Bhaskar was replying with gusto. After about 20 minutes of a kalyANi shower, Sangeetha started the famous Muthuswami Dikshitar kriti – *bhajarE citta bAlambikAM* composed on the goddess Balambika at Vaitheeswarankoil. Another half an hour of the kriti with the evergreen neraval at *dEvIm shakti bhIjOdbhava* took me to a blissful state with kalyANi.



As a typical filler before another major piece, Sangeetha sang Swati Tirunal's kuntalavarAli kriti, *bhOgIndraShAyinam*, and started a thorough exploration of bhairavI, after informing the audience that she is performing an RTP. If Sangeetha and HN Bhaskar gelled wonderfully for the kalyANi, they scaled new heights in the back and forth in the rAgam and tAnam. The pallavi *daravidaLita kuvalaya daLanila* was in tisra tripata in 4 kalai. Interestingly, T. M. Krishna, in 2005 also sang the same pallavi in bhairavi but tuned differently. Sangeetha varied the beat frequency from 4 to 2 to 1 through the pallavi giving ample opportunity for all to shine. Poongulam performed the tani for this piece with his usual verve. Poongulam performed for SRUTI for the first time with Balaji Shankar and B. U. Ganesh Prasad in 1996, and it is always wonderful to hear his able accompaniment and creativity.

I found that HN Bhaskar learned from MSG for 12 years and those touches showed innumerable times during the concert. His delivery of high-quality music and Poongulam following the nuance of the kritis especially leading into the charanams of kritis were added highlights of the evening.

Sangeetha concluded the concert with pieces that reflected her lineage with the immortal *rAdhA samEtA krsnA* in misra yaman composed by GNB and the surutti tiruppaavai *vangakkadal kadaindha* made famous by MLV.



What hit me most sitting in the audience was the fun that the 3 artists were having on stage. They had several impromptu exchanges and the ensuing smiles showed us that they were really enjoying the performance. This feeling of camaraderie also made the audience feel part of the collective experience and makes me expand on my initial observation that it is a virtue to enjoy a concert within the context of itself. Any piece of music must be enjoyed on its own without any other interfering thoughts, such as comparison. I mused to myself that the more concerts you listen to by different musicians, young or old, upcoming or seasoned, popular or otherwise, you realize how much there is to appreciate in this beautiful art with aha moments and nuance.

*Musicapriya is very involved in SRUTI and interested in the art of appreciating music.*

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## SRUTI 2020 programs – a sneak peek

*Uma Sivakumar, President-Elect*

Greetings from Sruti! We hope you enjoyed all our programs in 2019. As we continue to firm up our schedule, we are very excited to provide a cursory glance at a fantastic line-up of events for season 2020.

A landmark program we would like to highlight is **"Trinity - A Carnatic Music Play"** scheduled for **Saturday, April 4, 2020**. This is a unique first in our 34-year history and adds a new dimension to our mission of presenting and promoting Indian performing arts among our diverse audience. Presented by the much-reputed English Theater group, The Madras Players, "Trinity" is a tribute to 'the three jewels of Carnatic music' and integrates the two worlds of Music and Theater. The play dramatized by popular veteran actor and voice artist, **Sri P. C. Ramakrishna**, will feature some of the stalwarts of Carnatic music including **Sri Vijay Siva**, **Smt. Gayathri Venkatraghavan**, and **Dr. S. Sunder** playing the lead roles.



Read a review of this production  
<https://bit.ly/2Ds11ep>



Also included in the line-up for Spring 2020 is a much-anticipated **Carnatic vocal concert by Malladi Brothers**. Our effervescent community here would recall their astounding performances from the past years, and we are happy to feature the brothers yet again on the Sruti stage.

**Dr. S. Sowmya, “Sangita Kalanidhi” designate for 2020**, will also be presenting a Carnatic vocal concert as part of our Spring line-up. An erudite scholar, musician and virtuoso, Dr. Sowmya is among the top-rung musicians of her era and has engaged audiences worldwide with spellbinding concerts.

Doyens of Kuchipudi dance, **Jaikishore Mosalikanti and Padmavani** will enthrall our Sruti community with a **Kuchipudi Dwayam** dance presentation, the event currently scheduled for **Saturday, May 16, 2020**.

A **vocal concert by Amritha Murali** will round off the frenzied Spring season for us. Amritha is a rapidly rising vocalist in the Carnatic music arena and her concert promises to impact and invigorate the Sruti community.

It is a tad too early, but the committee is actively evaluating proposals for Fall 2020. One of the confirmed events would be a **Bharathanatyam presentation by Shijith Nambiar and Parvathy Menon**, the duo that needs no introduction to our audience here. We will share information on other events for Fall 2020 as they *fall* in place. Do not forget we also have our trademark community events, the **Sruti Thyagaraja Aradhana scheduled for Saturday, March 21, 2020** as well as **Sruti Day for Saturday, December 5, 2020**. Stay tuned for more details!!

We always strive to bring the best of Indian performing arts to our community, and the programs for 2020 are aligned with that core mission. Please visit [www.sruti.org](http://www.sruti.org) to check for program updates, renew membership and sponsorship, purchase event tickets and much more. While on that we are also happy to announce that we are working on a new and improved website with the help of a grant from Citizens for PA Arts. We are targeting early 2020 to roll out this new website, which will continue to be a great user-friendly resource for our community to engage and get involved with Sruti.

We look forward to your continued support and patronage for Sruti and wish you all a very happy 2020.



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Lakshmi & T. S. **Govindan**  
Lakshmi **Radhakrishnan**  
Lakshmi U **Gopalan** & Ravi **Iyer**  
Lakshmi **Yeleswaram**  
Lalitha B. **Krishnan**  
Lata & Suresh **Tyagarajan**  
Madhavi **Kuruba**  
Mallikarjun & Satya **Budhavarapu**  
Manikandan **Rajappa** &  
Radhika **Aravamudhan**  
Manjula **Kumar** & R. **Kumar**  
Meena **Pennathur**  
Meenakshi **Krishnan**

Mira & Srikant **Raghavachari**  
Muralishankar **Venkatesan**  
Nalini **Venkateswaran**  
Nambi **Aiyer** & Ponnal **Nambi**  
Nithya **Narayan**  
P. K. **Yegneswaran** &  
Jayanthi **Subramanian**  
Padmini & T. S. **Venkatraman**  
Parthasarathy **Krishnaswamy**  
Prabha & Mani **Subramaniam**  
Prabha & R. **Parameswaran**  
Priya & Satya P. **Kunapuli**  
Priya **Venkatesh**  
Quadrant Data Solutions  
Radha & Venkat **Kilambi**  
Radha **Nathan**  
Raja V. & Usha V.  
Rajakumar **Narasimhadevara**  
Rajee **Padmanaban**  
Raji **Venkatesan** &  
Dinakar **Subramanian**  
Rama Bhamidipati  
Rama **Shankar**  
Ramaa and Rungan **Nathan**  
Ramaa **Ramesh** &  
Ramesh **Santhanakrishnan**  
Ramadevi **Swaminath**  
Raman **Sankaran**  
Ramana & Santi **Kanumalla**  
Rangarajan **Suresh**  
Ravikanth **Iyer**  
Ravindra **Bangera**  
Renuka & Ramesh **Adiraju**  
Revathi **Subramony** &  
Ranga **Narayanan**  
Roopa **Srinivasan** & Prithi **Rajan**  
Rupashree **Vinay**  
S. G. **Ramanathan** &  
Uma **Ramanathan**  
Sandeep & Ranjitha **Kurup**  
Sangeetha **Narsi**  
Sankarakailasam **Iyer**  
Sarada T. & Parasaran **T.**

Saradha **Sriram**  
Sasidhar **Nimmagadda**  
Sathya & Girija **Vardhana**  
Shama **Tinaikar**  
Shankar **Ramasami**  
Shanti **Kumar**  
Shashikala **Tanjore**  
Siva **Ramachandran** &  
Nalini **Chakram**  
Soumya **Rajesh**  
Sridhar & Indira **Iyer**  
Srinivas **Chaganti**  
Srinivasan & Lakshmi **Raghavan**  
Srivalli **Pillutla**  
Srividya **Dhulipala** &  
Venkata **Tumuluri**  
Subha & Nari **Narayanan**  
Subrahmanyam **Rajagopal**  
Sudha & Ravishankar **Raman**  
Sudha **Moorthy**  
Sudhakar & Gayathri **Rao**  
Suganthi **Senthil**  
Sujatha & Patri **Prasad**  
Sumitha **Nair**  
Sunanda & Sanjay **Gandham**  
Sunandha & TT **Krishnagopal**  
Susila & **Varadarajan**  
T. G. **Venkateshwaran**  
T. L. N. **Sastry**  
Uma & Pitchumani **Sivakumar**  
Uma & Prabhakar **Chitrapu**  
Usha & Bala **Balasubramanian**  
V. R. Murthy **Ravinuthala**  
Vasanth & Paul **Narayanan**  
Vasanth **Nagarajan**  
Vathsala **Holla**  
Vatsala **Ramprasad**  
Venkata **Adiraju**  
Venki **Raman**  
Vijay **Ramineni**  
Viji & Panchanadam **Swaminathan**  
Vimal **Dev**  
Vinodh **Pillai**



## SRUTI 2019 PROGRAM LIST

### March 23, 2019

Thyagaraja Aradhana: Rendition of Utsava Sampradaya kritis, Pancharatna kritis and individual participation.  
Vocal concert: Gokul Chandramouli, Kamalakiran (violin) and Vijay Ganesh (mridangam)  
*Hindu Temple, Hockessin, DE*

### April 13, 2019

Veena concert: Jayanthi Kumaresh, Pramath Kiran (tabla), Jayachandra Rao (mridangam)  
*Community Music School, Trappe, PA*  
**Concert patrons:** Drs. Srinivas Prasad and Gita Ram

### April 27, 2019

Vocal concert: Sanjay Subrahmanyam, S. Varadarajan (violin), Neyveli Venkatesh (mridangam)  
*Hindu Temple, Hockessin, DE*  
**Anonymous Donor**

### May 4, 2019

Bharatanatyam recital: Dr. Janaki Rangarajan  
*Montgomery County Community College, Blue Bell, PA*

### May 5, 2019

Dance workshop by Dr. Janaki Rangarajan  
*Montgomery Township Community and Recreation Center, Montgomeryville, PA*

### May 10, 2019

Q and A session with Ranjani and Gayatri  
*Community Music School, Trappe, PA*

### May 11, 2019

Vocal concert: Ranjani and Gayatri, Charumathi Raghuraman (violin), Sai Giridhar (mridangam)  
*Souderton Area High School, Souderton, PA*  
**Concert patron:** Manikandan Rajappa and family

### May 18, 2019

Composer's day: Group rendition – compositions of Mysore composers  
Bala Bhavam concert: Himavath Jois (vocal), Vishal Sowmyan (violin), Srihari Raman (mridangam)  
Vocal concert: Amrutha Venkatesh, Rajeev Mukundan (violin), Arjun Ganesh (mridangam)  
*Bharatiya Temple, Montgomeryville, PA*

### August 17, 2019

Kuchipudi dance drama: Rukmini Kalyanam by Dr. Vempati Chinna Satyam troupe  
*Hindu Temple, Hockessin, DE*

### September 3, 2019

Vocal concert: Sankari Krishnan, Charulatha Ramanujam (violin), VS Raghavan (mridangam)  
*Philadelphia Ganesh Festival, Bharatiya Temple, Montgomeryville, PA*

### September 14, 2019

Vocal concert: Kiranavali Vidyasankar, Bhargav Tumkur (violin), Vinod Seetharaman and Srihari Raman (mridangam)  
*Agnes Irwin School, Rosemont, PA*

### September 21, 2019

Sitar concert: Purbayan Chatterjee, Gayatri Asokan (vocal), Anirban Chakraborty (harmonium) and Ojas Adhiya (tabla)  
*Community Music School, Trappe, PA*

### October 19, 2019

Vocal concert: Vijay Siva, R. K. Shriramkumar (violin), J. Vaidyanathan (mridangam)  
*Upper Merion Area Middle School, King of Prussia, PA*

### November 9, 2019

Vocal concert: Sangeetha Sivakumar, H. N. Bhaskar (violin), Poongulam Subramaniam (mridangam)  
*Community Music School, Trappe, PA*



**Composers' Day Group Rendering**



**Ranjani & Gayatri Q&A  
with Revathy Subramony**



**Purbayan Chatterjee**



**Ojas Adhiya**



**Anirban Chakraborty**





**Srihari Raman, Akshara Vidyasankar, Kamalakiran Vinjamuri**



**Charumathi Raghuraman**



**Pramath Kiran**



**Arjun Ganesh**



**J. Vaidyanathan**





**Gayatri Asokan** (*center*) and Ojas Adhiya



**Artists from the Rukmini Kalyanam Kuchipudi dance drama**



**Audience at Jayanthi Kumaresh Concert**



**Dr. Janaki Rangarajan** (*left*)  
with concert attendees





**Shyamjith and Viraja**



**Jayachandra Rao**



**H. N. Bhaskar**



**Jayanthi Kumaresh in concert**





**SRUTI Board of Directors with  
Sanjay Subrahmanyam, S. Varadarajan, N. Venkatesh**

*SRUTI acknowledges support from the following  
granting organizations for the year 2019*







# 2020 Event Lineup



Thyagaraja Aradhana - Mar 21



Malladi Brothers - Apr 18



S. Sowmya - Apr 25



"Trinity" - English Musical Play - Apr 4



JaiKishore & Padmavani Mosalikanti  
Kuchipudi Dance - May 16; Workshop - May 17



Amritha Murali - May 30



Shijith & Parvathy - Bharatanatyam - Sep 12

More events are being planned; Artists and Dates subject to change.

Sruti 2020 Sponsorships are available at [www.sruti.org](http://www.sruti.org)