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This logo was designed by Ratipriya Suresh and was selected on a competitive basis by the Sruti Board of Directors for publicity during Sruti's 25th anniversary celebrations. Ratipriya is a graphic and web design major at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia and pursues design, dance and music.

President's Note

Dear Indian Classical Music & Dance enthusiasts,

The Board of Directors of SRUTI is extremely excited about beginning the 2011 season with the Thyagaraja Aradhana, which represents a welcoming beginning to a fascinating array of events that have been planned for the year. To mark the 25th anniversary of SRUTI, this year the Aradhana festival is being observed as a two day event and includes several new and unique features in addition to the traditional Utsava Sampradaya and Pancharatna singing and individual participation. The first of the two day event is dedicated to St Thyagaraja's compositions whereas the second day will feature other well-known composers. This year, artists from the US including locally nurtured talent for both music and dance are being showcased for both the main and mini concerts interspersed between the individual participation. We hope you will enjoy the two days filled with classical music and dance. We look forward to your feedback and suggestions on things that worked and things that we could do better.

The Thyagaraja Aradhana Souvenir which you are holding in your hands, is a special high quality commemorative edition produced by the SRUTI's Publication and Outreach Committee, chaired by Gayathri Rao. In the spirit of the Sruti 25th anniversary, the Souvenir is an expanded publication, highlighting and recognizing the various local music enthusiast-writers who have contributed to the Thyagaraja Aradhana Souvenirs over the years. We are indeed privileged and honored to have in our midst so many talented and knowledgeable individuals who regularly contribute scholarly articles on the classical arts, compositions and educate us with their meaningful writings and analysis. Elsewhere in this souvenir, the editorial board has provided a more detailed account about this publication and its contents.

Finally I, as the President of Sruti, personally welcome each one of you to the beginning of the 25th anniversary celebrations and hope you will be part of it. We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming concerts this year - our website www.sruti.org has details of the upcoming events. Please check it out!

With warm regards,

Uma Prabhakar

Sruti - The India Music and Dance Society **presents**

Sri Thyagaraja Aradhana: 2 day event 19/20 March 2011

Saturday, March 19 2011, 8 A.M.

Montgomery County
Community College,
Science Center Auditorium
340 DeKalb Pike, Blue Bell, PA

Morning Session

- Utsava Sampradaya Kritis- Group Renditions.
- Pancharatna Kritis- Group Renditions.
- Individual participations (Thyagaraja Kritis only).

Afternoon Session

- Mini Vocal concert by **Anil Chitrapu**.
- Mini- Dance recital (Bharatanatyam style) by **Shoba Narayanan**.
- Vocal Concert by feature artists Toronto Brothers.
- Individual participations (Thyagaraja Kritis only).

Sunday, March 20 2011, 9A.M.

Hindu Temple of Delaware
760 Yorklyn Road,
Hockessin, DE 19707

Morning Session

- Individual participations (Kritis by any composer).
- Thematic 1 hour concert by **Revathi Subramony** - Composers of Karnataka

Afternoon Session

- Mini- Dance recital (Kuchipudi style) by **Kamala Reddy**.
- Mini concert by **Ranjani Prabhakar**
- Individual participations (Kritis by any composer).

Publication and Outreach Committee Note

Welcome to Sruti's Thyagaraja Aradhana 2011.

Sruti's Thyagaraja Aradhana is an annual event when local musicians and music lovers pay homage to the great and prolific composer, Saint Thyagaraja. It is one of several events all over the world following the tradition of celebrations in Thiruvaiyaru in India. As part of Sruti's 25th anniversary celebrations, this year's Aradhana is a special two day event. The Publication and Outreach committee is marking this event with a special commemorative Aradhana souvenir.

In this issue we take a walk down the memory lane, look back at how Sruti's Aradhana celebrations started and how they have evolved over the years. In recognition of contributors both local as well as those from other parts of US and India, and in the spirit of the 25th anniversary, we have reprinted 25 articles from previous souvenirs written by musicologists and music lovers. The articles include some by very young authors and also a nonagenarian! These articles give a glimpse of Thyagaraja the man, his music, the Aradhana celebrations and analysis of his music, including some personal views.

This issue also includes personal accounts of this year's Thyagaraja Aradhana celebrations in Thiruvaiyaru and Chennai music season. We have puzzles composed by youngsters and have put together some pictures from past Aradhana celebrations.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to Sruti's publications over the years. We hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as we have enjoyed putting it together and relive the 25 years of Sruti's Thyagaraja Aradhana celebrations.

Publications and Outreach Committee

Gayathri Rao (Chairperson)

Sundari Balakrishnan

Prabhakar Chitrapu

Sunanda Gandham

Rungun Nathan

Lakshmi Radhakrishnan

M.M. Subramaniam

Kiranavali Vidyasankar

Raman Visweswaran

Sruti Thyagaraja Aradhana Celebrations over the years

From the Publications and Outreach Committee staff

SRUTI has celebrated Thyagaraja Aradhana ever since its inception. It used to be and still is the first function organized by SRUTI during the calendar year. The first Thyagaraja Aradhana was held on February 28, 1987, at the Berlin Temple in New Jersey. The venue was picked for more than one reason. It was felt that the temple ambience would be appropriate for such a function, and that it would also serve the NJ patrons of SRUTI. Since Thyagaraja's music transcended language, the Sruti management decided to celebrate the event in cooperation with the three South Indian associations of the region. This co-sponsoring was discontinued after a few years.

Berlin temple continued to be the venue for several years except for 1999 when it was held at the Pennfield Middle School in Landsdale, 2004 and 2006 when it was held in Villanova and 2007 when it was held in Bharatiya Temple in Montgomeryville. For the last few years the venue has been the Mahalakshmi Temple in Delaware servicing that area also.

While any person who wanted to sing or play an instrument was given a chance to perform just one song, the Aradhana also included a main concert lasting about 1-2 hours by highly talented musicians residing in the U.S.A. This has now been expanded to invite touring artistes from India for a featured performance on that day. A list of artists featured in the main concert over the years is provided at the end of this article.

From the beginning, encouraging participation by youngsters has been an important aim of the "Managing Committee". Many of them, with encouragement by their parents and teachers, start preparing well in advance of the event. One can discern an appreciable increase in the quality of these performances over the years. In the past, special recognition was also given to promising youngsters by giving them special half hour to one hour time slots during the celebrations. Presumably, due to the increasingly large number of participants and hence of time constraints, this practice has been suspended. This year the "Board of Directors" has decided to expand the Thyagaraja Aradhana celebrations to two days. If this becomes the norm, then it would allow time for one or more of the youngsters to render 'mini-concerts'.

The first Thyagaraja Aradhana also saw the publishing of the Thyagaraja Aradhana souvenir in 1989. Since singing the Pancharatna kritis of Thyagaraja is an important event of the day, the souvenir contained the lyrics of these kritis to help those in the audience to follow the main singers. This practice has been followed almost all the years since. Additionally, the souvenir also included articles on Carnatic music in general and Thyagaraja's place and contributions in particular.

Typically, the Thyagaraja Aradhana day starts off with a pooja and concludes with an aarati and mangalam. In 2004, the pooja was followed by a procession led by the late Kanumalla Pattabhirama dressed as Thyagaraja and carrying a portrait of Lord Rama. In many ways, Sruti follows the tradition of Thiruvaiyaru in the conducting of the Aradhana. Following the pooja is the group recital of Utsava Sampradaya kritis followed

by the Pancharatna kritis and then individual rendering of Thyagaraja kritis. In the beginning, Prabha Subramaniam and Sumathi Sarangan led the Utsava Sampradaya group. Sumathi then trained some of her students who joined her in the rendering of these kritis. For a number of years after that, a group of youngsters trained by T.N. Bala rendered these kritis. Since 2006 Prabha Subramaniam has been leading the rendering of these kritis. The Pancharatna kritis were initially led by Vasantha and then for several years by Prabha Subramaniam and since 2006 by Kiranavali Vidyasankar. In 2006 a recording of nine Utsava Sampradaya kirtanas and Pancharatna kritis were made available on Sruti's website, so that people could listen and train without attending classes.

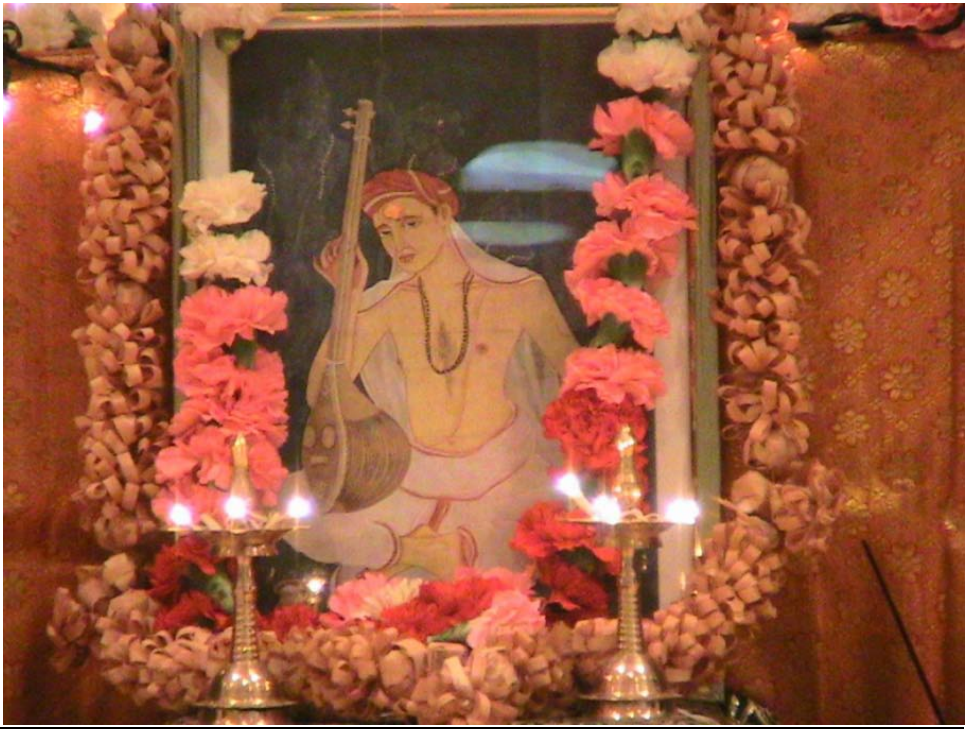
For most of the years, SRUTI has provided free food to the attendees at its Thyagaraja Aradhana. In the early years, this was a "labor of love", volunteered/donated by many "Anna Dathas". We owe them all hearty thanks. Today, the tradition continues with lunch and snacks being provided during the day-long event.

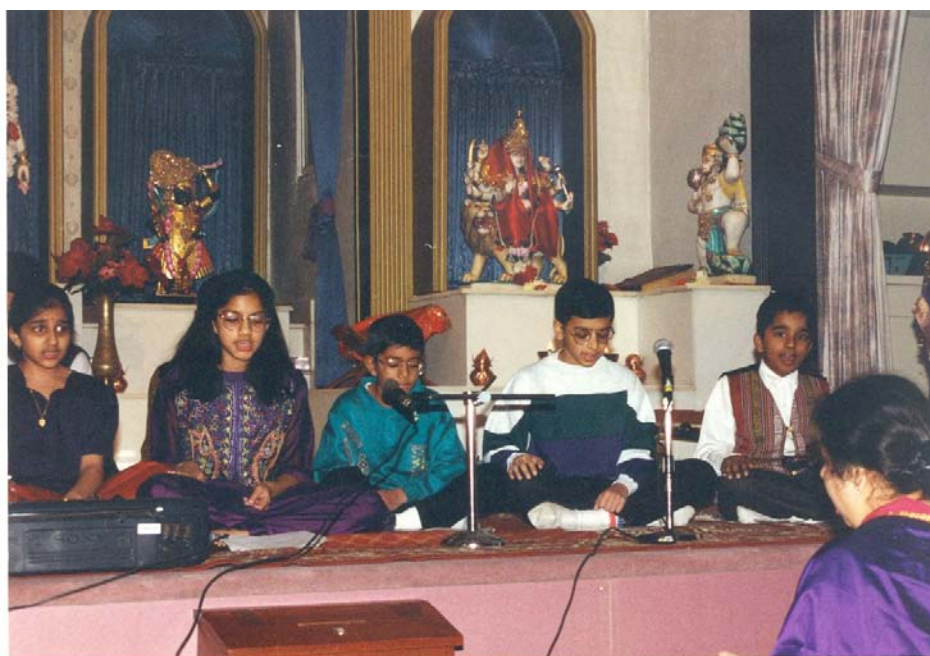
Sruti's Thyagaraja Aradhana continues to be an eagerly awaited event. It is heartening to see the overwhelming participation by youngsters who we hope will continue to nurture the tradition of Carnatic music.

SRUTI Thyagaraja Aradhana day – Main concert artists

1987-	Vasantha - vocal
1988-	Vijaya Reddy - vocal
1989-	Sitalakshmi Madhavan - vocal
1990-	Sakuntala Srinivasan - veena
1991-	Shashi Nandakumar Balija - vocal
1992-	Indu Vasudevan - vocal
1993-	K.S.Mani - violin
1994-	T.N.Bala - vocal
1995-	Bhavani P Rao - veena
1996-	Savithri Ramanand - vocal
1997-	Padma Srinivasan - vocal
1998-	N.Shashidhar - violin
1999-	Madurai R Sundar - vocal
2000-	Sudarsan Padmanabhan - vocal
2001-	Radhika Mani - violin
2002-	Rajeswari Satish - vocal
2003-	Aparna Balaji - vocal
2004-	Professor Subbulakshmi and Kalyani Ramani - vocal
2005-	Savita Rao - vocal
2006-	Kiranavali Vidyasankar - vocal
2007-	Jayalakshmi Sekhar - veena
2008-	Abhishek Raghuram - vocal
2009-	Nisha Rajgopal - vocal
2010-	Salem Shriram - vocal

A pictorial walk through 25 years of Sruti's Thyagaraja Aradhana Celebrations























Photos Legend

From top to bottom, from left to right

Page-8: Photo of Thyagaraja, used in early Aradhana celebrations

Page-9:

- First Utsava Sampradaya Kirtana singing group, led by Sumati Sarangan
- First Utsava Sampradaya Kirtana group singing and being conducted by Sumati Sarangan

Page-10:

- Santosh Adipudi * Seetha Ayyalasomayajula & group
- Utsava Sampradaya Kirtana group singing
- Amba Balakrishnan * Dinakar Subramanian

Page-11:

- Utsava Sampradaya Kirtana group, led by Prabha Subramaniam, supported by Sumati Sarangan
- Pancharathna Kriti group, led by Prabha Subramaniam, supported by Sumati Sarangan & Dinakar Subramanian
- Harsha Kanumalla & Anil Chitrapu
- Ranjani Prabhakar & Janani Prabhakar

Page-12: Audiences

Page-13:

- Bharati Sena * Raji Padmanabhan
- Sruti Iyer * Rochita Rungun
- Srikant Rao * Neha Nataraj

Page-14:

- Main Concert by Sumati Rao (vocal), Sandhya Srinath (violin) and Srinath Bala (mridangam)
- Late Sri Kanumalla Pattabhiramam as Thyagaraja
- Utsava Sampradaya Kirtana group

Page-15:

- Pancharathan Kriti Group, led by Prabha Subramaniam
- Audience * Children

Page-16:

- Utsava Sampradaya Kirtana group, led by Prabha Subramaniam
- Pancharathna Kriti Group, led by Kiranavali Vidyashankar
- Jayant Vatson * Veena Kanumalla

Page-17:

- Pancharathna Kriti Group, led by Kiranavali Vidyashankar
- Utsava Sampradaya Kirtana group, led by Prabha Subramaniam

Page-18:

- Shobha Narayan * Harsha Kanumalla
- Anil Chitrapu * Ranjani Prabhakar
- Shreya Adiraju * Sumant Swaminathan

THYAGARAJA, POET, COMPOSER AND MUSICIAN

A.K. Srinivasan

(Published in 1990)

Thyagaraja was a prolific composer besides being a poet and a musician. His lyrics have all the qualities of a poem. As a composer, he brought out the essence of a raga to stress the meaning of the words and the intricacies of the raga. He was well read in the Upanishads, Bhagavatha puranas, and the epics so that he could expound the philosophy in a simple manner in his compositions. His model was Potana's writings which were simple while profound in philosophical thoughts. As a musician he expounded the importance of nada and tala. His compositions such as *Swara Raga Sudharasa* in Sankarabharanam and *Sogasuga Mridanga Talamu* in Sri Ranjani are examples of the importance of raga and tala while in *Sobhillu* (Jaganmohini) he prescribes the way a song should be sung.

His compositions please the initiated as well as the un-initiated in music. There is simplicity in language and complexity in the musical structure with nuances in words and swaras. As a musician, Thyagaraja analyzed the beauties of various ragas and presented them in such a manner, the compositions give a well trained musician suitable places for elaborations (niraval and kalpanaswaras) to show the performer's talents. The sangathis in his compositions are picturesque and varied such as raga bhava and sahitya bhava sangathis. To bring out the essence of the raga and sahitya bhavas most of his compositions are of medium tempo. Sangathis in *Najeevadhara* (Bilahari) and *Darini Telusukonti* (Suddhasaveri) are examples of raga bhava sangathis whereas *Marubalka* (Sri Ranjani) and *Kalaharaname lara* (Suddhasaveri) are of sahitya bhava sangathis.

As a poet he has used alliterations, aphorisms, and proverbs etc., to embellish and to bring out the essence of bhakti and philosophy. As a musician cum poet, he combined the sahitya and swaras. An example of this is the swarakshara in the song *Samajavaragamana* (Hindolam) where the solfas Sa, Ma, Ni, Ga, Ma, Dha form the words of the lyric. He used words which have several meanings. For example, in *Anupama gunambhudhi* (Atana) the phrase Janakajamata has two meanings. Janaka Jamata means son-in-law of Janaka while Janakaja Mata means Sita's mother Bhoomi Devi. Besides these forms Thyagaraja has also used similies, rhetorical interrogation, hyperbole, euphamism etc., in his compositions.

Thyagaraja has brought out in his compositions the nine rasas. Punnagavarali is a raga which can have only one rasa while Sankarabharana or Kalyani can bring out several rasas. The composition *Kshira sagara sayana* (Devagandhari) brings out the ocean's calmness and tranquility but also reveals its depth. *Jagadananda karaka* (Nata), the pancharathna kriti, represents a heroic poem praising Sri Rama. *Santamu leka* (Sama) in its opening word itself shows the tranquility.

Besides composing kritis which can be sung by well trained musicians, he composed kirtanas which can be sung by groups. He also composed groups of songs named as Pancharathna kirtanas. In this category are the well known Ghana Raga Pancharathna sung during Thyagaraja Aradhana festivals, Thiruvottiyur Pancharathnam, and the Lalgudi Pancharathnam and others. Regarding the writing of Ghana raga panchrathnam, it is said that many musicians of his time failed to catch the musical significance of his

His Divya Nama kirtanas of one hundred songs are intended to be sung by groups of devotees. After he completed these songs, he composed *Ragarathna Malikache* in Reetigowla in which he says "Bhagavatottamulu goodi pade keertanamulata".

Thyagaraja was a musical experimenter in the sense he composed songs in rare ragas some of which may have been his own creations. These ragas are not found in early music literature. He refers to these ragas in some of his compositions as 'vintha ragalu' (novel ragas). In his composition *Muchchata brahmadulaku* (Madhyamavati) he says that these ragas lend scope for elaborations in alapana and/or swaraprastaras. One may mention some of these ragas here: Jaganmohini, Chittaranjani, Devakriya, Dilipaka; Jayantasena, Manjari etc.

References:

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TEST YOUR CARNATIC MUSIC & THYAGARAJA IQ

Uma Roy

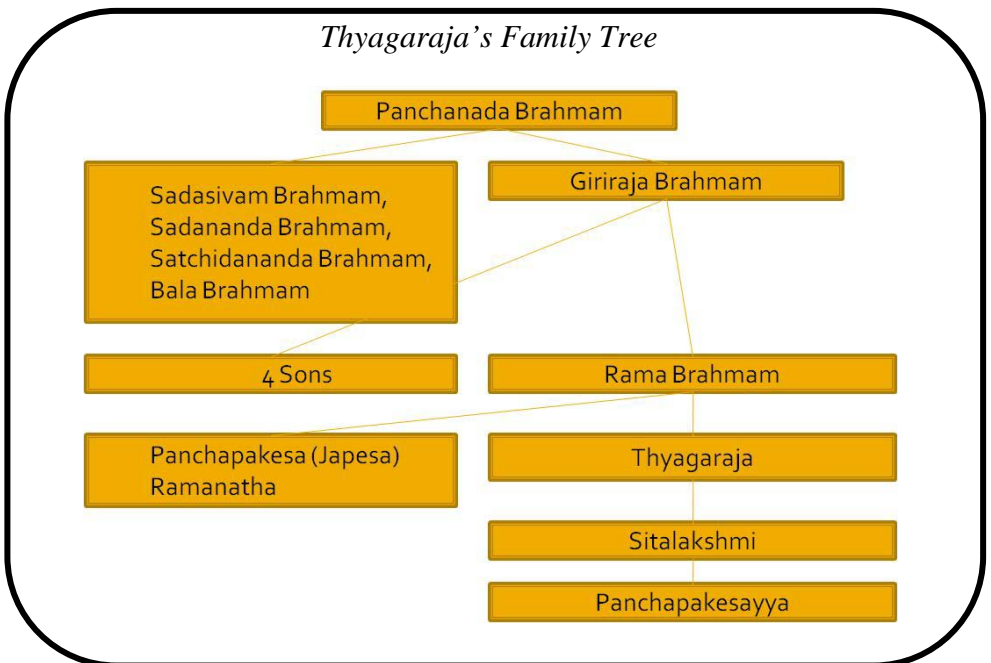
(Published in 1989)

Look at the pictures of the great composers in Carnatic Music and answer the questions by writing the number corresponding to the picture for questions 1-8. Questions 9-25 are only on Saint Thyagaraja.



1. Which of the above pictures is that of Saint Thyagaraja?
2. Who among the above composers is called the PITHAMAHA
3. (Grandfather) of Carnatic Music?
4. Which of them form the Trimurthis of Carnatic Music?
5. Who is the oldest of the Trimurthis?
 - a) Who can be called the father of Carnatic Music? b) Which of them is a King?
6. Which of the above composers composed Sarali swara-s, Janta swara-s etc?
7. Whose compositions are mostly in Sanskrit?
8. Which of the above composers sent his son to Thyagaraja to learn music?
9. How many kritis has Thyagaraja composed in Thodi - 2,20,200,12?
10. In what year was Thyagaraja born?
11. How old was he when he composed his first kriti?
12. Who was Thyagaraja's guru?

13. Thyagaraja loved two things most. What were they?
14. What was the main God or Goddess he composed on?
15. Name other deities he composed on.
16. Who invented the use of Sangathis?
17. In how many Raga-s has Thyagaraja composed his songs - 20,200,2000,50?
18. Which Raga did he donate the use of to another musician called Tribhuvana Swaminatha Ayyar?
19. Which were Thyagaraja's last compositions?
20. What did he see on 'Giripaina'? In what raga did he sing this?
21. How many sets of Pancharatna kriti-s did he compose?
22. Can you name these sets?
23. Name the operas Thyagaraja wrote.
24. If Thyagaraja was Johnson, who was Boswell?
25. Thyagaraja composed this song in Durbar Raga one night when he was traveling with Veena Kuppa Ayyar in a palanquin with some gold meant for some puja-s and thieves came to attack them, but were driven away by two boys. Which was this Kriti? Who were the two boys?



Is Thyagaraja really great?

Rasikan

(Published in 1990)

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

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

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

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

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

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

in weaving the talam into his compositions.

Thyagaraja perfected the kriti format consisting of pallavi, anupallavi and charanam with the later part of the charanam having the same dhatu as the anupallavi. Almost all his compositions exhibit this basic three anga format [He himself strayed away from this mold in his pancharatna kritis (which by the way, are in a class by themselves), bhajana/utsava sampradaya kritis and a few others, notably *Brochevar evare* (*Sri ranjani*), *Sri Raghuvara* (*Kambhodhi*). His contemporary, Syama Sastry, used this structure with some embellishments like swara sahitya. And all later composers have faithfully followed this pattern. This alone is a major accomplishment. Clearly South Indian music reached its zenith in his compositions.

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

Rasikan is a regular contributor to SRUTI. He is a strong supporter of SRUTI and a connoisseur of music.

Some Important Years in Thyagaraja's Life

1767:	<i>Birth (May 4, Monday)</i>
1774 (8th year):	<i>Upanayanam</i>
1784 (18th year):	<i>Marriage</i> <i>Met Ramakrishna Yathindra, who asked Thyagaraja to do</i> <i>Rama Nama japa for 96 crore times, which he completed in 21</i> <i>years (46M per year - 125k per day!)</i>
1802 (36th year):	<i>Sarabhoji raja incident (3 years after becoming king - but</i> <i>kingdom under East India Company control)</i>
1804? (38th Year):	<i>Brother Japasa steals the Rama idols worshipped by</i> <i>Thyagaraja and throws away in Kaveri river</i>
1821 (55th Year):	<i>Visits Veena Kuppayya in Thiruvodiyur etc.</i>
~ 1836 (70th Year):	<i>Visit by Vadivelu from Swati Thirunal's court</i>
1845 (79th Year):	<i>Death of Thyagaraja's wife</i>
1847 (81st Year):	<i>Thyagaraja attains Sidhdhi on Jan 6 after 3 days of sanyaasa</i>

Thyagaraja as a Moralist

D.N.Visweswariah
(Published in 1991)

Music lovers do not generally realize that the great composer in his compositions was about as morally demanding as, say, Purandara Dasa or Jesus Christ. It looked as if Thyagaraja lived simultaneously at two levels of reality: the first was the ordinary waking existence (what the philosophers in India have termed "Vyavaharika Satte") and the other was the divine existence (or "Paramarthika Satte"). In the latter, Rama, Sita and all the characters of Ramayana were as real to him as his own wife and relatives. Often enough he did mix the two and from that mixture flowed musical compositions the like of which the world has not seen and may indeed never see.

With regard to his worldly life, he, unlike most seekers of the divine, paid scrupulous attention to it. Here I am reminded of the story once recounted by the great musicologist, Prof. Sambamoorthy in Madras. It would appear that Thyagaraja was strict about the visitors to his house not spitting betel juice within a certain radius of his house, but that he made just one exception in the case of his great friend Shyama Shastrigal. The story at once illustrated that Thyagaraja was a careful house-holder who, however, exercised discretion. That same good sense made him extremely angry over the shams and humbugs existing in the society during his time, especially in the religious field. In his Saveri kriti "Balamu kulamu", referring to mere religious observances without any inner conviction, he asks rhetorically whether the crows and fish who dip into water have had their morning ablutions; whether the cranes who keep their eyes closed are meditating and whether monkeys who live in the forests are doing Vanavasa? As a Rama bhakta himself, he expresses in the Mukhari kriti "Kshinamai tiruga" that siddhi achieved by yoga or mere scholastic learning does not lead to divine grace but only to rebirth. Thyagaraja is even more forthright in his kriti "Bhakti bhikshamiyave" in Shankarabharana where he says that deceitful people teaching the Puranas and Shastras are no better than corpses dressed up in lace turbans and adorned with jewels! In a very colorful simile he asks, in his Abhogi kriti "Manasu nilpa shakti leka pote", whether the Somayaji (the high priest who performs yagas with the help of his wife) will go to heaven even if his wife is a debauchee. In this context, one is reminded of Jesus Christ scolding the scribes and pharisees of his day. Obviously only true men of God can speak out so boldly against sham religious practices.

Thyagaraja was evidently a keen observer of men and their behavior. This was made easier because he lived in a small town and in a rather closed society, and the physical proximity of his neighbors brought to him easily the news of their doings. Again and again, and in differing phrases, he talks of men's attraction to other people's wives. Thus, in his famous Shuddha Dhanyasi kriti "Enta nerchina enta juchina", he says that if a man does not follow the right path, despite all his learning and pilgrimages, he is likely in the

end to become a slave to women. Again in another famous kriti "Rama neeyada prema rahitulaku" he says that a man devoid of true devotion knows as much of the sweetness of God's holy name as a mere man in the clothes of a woman can know of maidenly chastity or the ability of a tiger's cub to produce cow's milk, even if that cub had put on the mask of a cow. (Charles Dickens, speaking of one of his merciless characters, virtually uses the same analogy: this character, according to the novelist, could produce as much human kindness as a tiger could of cow's milk! How great men, separated by time and space can think the same thoughts!)

Thyagaraja in his "Telisi Ramachintanato namamu" kriti in the raga Purnachandrika emphasises the need for utter devotion to the Lord, for, otherwise the meditator may be thinking of Rama, a woman rather than Lord Rama! In the Pancharatna kriti "Duduku gala nanne dora" the great composer gives in one piece the many possible evils that befall an insincere and godless person. Although the first person singular is used throughout this kriti, it refers not just to the composer, but to mankind in general.

Generally, however, the "I" in his kritis refers to himself personally and like all the bhaktas he exaggerates his faults. In his very colorful kriti, the famous "Dachukovalena, Dasarathi" in the Todi raga, the great saint-composer asks Rama why He is holding His mercy from his devotee even after (1) Sita put in a good word on his behalf just when the Lord is fondling her with kisses; (2) when Bharata has likewise spoken favorably on Thyagaraja's behalf to the Lord when massaging his feet, and (3) when Lakshmana had similarly acted while serving the Lord! All this will doubtless appear strange to a modern reader, but just to show that Thyagaraja was no mere dreamer, I will quote a simile he has used, which would certainly have done credit to that most sensible and witty statesman we had in India, the late C. Rajagopalachari, who could at a moment's notice turn the tables on just about anybody on earth. Thyagaraja, in his Kapi kriti "Meevalla gunadoshamemi, Shrirama", after saying that his blemishes are his own, and not due to the Lord, asks rhetorically if the son-in-law is responsible if one's daughter is unable to stand the labor-pains? In our frustrated moments, when we are apt to blame others, we might ask ourselves just such a question If only we knew how to compose kritis a tenth as beautiful when we are frustrated! There are numerous pieces in which Thyagaraja expresses great personal anguish, mainly because of the Lord's supposed neglect of his faithful devotee and of the cruel behavior of his peers towards him; but for all the anguish the saint suffered, all that the music lovers of his and future generations received was unmatched divine not. In point of fact, most of his disciples whose mother tongue was Tamil barely understood the verbal meanings unless their guru explained to them, but of the bhavas of the compositions as they listened, there could be little doubt in the disciples' minds, otherwise the kritis may not have survived from generation to generation.

Ten thousand miles away from where they were first composed in the 18th century they

are being sung with fervor here today towards the close of the 20th century. Proof enough!

D.N.Visweswariah is an ardent lover of music and father of Uma Roy, President of CMANA.

Thyagaraja’s Birth Details

*Birthday: Monday 4 May 1767
Sarvajit year, Chaitra masa, Bahula Dasami*

*Astrological Details: Purvashada Nakshatra, Kataka Lagna,
Bharadwaja Gotra, Aapasthamba Sutra,
Krishna Yajus-saakha*

Birth Place: Thiruvavarur, Tamil Nadu, India

Parents: Sitamma, Ramabrahmam

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Tyāgarāja’s horoscope from the palm-leaf manuscript of his life written by Thanjavur Sadaśiva Rao and Venkatasuri. (Courtesy The Music Academy, Madras)

Thoughts before Dying

Uma and Chitrapu Prabhakar

(Published in 1992)

It is said that Thyagaraja was intimated of his coming death in a dream. In that dream, Lord Rama apparently promised to take Thyagaraja to His sannidhi within ten days. Of the songs that Thyagaraja composed during these last days, three are well known. They are "Giri paina" in Sahana raga, "Paritapamu gani" in Manohari raga and "Paramatmudu velige muchchata" in Vagadhiswari raga.

It is interesting to try to interpret the meanings of these songs. For, they were written by a man on the brink of death: From a point of no return; from a point when one could look back and see what life has been to him; from a point where one can look back and see what one has discovered in one's life- what was most valuable and what one would advise others to do or not to.

These writings should be different from a philosopher's musings and speculations about Life and Death in general. For, however fine a thinker one may be, I believe that the inevitability of the falling blade brings clearer insight (!). It will push the inessentials into the background and only the most dear to the heart and mind will stand out. Stand out - crystal clear like a child's vision, and vibrant like a van Gogh's painting. Therefore, I studied the meanings of these songs with some time and thought in hand. The song "Paramatmudu" impressed me most. The song and the meaning go as follows.

1. Paramatmudu velige muchchata бага telusukore !
2. Hariyata, harudata, Suralata,
narulata, Akhilandakotulata,
Andarilo Paramatmudu velige
3. Gagana, Anila, Tejo, Jala, Bhu mayamagu
Mriga, Khaga, Naga, Taru kotulalo,
Sagunamulalo, Vigunamulalo,
Satatamu Saadhu Thyagarajarchitudu,
Ilalo Paramatmudu velige ..

Translation (of the spirit of the song):

1. Won't you see and know
The marvel of the *being* of God!
2. His *being* in Shiva and Vishnu;
..... in Gods and Men;
... in the various life forms;
Won't you see ... ?
3. In material things,
-made up of air, sky, fire, water and the earth
such as
animals and birds;

serpents and trees;
In inanimate opposites:
such as
good and bad;
Won't you, please, always see
The *being* of God !

Appreciation:

The main problem in the Life of a person is his relation to people, living and nonliving things, and psychological ideas. It is a *problem*, because we see a multitude of them and they are often in contradiction with others. Therefore, the quest of a thinking individual should be *synthesis*. That is, to be able to understand them all in one *mutually non-inconsistent* way.

In the above song, Thyagaraja asks us to see all the pieces *together*. Good and bad are not different. The believer and the nonbeliever are not different. He urges us to develop and maintain such a *universal/cosmic* attitude. Certainly, it will go a long way to building a peaceful personal life, peaceful relationships and a peaceful world.

Dr. Uma Prabhakar is with Smith Kline & Beecham Pharmaceuticals, King of Prussia. Her interests include Carnatic and Hindustani music. Dr. Chitrapu Prabhakar is an Assistant Professor at Drexel University. He is interested in music, writing and philosophy.

Srirangam Anecdote

According to tradition, Thyagaraja visited Srirangam in Tamilnadu and was staying in a house near the Ranganatha temple. A procession of the Ranganatha Swamy began and Thyagaraja was overcome with joy and sang the song Raju Vedale in Raga Thodi. Gradually, the procession approached the house and Thyagaraja was eagerly anticipating the coming of the chariot in front of the house. Unexpectedly, the chariot turned a corner and was going another way. Apparently then, the chariot suddenly stopped and could not be moved, how much ever effort was put in. After sometime, some one proclaimed that this happened because a genuine Bhaktha of the Lord was upset and unhappy. The people then discovered that Thyagaraja was in the neighborhood and promptly brought him to the Ranganatha Swamy chariot. Thyagaraja burst forth into the other two famous kritis, Vinarada naa manavi in Raga Devagandhari and O Rangasayi in Raga Kambhoji. Together with two other kritis that Thyagaraja composed at this place, the kritis became famous as the SriRangam Pancharathnas.

Wrap Music of Thyagaraja

Prabhakar Chitrapu

(Published in 1993)

When you attempt to write a song in classical style, you will immediately realize the magnanimity of Thyagaraja's works. You will soon notice that every single word -nay letter- needs to be right. The words have to be of proper length, with stress and elongation at the right place. And each word must be capable of being musically 'squeezable like sourdough'. And on top of all these, a purposeful message has to be built in. Perhaps, it is not possible to *chisel/craft* all these in one by one. They must be spontaneously born in a moment of intense passion and inspiration. This does not undermine the importance of *training* in any way: all technique must be perfected and ready when the passion comes. The soil must be prepared and the seeds be sown, by the time the rain arrives.

There is one technique that I have noticed in Thyagaraja's lyrics, which I have not seen elsewhere before. (This may well define the extent of my knowledge/ignorance!). I wish to call it the "wrap technique" or as a somewhat more catchy expression "wrap music". It refers to the words and meaning "wrapping around" each line or para. I shall illustrate this technique with three different types of examples.

Type 1: Consider the following first line of a Thyagaraja Kriti in Vachaspati raga:

"Kanta Judumi Oka Paari, Kri"

The first four words have the following meanings: Kanta = with an eye; Judumi = please look; Oka Paari = once. Together, the sentence thus means "Please look at me once".

The beauty of this line is that it "wraps around", in the sense that the last and the first words can join together, becoming a new word: Kri_Kanta, meaning "from the corner of an eye". Thus, when you sing this line more than once, we get the wrap around effect:

Kanta Judumi Oka Paari,
Kri_Kanta Judumi Oka Paari,
Kri_Kanta Judumi Oka Paari,

Ad Infinitum!! Of course, the wrap around happens also with the music: that is with the musical notes associated with these words.

The notes would connect together smoothly, fitting into the raga of the composition. (I am not knowledgeable enough to comment further in this matter).

One is reminded of the famous book "Godel, Escher, Bach" by Douglas Hofstadter. In this book, the author describes the so called "infinite loops" created by Bach in his music, produced by similar wrap around techniques. Thyagaraja wrapped around not only music but also the words!!

Returning to our example, we see that Thyagaraja continues the wrap technique to the entire composition.

p. Kanta Judumi Oka Paari, *Kri(kanta ..)*

a. Bantudai velayu baagugaani

Tappu Tantalella maanukonna nannu, *Kri(kanta ..)*

c. Alanaadu Sowmitry paada seva

Chelaregi seyu vela Sitato

Baliki juuchinanta pulakaankitudai

Baragina yatu Thyagarajuni *Kri(kanta ..)*.

(p, a, c stand for pallavi, anupallavi and charanam respectively). The meaning of the charanam is quite interesting in its own right. It refers to an incident in Ramayana, wherein Lakshmana (Sowmitry) is performing 'paada seva' to Rama. Impressed by it, Rama mentions it to Sita, and looks at him (affectionately) with a sidelong glance. At this, Lakshmana is thrilled and Thyagaraja asks Rama to look at him in the same way.

Type 2: Another example of the wrap technique is the following song in Kharahara Priya raga:

p. Prakkala nilabadi koliche muchchata baaga telparada

a. Chukkala rayani geru momugala

Sudati Sitamma Soumitri Ramuniki iru (*prakkilla ..*)

c. Tanuvuche vandana monarinchu chunnaaraa

Chanuvuna naama kirtana seyuchunnaaraa

Manasuna dalachi mai marachi yunnaaraa

Nenarunchi Thyagarajunito Hari Hari, miru iru (*prakkala ...*)

Here the word Iru+Prakkala is wrapped around. (Iru=Both; Prakkala=Sides). The wrap around scheme here differs from the previous example in the following way: Here, the two parts of the wrapped-around word are independent words by themselves, whereas, in the first example of Kri+Kanta, 'Kri' cannot stand by itself.

Type 3: The final example defies simple rules that characterize the earlier types, and demonstrates sophisticated and intriguing play with words. The song I am referring to is the famous one in Suddha Saveri raga:

1. *Darini* telusukonti, Tripura

Sun + *dari* + *ni* + nne Sarananti

2. *Maaruni* Janakudaina Maa Dasaratha

Ku + *maaruni* Sodari dayapari mooksha (*darini ...*)

3.

Knowledgeable people acknowledge the greatness of the *music* in this composition, which includes the extensive sangatis it allows. In fact, it appears to have been quite famous even during Thyagaraja's own time. Attesting to this statement is the following para, taken from the book of P.Sambamoorthy, page 169. (Italicized words are included by me):-

“Dasari, a reputed nagasvaram player of the time, was once engaged to perform during the temple festival at Tiruvaiyar (*the place where Thyagaraja lived most of his life*). One night, as the procession turned to the South Mada Street, the nagasvaram player stopped at the junction of the Tirumanjana Veedhi (where Thyagaraja lived) and played the piece Darini telusukonti prefacing it with a brief alapana. The stillness of the night, the beautiful music, the sparkling sangatis of this masterpiece of Thyagaraja in Suddha Saveri raga, all made a tremendous impression on the listeners. The sage of Tiruvaiyar who was listening to the piece from his house was so touched by the brilliant performance that, leaving his house, he walked up the distance, came near the performer and congratulated him on his brilliant performance.”

Returning to the topic of the present article, I claim that the *words (sahitya)* of this composition are also quite fascinating and in fact quite intriguing. First of all, we see the wrap technique used very successfully in the words Sundarini and Kumaaruni. The former splits as Sun+darini, while the latter as Ku+maaruni. dari=shore; maaruni = of maarudu = of the God of Love, Manmatha. The first pieces do not have independent meanings. Taken together, Sundarini refers to the Goddess Tripura sundari, the resident diety of the Thiruvottiur temple. Similarly, Dasaratha Kumaruni refers to the son of Dasaratha, namely Rama. These two examples differ from the previous ones, since the wrapping works in the middle of the line and not at the end of the line.

The intriguing part of this composition (personally speaking, that is!) is the ambiguity in the word Darini. The context is "darini telusukonti". Literally, we have Darini = The shore; Telusukonti = came to know. Thus, Thyagaraja is saying that he has come to know the shore. The word 'shore' is used figuratively to mean an end point or goal of a search. This is the interpretation given by Kalluri Veerabhadra Sastri, in his book "Thayagaraja Kirtanal: Visesh Vivaramanu".

Interestingly enough, in published books, articles and opinions, one sees not only the word Darini but also as Daarini !! Now, Daarini means a path or a way. Thus the meaning of Daarini telusukonti becomes "I have come to know the path". The meaning is thereby changed dramatically: from the goal of a path to the path to a goal!

Strictly speaking, with the word "Daarini", the wrapping around does not work! For, Sundari is spelt with a short 'a' sound while Daarini would be spelt with a long 'a' sound. Of course, it is possible to produce this 'distortion' while singing by stretching the notes appropriately.

In fact, one may not even have to call it distonion: one can view it simply as a clever switching between the shon and long 'a' sounds, words and meanings. Coming from a mastermind like Thygaraja, such ambiguities should not be confused to be linguistic accidents. They must be deliberate choices. In this case, a delightful and cheeky play with words and music.

Similar is the case with the other wrapped around word, namely Maaruni. In published works, we find both Maaruni as well as Maruni. Fortunately, both mean the same (Manmatha)! So, I do not see any confusion or play of words here.

More Examples: Here are some more examples, chosen mainly to support the claim of

this article. Clearly, they are not exhaustive.

In the first set of examples, a word is split and wrapped around. The words are as in Type 1 where the first part does not have an independent meaning.

1. p. Vidulaku mrokkeda, Sangeeta ko (*vidulaku*)

The individual words have the following meanings: Vidulaku = to scholars; mrokkeda = shall bow to; sangeeta = musical. The sentence thus means "I shall bow to ". With the wrapping in effect, Kovidulu means scholars. That is, I shall bow to music scholars.

In the following examples also, a word is split and wrapped around. As in Type 2 of the previous section, both parts of the split word can stand by themselves. As such, they are compound words. Clearly, such words are easier to wrap around.

1. p. Rama ninne namminaanu, Nijamuga Sita (*Rama*)

Here the word that is split is the compound word, Sitarama. Another example is:

2. p. Ramaa Niyeda prema rahitulaku
Ni naama rochi telusunaa? Oh Sita (*Ramaa*)
a. Kaamini vesha dhariki sadhwi nadatha
Emaina telusuna Aa rithi, Sita (*Ramaa*)

Yet another example is the following:

3. p. Meru samana dhira ! varada ! Raghu
Vira ! Jutamu rara ! Maha (*meru*)
a. Sara sara oyyarapu nadalanu
Nirada kantini ni thivini Maha (*meru*)

In the following examples, the splitting and wrapping around is achieved at a *phrase or sentence level*. These are also comparatively easy to wrap around.

1. p. Nagumomu gana leni naa jaali telisi
Nanu brova raaraada, Sri Raghuvara, Ni (*nagumomu*)
a. Nagarajadhara niidu parivaarulella
Ogibodhala jesevaaralu gaare, yatulundedare, Ni (*nagumomu*)
c. Khagaraju niyaanathi vini vega chanaleda
gaganaaniki Ilaku bahudurambani raado
Jagamele paramaatma Evarito moralidudhu
Vagajupaku taalanu nannelukoraa, Thyagarajanuta, Ni (*nagumomu*)
2. p. Paramatmudu velige muchchata baaga telusukore
a. Hariyata, Harudata, Suralata, Narulata
Akhilanda kotulata, Andarilo (*Paramatmudu*)
Gaganaanila tejo jala bhumayamagu
Mruga khaga naga taro kotulalo
Sagunamulalo Vigunamulalo
Satatamu sadhu Thyagarajarchitudu ilalo (*Paramatmudu*)
3. p. Enduku dayaraadura, Sri Ramachandra, Niku (*Enduku*)

- a. Sandadi yani marachitivo, Indulevo, Niku (*Enduku*)

Finally, the following example illustrates special styles of wrapping as in Type 3 of the previous section. The wrapping around occurs in the middle of the line in the pallavi.

1. p. Teratiyagaraada Loni (*Teratiyagaraada*
Tirupati Venkata Ramana Matsara manu
a. Parama purusha dharmaadi mookshamula
Paaradoluchunnadi naaloni (*Teratiyagaraada*)

Closing Note: I hope that these examples and my analysis of them has kindled some interest in at least some readers. To such readers, I wish many moments of thrilling joy, that I have experienced in Thyagaraja's music and words. In his own words, "Gitarthamu Sangitaanandamu Ii thaavuna chudaraa, Oh Manasaa!"

Dr. Prabhakar Chitrapu works with Dialogic in Edison, NJ. He is interested in music, writing and philosophy.

The Anandabhairavi Anecdote

It is a well known fact that only 3 compositions of Thyagaraja are known to exist in Raga Anandabhairavi. These are: Kshira Sagara Vihara, Nike Theliyakapotha Rama and Rama Rama Ni Vaaramu. (Incidentally, a 4th kriti with the Pallavi "Ni Balama, Naama Balama, Nijamuga Palkave, O Rama" is sung by Dr M. Balamuralikrishna and is also attributed to Thyagaraja. However, this view does not appear to be universally known or accepted).

In any case, there are some stories as to why Thyagaraja may not have composed any more songs in Raga Anadabhairavi. A popular one is the following: As you probably know, Anandabhairavi is an ancient raga, with many songs in that raga. In particular, a group led by Tribhuvanam Swaminatha Gurukul apparently made a living by singing songs in this raga mainly. This group apparently once visited Thyagaraja and impressed him with their rendering of the Raga. An elated Thyagaraja is said to have offered them to ask any thing that they wanted from him. They in turn requested that Thyagaraja gift them the Raga Anadabhairavi and therefore, implicitly, not compose any more compositions in that Raga! Of the reasons that can be speculated, a strong contender is that the group leader thought that people would wonder about why Thyagaraja composed only 3 songs in such a major and old raga. Then the story would be told, making the group also as immortal as Thyagaraja would be! Pretty shrewed, if true!

KSETRA KRITS OF SAINT TYAGARAJA

P. P. Narayanaswami (Canada)

(Published in 1995)

Of the 705 or so *krtis* of Saint Tyagaraja that are currently in vogue, a major bulk is devoted to singing the Glory of Lord Sri Rama through the medium of *Nama Japa* and *Bhakti*. Several *Harikatha* exponents have conducted *Ramayana Katha Prasangams* employing solely his compositions, to illustrate the essence of this epic story, since there is a wealth of *Rama Nama Mahima* scattered through his songs. Though he was an advocate of *Rama Nama Taraka Mantra*, Tyagaraja has taken time out to deviate from this theme, to compose several beautiful *krtis* in praise of other Gods and Goddesses of the South Indian Hindu Pantheon. Unlike Muttusvami Diksitar, he was not a zealous pilgrim, but he had travelled to some nearby shrines in places like Srirangam, Lalgudi (near Trichy), Tirupati, Kovur, Tiruvottoyur, Nagapattanam, Madras, to mention a few places. Also, besides Lord *Rama*, he has composed and sang in praise of Lord *Ganesa*, Lord *Siva*, Lord *Visnu*, Goddess *Parvati* (in several forms), and the sacred river *Kaveri*, in addition to a large number of songs glorifying *Nadabrahmam*, the medium of *Sapta Svara* through which he expressed his feelings toward God. In this small note, I shall try to point out the various Tyagaraja *krtis* that are *not* related to the theme of *Rama Brahmanam*.

On Lord Ganesa, Tyagaraja sang the *krti* "*Giriraja suta tanayai sadaya*" in the Ragam *Bangala*. This composition is in simple Sanskrit, and there are numerous compositions of Tyagaraja in Sanskrit. Another *krti* on *Ganesa*, again in Sanskrit, "*Sri Gananatham Bhajamyaham*" in the Ragam *Kanakangi* is attributed to Tyagaraja, but strangely, it includes the *mudra* (signature) of Tyagaraja, as well as Muttusvami Diksitar (in the phrase "*Guruguha*"), but the style resembles very much that of Diksitar.

In the *krti* "*Sari Vedalina*" in Ragam *Asaveri*, Tyagaraja describes the flow of the sacred river *Kaveri* - the river, which gloriously going towards her husband's house, fulfilling the desires of all devotees, and after seeing Lord *Sri Ranganatha*, comes to *Pancanadisvara*, who is the life of the fourteen *lokas*. In the *Mukhari* raga piece, "*Muripemu galigegada*", he further echoes: "Oh *Rama!* are you not happy that you have secured the abode of *Pancanada Ksetra* in *Cola Desam*, a place so beautiful, and worthy of being coveted by Lord *Siva* himself, situated on the banks of the holy river *Kaveri*

Since Tyagaraja spent a major portion of his time in the temple city of Tiruvaiyaru (*Pancanadi* - the bank of five rivers), we find a number of compositions dedicated to the presiding deity of the temple at Tiruvaiyaru, Lord *Pranatarthihara* (*Siva*), and the Divine consort Goddess *Dharmasamvarddhani*. The following *krtis* are all composed at this sacred place.

Krtis on Pancanadisara

<i>Illalo Pranatarthihara</i>	Athana
<i>Evarunnaru</i>	Malavasri
<i>Ehi Trijagadisa</i>	Saranga
<i>Muccata Brahmadula</i>	Madhyamavati
<i>Darsanamu Seya</i>	Narayanagaula
<i>Siva Siva yena</i>	Pantuvarali
<i>Devadi deva Sadasiva</i>	Sinduramakriya

Krtis on Dharmmasamvarddhani

<i>Karunajutavamma</i>	Todi
<i>Parasakti Manuparada</i>	Saveri
<i>Nivu brovavale</i>	Saveri
<i>Bale Balendu</i>	Ritigaula
<i>Amma Dharmmasamvarddhani</i>	Athana
<i>Vidhi Sakradulaku</i>	Yamunakalyani
<i>Sive Pahimam</i>	Kalyani
<i>Innallavale</i>	Desya Todi
<i>Nannu Kanna Talli</i>	Kesari
<i>Amba Ninnu Nammiti</i>	Arabhi

At the request of Saint Upanisad Brahman, a head of the *Matham*, and a close friend of his father, Tyagaraja visited the ancient city of Kancipuram, renowned for its numerous Siva and Visnu temples. Two *krtis* on Lord *Varadaraja*, in the rare ragams *Ragapancamam* and *Svarabhusani*, and one in *Madhyamavati* on Goddess *Kamaksi* are available to us.

Krtis on Varadarajasvami

<i>Varada Navanitasa</i>	Ragapancamam
<i>Varadaraja Ninnukori</i>	Svarabhusani

Krti on Kanci Kamaksi

<i>Vinayakuni valenu</i>	Madhyamavati
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Vina Kuppayyar was a prominent disciple of Tyagaraja, and at his request, Tyagaraja visited the town of Tiruvottiyur (also known as Asipuram). Here he composed five beautiful *krtis* on Goddess *Tripurasundari*, known as *Tiruvottiyur Pancaratnams*. The last one in this series, in the *Ragam Suddhasaveri*, is a very popular song, often rendered in concerts.

Tiruvottiyur Pancaratnam

<i>Kanna Talli</i>	Saveri
<i>Sundari Ninnu</i>	Arabhi
<i>Sundari Nannindarilo</i>	Begada
<i>Sundari Ni Divya</i>	Kalyani
<i>Dharini Telusukonti</i>	Suddhasaveri

One Sundara Mudaliar of Kovur, a rich Landlord, and a sincere devotee of Tyagaraja, invited him to visit his home town and the shrine of Lord *Sundaresvara* of Kovur. Here, Tyagaraja composed five songs, which are at present known as *Kovur Pancaratnams*.

Kovur Pancaratnam

<i>I Vasudha</i>	Sahana
<i>Kori sevimpane</i>	Kharaharapriya
<i>Sambho Mahadeva</i>	Pantuvrali
<i>Nammi Vaccina</i>	Kalyani
<i>Sundaresvaruni</i>	Sankarabharanam

In the soul-stirring and weighty *Kambhoji* composition, O *Rangasayi*, Tyagaraja refers to the shrine at Srirangam as "*Bhuloka Vaikuntam* (the heaven on earth!). The five gems, known as *Srirangam Pancaratnam* is a masterpiece of five *krtis* on Lord *Ranganatha*.

Srirangam Pancaratnam

<i>Juta Murare</i>	Arabhi
<i>O Rangasayi</i>	Kambhoji
<i>Karuna Jutumayya</i>	Saranga
<i>Rajurvedala</i>	Todi
<i>Vinarada</i>	Devagandhari

Tyagaraja had several disciples from the town of Tiruttavatturai, also known as Lalgudi. At their request, he spend some time in the small town of Lalgudi, worshipping the presiding deities, Lord *Saptarsisvara* (also known as *Sri Tapastirtha Deva*, and Goddess *Pravrdha Srimati*. While at Lalgudi, he is believed to have stayed at house of the parents of the famous violinist Lalgudi G. Jayaraman. (The name "Srimati" is often a household name for female children in this village). The five songs he composed here are known as *Lalgudi Pancaratnams*. Recently, Lalgudi Jayaraman and his disciples have beautifully rendered all these five *krtis* in chorus, in a one hour cassette.

Lalgudi Pancaratnam

<i>Gati Nive</i>	Todi
<i>Lalite Sri</i>	Bhairavi
<i>Deva Sri</i>	Madhyamavati
<i>Mahita Pravrdha</i>	Kambhoji
<i>Isa Pahi Mam</i>	Kalyani

The story associated with the *Gaulipantu* *krti* "*Tera tiyagarada*" is well known. When Tyagaraja visited the famous hill temple at Tirupati, the entrance curtain was closed, and so he spontaneously sang this *krti*, and at once, it is believed that the curtain rose, and he had holy darsanam. The other song associated with Tirupati temple is "*Venkatesa ninu*" in Madhyamavati Ragam.

When Tyagaraja visited the coastal town of Nagapattanam, it is conjectured that some incident might have taken place there, that caused him sorrow. This mood is reflected in the composition "*Karmame Balavanta Maya*" in *Saveri*. At this place, he also sang the Todi *krti* "*Evaru Teliya*".

A sequence of three compositions are attributed to the temple at Sholingapuram. The first one is on *Yoga Lakshmi Narasimha*, while the second and third, in the rare Ragams *Vasantavarali* and *Purnalalita*, are on *Yoga Anjaneya*.

Krtis on Anjaneya

<i>Narasimha Nannu</i>	Bilahari
<i>Pahi Ramaduta</i>	Vasantavarali
<i>Kaluguna Padaniraja</i>	Purnalalita

In the town of Sirkazhi, Tyagaraja sang three songs on Lord *Subrahmanya*: "*Ni Vanti Daivamu*" in Todi, "*Innalavale*" in *Desya Todi*, and "*Vara Sikhivahana*" in the not so often heard *Ragam Supradipam*.

There is supposed to be a Tyagaraja *krti* dedicated to the Sri Parthasarathy temple of Tiruvallikeni (Triplicane, Madras), beginning with the *Pallavi* line "*Sari Vetalina*", but only the *Pallavi* and *Anupallavi* are currently available, and the Caranam is lost! There are a few other compositions, whose correct context and location cannot be determined, for want of exact geographical details.

No description of Tyagaraja compositions will ever be complete without mentioning his numerous krtis on the theme of *Sangita Prasamsa*, which praise the Glory of divine Music, the Nadabrahmam: He echoes the Vedic dictum that Lord Siva is *Nada tanu*, and praises Lord *Sankara* in the *Cittaranjani* song "*Nadatanum Anisam Cintayami*"! He describes *Siva* as the essence of *Samaveda*, who delights in the art of seven *Svaras* which are born of his five faces. In the *Sri raga* song, "*Namakusuma*", he asks us to place the supreme Lord on the bejewelled pedestal of *Nada* and *Svara*, and worship his feet. Mere knowledge of music without *Bhakti* (devotion) does not lead us to the right path, says Tyagaraja in the Dhanyasi krti "*Sangita Jnanamu*". In the *Andolika* krti "*Ragasudharasa Panamu*", Tyagaraja suggests in the Caranam that *Nada*, *Svara* and *Pranava* are of the very form of Lord *Sadasiva*. One can attain bliss of *Brahman* by contemplating on *Nada*, according to the *Kalyanavasanta* song "*Nadaloludai*". The list goes on. The following is a partial list of Tyagaraja krtis devoted to the Glorification of Music.

Krtis on Sangitam (Nadam)

<i>Anada Sagara</i>	Garudadhvani
<i>Moksamu Galada</i>	Saramati
<i>Nadaloludai</i>	Kalyd navasantam
<i>Nadasudharasam</i>	Arabhi <i>Nadasudharasa</i>
Begada	
<i>Svararaga Sudha</i>	Sankarabharanam
<i>Sripapriya</i>	Athana
<i>Sangitasastra</i>	Mukhari
<i>Sogasoga</i>	Sriranjani
<i>Sobillu</i>	Jaganmohini
<i>Sangita Jnanamu</i>	Dhanyasi
<i>Vidulaka</i>	Mayamalavagaula
<i>Vararaga</i>	Cenjukambhoji
<i>Nadatanum</i>	Cittaranjani
<i>Ragaratnamalika</i>	Ritigaula
<i>Namakusuma</i>	Sri
<i>Sangita Sastra</i>	Salakabhairavi
<i>Sitavara</i>	Devagandhari

In conclusion, we offer our humble homage to Saint Tyagaraja through the following majestic *Sloka*, composed by Walajapet Krishnaswamy (the eldest son of Walajapet Venkataramana Bhagavathar, the foremost disciple of Saint Tyagaraja) , which beautifully crystalizes the sacredness and depth of this divine composer.

Saint *Vyasa* accomplished IT (the supreme bliss) through Vedic discussions; Saint *Valmiki* through soft words of poetry; Saint *Suka* through renunciation; *Prahlada* through intense devotion; *Brahma* and *Narada* through music and literature. I salute Saint *Tyagaraja*, who achieved the supreme by merely drinking the immortal ambrosia of Lord's sacred Nama.

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THYAGARAJA ARADHANA

Music Event of 1995- A Review

(Published in 1996)

Childrens program (reviewed by Rangarao S. Sudhakara)

The 1995 Thyagaraja Aradhana, as always, started off in time (or almost) and, as usual, we had a full crowd from the start. The programs started with Sampradaya Kirtanas, Pancharatna Kirtanas and Divyanama Kirtanas, in that order, all by separate groups. This is one of the most interesting parts of the day's program and it was made more enjoyable for those assembled when they could follow through the printed excerpts of Pancharatna Kirtanas from Srutiranjani.

It was shortly after that, that we had the children and youth program in which a total of 27 youth artists participated rendering individual songs. They gave varied levels of performance but surprisingly the level of awareness and the interest shown was very high. The performance level of some of the artists were so good, they could have taken part in the afternoon adults section of the program. Most of the children identified even the Ragam and Talam for the song being rendered. There were almost no repetitions among the songs chosen. Some of the small children were really adorable and all of them had no shyness at all to come up on the stage and face the assemblage. In fact some of them were waiting for the audience to fill up, before they could start. This is all due to the cumulative effort put in by the youth artists, their Gurus and parents. Our sincere appreciation for their efforts and we hope they continue to show the same interest for coming years' Aradhana also.

Mini Concert by Santosh Adipudi (reviewed by Poornima Narayan)

Camatic music lovers here in the Delaware valley can be justly proud that they have a promising, young camatic musician, Santosh Adipudi, living right amidst them. Santosh gave a delightful mini music concert on the occasion of Thyagaraja Aradhana under the auspices of SRUTI. He was accompanied by Sashidhar on violin and Prakash Rao on mridangam.

Santosh started the concert with 'Guruleka Etuvanti' in raga Gowrimanohari. Gowrimanohari lends itself to bhava laden rendition of kriti. Santosh sang the kriti accordingly, complete with crisp swaraprasthara. He chose 'Sri Raghuvara' in Kambodhi as the second item. He presented the alapana in low, middle and high octaves methodically showing the structure and nuances of Kambodhi. He rendered the kriti in the traditional style following it up with a rhythmic swaraprasthara.

Next, Santosh sang, without alapana, 'Teliyaleru Rama' in raga Dhenuka. This raga also included a short and sweet swaraprasthara. After this, he took up raga Kharaharapriya for a detailed alapana. This was followed by the well known composition 'Prakkala Nilabadi'. The alapana showed his technical understanding of the raga. He rendered the kriti in a traditional style with intricate gamakas. Santosh showed his imaginative skills in the niraval 'Manasuna dalachi mai marachi' (charana) and the rhythmic swaraprasthara that followed. Santosh endeared himself to the audience through the rendition of this raga and kriti.

Santosh continued his concert with 'Jnana Mosagarada' in Poorvikalyani. His rendering of the kriti and swaraprashthara which followed, was impressive. He concluded the concert with a brisk 'Ninnadanela' in raga Kannada.

Santosh, belying his 13 years, showed maturity in presenting an even paced concert in a traditional style. I am sure we will have many occasions to hear him in the years to come. It was a great pleasure to hear Shashidhar's melodious violin. Kharaharapriya, Kambodhi arid Poorvikalyani sounded extra sweet on his violin. Prakash Rao gave excellent support on mridangam. It is commendable that professional accompanists like Shashidhar and Prakash Rao supported Santosh in his efforts.

Adult Program (reviewed by Prabhakar Chitrapu)

Suppose you love someone very dearly ... and admire and respect and adore for his/her looks or intellect or talent or strength Suppose also that, inspite of your deep desire, you do not have the nearness of that someone for whatever reason ... Now you think of the others that are near him/her .. closeby, always ... How would you wonder about how they enjoy the company that you so dearly long for? How would you wonder about what they are thinking and feeling? How would you wonder ... The You is Thyagaraja; the Someone is Sri Rama; the Others are Sita and Lakshmana, the Wonderings are the song Prakkala Nilabadi in Kharaharapriya. They were brought back to life by Poornima Narayan and Hema Ramamoorthy ... the very first rendering in the adults part of the Thyagaraja Aradhana.

The next song was the famous Nagumomu Ganaleni in Abheri, sung by Prabhavathi Nagaprasad. The picturization in this song is quite fascinating: Thyagaraja is wondering why Sri Rama has not heard his pleas and visited him yet. Could it be that although Sri Rama was willing to make the trip, Garuda - His long distance carrier - is reluctant, complaining that the Earth is too far?!! Meena Seth and her mother Rajyalakshmi sang a delightful Ganamurthe. Venu Ganamurthe in the raga Ganamurthi. The reference in this song is Sri Krishna, who appears not-infrequently in Thyagaraja's compositions. This song and this raga are so tranquilizing and the singers did justice to it.

The next kriti was one of the Lalgudi Pancharathnas, in raga Kalyani. Isa Pahimaam, Jagadeesa Pahimaam was rendered in a highly professional manner by Sumathi Sarangan, Prabha Subramaniam, Susheela Varadarajan, Dinakar Subramaniam, Amba Balakrishnan (veena) and Sashidhar (violin). The object of this song is the resident deity of the temple in Lalgudi, Lord Shiva. This song is one of the few Sanskrit compositions of Thyagaraja (unlike Dikshitar, who almost exclusively composed in Sanskrit). Sashidhar then exhibited his versatility with a solo vocal performance with the song Shyama Sundaraanga in raga Dhanyasi.

Nanupalimpa is another famous kriti of Thyagaraja in raga Mohana, which P. Swaminathan rendered next. There are two stories associated with this kriti: one says that Thyagaraja composed it when he re-discovered his stolen idols of Sri Rama. The other says that he composed it on the occasion of his daughter's wedding, when someone presented a painting of Sri Rama. Nandini Mouli next sang Ninne nera namminaanuraa in raga Panthuvrali. This raga and especially this song are so moving and absorbing that one can easily lose oneself in listening to it. Indeed, Nandini gave us an opportunity to do just that!

This was followed by a veena recital of the kriti Koluvaivunnade in raga Bhairavi by Amba Balakrishnan. Ponnal Nambi, Padmini Venkatraman and Vatsala Ramaprasad rendered a crisp and sweet Manasaa Etulorthune in raga Malayamarutham. In this song, Thyagaraja rather cutely advises the listeners to take his little clues to achieve liberation

and not waste time in the company of people filled with Rajas and Tamas Gunas. As you may be aware, Hindu philosophy classifies human characteristics into three Gunas, Sathva (detached, gentle), Rajas (action oriented, ambitious), Tamas (lazy, inattentive) tendencies. (I wonder what 'you' would think is a dominant guna these days among our people in this country?!!)

Gayatri Sudhakar and Saroja Kurpad then sang a very interesting song Koti Nadulu in raga Thodi. The object of this song is the Kaveri River, which flowed near Thyagaraja's house. It was also the river into which his Sri Rama idols were apparently thrown by his brother; it was also the river on whose banks Thyagaraja was cremated. Sabitha Sena and Bharathi Sena next presented two songs, Dayaraani in Mohana (jointly rendered) and Nike Theliyakapotha in Ananda Bhairavi (alone by Bharathi). Dayaraani is an extremely moving composition, in which Thyagaraja describes the tearful joy he experiences in imagining Sri Rama in his mind. The kriti in Ananda Bhairavi is one of the only 4 compositions of Thyagaraja in that raga. There is a very interesting story behind this small number. Apparently, Thyagaraja was once so impressed by the Ananda Bhairavi rendering of a contemporary Bhagavathar, that he promised him any wish he wanted. This, rather shrewd, Bhagavathar asked Thyagaraja to stop composing in Ananda Bhairavi from that day on! Why would someone ask such a wish? To piggy back on the immortality of Thyagaraja. Surely, people in the coming centuries would wonder at the small number of kritis in Ananda Bhairavi and the Bhagavathar would be remembered !!!

The next song was delivered in a gentle, deep and effective manner by Srinivasa Reddy. The song was Intha Soukhyamani Ne Cheppajaala in raga Kapi. One beauty of this song is in the lyrics, where Thyagaraja expresses his inability in describing the joy of meditating upon Sri Rama's name. Then he goes on to say that one who knows this joy is Lord Shiva. Indeed, he knows it by eating the sugar-candy of Sri Rama's name, dipped in the nectar of sangeetham! How much sweeter can sweet get?!!

Ranjani and Priya Swamy rendered on violins the Panthuvarali kriti Shiva Shiva Ana raada. The reference to Shiva indicates the strong mixing of Shiva and Vishnu (especially Rama) in Thyagaraja's compositions. Next Viji Swaminathan sang another famous composition Thyagaraja, Paramathmudu in raga Vagadhiswari. Thyagaraja had a premonition of his death and this was one of the last two compositions, in which he declares the essential unity of the opposites.

The rest of the program contained two renderings of the popular Utsava (Bhajana) sampradaya kirtana in raga Ananda Bhairavi, namely Kshirasaagaravihara. The song was rendered separately by Prabhakar Chitrapu and the group Meenakshi Swaminathan, Anandi Pitchi, Kavitha Sarangan. The latter group also sang Sitakalyana vaibhogame in raga Navroj. Priya Sudarshan provided a sweet rendering of Sata Raga Rathna Malikache in raga Reethi Gowla. Hema Bhargava next sang Mookshamu galada in raga Saramathi and Shrivasa played Telisi Rama in raga Pooma Ravi Chandrika. Finally, the program concluded with a song by Lakshmi Ashwathanarayana - Sitakalyanavaibhogame in raga Navroj. Quite a fitting conclusion.

Veena Concert by Dr. Bhavani P. Rao (reviewed by Bharati Sena)

Smt. Bhavani Rao's veena concert was like icing on the cake. Thyagaraja Aradhana 1995 was concluded with the melodious veena concert on March 4th at the Berlin temple. The

concert enhanced the day's program. Smt. Bhavani was accompanied by the already well acclaimed musician Sri Prakash Rao on mridangam.

Bhavani's creative touch was obvious as she opened her concert with Nata kurunji varnam. Giriraja suta tanaya in raga Bangala was a perfect invocation. She played it very effortlessly. Nada Tanumanisam in raga Chitta Ranjani was heart warming. The center piece of the concert was Eti Janmamidi Ha! in raga Varali. She elaborated with aalaap, niraval and kalpana swarams. However, my favorite piece of the concert was Brovabharamaa in raga Bahaduri. In this piece, she showed her preciseness which reflects a refined technique and, I think, she touched the hearts of the listeners.

Among other Kirthanas she played, Manavyala kinchara would not have been my choice for her unique ability. I would have preferred her to play Paramathmudu or Nadaloludai. At times, I felt that she was a bit too fast for the mridangam. Mutual respect and admiration between the performing artists is the key to the success of any performance.

Finally, she concluded the concert with my favorite kriti Yentha Muddo in raga Bindumalini and mangalam, which held the attention of an attentive and delighted audience, who were lucky enough to hear it that day. Dr. Bhavani Rao is no doubt one of the finest musicians in our Tristate area.

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Nanu Palimpa kriti Anecdote

“Nanu palimpa nadachi vachchithivo” is a beautiful kriti of Thyagaraja, which is set in the generally happy Raga of Mohana (although it is probably slower in tempo than most, if not all, of his other songs in Mohana are). In a sense, his lyrics seem to literally paint a picture of Sri Rama, just as in the physical painting that forms the basis of an anecdote associated with this kriti. It was an oil painting of Sri Rama, that was done by an artist by name, Pallavi Ellayya. Thyagaraja was celebrating his daughter's wedding and one of his students, the well known Walajpet Venkataramana Bhagavathar, was presenting this painting for the wedding. Thyagaraja saw his student walking towards the house, holding the painting in his hands. On such a wonderful sight, Thyagaraja's emotions burst open and he sang this lovely song! It is very interesting to study the meaning of the charanam, in which Thyagaraja describes how Sri Rama, holding the hand of Sita, the dharani suta, is glowing with the various colors of the painting: blueness of Rama's skin like that of the precious stone – commonly known as Indra Nilam or in a poet's language Surapathi Nilam!; the white shine of pearl necklaces on Rama's chest; and the radiance of Kodanda, the bow of Rama. (Do listen to it again!)

Understanding Tyagaraja's Niche in Society

Dr. William Jackson

(Published in 1998)

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

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

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

of the heritage he valued most in a chaotic world.

Various ideas of justice stand behind the organizational logic of enduring societies. The rationale for the system which perpetuated the inequality of different castes in India is often found reflected in popular religion. For example, a recent study shows how ancestral spirit veneration served to reproduce at the level of religious imagination the social hierarchy in Bengal. Such practices which ritually enact or narratively elaborate on hereditary status and its continuation in the invisible world of spirits, reveal how unequal hierarchical relations are reproduced generation after generation over long periods of time.

In Tanjavur it is noteworthy that in the annual procession, a major part of the Seven Shrines festival, a parayar (low caste man) with a royal parasol leads the procession line, reminding all of the myth depicting the Vedic god Indra becoming a parayar. This practice affirms and helps reproduce the hierarchical system of inequality by giving the representative parayar great honor one day of the year. It is a recognition of the large part played by the low castes of society in the delta economy. The parayar remains a parayar, though his connection with the high god Indra is ritually celebrated. In outward display even the lowly receive their due; "Every dog has his day" or even the poor enjoy days of feasting.

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

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

It is sometimes said that the old brahman ideology formed the "glue" for the social system. But a living society is more like an organism than like a collage or patched pottery. The ideology in original intention was therefore more like unifying lifeblood and coordinating nervous system, made up of fibres of ritual, symbol and rationale derived from the religious order. In this view, because of the law of karma, each member of society was suited to birth at his or her level of dharma. The priest, the ruler, the merchant and the servant played complementary roles in this ideal scheme, with nature's

law of just deserts ordering the body politic. A large part of the caste system was profession-based, like the guild system in Medieval Europe: families of crafts people, members of trades. The different limbs of society were all integral parts of the same Purusa.

The Western world held and developed a remarkably similar rationale for aristocratic and feudalistic social organization. In Plato's Republic the mix up of work, one member of society performing another's function, is injustice, while each person performing in the community the function which best suits his or her nature, is deemed justice.

Later, Gnostic concepts of the human community envision a fall from a higher realm, by which an originally undivided "Human Form Divine" becomes divided into conflicting functions, each an incomplete part of humanity, and each with a dominant tendency or talent -- "intellect", "desire", "craftsmanship", etc. This organic model of society is also found in Roman thought, and in medieval conceptualizations, such as those found in John of Salisbury's Polycratis. Society is like a body; "Let the eye be an eye, the hand be a hand." Though this view often put the peasants at a disadvantage, it was a means which evolved to conceptualize the whole.

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

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

From the distance of two centuries we imaginatively stand, as it were, at the gopuram or gateway to that historical situation and suggest what seems to have been involved in Tyagaraja's response.

Tyagaraja refused to acknowledge the British in songs, but he was resolutely preservative of important indigenous musical elements which had been accumulating in Tanjavur and elsewhere in South India for centuries. His way was an insistence that foreign rule did not mean loyalty (bhakti) to Lord Rama's rule was now a thing of the past. His songs reaffirm the way of other earlier saint singers whom he echoes. They criticize hypocrisy, and promote spiritual values which bhakti inspires.

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

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

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

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

Carnatic Music Word Puzzle

Anjani Chitrapu and Vandana Rao
(Published in 1998)

How many of the carnatic music-related words listed in the box below can you find in the following puzzle! An example is highlighted.

s	a	h	f	b	p	k	g	o	g	v	q	t	b	n	j	m	r	v
a	d	f	k	c	y	s	g	j	b	l	o	y	t	l	o	a	a	a
n	n	k	s	h	p	h	a	f	b	c	m	a	k	m	j	d	m	r
k	l	a	m	u	e	e	t	d	v	j	l	g	a	p	o	h	u	a
a	q	f	p	z	l	e	r	k	s	n	i	a	s	o	r	y	n	l
r	w	m	u	n	i	r	a	f	t	p	k	r	w	p	a	a	i	e
a	e	r	a	a	g	a	m	i	f	o	r	a	e	j	m	m	m	e
b	a	s	h	f	u	s	a	m	s	l	v	j	n	h	a	a	a	l
a	n	a	n	d	h	a	b	h	a	i	r	a	v	i	l	v	r	a
r	c	g	l	g	h	g	r	t	y	y	e	l	k	n	o	a	a	g
a	o	a	s	h	x	a	h	i	a	u	e	k	i	d	l	t	v	a
n	b	r	v	b	a	r	l	e	j	i	t	k	h	o	i	i	a	n
a	x	a	j	h	l	a	u	f	a	p	h	i	t	l	n	p	k	a
m	o	m	i	t	y	p	l	m	v	n	i	j	a	a	a	o	a	l
j	p	o	s	d	g	g	k	r	a	b	g	m	k	m	v	i	v	o
y	e	d	q	w	k	b	j	l	r	v	o	k	a	q	d	n	e	l
p	a	r	i	p	a	l	a	y	a	f	w	p	m	u	a	t	h	a
i	l	a	p	a	n	q	w	a	s	d	l	k	a	l	s	a	e	p
j	k	i	p	r	d	g	i	n	b	n	a	o	y	j	m	b	l	l
s	a	d	c	v	g	h	j	k	t	p	z	m	d	x	u	q	u	i
a	g	h	l	l	m	o	h	a	n	a	r	a	m	a	h	m	o	f
i	k	t	r	s	j	l	k	e	d	a	r	g	o	u	l	a	i	z

varaleelaganalola, sankarabaranam, reethigowla, tyagaraja, napali, ramunimaravakave, mohanarama, raagam, samajavara, kedaragoulai, madhyamavati, hindolam, paripalaya, ksheerasagara, anandabhairavi, jojorama.

Anjani Chitrapu and Vandana Rao are both 8 year old, third graders. They learn Camatic and Western classical music, both vocal and instrumental.

An Unforgettable Experience...

Hema Ramamurthy

(Published in 2000)

Last year, I had the opportunity to attend two well-known music events in India. They were the Sawai Gandharva Festival in Pune and the Thyagaraja Aradhana at Thiruvaiyaru. I had heard of these events ever since my childhood and hoped to attend them someday. I am glad I got a chance to take these trips.

With the video tapings of these programs and the present day mass communication in place people get to view these programs in the comfort of their living rooms. But I wanted to see and experience something more: the experience of being there in person, feel the music in the air, and be with thousands of people who gather from near and far away places just for the love of music. I think one has to be in these places to feel the energy and spirit floating in the atmosphere.

The Sawai Gandharva festival I attended was conducted on Dec 9th, 10th, and 11th, of '98. As is the custom, the programs were conducted during the night. It's an all night program, starting at 8:00 pm and lasting until 6:00 am the next day. Each artist was given a time slot of 1½ to 2 hours. The program included Shenai, Sitar, and vocal performances by some very well-known and some not-so-well-known artists. The program concluded with the vocal performance by the famous artist, Feroz Dastur of Kirana Gharana, which topped the festival and brought it to a grand finale. (Pt. Bhimsen Joshi traditionally did the honor, but because of his illness, he was unable to participate.) Ganapathi Bhatt from Karnataka captured the hearts of the audience with his music and was among those who made it worthwhile to be awake in the wee hours of the morning. The program ended on the morning of Dec 11th, with a playing of a recording of Sawai Gandharva, and everyone remembering and paying homage to this great giant in the music field.

The venue for the Sawai Gandharva festival had changed. For years, the festival was held outdoors. The previous year the festival had to be postponed due to severe rain. The festival in '98 was held indoors in the Nehru stadium, the capacity of which I think was about 3000. (I'm not sure about the exact number) This, I heard, is a very small number compared to the 10000-15000 people that used to gather for the previous festivals that took place outdoors. There were people of all ages: young college students, older people and many young couples (some with small children falling asleep on their laps). Though chairs were available, most people preferred to make themselves comfortable-sitting on the floor, and bringing blankets to ward off the cold. There were a few snack bars outside that people frequented to during the course of the night. There were also many vendors selling music tapes, CDs, and books.

The stage was very well decorated, with a nice backdrop made up of fresh flowers. It was very artistically done each day. On either side of the stage there were two huge TV screens on which the program was projected allowing a clear view of the performers to the audience. There were also TV cameras and major audio companies busy with recordings.

Getting to the Nehru stadium posed no problems. The autorickshaw and taxi drivers were familiar with the festival and even engaged in conversation about the artists who were

going to be performing that evening. However, Pune, being a large town with a diverse population, had quite a few people who were not involved or even interested in music. I felt they lived a life quite untouched by the magnanimity of the event that was taking place in their own hometown.

This was in striking contrast to what I saw in the small village of Thiruvaiyaru, on the banks of the river Kaveri, in the Tanjore District. A quaint village, a village that could easily be overlooked at other times, comes under limelight during the Thyagaraja Aradhana festival. It is a tradition that has continued ever since it was started by some of Thyagaraja's disciples in 1847 to pay respects to him. We could see the involvement of everyone in the community as soon as we entered the village. With banners flying, houses decorated with fresh flowers, elaborate *rangolis* in the front yard, it felt like the *whole* village was getting ready for a festival. In front of some thatched huts, we saw some spectacular *rangolis*, with different poses of Thyagaraja. We felt compelled to take photographs of some of them (with the owners' permission of course). The Panchanadeeshwara temple stands as an example of the huge temples of south India, with its enormous *avarnams*. The size of the temple stands out in my memory. For a village as small as Thiruvaiyaru, the enormous temple stood as a focal point, reflecting the important role the temple played in people's lives. The Panchanadeeshwara temple, I heard, gets its name from the fact that the five rivers (the Kaveri and its tributaries) flow apart from each other in the short distance between Tanjore and Thiruvaiyaru.

The podium and the pandal built for the Aradhana were sights by themselves. With the thousands of people gathered together to pay respects and homage to the great saint & composer and one of the Trimurthys of Carnatic music, there was a sense of reverence and humility in the air. The famous and well-known artists and even some of the unapproachable ones were present.

Hema Ramamurthy is a life member of Sruti and a member of the Library Committee.

First and Last Compositions of Thyagaraja

- Earliest Compositions as a Young Boy:*
Namo Namu Raghavaya in Raga Desi Thodi
Thava Dasoham in Raga Punnagavarali
- Compositions during Thyagaraja's last 10 days:*
Giripai in Raga Sahana
Paritapamu in Raga Manohari
Paramathmudu in Raga Vagadheeswari

Ghana Raga Pancharatna Kriti-s

By Library Committee

(Published in 2001)

The Thyagaraja Aradhana, conducted annually in Tiruvaiyaru, attracts thousands of people from different regions of India and abroad. Started in 1925 by Bangalore Nagarathnamma (a brilliant singer of Thyagaraja Sisyaparampara), who built the shrine for Saint Thyagaraja at his samadhi, the *Aradhana* has been a time-honored tradition in which musicians of high repute participate. An important component of the proceedings is the re-enactment of *unchavritti*, the daily rounds that Thyagaraja as a *Bhagavatha* made, to gather alms. Leading vidwans take part in this event, starting from the *Tirumanjana Veedhi* residence of Tyagaraja and ending at the site of his samadhi. At the samadhi, musicians pay tribute to the memory of the great vaggeyakara through choral-singing of the Pancharathna Kritis. *Chetulara*, a composition in Bhairavi, is customarily rendered by flutists preceding the chorus. Due eminence is given to the great musicians present on the occasion. For example, in the fifties, the flute playing of *chetulara* was always led by Palladam Sanjeeva Rao while each of the Pancharathna kritis was led by a highly respected musician such as Musiri Subramania Iyer, Maharajapuram Vishwanatha Iyer and Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar.

The Aradhana is conducted in many places all around the world and the group singing of the Pancharatna kritis is a focal item of the event. The aradhana program format seems to have evolved over a period of time, while the singing of the Pancharatna kritis preceded by *chetulara* in flute, seems to have come into vogue in 1940, when the *Thyagabrahma Mahotsava Sabha* was formed, with Musiri Subramania Iyer as the first secretary of the Sabha.

It is not known when and by whom these five kritis of Thyagaraja came to be named as the *Pancharatna kritis*. According to scholar T.S. Parthasarathy, in the 1908 volume of Tyagaraja's kriti-s, Narasimha Bhagavatar refers to them as the compositions known together as the Pancharatna. So the grouping and christening of the five kriti-s must have occurred even earlier. A textual reference to the kritis as Pancharatna can be found in a 1933 book containing seven Thyagaraja kritis edited by S.A. Ramaswamy Iyer.

There are also several explanations as to how and why these kritis were selected and grouped. Select kritis of a composer are usually grouped according to some common or linking factors such as theme, deity or kshetra. Since none of these criteria can be applied to the set of five Pancharathna kritis, it is suggested that the unique name might have been given because of their distinctive merits and the creative excellence binding them.

Some distinctive characteristics merit attention:

1. The number of charana-s in most Tyagaraja kriti-s is less than five, but there are eight to 10 charana-s in the Pancharatna-s.
2. The *swara-sahitya* type of structure of the charana-s adds to their evocative quality when sung. Furthermore, the charana-s have different dhatu-s (varnamettu).

It is said that, while the *pathantara* that is followed is of the Umayalpuram school (as taught by Swaminatha Iyer, according to Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer), there is not

much difference between the versions of the three main sishya parampara-s. While all are set to Adi tala, the speed in which they are to be rendered is 1-kalai chaukam, except in the case of the Varali piece which is set in 2-kalai. Incidentally, the latter, as also the fact that this kriti is not usually taught by many because of an extramusical consideration, may be the reason why many falter when singing it as part of a chorus.

As regards theme and import, it may be mentioned that, while most of the known kriti-s of Tyagaraja are contextual and in the nature of responses to specific situations, pleas, etc., the subjects of these five kriti-s are rather more general even while each of them conveys different moods.

Another point that needs to be explained is the reason why the prefix 'ghana raga' is attached to the Pancharatna-s. The characteristics commonly associated with the ghana raga-s are majesty and fulsomeness, with the sound emanating from the navel (nabhi) and commencing with 'hoomkara'. These raga-s provide considerable scope for sangati-s both in *arohana* and *avarohana* passages. For fulsome singing, they require rigorous 'akara' sadhakam. 'Ghanam' in musical parlance is interpreted to denote a weighty, substantial style; a branch of *manodharma sangeeta* or creative music wherein a raga is expounded in the style of *tanam* but the speed of singing is very fast (Ref. *Dictionary of South Indian Music and Musicians* by Prof. P. Sambamoorthy, Vol II). However, the grouping of the kritis does not seem to be only because they are all in Ghana ragas. Except for Gaula in which Thyagaraja composed only one kriti, there are more than one in the other four ragas.

Though the five raga-s traditionally referred to as ghana raga-s are the same in which Tyagaraja composed his Pancharatna-s, these are not the only raga-s termed as 'ghana'. Another set of raga-s so described consists of Kedaram, Narayanagaula, Reetigaula, Saranganata and Bauli. Punnagavarali also has been cited as a ghana raga.

Thus, the grouping of the kritis as the Ghana Raga Pancharathna seems to be the result of a consensus of opinions that these compositions in the 5 ragas Nattai, Gaulai, Arabhi, Sri, and Varali, are the most scholarly contribution of Thyagaraja to South Indian Music. The composer has condensed in these five immortal gems, all his musical genius, his boundless devotion to God and the profound wisdom of the Vedanta teaching.

Compiled by Library Committee. Excerpts have been taken from an article in the Sruti (India) magazine: Thyagaraja's Ghanaraga Panchartna by Manna Srinivasan.

The Musical Plays of Thyagaraja

By Library Committee

(Published in 2001)

Thyagaraja composed two musical plays, bringing out the greatness of devotion to God. The *Prahlada Bhakthi Vijaya* and the *Nauka Charitra* are modeled on the *natakas* of the Bhagavatha tradition.

Nauka Charitra, a one act play, is more dramatic and is considered to be the more noteworthy as an artistic achievement. The play is full of delightful music and beautiful poetry written in simple language. With the *Humbling of the Gopi's Pride* as the theme, the opera stresses the importance of absolute surrender to God. The story is told in the context of a boat excursion on the river Jumna- the party consisting of Krishna and Gopis. The Gopis are exhilarated with Krishna's love and become intoxicated with pride. Lord Krishna, in order to render them humble and purify them, conjures up a gale which tosses the boat in the turbulent waters. The women are filled with panic. The craft suddenly springs leak and Krishna grimly asks them to remove their garments, symbolic of all material trappings, and plug the holes with them. When the desperate Gopis surrender their pure spirit to the Lord in meek prayer that He was the sole saviour, the Lord calls off the storm and blesses his devotees.

Nauka Charitra consists of 21 songs, 24 *Kanda padyas*, 5 *Sisa Padyas*, 3 *Utpalamalas*, 5 *Champakamalas*, 7 *Sardulas*, 2 *Dvipadas*, 1 *Utsaha padya* and many interesting prose passages serving as connecting links in the story. The play starts with a composition in Surati and ends with a mangalam in the same raga. Of the 21 songs in the play, 7 are in the kriti style and the rest are simpler melodies. Excepting for the Ghana raga Varali, the other ragas used in the play are rakthi ragas. In all, 13 ragas are used in the *Nauka Charitra*. The ragas and the number of songs (in paratheses) in each raga are Surati(2), Pantuvarali(1), Yadukulakambhoji(1), Saurashtra(4), Saranga(1), Bhairavi(1), Punthagavarali(4), Saveri(1), Karnataka Kapi(1), Devagandhari(1), Ghanta(2), Varali(1) and Mohana (1). Excepting for the *phala stuti* (benediction *sloka*) in the end, the entire opera is in Telugu.

In *Prahlada Bhakthi Vijaya* which is a play of five acts, Thyagaraja brings out the triumph of Prahlada's devotion to Hari over the many trials to which he was subjected to by his demon father Hiranyakashipu. The play is composed of both heavy and light musical pieces, some of which have become popular in concerts. There are 45 kritis in 28 ragas and 135 verses. A well-known composition belonging to this set of kritis is *Sri ganapathini* in Saurashtram, which is sung as a prelude to the rendering of Pancharathna kritis. Again, Thyagaraja has employed many rakthi ragas: Huseni, Sahana, Punthagavarali, Ghanta, Nilambari, Gaulipantu, Asaveri, Ahiri and Paras.

Compiled by Library Committee: Sources: The Spiritual Heritage of Thyagaraja by C. Ramanujachari; A Dictionary of South Indian Music and Musicians, Vol 3 by Prof P. Sambamurthy

Inspiration for a Song

T. Sarada

(Published in 2004)

Here is one of the many interesting events in the life of Sri Tyagaraja. Sri Gopala Krishna Bharati, (1811-1881), (Ref.1), who lived during the time of the Trinities was famous for his simple songs and music dramas written in Tamil. His “Nandanar Charitram” published in 1861 became a popular piece for stage presentations and he was known by name to Sri Tyagaraja. Gopala Krishna Bharati once came to visit the much older Sri Tyagaraja (1767-1847)(2), and get his blessings. When he introducing himself as a visitor from Mayuram, Sri Thyagaraja asked him if he knew the famed Gopala Krishna Bharati. Thrilled by the recognition, Bharati said that it was his own humble self. During this visit Bharati had the occasion to hear Sri Thyagaraja’s Abhogi elaborated by his disciples followed by the song, “Manasu Nilpaka Sakti”. The beauty of the composition took Bharati’s breath away. Just then Sri Tyagaraja asked Bharati if he had composed any song in Abhogi. Bharati did not answer the question since he had not done that so far. That same night Bharati composed the song, “Sabhapatikku” and sang it for Sri Tyagaraja, the next day. There is an account which says that the Anupallavi of this song which starts with the words, “Kripanidhi ivaraippola”, was a reference not only to Lord Siva of Chidambaram but a homage paid to Sri Thyagaraja for his graciousness. The actual words mean, “a benevolent soul like this person”.

When Sri Thyagaraja learnt that the song was composed only the previous night, his respect for the young composer increased greatly and he expressed his appreciation profusely. Bharati was touched by the sincere appreciation of the great composer. This event is considered to have been the turning point in Bharati’s life, since he became a prolific and very popular composer from that time on.

*These interesting obvious and implied meanings were brought to my attention by Mani Subramanyan, who said that it was often mentioned by Sri U. V. Swaminatha Iyer the great literary figure in Tamil Literature who lived in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

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Thyagaraja's Compositions in Bharatanatyam

Kala Menon

(Published in 2004)

Balasaraswati is once believed to have said, "Bharatanatyam, in its highest moment, is the embodiment of music in its visual form". Some of the well-known music composers for Bharatanatyam include Jayadeva, Narayana Thirtha, Kshetrajna, the Tanjore Quartette - Ponnayya, Chinayya, Sivanandam and Vadivelu, Veena Dhanammal, Swati Tirunal, Rukmini Arundale, Arunachala Kavi Rayar, and Gopalakrishna Bharati to name but a few.

Thyagaraja (1767-1847), the great saint, poet, and composer lived in Tanjavur District. Most of his compositions known as kirtanas and kritis were inspired by devotion to Lord Rama, and have very appealing short Telugu lyrics that combine intense Bhakti with the art of music. Krishna Raja Wodeyar, the royal scholar patron of the arts in Mysore, was a contemporary of Thyagaraja and also of the Tanjore Quartet (who gave a marga format to the Bharatanatyam solo recital). Under the Wodeyar dynasty, there was a great resurgence and patronage of the arts. Tanjavur was also considered by many as the most important music and dance center of India for many years. So, although it appears that there was opportunity for Thyagaraja's compositions to be adapted to Bharatanatyam during his lifetime, there is historical evidence to show that Thyagaraja actually criticized the teaching of Bhakti music to devadasis, and some historians believe that one reason he refused to sing for the king in Tanjavur was because he wished to dissociate his music from that of the devadasis. During this period, Bharatanatyam was mainly performed in the temples by the Devadasis and in the royal courts by Rajadasis.

It was not until the 20th century and largely due to the arrival of Rukmini Devi Arundale and like-minded visionaries into the cultural scene in India, that Bharatanatyam underwent a much needed resurrection. Bharatanatyam was extricated from the temples and royal courts and developed into a refined art form for all. As a result of this movement, Thyagaraja's many compositions have found their way into Bharatanatyam. For the most part, Thyagaraja's Bhakti compositions were intended to be sung in the moods of love in separation. To sing in this mode is to emphasize the devotee's feminine aspects (prakriti) in relation to the masculine Lord (purusha). Thyagaraja's expression of the feminine in his compositions in the purusha-prakriti context was usually rather veiled. He exercised refinement in his portrayal of Sringara rasa. This aspect of Thyagaraja's compositions lends itself well to how Rukmini Devi envisioned the expression of Sringara bhava through Bharatanatyam. Today, a number of Thyagaraja's kritis have been adapted to Bharatanatyam choreography and a few examples will be discussed below:

Thyagaraja composed two musical plays – Prahalada Bhakti Vijayamu which tells the story of Prahalada's devotion (Sthira bhakti) in a very impressionable way and consists of 45 songs, dialogues and poetry, and the other is Nauka Charitram which consists of 21 songs and tells the story of a boat trip that the gopis take with Krishna. The predominant bhava here is Madhura bhakti. Both these musical plays have been adapted to Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi performances.

The Dhanajayans have produced a dance drama on the life of Thyagaraja himself called

Sri Thyagaraja Vaibhavam. A number of Thyagaraja's compositions were used in this group performance. The performance opened with Sreeganapathini in Sourashtram. Other compositions that were used were Tulasidalamula che in Mayamalavagowla, Nagumomu in Abheri, Venuganalolunikana in Kedaaragowla, Evarikkai in Devamanohari, Nidhichalasukhama in Kalyani, Melukovayya in Bauli, Nenenduvadakudura in Karnataka Behag raga, Evarimatta vinnava in Kamboji, Kanukontini sreeramudu nedu in Bilahari, Nannuvidachi in Ritigowla, and Sita kalyana vaibhogame in Kurniji. The production ended, as very many Bharatanatyam performances do, with the mangalam, Pavamanasuthudupattu in Saurashtra.

The acclaimed dancer, Urmila Sathyanarayana recently performed Thyagaraja's Endaro Mahanubhavulu in a Bharatanatyam recital in India. Also, Ananda Shankar Jayant, an exponent of Bharatanatyam from the Kalakshetra school and a Kuchipudi exponent from Hyderabad staged a monoballet, Thyagaraja Ramayanam at the music academy performance in Chennai recently. Ananda is the Honorary Director of Shankaranada Kalakshetra, a premier institution for music and dance in Secunderabad. The presentation was choreographed by Ananda herself using compositions of Thyagaraja to portray the story of Rama. The songs used included: Sogasuchooda tharama, Ooyala loogavaiya, Muni kanu saiga thelisi, Sita kalyana vaibhogame, Sandehamu theerpavaiya, Oka mata, Oka bhanamu, Enthai nine varninthumu sabari, Marukelara O rahgava, Apa rama Bhakti, and Sarasa sama dhaana. These are just a few examples that demonstrate the welcome infiltration by Thyagaraja's compositions into the classical dance forms of India and is in no way intended as an exhaustive information source on the subject. All we can say with certainty is that this list is ever growing.

In 1925, Bangalore Nagaratnammal, an accomplished musician and dancer who was from the devadasi and rajadasi community attached to the Mysore palace due to adverse family circumstances, was given the charge of constructing a memorial to the saint at his Samadhi in Thiruvaiyaru after experiencing a spiritually uplifting vision of Thyagaraja. As a result of her one pointed efforts and Bhakti towards Thyagaraja, a shrine with a marble image of Thyagaraja was constructed in Thiruvaiyaru as per His directions. The annual Thyagaraja aradhanai is celebrated in this shrine on Pushya Bahula Panchami day in January. Nagaratnammal died on May 19, 1952 and was buried by her friends at the feet of her Guru, Thyagaraja. Legend has it that a Garuda was seen circling above at the time of her burial and the assembled Bhaktas took this as a sign of the "will of the guru". When a few drops of rain fell it seemed to those assembled as if rose-water was being sprinkled in Nagaratnammal's honor.

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Dr. Kala Menon is a connoisseur of the arts and is a research scientist in oncology at the University of Pennsylvania.

My Favorite Song

T. S. Ranganayaki

(Published in 2005)

My dear friends, Thank you all for honoring me as one amongst you and asking me to write this article. I hope that you do not expect an erudite or scholarly contribution from me about the greatest of composers, musician and Bhakta or about his God, the creator of these universes. I do not know many songs to dabble with but I maybe able to write some of my ideas on some of the songs that have special appeal to me.

In my earlier days when my throat obeyed my will, I was able to learn music from some stalwarts, artists who knew music, songs and their nuances and more important how to sing them!

Anyhow here is one song that I have chosen to write about and why I like it. The great poet and Bhakta, Sri Thyagaraja asks his Rama why Rama is so very indifferent and silent towards him. This feeling is something which we all feel at times towards our chosen Deity, Lord Rama or the god with a million names, attributes, shapes and personalities. The song is, “Palukkavemi Na Daivama”, in the Ragam “Purnachandrika” and Talam, “Adi”. The song goes thus: “Oh Rama why don’t you talk to me, my own God? Ever so many people laugh at me and is it justified to be laughed at thus, my Rama? “I do everything just as you manipulate and even then you are neglecting me, why? What is the reason for doing so? “In my younger days my own father and mother taught me to be pious, love You and protected me from wickedness. Even then some others made me unhappy over many things. You are witnessing all my sufferings and still You keep quiet. How long are you going to be like that, my most loving and affectionate Lord, the greatest of all Devas?”

I like this song because my own feelings and thoughts tally with the saint’s in many respects. Only a personified Deity can explain or answer all our questions and doubts about the Cosmic mysteries. I will give a sample of the many things beyond our understanding. Our Universe has come into being and has evolved into billions of suns and probably planetary systems. Probably there are various life forms in these, although still not proved with our definition of science. The life forms in our own planet have evolved from the primordial DNA over eons to the present with all the awesome achievements of humans to a great extent. We can only marvel at the scope of its power and magnificence. However, when we see in Nature prey and predators, good and evil and the depravities to which the human beings can sink I wonder Why God has created such incongruities and cruelty. The question why keeps on coming back again and again and who can answer it except God? So I think, “Who am I to comprehend His/Her Greatness or purpose?” As Sri Thyagaraja says I would like to think of Him as the affectionate, loving and greatest of all personal Gods and hope He will answer our questions some day.

Ranganayaki is a 94 year old wife, teacher, mother and matriarch of an extended family. She is enjoying her retirement by fantasizing about Astronomy, Nature, and Molecular Biology. She spends much of her reading time with Harlequin Romances these days, that is when she is not reading Smithsonian or National Geographic!

Incidentally in her preteen and teen years she had the good fortune to be exposed on a daily basis to the music of the brilliant exponents of Carnatic Music, Tiger Varadachari and Veenai Dhanammal. She could sing to spell bound friends, family and small audiences. She also played the violin and set to tune many Slokas and songs of Sri Sadasiva Brahmendrum to the delight of listeners.

Editor's note: Smt. Ranganayaki celebrated her 100th birthday in September 2010.

My Favorite Thyagaraja Kriti

Ranjani Prabhakar

(Published in 2005)

The life and work of Thyagaraja is a miracle beyond all miracles. No musician has revolutionized the realm of Carnatic music quite like he has. His creativity meshed with his piety has provided more than 1600 kirthanas etched into the stone of history. Naturally, for someone to pick her favorite song from the myriad of Thyagaraja kritis is not the easiest task. Every kirthana has its own sentimental value, a unique stamp differentiating one song from an other. Although my knowledge of Thyagaraja is very elementary, I've found that some songs shine brighter than others. After much deliberation and thought, my most favorite Thyagaraja kriti is *Kamalaaptakula* in raaga Brindava Saranga.

Music has been in my blood line from the day I was born. My grandparents were avid music enthusiasts, and they have been generous enough to pass along their zeal. As a student of Carnatic music, I have learned to form opinions, criticisms, likes, and dislikes about the classical music I am exposed to. My erudition is far from reaching par, though I know what catches my ear. Saint Thyagaraja's *Kamalaaptakula* stands out like a shining star from the rest of his oeuvre. In this kriti, Thyagaraja clearly manifests his most loving devotion to Lord Rama, as he sings, "Ocean of mercy! Moon emerging out of the ocean of the dynasty of sun that causes lotus to blossom! Spouse of Sri Devi! Dutiful son of Kausalya! One with beautiful form! Friend of Siva who burnt Cupid! Having heard of your exploits on protecting myriads of devotees, I have come seeking your grace. Please show me mercy and assure me freedom from fear. O Lotus eyed!" Thyagaraja illustrates his praise and innermost faith in God by singing of His many glories and asking for His blessings. But how is this different from all of Thyagaraja's other works? This kriti is bathed in the simplest clothes, yet conveys such a vast and profound meaning. It has a soothing effect. The melody paints the emotion of the deep-felt longing that Saint Thyagaraja experiences with Lord Rama. He addresses Ram with the greatest degree of sincerity and fondness, and proceeds to humbly seek His eternal grace. Brindavana Saranga, along with the cadence of aadi taalam, captures the gripping intensity lingering on the lyrics and exemplifies the aura of the music. Altogether, all of the components of this kriti work hand-in-hand to proportionally craft this magnum opus.

Thyagaraja's measureless collection of compositions have thus instilled the quintessence of Carnatic music. The eclectic variety of his music leaves so much material up to personal interpretation and preference. His music has stood the test of time, and will continue to last for generations and generations. Truthfully, my knowledge of Carnatic music is still nascent, so who am I to judge Thyagaraja's composition? It takes a true scholar to form an educated analysis of such a great man's musical work. But don't doubt that as my knowledge increases, so will my number of favorite Thyagaraja kritis.

Ranjani Prabhakar is a junior at Upper Dublin High School. She has been learning Carnatic music for eight years from Indu Vasudevan. Aside from singing, Ranjani enjoys writing, biking and playing the violin.

I discover yet another favorite composition of Saint Thyagaraja.....

Pratima Adipudi

(Published in 2005)

I was listening to the popular Bhadrachala Ramadas composition '*Ikshwaku Kulatilaka*' the other day and the harsh tone of some of the lyrics grabbed my attention. (Those who know Telugu will appreciate the harshness of the raw colloquial words like '*Evadabbasommani*'). Ramabhakta as Ramadas was, I wondered at the liberty that Ramadas was taking in his moment of anger and frustration (he does apologize to Rama towards the end of the composition saying that his harsh words are a direct result of the beating he took from the prison guards). Suddenly a strange thought popped up in my mind – did Thyagaraja, the other great Rama Bhakta ever scold or abuse the Lord in his moments of anger or frustration? Thus began my search to find a composition where Thyagaraja, the purest of *Rama Bhaktas*, resorted to blaming Rama. I referred to a biography on Thyagaraja's life, searching for times in his life when he could have tried to blame the Lord. My limited search yielded but one occasion when his brother Jalapasha threw away Thyagaraja's Rama vigrahas (idols) into the river. The great Thyagaraja, disheartened after a futile search for the idols and lost without his Rama, composed several songs in despair (*Entarani*, *Chalamelara*, *Enduku Nirdaya*, *Yuktamu Kadu* to name a few). Of these, the lyrics in '*Yuktamu Kadu*' in *Sri Raga* appealed to me. Even in this piece, the closest that Thyagaraja ever comes to blaming his Rama is to use a pleading blame (*ninda*), but as all of us know, when it comes to praising the Lord, he never holds back. This composition is rich in '*Nindastuti*', but even here, his *stuti* (praise) overshadows his *ninda* (blame). As I looked into this composition, its lyrics were a revelation.

Even in despair and anger, Thyagaraja is incapable of using harsh words with his Rama. The best he can ever do in his '*nindastuti*' is to question Lord Rama's judgment. In *Yuktamu Kadu*, Thyagaraja wonders why the Lord has disappeared, exclaiming in despair that it is not proper on His part not to protect his beloved *bhakta*. In fact, the title or beginning phrase of the song literally means "this is not proper for you, Lord". Even in this questioning of the Lord's judgment, Thyagaraja's *stuti* shines through his *ninda*. He comes up with some serious accusations, questioning whether Sita advised Rama not to

THYAGABRAHMAM – His Musical Influence

V.K.Viswanathan

(Published in 2006)

The only reason I decided to attempt writing this article is the hope that someone reading this article will have the ability to properly project the not easily describable GREATNESS of someone who lived amongst people like us a few centuries ago. As a physicist I find myself in a predicament not too different from the proper presentation of the miraculous 1905 year of Albert Einstein. I am not going to say anything original but am going to depend on EXPERTS like Professor P.Sambamurthy, Rangaramanujam Iyengar (R.I.), G.N.Balasubramanian (GNB), Madurai Mani Iyer (MMI), S.Rajam (S.R.), T.S.Parthasarathy (T.S.P) and Lalgudi. Jayaraman (LGJ). I was very fortunate to discuss with these experts this INFINITE soul's contributions, which cannot be fully comprehended by an ordinary mortal. I will also discuss "Tamil Thyagarajar" Papanasam Sivan who lived amongst us not too long ago and whose Bhajans & Concerts I was very fortunate to attend.

As Harikatha Expert Kamalmoorthy correctly observed, it is the DIVINE aspects of Thyagabrahmam that we should spend time on. She ONLY discusses Thyagaraja HRIDAYAM! But the intent here is to describe the musical aspects and influences of Thyagaraja and to provide some enlightenment on his UNIQUE and Monumental contributions to Carnatic Music.

TSP has said that Thygaraja is the one who completed the TOTAL figure and attributes to him the dominant musical form in carnatic music called "KRITI". GNB has stated that "A kritiless concert will be a contradiction in terms, like a typical South Indian meal without rice or a North Indian meal without wheat". Typically, a Kriti consists sequentially of PALLAVI (one or two lines enabling the listener to enter into the spirit of the song), followed by ANUPALLAVI (one or two lines reaching the emotional high) and concluding with CHARANAM (development of the previous two segments). There can be several charanams and may contain the signature of the composer. Apart from these Essential Angas, there are many Decorative Angas like Sangathi (a kind of variation on the musical theme) which was first introduced by Thyagaraja and is an indispensable part of any kriti.

The artistic device of Sangathi is "a capital stroke of psychological stimulus" (R.I.) which takes the music to a climax step by step and is not just an exercise in melody. "Chakkani raja" (listen to MMI) has forty two such steps in Pallavi alone. "Na Jeevadhara" (LGJ), Bhavanutha (Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer), "Dorakuna" (Maharajapuram Santhanam), "O Ranga Sayee" M.S.Subbulakshmi-(M.S.S), Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer-(S.S.I.)- have half of these mounting crescendos of sparkling music phrases. From this invention of Thyagaraja has arisen "NIRAVAL", the extempore improvisation which separates the experts from the mediocre! M.M.I., G.N.B., and M.S.S. excelled in both creativity and appropriate placement of niravals in the compositions.

The precursor to Kriti was Kirthana which emphasized the aspects of Bhajan and Bhakti. The beginnings of the modern kriti were in Gita Govinda of Jaya Deva in the 12th century. Purandaradasa followed. Bhadrachalam Ramadasar and Annamacharya provided the inspiration for Thyagaraja to definitively create the Kriti Form.

Arunagirinathar (composer of Thirupugazh) is an astounding genius in RYTHMIC PATTERNS, a major topic unto itself. To enhance the compositions, each stanza was set to a particular unit of measure without any built-in intricacies of rhythm. Thyagaraja's compositions avoid the monotony by providing ample variations and as a result, enhance the composition. Starting a composition before or after the first beat as well as starting an Adi tala composition between the little and fourth fingers (six units after the Laghu) are just two of many innovations of Thyagaraja. R.I. says "this opened the floodgates of creativity" in rhythm in carnatic music and led to phenomenal growth in various areas including Pallavi, Swara prasthara, and Solo turns for rhythmic instruments. R.I. points out that even in compositions in Adi Tala, single strides like Makelara, Brochevaru, Rama Neepai, Manasunilpa, Sangeetha Gnanamu, and Sri Rama Padama show astounding variations of rhythm. It is no exaggeration to say that Thyagaraja's original contributions pushed rhythm to new and greater heights.

Thyagaraja used the improved recast version of Govindachari from "Sangraha Choodamani" as opposed to the Venkatamukhi scheme. Six hundred and ninety compositions are attributed to Thyagaraja in 210 ragas. Only 37 are in Vivadi Swara Ragas and 130 are in Harikambodhi and its janya ragas. There are 31 compositions in Thodi, 30 in Sankarabharanam, 19 in Bhairavi and Kalyani, 17 in Saurashtra. He created over 75 ragas also! S.S.I. has stated it best when he said that if you can sing the compositions of the Trinity properly you have attained the highest level in any aspect of Carnatic Music.

Even in his own life time, Thyagaraja became undoubtedly the greatest as well as the most respected and popular personality in Carnatic Music. There is evidence that compositions of Dhikshithar as well as Shyama Sastri the other two members of the Trinity were influenced by him. Every one after him has tried to compose Kritis of his caliber and very few have come close.

One composer who lived in our own lifetime and gave us a glimpse of what R.R.I. HAS CALLED "A GENUINE COMPOSER" belongs in the category of great composers in the time period following the trinity. He is Papanasm Sivan about whom R.R.I. has written: "In moments of contemplating the Divine, he is in a sort of trance. Word and sound flow from his mouth through inspiration. There is perfect concord between the theme of the song and its scale. Only such songs bear the seal of immortality. Sri.Sivan is an ornament to this galaxy of composers. To paraphrase R.I., Sivan's "Kartikeya", "Tamasamen", "Kanakankodi", and "Kapali" MATCH Thyagaraja's "Koluv Amaregada", "Dharini", KsheerasagaraSayana", and "Giripai Nelakonna". It is very high praise from a person who had over two thousand classical songs in his repertory and fifty years of research. His devotion to Thyagaraja was so great that like the legendary S.Rajam, he taught his students over 200 kritis of Thyagaraja preferring to teach them over his own compositions. Out of deference to the great Thyagaraja, Sivan composed several compositions to be specifically sung to the tunes of well known and established kritis of Thyagaraja. Karunai seyvai-Raghu Nayaka, Nin Arul Iyambalaghumo-Ninnaenera Namminaru, Haranae Innum Dhayai Vallaiyae-Nenendu Vedukudura are some examples. In his Presidential Address to the Music Academy, Sivan said he worshipped the TRINITY as his PRIMARY gurus. He also said that he preferred to sing their songs over his own compositions! Finally, anyone who has heard M.M.I. sing Thyagaraja's "Nannu Palimpa" and Sivan's "Kapali" cannot fail to see the similarities in the two compositions as well as the pinnacle of musical genius that both Thyagaraja and Sivan reached with their compositions.

Below we show the depiction of "Nannu Palimpa" of Thyagaraja by Sri.S.Rajam, a

disciple of Sivan. This is the closest we can come to imagining the scene in Thyagaraja's mind! He has done yeoman service to current and future generations with his line drawings of the key scenes in many of Thyagaraja's compositions.



Finally, those of us who have recently been to Thiruvaiyaru Aradhana would have been appalled at the Commercialization, Politicisation, and general cheapening aspects which have taken over. Many U.S. Organisations are actually doing a better job.

It is worth noting that in a brief period of twenty years the Great Kanchipuram Naina Pillai (in whose school and style D.K.Pattammal has been delighting and educating us for over seventy years at least) has managed to present 200 of Thyagaraja's compositions. I doubt if today the combined number of his kritis being presented in concerts regularly is half that number. While I personally have not attended every concert it is encouraging to note that Sanjay Subramaniam and Sowmya are very innovative and present at least two compositions that are not regularly heard.

I end with a quote from Rangaramanujam Iyengar: "The crying need of the hour is for a band of selfless votaries of art who will preserve the music of Thyagaraja in the best traditional manner and propagate it along with his philosophy, with genuine zeal, competence, and humility. There can be no better homage to him than this." I totally agree!

V.K.Viswanathan had the good fortune of listening to Various Giants of Carnatic Music and was lucky to have interacted with many experts who were gracious enough to enlighten him. He considers himself very fortunate to have lived in what LGJ has said was the Golden Age of Carnatic Music. He would have preferred to have lived in Tiruvaiyru during the time the TRINTY lived! He currently lives in Los Alamos, New Mexico.

Lyrics and Music in Tyagaraja's Compositions

Vidyasankar Sundaresan

(Published in 2007)

Tyagaraja is celebrated as a *Vaggeyakara*, i.e. he is the author of both the lyrics (*vak*) and the musical setting (*geya*) of his compositions. This article explores some of the characteristic relationships between the lyrics and their musical setting in Tyagaraja's compositions.

One can describe this relationship according to many different dimensions. From an emotional perspective, one can talk of the consonance between the mood created by the musical structure and the mood imparted by the words of the song, e.g. the sophistication (*sogasu*) referred to in *Sogasu chooda tarama* (Kannadagowla) vis-a-vis the sophisticated way in which the Kṛiti begins. One can explore how the various facets of the same Raga are handled differently in different compositions, e.g. each Kṛiti begins at a different starting note and the Raga structure is built up through the end of the Kṛiti. What I would like to focus on in this article is a structural dimension — how the words of Tyagaraja Kṛitis and their musical structures are intertwined. Most of us Carnatic music lovers do not necessarily understand the Telugu language. Nevertheless, just as we can experience and appreciate the music, we can also appreciate the creative ways in which Tyagaraja has composed his lyrics and music.

South Indian poetry makes highly effective use of alliteration, i.e. the use of the same syllable at the beginning of consecutive poetic lines. In the south Indian languages, there is a unique variation on alliteration, as it is applied not only to the first syllable in each line, but also to the second syllable. Thus, in Arunagirinatar's famous Tiruppugazh in Tamil, we have,

muttai taru patti tirunakai attukkirai satti sharavana ...

Similarly, Andal sings in her Tiruppavai,

mayanai mannu tuya peruneer ayaṛ kulattinil tayaik kutaḷ

Although both the above examples are from Tamil poetry, this feature of alliteration on the second syllable is found in Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam too, and to some extent, in Sanskrit. When it appears in Sanskrit poetry, it is thought to be the result of the influence of south Indian poetics. To my knowledge, alliteration on the second syllable is not found in the classical poetry of any non-Indian language. Let us see how Tyagaraja weaves this poetic stylistic device into his compositions, with the help of a few examples.

Tyagaraja's Kṛitis are typically structured according to a Pallavi — Anupallavi — Charanam(s) design. In this type of composition, we see that Tyagaraja links the Pallavi and Anupallavi together using the second syllable alliteration scheme. Often, the regular kind of alliteration, using the first syllable, is also found together with that on the second, while in some instances we find it extended into even the third syllable, to increase the effect. For example,

Vasanta; Rupakam

Pallavi —

Sitamma Mayamma

Anupallavi —

Vatatmaja Saumitri

Kharaharapriya; Adi

Pallavi — *Chakkani* Rajamargamu

Anupallavi — *Chikkani* Palu

Sankarabharanam; Adi

Pallavi — *Eduta* nilachite *nidu* sommulu

Anupallavi — *Nuduti* Vrada gani

Within the Anupallavi itself, consecutive lines use the regular alliteration on the first syllable.

Vasanta; Rupakam

Anupallavi — *Vatatmaja* Saumitri ... *Vainateya* ...

Kharaharapriya; Adi

Anupallavi — *Chikkani* Palu ... *Chiyanu* Gangasagaramu ...

Sankarabharanam; Adi

Anupallavi — *Nuduti* Vratagani ... *Na* taramu telisi ...

How do these fit into the musical structure of the composition? If we compare against the Tala cycles (Avartanas), we see that the recurring syllable tends to appear at more or less the same count in successive Avartanas. This is the case when the Kritis are not too wordy. In Kritis where a lot of words are packed into each Avartana, the same second syllable reappears often within the same Tala cycle. For example, in Elani dayaradu, in Raga Atana, we have a repetition of the *la* sound throughout the Anupallavi.

<i>Bala</i> kanakamaya	<i>cela</i> sujana pari-
<i>pala</i> srirama	<i>lola</i> vidhruta shara-
<i>jala</i> shubhada karu-	<i>nalavala</i> ghana-
<i>nila</i> navya vana-	<i>malikabharana</i>

Interestingly, Tyagaraja repeats the second syllable not within the grammatical word, but according to where it falls in the Tala structure. Thus, the words *paripala*, *sharajala*, *karunalavala*, *ghananila* and *vanamalika* are arranged within the musical structure in such a way that the *la* sound is always in second position with respect to the Tala units. Note also how the regular first syllable alliteration is applied to the initial words of the first two lines (*Bala* and *pala*). In this context, it is interesting to look at the four Tyagaraja Kritis that begin with the word *Bhajana*.

Atana; Rupakam

Pallavi — *Bhajana* seya rada rama

Anupallavi — *Aja*-rudradulaku satatamu

Kalyani; Rupakam

Pallavi — *Bhajana* seyave manasa

Anupallavi — *Aja*-rudradulaku bhusuradulaku

Narayani: Adi

Pallavi — Bhajana seyu margamunu jupave

Anupallavi — Ajudu rudruda-khandala

Surati; Rupakam

Pallavi — Bhajana parula kela ...

Anupallavi — Aja-rudra-suresha ...

In each Kriti, Tyagaraja begins the Anupallavi with the word Aja, followed by Rudra! This satisfies both the structural role of the second syllable alliteration and the meanings that he wishes to convey in these Kritis.

In the Charanam(s) of Tyagaraja's Kritis, the pattern followed in the Pallavi and Anupallavi is broken and a new alliterative second syllable appears. Again, this syllable falls in the second position in terms of the musical line and is not necessarily second within the grammatical word.

Vasanta; Rupakam

Charanam Paramesa Vasishta Para-
shara Narada Shaunaka Shuka
Surapati Gautama lambo-
dara guha sanakadulu

Kharaharapriya; Adi

Charanam Kantiki sundara taramagu rupame muk-
kanti nota chelage namame tyagara-
jintane nelakonna adidaivame itu-
vanti sri saketa ramuni sadbhaktiyane

Sankarabharanam; Adi

Charanam Tarana dorakani paraku nayeda-
nu Rama jesite surasurulu met-
tura ippudu ee haramitana me-
lara bhakta Tya- garaja nuta na

In Kritis that have multiple Charanams, each one tends to have its own second syllable alliterative pattern. At the same time, Tyagaraja's creativity is not a slave to the rule of second syllable alliteration. In many Kritis, he chooses not to use it at all. Thus, for example, in the Pancharatna Kritis, the Pallavi and Anupallavi follow this scheme, but not all the Charanams follow the rule. In the Nattai Kriti, for example, we have second syllable alliteration using the ga sound in the Pallavi and Anupallavi (Jagadananda Gaganadhipa Suguna) mixed in with first syllable alliteration in the Pallavi (Jagadananda Jaya Janaki). Among the Charanams, no such strict pattern is found in the first, fifth, sixth, seventh and tenth Charanams, while the others have alliterations in the first or second syllables or both.

When it comes to compositions that are more in the nature of *bhajana*-s, Tyagaraja applies more stringent rules and alternates first syllable and second syllable alliterative schemes within the lines of each stanza. This is reminiscent of the patterns we see in older composers like Purandaradasa, Bhadrachalam Ramdas etc. For example,

Pavanaja stuti patra
Ravisoma-vara netra

Pavana charitra
Ramaniya gatra

In the third line, the first syllable changes from pa to ra, but the second syllable alliteration on the va sound is retained. However, the fourth line retains the changed first syllable (ra) and breaks the second syllable pattern. This interleaved pattern of alliteration is seen in every stanza in this composition.

There is often a debate in many people's minds, regarding the relative importance of melody versus lyrics in Carnatic music. Tyagaraja shows us that this debate is largely meaningless in his horizon. The two dimensions of lyrics and musical structure are so closely woven together in his compositions that it is impossible to downplay the role of one and elevate the other. In his compositions, a stylistic poetic device is taken out of the realm of poetic meters and applied in the context of the Tala structure of the Kriti. He applies it judiciously to various types of compositions, to give us a wide vista of compositional styles — truly the mark of a creative genius. He transcends the dichotomy that we see and merges them in the service of his larger purpose.

Vidyasankar Sudareshan currently heads Sruti's Publications and Outreach Committee. His interests include Carnatic music, musicology, Indian philosophy and Sanskrit studies.

Historical Meetings of Thyagaraja

- *Thumu Narasimhadasu of Ponnur, Guntur district met Thyagaraja in house of Veena Kuppayya in Thiruvothiur and wrote 2 poems about Thyagaraja - thought to be in 1821*
- *Gopinatha Bhattacharya, a Hindusthani singer*
- *Gopalakrishna Bharathy (author of musical Nandanar charitham) - Composed Sabhapathi in Abhogi on Thyagaraja's request*
- *Shatkaala Govinda Dasudu from Swati Thirunal's Thiruvaankuru kingdom, Muvvattupuja taluk, Rama Mangala village visited and sang Jayadeva's asthapadi Chandana Charchita in Pantuvarali raga in 6 kalas*
- *Doraiswamy Iyer (Panchanada Iyer) impressed Thyagaraja by singing one Thyagaraja's songs very well in a bhajan- Thyagaraja was very pleased, embraced him and blessed him to have sangita vidwans as offsprings- his sons are Ramaswamy Sivan and Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer, who composed the well known 72 melakarta ragamalika*

TYAGARAJA AND MUTHUSWAMI DIKSHITAR

Two Great Composers of Diverse Nature

H.Y. Rajagopal
(Published in 2008)

When you think of the *trimurtis* of Karnatak music, you cannot but be struck by how diverse Tyagaraja and Muthuswami Dikshitar are in their approach to music and styles of composition, despite sharing many common elements. Bhakti or devotion to god guided every step of their lives but even in the type of bhakti they embodied and the way they gave expression to it they were different. Here we have the mystical Tyagaraja, sensitive and lyrical, who through his songs conveys the cry of supplication of millions of his fellow beings. And there is Muthuswami Dikshitar, sophisticated and erudite, intellectual and somewhat impersonal, but amazingly rich in raga conception and development, and whose majestic kritis fill you with a different kind of musical experience. That these two musicians were contemporaries, and lived not too far from each other and yet were so vastly different in their styles is a tribute to their creative genius and independence of spirit. At the same time, the fact that the discerning listening public of Karnatak music long ago recognized their genius and accorded both of them the highest place of honor is a tribute to their own musical sensibility. Too often, however, we tend to think of the *trimurtis* one-dimensionally. Dikshitar forces us to think otherwise. I would like to share some of my thoughts on the matter with my fellow Sruti members. I must preface it by saying I offer them only as tentative remarks, in the spirit of opening an arm chair discussion (which is the best I can do after all, considering my limited knowledge!), rather than as conclusions from a serious study of the subject. It is rather like a sketch for a portrait than the portrait itself.

Tyagaraja has become an iconic figure in Karnatak music. His name is almost synonymous with the system itself. He lived the longest of the three and is the most prolific of all our composers. He also was a great teacher who trained and nurtured a dedicated band of disciples who preserved and propagated his legacy. He is the touchstone of quality by which we measure other composers, except perhaps the other two of the *trimurtis*, Shyama Shastri and Muthuswami Dikshitar. But even there comparisons are constantly being made, although not so much to establish the superiority of any one over the others but to gain greater insights into their extraordinary musical genius.

Music was a means of communication to Tyagaraja. He constantly communicated with his own inner self and Rama, his *ishtadevatha*, and that communication found outward expression and reached his fellow beings in the form of a song. You might recall how frequently Tyagaraja uses the word *manasaa* in his compositions. He speaks to himself, communicating his thoughts from one part of his consciousness to another part as it were, all the time keeping the image of Rama in his mind. It is as though he has Rama as a witness to every thought that goes through his own mind. Rama is his dearest god, his master, his closest friend and confidant. There is nothing he wouldn't tell him. He may burst out in ecstasy or cry out in anguish, he may sing his praise or speak of his own frustration. It is these aspects that have given Tyagaraja kritis a lyrical quality and an immediate emotional appeal and create in the listeners a feeling of personal closeness, a feeling that Tyagaraja is articulating our own feelings. And the language he used for communication was Telugu, his mother tongue, in a simple everyday form. This again gives his compositions tremendous sustaining power. We have seen this phenomenon in

the case of a few other composers as well, such as Purandara Dasa, another great communicator, who composed in Kannada, the language of the people.

Dikshitar conceives music not so much as a means of communication but as a means of adoration and worship of the godhead. Of course, there is communication in all great art and Dikshitar's music is no exception. But the dominant goal is worship. Further, the worship is conceived in an established traditional manner. The emphasis is entirely on the subject of the kriti. There is rarely a reference to any personal feelings of ecstasy or anguish as one finds so commonly in Tyagaraja. True, Tyagaraja has composed *utsava sampradaya kritis* that are actually sung as part of worship. But these also reflect various aspects of a devotee's personal relationship with the Supreme One. In Dikshitar's kritis this personal element is sublimated into an impersonal relationship. One sees in Dikshitar, a highly disciplined mind, attuned to performing a long ritualistic worship or *upasana*. The mood is serene and contemplative.

Unlike Tyagaraja, Dikshitar composed in Sanskrit, the language of the sacred texts, the medium used by the intellectuals and keepers of esoteric knowledge. The texts of the kritis are composed in adoration of the deities and consist of their names and words and phrases describing their various attributes, strung together somewhat like the texts of the famous *stotras* (prayers). He had an encyclopedic knowledge of various fields and drew his material from Vedanta, puranas and tantric sources, and *jyotisha* (astrology). He was a man of ideas and is perhaps the only one to bring in ideas from so many different fields. He refers to concepts and practices and terms established by traditional forms of worship. (You may recall even in the very familiar *vatapi ganapatim bhaje*, there are phrases like *trikonamadhya gatam* that are abstruse to lay people.) He employs all the six *angas* or component sections of *stotra* literature, namely, *namaha* (salutation), *asi* (blessing), *siddhanta* (active affirmation), *parakrama* (mighty deeds of the deity) and *dhyana* (meditation) (see S.A.K. Durga, Muthuswami Dikshitar, Sruti Ranjani, Sruti, Ed. Viji Swaminathan, 2003, pp.123-131). He naturally felt Sanskrit was the most suitable vehicle for his purpose.

If Dikshitar's kritis were just *stotras*, even granting they were beautiful, they would not have excited the attention of music lovers for generations as they have and perhaps we wouldn't be talking about them nearly two centuries later from a different continent. They would have been regarded as no more than mantras or *stotras* used in everyday worship and left at that. But the amazing thing is the genius of Dikshitar has transformed them into some of the most magnificent kritis of Karnatak music.

Dikshitar's vision, it seems to me, was that of an architect. Even as a great architect visualizes the arrangement of space and structure, open and clustered places, areas of light and shade, and carefully places various components to produce a unified, balanced and harmonious whole, Dikshitar builds an extraordinary structure in the space of the raga, making the abstraction of raga into a reality, as it were. The concept and development of raga, and its fullest expositions are the hallmark of his compositions. And each kriti is complete, like a well designed and executed piece of architecture, the result of the work of master craftsman, not of a passing emotion. Dikshitar is a master at being impersonal, even a bit distant and awe-inspiring may be, and yet can take you on one of the most satisfying journeys of your life through the wonderful world of raga. I remember the feeling I had when I first heard his *Nayaki* kriti, *Ranganayakam*; its effect lingered in me for days.

An image that often comes to my mind when I hear Dikshitar's kritis is that of a magnificent temple. As you get through the main entrance, you see a vast courtyard. The slow tempo of his kritis suggests the vastness of space and an unhurried exploration of it. Dikshitar guides you through that space, showing you various features of the temple, the magnificent courtyard, the superbly sculptured pillars, the friezes depicting episodes from the mythology of the main deity, the images of other deities and finally into the *garbhagudi*, the *sanctum sanctorum*. Dikshitar would want you to spend a lot of time in the temple, taking in each aspect of the edifice, enjoying the beauty of the sculptures and understanding the mythology and iconography, and finally going through the spiritual experience of worship. He wouldn't want you to rush through it all. He would want you to take it as a pilgrimage in itself.

I have often wondered what factors might have shaped his temperament (*manodharma*) that led to certain choices that characterize his kritis. The slower tempo of the kriti and a gradual development of the raga are clearly the influence of the *dhrupad* style of Hindusthani music to which he must have been exposed when he was in Benares completing his tutelage under Chidambaranatha Yogi. Even granting that slower tempo and elaborate exposition of raga were not uncommon in Karnatak music of those days (can you believe it!), the influence of Hindusthani music can be easily seen otherwise. Recall the kritis in Dwijavanti, Brindavana Saranga, etc. If you compare the kritis *Kamalaptakula* of Tyagaraja and *Rangapuravihara* or *Soundararajam* of Dikshitar, you will see vastly different treatments of the same raga. Tyagaraja's treatment seems rather limited while that of Dikshitar reaches out to the frontiers.

Another factor that might have influenced his choice of the slower tempo could be that he was a *vainika*. A slow tempo is ideally suited for exposition on veena. Although Tyagaraja was also known to be a veena player, he was essentially a vocalist. He is said to have possessed a wonderful voice that ranged over three octaves. His kritis also seem to have been fashioned for faster, higher-pitched vocal rendering.

Dikshitar was an inveterate traveler, far more so than Tyagaraja, going on pilgrimages, visiting temples, and composing kritis in praise of local deities. I wonder if this practice, in addition to giving him knowledge of sculpture and mythology and iconography, even artistically influenced the architecture of his kritis.

The fact that Dikshitar most effectively integrated some elements of Hindusthani music into the Karnatak system should demonstrate his open artistic temperament and receptivity to new ideas, while being a traditionalist to the core. Clearly the independent spirit of a great artist is at work here. He has composed kritis in some 22 *desiya* ragas some of which were still evolving in his time. I feel amused when I see some self-styled "purists" disapprovingly shake their heads when they notice some infusion of Hindusthani shades in a Karnatak music concert. But then they must hold Dikshitar guilty of the same offense! They probably forget that Kalyani which is considered a major raga in Karnatak music now was once condemned as unfit for presentation in a concert by no less an authority than Venkatamakhhi, because of its Persian origin! I am not suggesting that everyone should like Hindusthani music. I am only suggesting that we be aware of how things evolve. What is taboo today may become "classical" in a later age.

It was this same eclectic attitude that made Dikshitar experiment with western music and compose early in his life what is referred to as "Nottusvara Sahitya." Dr. Durga states that at the request of a European collector Dikshitar composed forty songs with Sanskrit text set to the tunes of famous western songs, one of them being *Santatam Pahimam*, set

to the tune of “God save the King.” It was again such openness of mind and musical acumen that led him to recognize the vast potentiality of the western violin as a suitable instrument for Karnatak music and encouraged his disciple Balu to learn it. Considering that the violin has never gained the prominence in Hindusthani music that it has in Karnatak music, one might argue that it must be the result of Dikshitar’s early endorsement in its behalf.

One of the artistic innovations of Tyagaraja that has become a standard feature of Karnatak music is the concept of *sangatis*. This provides an opportunity for the performer to embellish the kriti at suitable points. Tyagaraja kritis offer great flexibility for expanding on the kriti through sangatis, neraval and kalapana svaras and this is one of the main reasons for their enormous popularity with the performers. However, this very same flexibility could work against the composer, if not handled judiciously. Typically in today’s Karnatak music concerts the alapana is becoming ever shorter, with the performer investing all the time and energy on the kriti. Unless the various aspects of kriti rendering are properly balanced, there is a possibility in this practice that the performer gains the center stage and the composer recedes to the background. Unfortunately, this seems to happen to Tyagaraja quite often, which makes me ask: are we being fair to him? Aren’t we treating Tyagaraja rather loosely, on our own terms rather than on *his*? This is less likely to happen in the case of a Dikshitar kriti. Because of its more compact structure, its identity is better preserved. In this respect, his kritis are more like the works of composers of Western music.

Present day Karnatak musicians, accustomed as they are to fast paced singing, find it exacting to render Dikshitar kritis in slow tempo as originally intended. Neither do the audiences seem to have the patience for it. As for the composers, most of them tend to pattern the kriti as a whole after Tyagaraja but unfortunately the text tends to be most commonplace, devoid of any personal statement or poetic flights of imagination. They want to play it safe by stringing together names of the deity, clichés and catch-all phrases denoting bhakti. I wonder sometimes would any new composer dare start a kriti with words like “*enta muddo, enta sogaso!*” as Tyagaraja did in that lovely Bindumalini kriti or ask Rama to give him a kiss as he did in *Rara Sitaramanimanohara* (‘*Oka muddeera, dhira!*’). Tyagaraja and Muthuswami Dikshitar are like *Ganga* and *Jamuna*, two of our most celebrated rivers that rise not too far from each other in the foothills of Himalayas but travel in parallel paths for nearly nine hundred miles before meeting in Prayag and continuing their journey to the sea. Legend has it that a third river *Saraswati* also joins the other two, running underground as *guptagamini*. Shyama Shastri, the eldest of the *trimurtis* is said to have composed only 108 kritis (some put it at 300) of which only a dozen or so are in currency but they are of such exquisite quality that he is accorded an honored place along with the other two composers. With the confluence of these three, what a swell we have of life sustaining music!

H.Y.Rajagopal, an engineer by profession, lives in Media, PA and is one of the founding members of SRUTI.

SELECT ARTICLES BY YOUTH

(Published in 2008)

Tyagaraja Aradhana Around the World:

Ashraya Ananthanarayana, 7, of Srutilayam Music School

The 'Thygaraja aradhana' is celebrated every year on Pushya Bagula Panchami day in Thiruvaiyaru where Shri. Tyagaraja attained his Samadhi. The Festival today is not only celebrated in Thiruvaiyaru, India but all over the world in different ways. In India several artists perform the Pancha Ratna and Utsav kritis at the Samadhi of the legend on the banks of river cauvery in Thiruvaiyaru.

After India, comes the most popular destination, Singapore, where every year the Tyagaraja Aradhana is celebrated in a big way. Apart from SIFAS(Singapore Indian Fine Arts Society) celebrating its Aradhana at the Esplanade Hall every year, this year (2008) the SYAMA Academy has also undertaken the task of conducting the Aradhana at the Sri. Krishnan Temple of Singapore in a grand manner in the months of Jan and Feb.

In America the popular one would be the Cleveland, Ohio Tyagaraja Aradhana Music festival. In USA it is celebrated sometime in March so it can also be said that the flowers of spring bring along with it the fragrance of Shri.Tyagaraja. The inauguration of the festival is done with the rendering of Utsav kritis followed by the Pancha Ratna Kritis. Over 45 concerts are held during the festival along with various senior artists giving lecture demonstrations, workshops and Bharatnatyam performances to the budding and inspired talents.

The Sydney, Australia Music circle run by a group of volunteers is known for hosting the festival sometime like the American celebration, always in March. I guess Easter weekend proves to be an important weekend for Indians too in Australia with the joyous celebrations of the festival. The year 2005 is unforgettable for me due to the very unique theme - 'Rare compositions of Tyagaraja and compositions in rare Ragas'. Though difficult, I believe the teachers and students of Australia stood up to the challenge and performed several rare ragas like malavasri, sindhunamakriya, pratapavarali etc. festival and almost every Indian family attends it proves it that Shri. Tyagaraja lives forever in our minds.

The Shri Balaji temple of England, UK is yet another popular place where the Aradhana is celebrated in a very joyful manner during the first week of March. Apart from the rendering of the kritis by the group they also like the other places encourage student talent display in the field of Carnatic Music. There is always a popular Carnatic group called from India for giving concerts during this celebration. Likewise The Aradhana is celebrated with great joy by carnatic music organizations all around the world like Canada, UAE, Dubai or I should say everywhere where you could find Indians.

I am very proud to be an Indian carrying the legacy of our rich culture, talent and tradition generation after generation. Shri.Tyagaraja truly a gift from the heaven above.

Tyagaraja Day

Veena Kanumalla, 13, student of Smt. Kiranavali VidyaShankar

Tyagaraja Aradhana is really important because it's a day where people come together to listen to and enjoy his kritis. Recently, I have learned quite a few new kritis composed by Tyagaraja, but if I had to pick my favorite, it would be Idismayamura in the ragam Chayanata. One of the highlights of the ragam is that it has a jump in the arohanam from P to S. And throughout the song, there are many such jumps. If one has the ability to make this jump with precision, it would add to the beauty of the ragam and the composition. This is one of the amazing aspects of Tyagaraja's compositional style - to introduce little bits of challenges and excitement into his kritis. I learned the Pancharatna kritis from my guru, Kiranavali Vidyasankar more than a year ago. Now that I'm slowly understanding each kriti better, I can appreciate the greatness of Tyagaraja even more. It is an ongoing journey.

Tyagaraja Day

Sumitra Jagadesan-Age:9, student of Smt. Vidya Sridhar

I started carnatic music when I was about five years old. My interest in carnatic music is that I love to sing, and I wish I could be a famous carnatic singer and composer like Tyagaraja. I love carnatic music because its fun to sing and I can learn about Indian classical music. I've been singing carnatic music for three years, and I sang in the Tyagaraja aradhana twice. Tyagaraja was born on May 4, 1767 and he died on Jan 6, 1847. So I sang in the Tyagaraja aradhana to celebrate his great life. I sang four of Tyagaraja's songs they were Giriraja, Buntorithi Golo, and Kalaharana. Tyagaraja is a very famous singer, and we should all help keep him famous and we should keep singing all his wonderful songs. The fact that Tyagaraja composed his first song at age eight got me interested. I also found out that most of Tyagaraja's song has his name at the end of his it. I'm grateful that though I'm all the way here I can still learn Tyagaraja's songs. All of Tyagaraja's songs are very nice and I wish I could learn all of his songs one day.

Neha, a lover of Tyagaraja Kritis

Neha Nataraj, student of Smt. Kiranavali Vidyashankar.

Tyagaraja Aaradhana is important to me because songs are a part of me. Sri Tyagaraja's expressive, complex songs move me greatly, and it feels good to see so many people-particularly children putting effort into singing his beautiful compositions. I have two favorite songs of his. My first is "Sara sara samaraikashoora." I love this song because it is quick and playful. I have heard this song played by Chitibaabu on the veena. I am fond of this version because the characteristics of the lively veena correspond to this spirited song.

My second favorite song is "Bhuvini Daasudane." I find Sri Ranjini a very captivating and enchanting raga. The notes in this song are put together very nicely, and I love this song. I have listened to Dr. Balamurali Krishna's version, which made me persuade my mother to teach me the song.

Two Well Known Disciples of Tyagaraja

Hari Santhanam, 9, of Srutileyam Music School

Saint Tyagaraja had 30 direct disciples. Each of them did a lot to preserve his music and also propagate it. Here I will present the work of two of his disciples; Veena Kuppayyar and Walajapet Venkataramana Bhagavatar.

Veena Kuppayyar was born in the state of Tamil Nadu, in the town of Tiruvottiyur. His father, Sambamoorti Sastri played the violin and the veena. He learned how to play from his father. Later he became a student of Tyagaraja and learned how to compose songs. He knew how to speak Telugu and Sanskrit perfectly. He played violin well but, people started calling him Veena Kuppayyar because he played the veena very well. Later Veena Kuppayar moved to Muthialpet in Madras. Kovur Sundara Mudaliar was his supporter and Veena Kuppayar enjoyed being his musician. Tyagaraja visited Veena Kuppayar in Muthialpet, Madras. Kuppayar taught lots of students helping spread Tyagaraja's krithis and music. Veena Kuppayar composed his songs in Telugu. One varanam that is famous is saami ninne kori. Veena Kuppayar's songs are identified by his mudra, Gopaaladaasa. Some of Veena Kuppayar's other compositions are: Inta Paralekha (Begada - Rupaka), Vinayaka Ninnuvina(Hamsadvani), Inta Chalamu (Begada), Inta Chouka(Bilahr), Nenarunchi(Danyasi), Koniyadina (Kambhoji).

Walajapet Venkataramana Bhagavatar was an important student of Tyagaraja. Venkataramana Bhagavatar was a disciple from Ayyampettai a town near Tiruvaiyaru and did secretary work for him. He was associated with Tyagaraja for over 25 years. He knew Sanskrit and Telugu. His son Krishnaswamy Bhagavatar learned from Tyagaraja too. Father and son wrote down the information and the events of Tyagaraja's life for 35 years. They wrote about Tyagaraja's visits to famous temples. Father and son preserved most of Tyagaraja's krithis for the future. Thanks to them we know that Tyagaraja wrote three operas- Prahlada bhakti vijayam, Nauka charitram, and Sitarama vijayam. The musical world is very lucky that the father and son preserved Tyagaraja's compositions. They taught students and spread Thygaraja's krithis and songs. Some of Venkataramana Bhagavatar's compositions are: Sri Guru ashtakam - in Sanskrit (Dhyana slokams) 27 Tyagaraja and Muthuswami Dikshitar are like *Ganga* and *Jamuna*, two of our most celebrated rivers that rise not too far from

each other in the foothills of Himalayas but travel in parallel paths for nearly nine hundred miles before meeting in Prayag and continuing their journey to the sea. Legend has it that a third river *Saraswati* also joins the other two, running underground as *guptagamini*. Shyama Shastri, the eldest of the *trimurtis* is said to have composed only 108 kritis (some put it at 300) of which only a dozen or so are in currency but they are of such exquisite quality that he is accorded an honored place along with the other two composers. With the confluence of these three, what a swell we have of life sustaining music!

Divine Composition by Swami Tyagaraja

Arvind Kumar, 15, student of Smt. Kalyani Ramani NJ

Tyagaraja's infinite compositions have been a communication between the Lord and his devotee. In his songs, Tyagaraja would adore Rama, share his personal hardships, and even complain or criticize Rama, in a playful way. The composition, ""Rama Nannu

Brovara” best describes the close relation between Tyagaraja and Rama. Tyagaraja endeavors to grab the attention of the Lord, and secure his love for Him. This is similar to a child persuading his parents for a desirable item. In this case, Tyagaraja is invoking the protection of Rama, and tries to persuade Him by adoring His authority and magnificence.

“ Rama nannu brovara vemako lokabhi; Cimalo brahmalo shiva keshavadulalo prema mIra melugu cunde birudu vahincina sita; Meppulakai kannatavu-nappu badaga virravigi tappu panulu leka unde tyagaraja vinuta sita””

Tyagaraja converses with Rama :

“O lord Rama, protector of the world! Won’t you come and protect me? You are regarded as the whole Cosmos, ranging from a tiny ant to the trinity: Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. You are the charmer of mankind who awes and attracts all.

O lord Rama, protector of the world! Won’t you come and protect me? Have I ever desired wealth- from a mere quarter to conducting a lethargic, material life, filled with conceit and overindulgence? Have I ever been arrogant, committed sins, or had been involved in corrupted practices O Rama- worshipped by this Tyagaraja?

O lord Rama, protector of the world! Won’t you come and protect me?” Inevitably, the line “Cimalo brahmalo shiva keshavadulalo” appeals to me the most. One can easily visualize the Lord’s radiance of divine love enveloping and protecting His humble devotee who kneels besides Him praying for protection. Tyagaraja metaphorically compares Rama existence ranging from a petite ant to the ultimate Trinity: Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. Thus, Tyagaraja exhibit’s the infinite glory, stating that there is not a place where Rama does not exist. Just by hearing and interpreting the meaning of this divine script, one can feel the immense love flowing between Tyagaraja and Rama. Tyagaraja bribes Rama, praising His omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience. The Saint pleads to the Lord that although he, Tyagaraja is free from sins, ego and desire for wealth, Rama does not come forward to protect him. What wrong has he done to displease Rama, he asks in anguish. By seeing both the Sage’s musical genius, and devotion, it is possible to see how Tyagaraja melts the Lord’s heart drawing His attention. Ten days before Tyagaraja died, Rama gave him a vision, as if he was in Lanka, ready to fight Ravana. In this revelation, Rama told Tyagaraja tMoksham. Tyagaraja composed a song of this vision. One day before his death, Tyagaraja took sanyasa and detached himself from the world. The next day, January 6th, 1847 Tyagaraja had given up his body, merging with the Lord, forever!hat he will merge with Him, ultimately attaining.

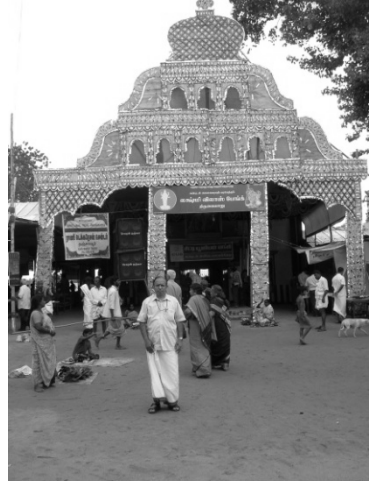
Thyagaraja’s Travels

Thyagaraja was not an avid traveler – he seemed content to stay in his village and seek musical creativity and spiritual salvation from his Sri Rama. Once he did go to Kanchi, at the request of his father’s friend, Upanishadbrahma, when he visited Kamakshi and Varadaraja temples, composing a few kritis on these deities. A more extensive travel was undertaken, apparently after the incident of his separation from his brother and the anguish that preceded it. Perhaps also seeking mental peace, Thyagaraja traveled first to Walajapet for 12 days, then to Tirupati to Puthur in Chittoor mandalam to Ghatika Kshetram to Chennai to Thiruvathiur to Kovur to Thiruvaiyaru via Nagalapuram where robbers incident took place. At several of these stops, Thyagaraja composed songs on the local deities.

Endaro Mahanubhavulu Andariki Vandanamulu...

P. Swaminathan
(Published in 2009)

Endaro Mahanubhavulu Andariki Vandanamulu.. - There are many great men; salutations to all of them... so goes the final composition of Thyagaraja's pancharatna krithi sung in a chorus by the assembled musicians. The music was reverberating through the air into Door Darshan for the benefit of people all over the world. It was the 162nd aradhana celebration in honor of Saint Thyagaraja. The place was Thiruvaiyaru, a small village in the district of Thanjavur in south India, where saint Thyagaraja lived and attained Samadhi in 19th century. In this final pancharatna, Thyagaraja pays his obeisance to the learned and virtuous souls at large. The song, noted for its rich mixed diction of Telugu and Sanskrit, contains beautiful swaraksharas which are adorned by numerous chitta-swaras. Even though Thyagaraja had composed several pancharatnas, the "Thyagaraja Pancharatna" rendered in Thiruvaiyaru before Thyagaraja's Samadhi stands out the best. Its uniqueness lies in the structure of the krithis, swarakshars, chitta-swaras and the scope for chorus rendering etc.



Brief history behind the aradhana celebration:*

Thyagaraja aradhana has two aspects to its celebration viz. religious activities and the more popular and interesting musical rendering. In the beginning, there were no music concerts but only the pujas for Thyagaraja's idol were performed by his grandson at the Samadhi. Upon his death, Thyagaraja's disciple Thillaisthanam Rama Iyengar took the responsibility of celebrating the aradhana at Subbharama Bhagavathar's residence. Rama Iyengar continued the daily pujas at the Samadhi. Thanks to the Umayalpuram brothers (Sundara Bhagavathar and Krishna Bhagavathar) a granite structure was erected replacing the old brick construction. Upon the demise of Rama Iyengar his disciples Narasimha Bhagavathar and Panchu Bhagavathar continued the celebration. For the first time in 1908, Narasimha Bhagavathar held a five-day aradhana celebration that included harikatha and music concerts. This celebration took place in Pachaiappa's choultry, 2 *Thirumanjana veedhi*. As is often the case in India, when the two brothers fell out, two factions were formed, known as Periya katchi (supporters of Narasimha Bhagavathar) and Chinna katchi (supporters of Panchu Bhagavathar). Upon split with his brother, Narasimha Bhagavathar celebrated the aradhana in Kumbakonam but when he died Periya katchi too resumed the celebration in Thiruvaiyaru. Chinna katchi under the leadership of Panchu Bhagavathar formed "*Thyagabrahma Vaibhava Prakasa Sabha*" and elected Pandit Lakshmanachar as the president and Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar as the vice-president. With the formation of the sabha, many vidwans and vidwamsinis became its members with an annual fee of Rs10. The committee members of this sabha assumed the responsibility of conducting the aradhana between 1914 through 1940. With the demise of Lakshmanachar in 1919, Chinna katchi went through some rough times with infighting among the new leaders of the Sabha involving Mayavaram Vaidyanatha

Bhagavathar, Thanjavur Govinda Bhagavathar, Sabesa Iyer and Soolamangalam Vaidyanatha Iyer etc. However the leaders managed to patch up their petty differences and the activities of Chinna katchi continued as one group until 1925 when Bangalore Nagaratnamma appeared in the scene.



In 1925, Nagaratnamma erected the current temple for Saint Thyagaraja around the Samadhi and performed the kumbabhishekam. She handed over the keys to the temple to Ramudu Bhagavathar, great-grandson of Thyagaraja's brother. After getting a court order from the Thiruvaiyaru Sub-Magistrate executive committee of Chinna katchi was able to perform the aradhana celebration on the bahula-panchami day at the newly erected temple in 1925. On that day evening Palladam Sanjiva Rao gave the first concert

for the aradhana. Starting in 1926, Chinna katchi's rights to perform the aradhana at the current venue were upheld by the court. In the same year, Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar was elected president of Chinna katchi.

When Nagaratnamma wanted to perform during the aradhana celebration her request was turned down by both the factions, since during those days women were not allowed to perform during the aradhana. This heralded a new party, that of Nagaratnamma in the scene. Thus there were three factions celebrating Thyagaraja's celebration in parallel until 1940. Persuaded by common sense, the music lovers of the three parties gave up their differences and united as one group to honor Saint Thyagaraja in 1940. This was also the year when common sense prevailed and women were allowed to perform during the aradhana and take part in the religious activities. In 1984, Chellam Iyer (grandson of Gopalakrishna Iyer founder member of the first Thyagabrahma Mahotsava Sabha with Chinna katchi), S. Parthasarathy and few others of the Thillaisthanam tradition, formed a Trust called "*Sadguru Thyagabrahma Aradhana Kainkarya Trust Madras*" that even today continues the religious part of the aradhana celebration. The musical celebration is continued by the group formed in 1940.

Thyagaraja Aradhana 2009:

THE 162nd Aradhana celebration in honor of Saint Thyagaraja was performed at the Samadhi of the saint in Thiruvaiyaru, Thanjavur district on Jan 15, 2009 with the traditional rendering of the "pancharatna krithis" by a group of musicians assembled under one roof. Even the celestial angels greeted this occasion with a heavy down pour just during the pancharatna krithi rendition. Earlier in the morning the traditional "unchavrithi" was performed after special pujas to the saint's bronze idol in his ancestral home. The idol was carried in a procession to the Samadhi led by the secretary A.K. Palanivel where special abhishekam was performed simultaneously while the chorus rendering of the pancharatna krithis was being performed, followed by mangala aarthi.

The chorus was rendered remarkably well by the assembled artists and the audience was kept in rapt attention. Just to mention a few prominent vocalists who participated in the chorus singing were T.V. Gopalakrishnan, Sudha Raghunathan, O.S. Arun, Neyveli Santhanagopalan, Anuradha Krishnamoorthy, Gayathri Girish and others. Prominent

among the flautists were N. Ramani, Prapanjam Sitharama Rao, Prapanjam Balachandran and others. Leading violinists were V.V. Ravi, Neyveli Krishnan, Narmada and others. The singers were accompanied on the mridangam by Umayalpuram Sivaraman, Srimushnam Raja Rao and Thiruvapur Vaidyanathan. Earlier there was nadaswaram recital by Thiruppamburam Brothers, Sheik Subhani and Khalish Beevi, Chinnamanur Kasim and others.

This year's celebration was inaugurated on January 11 by the violin maestro Chandrasekaran by lighting the sacred lamp. Every day celebration started at 8:00AM in the morning and concluded at midnight. The evening programs and primetime features were telecast by AIR and door dharshan. Large number of junior artists and children learning music participated in the program and paid their respect to Saint Thyagaraja. Everyday two or three senior artists were featured during the primetime. Though this year's aradhana coincided with the Pongal holidays, people in large numbers attended the function from far off places including foreign countries like US, England, Middle east, Australia, Sri Lanka etc. to pay homage to the saint and receive his grace. Saint Thyagaraja commands the respect due to an emperor of the musical empire even though he led the life of a mendicant in his life time. Approximately 10000 people attended this year's function according to the estimate provided by the executive committee of the aradhana celebration.



The house where the Thyagaraja lived in *Thirumanjana veedhi* is being renovated and will be ready for public view some time next year. The venue will be used as *dhyana mandapam* where the visitors can meditate and experience the divine music of Thyagaraja. This project is undertaken with support from all musicians as Thyagaraja has touched or influenced each and every disciple of classical music.

On a personal note:

My journey to Thiruvaiyaru from Chennai was anything but fun. I had been planning to attend this year's celebration since October 2008. In spite of my planning, the train reservation for me and my wife between Chennai and Thanjavur were on waiting list and never got confirmed since that night was the day before the great Pongal festival in Tamil Nadu and all the trains were overbooked and sold out. Finally we managed to get on to a bus on the afternoon of Jan 14th and reached Thanjavur at 1:30AM on Jan 15th. Checked into a dingy hotel and got two hours of sleep before we got up at 5:00AM to get ready for the aradhana celebration. We reached the Samadhi at 7:00AM since we did not want to miss the pancharatna krithi. From the time I entered the premises of the temple a surreal feeling came over me. I was excited to see so many musicians assembled under one roof to pay homage to the greatest musical genius. I met quite a few of my musician friends Kadri Gopalnath, Raja Rao, Sudha Raghunathan, Umayalpuram Sivaraman, N. Ramani, Neyveli Santhanagopalan just to name a few. Kadri Gopalnath and Raja Rao had kindly given us a pass to sit alongside the musicians with a requirement that I had to be dressed up in *veshti* and a towel to cover the body (no shirt). I was fortunate to get some time to

converse with Umayalpuram Sivaraman who briefly described the history behind the aradhana celebration. Later I got a chance to talk to A.K. Palanivel the secretary for the aradhana celebration. Palanivel is a recognized thavil vidwan. It was remarkable to see free food served to all the attendees both in the morning as well as in the evening. I had good conversation with Deccan Murthy, the treasurer of the aradhana committee who is responsible for food arrangements. He mentioned that free food (all you can eat) was served two times a day during all the five days of celebration. The dining hall where the food was served can seat about 300 people at one time. On the average about 2000 people were served food every day.

I also visited the great temple housing *Lord Panchanadhiswara* and *Goddess Dharmasamvardhini*. The temple is a spectacular building but very poorly maintained as is often the case in India. It was heartrending to see beautiful Thanjavur style paintings on the walls inside the temple being painted over by artless crew showing marks of graffiti. The Thiruvaiyaru I had seen as a young boy with my father has not changed much. It has become more crowded with more buses and lot more dirt all over. It is very unfortunate that there are no hotels for the visitors to stay during the aradhana celebration. In spite of all this I would love to visit Thiruvaiyaru whenever I get a chance. If you ask my wife she may beg to differ with me.

* The historical account presented here is based on the reports from the Hindu news paper, other local dailies and private conversations the author had during the visit. These are for informational purpose only.

Dr. P. Swaminathan is a former President of SRUTI. He has served in the SRUTI committees in various capacities during past 21 years since the foundation of SRUTI. He loves Carnatic music and is a frequent contributor to SRUTI publications.

Number & Types of Thyagaraja's Composition

- Claimed to have composed 22,400 songs – equal to the number of slokas in Valmiki's Ramayana. However, only about 736 kritis are known, of which some 10-20 are of controversial authenticity.
- Sthala kritis: Thiruvathiur Pancharathnas; Kovur Pancharathnas; Sri Rangam Pancharathnas; Lalgudi Pancharathnas.
- Divyanama kirtanas; Utsava (Bhajana) Sampradaya Kirtanas
- Musicals: Prahlada Bhakti Vijayam; Nouka Charitram; Sitarama Vijayam (unavailable)

Thyagaraja's Quest for Supreme Wisdom

Ch. Mallikarjuna Rao

(Published in 2009)

Aananda and Vedanta Vichara

Aananda or happiness is two fold: *vishayaananda* - the relative and temporary happiness that is based on *baahya vishayas* or external objects and the *aathmaananda* or *Purushaartha Moksha* - the absolute and permanent happiness that is based on *aathma jnanam* or self-knowledge. *Vedas* offer these choices and also give the methodologies to achieve them-*Veda Poorva* viz. *samhitas* and *brahmanas* for *vishayaananda* and *Vedantha* viz. *Aaranyakaas* and *Upanishads* for *Aathmaananda* or *Purushaartha Moksha*. *Samhitas* and *brahmanas* prescribe *Karma* and *Upaasana* methods that lead to *Purushaarthas* viz. *Dharma*, *Artha* and *Kaama*. However, *Karma phalam* and *Upaasana phalam* have three defects- *bandhakatvam* or bondage, *athipthikaratham* or discontentment and *duhkha mishritham* or mixed with pain – pain in acquiring the *vishayas*, more pain in their preservation and most pain in their loss sooner or later. It is *Moksha* that is totally free from these defects. However, there is no short cut to *Moksha* other than *Vedanta Vichara* or engagement in *Vedanta* under a competent and traditional guru. Indeed, Saint *Thyagaraja* proclaims this idea in his *kriti* “*Guru leka yetuvanti guniki theliyagabodu*”- without *Guru-Sathguru* (a traditional *Guru* who is established in *Brahma Nishtta*), it is not possible to know and abide in *atma-jnanam*.

Vedanta in Thyagaraja Kritis

Saint Singer *Thyagaraja*, the soul of Indian culture and *Parama Bhaagavathaagresara*, followed the above method of *Vedanta Vichara* in his pursuit of *Moksha*. This great Singer-Poet, Maestro of *Bhaava*, *Rasa* and *Thaala* and Musical Composer nonpareil, graced the world during the period 1759 to 1847 A.D. He underwent rigorous *Vedic* and *Vedantic* study under his father and mentor *Sri Kakarla Raamabrahmam* and also traditional *Guru Swami Ramakrishnaananda*. Later he was blessed by none other than *Vara Naarada Guruswami* with the unique gift of *Svararnavam*. Thus he had *Shastra vichara* under competent traditional *Gurus*- the basic requirement for *Moksha saadhana*.

Saint *Thyagaraja* as a *Jnana Nishtta* is revealed to us in many of his compositions. But three among them presented for the present study are outstanding in this context. Their deep understanding is invaluable in our own *Vedanta Vichara* and *Moksha Sadhana*.

The first *Kriti* that is presented for discussion starts with the pallavi “*Jnana mosaga raada-Garuda Gamana Vaada*” in which *Thyagaraja* appeals “Oh *Garuda* Conveyed! Gift me the Supreme Wisdom. Is there any (incompatible) controversy (that is a deterrent for the fulfillment of my appeal)?” There are two aspects that are clear in this song. One, mere *Vedantic* Knowledge is of no avail. It needs to be converted to the Supreme Wisdom. Next, divine grace is a MUST for this Wisdom. Saint *Thyagaraja* condenses the entire *Vedantic* thought into a stunningly simple song.

Saint *Thyagaraja* had the prerequisite knowledge of *Vedas* but appeals to *Garuda Gamana* for *Jnanam*, the Supreme Wisdom. Such an invocation is perfectly justified. Indeed, *Adi Shankara Bhagavatpada* in his *Viveka Choodamani*-verse 3 states:
Durlabham thrayam yevaitthath Dalvaanugraha hethukam
Manushyathvam Mumukshutham Mahaapurushssamshrayah

“Self-Knowledge and Liberation cannot be obtained by mere meritorious *Karma* and *Upaasana*. To be born as a human being, to have utmost craving for liberation and to have a recourse in a competent and traditional guru- all these are the effects of Divine grace.

Again, in the kriti “*Enduku Peddalavale*”, Saint *Thyagaraja* imploringly appeals to Lord *Raama*: “Why do you not gift me the wisdom of the great realized ones? Mere knowledge of *Vedas*, *Sastras* and *Puraanas*, Music, Drama, Rhetoric and Literature (*Apara Vidya*) Vedantaas and *Thathvaarthas*(*Para Vidya*) is of no avail without the ultimate wisdom by which the imperishable is attained (*yaya thath Aksharam adhigamyathe*)”. This refined intellect is termed “*peddala vale buddhi*” by *Thyagaraja*- the one that is called “*agryaya, sookshmyaya buddhya*” (sharp, subtle intellect) by *Kathopanishad*.

Let us now examine how Saint *Thyagaraja* pursues his quest for the Supreme wisdom. This is clearly brought out in the next *Krithi*.

*Inthakanna Aanandamem Oh Raama! Raama! Santhajanulakella
sammathiyai undugaani
Aaduchu naadamuna paaduchu yedururaa veduchu manasuna koodi
yunduta chaalu
Shree Hari keerthanache Dehaadi indriya sa moohamulu marachi
sohamainade chaalu
Nee japamula vela Nee jagamulu Neevai Raajillunayya Thyagaraajanutha
charitha.*

In this *Krithi*, *Thyagaraja* asks “Is there Bliss (Supreme) that is greater than (*aparokshaanubhooti*)? Oh *Rama Raama* (*saguna Eswara Raama*, the embodiment of Truth and all virtues)! Oh *Raama* (*Nirguna Brahma Raama*- the All-supporting *Sath* and the All-enlivening *Chith* principle). It is this True Knowledge or Self-Knowledge in the form of Supreme Bliss that is known only to the enlightened *vedantins* (*santhajanulu*).

Suffice it to understand this Self-Knowledge, the *Aparoksha Jnanam*, in unison with the subtle mind- intellect through the entreating touch of music and dance. Suffice it to understand this *Soham*-Knowledge (Self-Knowledge) available in *sahaja samaadhi* when sense organs of perception and action dedicated to *Hari Keerthana* are withdrawn from the objective world. Suffice it to understand that in moments of meditation, the worlds of experience culminate in the brilliance of *Jeevaathma Paramaathma Aikya Jnanam*.

Supreme wisdom and Uttama Bhakthi

Bhagvan Ramana in his *Upadesa Sara* calls the Ultimate as *Uttama Bhakthi*. He says “The actions done by the body and mind viz. *pooja*, *japa* and meditation are serially superior to each other. To chant or sing the glories of the Lord is good. Superior to that is loud *japa*. Superior to that is soft *japa*. Superior to soft *japa* is *japa* done by the mind. Mental *japa* is the subtlest and the best. Meditation without duality (*SOHAM*) is considered superior to contemplation with duality. By the strength of the *soham* thought, firm abidance in the existence principle is gained which is free from thought modifications. This indeed is Supreme Devotion.”

The term *Japamulu* applied by *Thyagaraja* includes the entire spectrum of physical,

verbal and mental disciplines that are ingrained in all his activities. The “*Sohamaina Aanandam*” that is referred to in the kriti “*Inthakanna Aanandamemi*” is the very *Sath-bhaava-susthih* or *Uttama Bhakthi* presented to us by *Bhagvan Ramana* in *Upadesa Sara*.

Lord *Krishna* equates *Jnanee Bhaktha* to *Uthama Bhaktha* in *Bhagavad Gita* Ch.7 verses 14 and 16.

Chaturvidha bhajanthe maam Janaasukrithinorjuna
Artho jijinaasu rartharthee Jnanee cha Bharatharshabha
Vudaaraassarva Yevaithe Jnaneethvaathmaiva matham
Aasthithah ssahi yukthaathmaa maamevaa nuthamaam gathim

“Four kinds of virtuous men worship Me, Oh *Arjuna*, the distressed, the seeker of knowledge, the seeker of wealth and the wise. O best among the *Bharathaas*. Noble indeed are all these four. But the wise one, I deem as My very Self. For, steadfast in mind, he is established in Me alone as the Supreme Goal”.

Ecstasy of Self-Knowledge

Lastly, I present to you another *Krithi* that reveals his ecstasy in Self-Knowledge.

Entha Bhagyamu Ma Paala kalgithivi, Evvareedu mujjagamulothanaku
Chenthajeri sou janyudai baliki Chinta baaga thola ginchi brochitivi
Munnu nee sarneepamuna velayu sath Munula nella naNimaadi leelalache
Thinnagaanu paalanamu jesinattu Nannu gaachithivi Thyagarajanutha

“What a great fortune has come within our range of cognition! Who can rival this (*sath-chith-anaanda*) in the three worlds of experience (waking, dreaming and deep sleep) of the Body-mind-intellect complex? Moving close with compassionate expressions and removing all sorrows thoroughly, you are the doubtless protection indeed!

In the distant past, sages with siddhis such as *anima* or capacity for *sookshma darshanam*, who were close to you, were convincingly protected by you. So also you have now protected and blessed me (with the *ekathvam* of *Chith roopa Athma* and the *Sath roopa Jagath* which is the very *Ananda swaroopan* of the Self)! Oh, *Thyagaraja* praised”.

Conclusion

It is noteworthy Saint *Thyagaraja* refers to in his *Krithis*, *Raama*, interchangeably in the context of *Saguna Sakara Seetha- Raama* and also *Nirguna Nirakara Atma-Raama*. He is well aware of the scriptural message that *Saguna Eswara Upasana (Dhyanam)* is incomplete without *Nirguna Brahma Upasana (Nidhidhyasanam)*; and *Nirguna Brahma Nidhidhyasanam* is impossible without *Saguna Eswara Dhyanam*. *Thyagaraja's Raama* signifies both and he revels in the abidance in either as per his musical mood, although he is a *Jeevan muktha* with the cognitive conviction of “*Soham*” and “*Thathavam Asi*” declared in our scriptural *mahavakyas*. All glory to Saint *Thyagaraja*. All glory to *Raama* the *Jagadanandakaraka* – The One Reality *Satchit Anandaswaroopa* whose proof is the very creation itself with its multiplicity of *namas* and *roopas*.

(*Mallikarjuna Rao* is a retired marketing executive living in Chennai. He was a disciple of the late Sri R.K.Venkatarama Sastri in classical Carnatic music and a disciple of H.H Swami Paramarthananda Saraswathi, Chennai in Vedanta. The article was provided by the author's niece, Dr. Gayathri Rao.)

Back to Where We Came From

Usha & Bala Balasubramanian

We (Usha and Bala) left on our half-day long journey to Thanjavur enroute to Thiruvaiyaru for the Thyagaraja Aradhana. We traveled on a fairly well equipped minivan .The road to Thanjavur via Thiruchy was quite impressive and clearly well maintained and it was a very pleasant change from the past. We were traveling quite fast (averaging nearly 100 kilometers per hour) and we didn't see many cows or bullock carts on the main trunk roads, but mainly free flowing automobiles.

The road to Thiruvaiyaru from Thanjavur wasn't so good in comparison to the main trunk roads. As we were wondering as to when was the last time they paved these small town roads, we saw a big bus navigating through the one lane road. Obviously, something's didn't change.

But what we didn't realize yet is how far back we are going to dive back in to. 164 years to be exact. The journey for us was a delicious mix of old and new. We were thinking that all of us here in the US should do these kinds of trips while the mix is still delicious. A little more of this or a little less of that could have easily messed up the taste. But it seems like the society knows when to stop the new and celebrate the old.

The most striking thing that we saw right as we arrived was the Pandal. The Pandal, as it was affectionately called, was the place where everything happened. It was really a massive tent, with a capacity for about 10,000 people, was decorated with great care. There was also the obvious commercialization within the Pandal. The main sponsor City Union Bank was prominently displayed throughout along with other sponsors, many of them were also banks. Why are so many banks interested in Carnatic music and Thyagaraja Aradhana? Is that where the money is? Hard to say. However considering the fact that this is a large function and was practically free to all the people who attended and the government is not bank rolling the event, the sponsors certainly deserve some promotion. Charging for the listening to the event or for the food could have spoiled the tradition of the event.

As we were entering the Pandal they handed me a pass and I (Bala) was told to go to the Gents section. Just like that in an instant, completely unexpected, I was separated from my wife. She gave me a smile, as this is the first time for me and she has attended many Thyagaraja Aradhanas from her childhood, having grown up in Thanjavur. "You are on your own buddy!" Most of the other 10,000 people under the Pandal accepted this fate, and was bravely embracing the company of their own gender. I also summoned up my courage and started to move about bravely among the gents; after all I am also back to where I came from. The amazing site was that the number of men and women were about equal, and could see split down the middle and the awesome tradition still being followed. The river was flowing to the full on the side of the Pandal and I got to see the majesty of the river Cauvery.

Sudha Ragunathan, one of the leading exponent of Carnatic Music, wrote an article with the title 'Tryst with Thiruvaiyaru' on the paper published on January 24th 2011. She says that it's her "date" with Saint Thyagaraja. The same sentiment is there with all the artists who spend their own money to come to pay homage to the Thyagaraja Swamy on Pushya Bahula Panchami year after year for the last 164 years.

We are not sure whether there is such devotion shown to any other composer in the world, by the leading artists. For us this was a Once in a Life Time kind of trip back to the land where we came from, at least my ancestors. It is fitting that India is in vogue right now, and the good people of Carnatic music lovers are maintaining a tradition that brings happiness and meaning to our being. What a country! It was easy to ignore a bit of filth and dirt along the way.

It was obvious that this must have been a really special peaceful place about 164 years ago. Saint Thyagaraja and the people living in the area were indeed living off the fertile land and it is easy to imagine the tranquility that must have been there for the Carnatic music lovers of the area in those days.

Passion for the Carnatic music, was obvious in all the people assembled in the Pandal. With love of music was already a given, the people were taking it to the next level. In a sense there was sort of mob effect present. During the evening concerts that we attended, we could see the passion. Even the biggest artists were given only 20 minutes to perform, and no one was trying to go “one up” any one else. There was tradition and respect, and it was all very pleasant to observe.

The Aradhana day started early with about an hour of Nadaswaram concerts by many vidwans concluding with AKC Natarajan playing Rama Bhakthi. After that the enchanting rendering of Pancharatna started with 10,000 singing in chorus. It ended with Deeparadhana for Thyagaraja Swamy. The Pancharatna event went flawlessly and as expected. They must have had quite a bit of practice.

“Endaro Mahanubavulu Andariki Vandanamu”. I took the meaning as Saint Thyagaraja proposing a true secular approach nearly 200 years ago, well ahead of his time. He mainly worshipped Rama, however he acknowledged all the Gods. The depth and the meaning of his songs has eluded many of us for a long time, since there was so much focus on the music structure than the words. As we continue the tradition we would hope that there is some more emphasis on the beauty of the lyrics. There are many who know and understand the lyrics very well and may be they can contribute towards better understanding of his compositions. However, the music lives on.

One of the most fascinating people inside the Pandal was Srimushnam Raja Rao. He was a bundle of energy going back and forth gently telling people what to do. He was also the Secretary for the festival, and possibly responsible for the success of it. Everyone was glad to oblige to him and there was no incidents of misunderstandings, anger or disappointment that I could witness. There was only high expectation for the moment and everyone in the Pandal was clearly in tune with the event. Perhaps it is hard to get such a large group to sing in perfect harmony, but the people present just wanted to participate. Happiness for just being there, and energy that comes from people being together was omnipresent. Everyone showed at most respect to Saint Thyagaraja, and no one picked on any petty fights. Outside of the Pandal, the behavior could be quite different, by the same people. But inside the Pandal it was magical.

We also attended a set of 20 minute mini concerts in the evening by many leading artists. The stage was set for two performances side by side, alternating, in order to save time for set up. It was a pleasure to see senior vidwans performing for Thyagaraja dropping all their egos and showing tremendous respect for music and tradition. We heard Sikkil

Gurucharan accompanied by Umalayapuram Sivaraman on Mridangam who was given some extra time to play Thani avarthanam, which was brisk and energetic. We also heard Kadri playing Saxophone with Kanyakumari on the violin so well that he wanted to keep playing, at the same time knowing the limitations of time. Srimushnam Raja Rao was encouraging him to stop after one more and managing the crowd expectations, artist's expectation and respecting the next artist Sudha Raghunathan who was waiting to give a scintillating performance. Srimushnam was masterful as the cheerleading MC for the evening concerts. We also heard delightful performances from Ganesh Kumaresh and Delhi Sunderarajan on violin. For us, this evening of mini concerts by current leading exponents of Carnatic music was unmatched in its breadth and depth.

We wish that most people who enjoy listening to Carnatic music would visit at least once in a life time to Thiruvaiyaru during the Thyagaraja Aradhana. We are quite sure that the tradition having prevailed for that last 164 years, will survive for a long time to come. But that's no reason postpone your enjoyment by making a trip. The weather is usually very good this time of the year in the area and also usually the water will flow in the river after rainy months in Oct and Nov. During the harvest time people are generally happy and not so snappy.

Usha and Bala have been staunch supporters of Sruti for many years. Usha served as its President during 2006 and as its Treasurer many times. Bala is currently CEO of Karya Technologies, makers of Mobile Applications. He serves as Vice President of Bharatiya Temple and has been involved in various organizations for the benefit of Indian community in the area for the last 25 years.



Chennai Music Season 2010 – Some Observations

Dinakar Subramanian

This was my first trip to Chennai in December in many years. December 2010 coincided with my 25th year reunion event for my undergraduate degree. Excited as I was about the reunion, I was more excited about attending the music season after a very long time. I arrived on a Saturday morning in Chennai and promptly attended a concert in T. Nagar that afternoon.

My routine would include checking the Hindu newspaper every morning to check the updated concert schedules. What was surprising was the reliance placed on the Hindu newspaper as the final word on the schedules. In fact, when I once called a Sabha to confirm the timing of a concert, the person said – Please check the Hindu – whatever is in the Hindu is what will happen today. The Sabha person must have thought to himself that I was definitely a visitor to Chennai.

My interests and schedules led me to the Ramarao Kala Mantap (T. Nagar), Music Academy, Krishna Gana Sabha, Mudhra (T. Nagar), Anantha Padmanabha Swami temple in Adyar, the Parthasarathi Swamy Sabha, Rasika Fine Arts (T. Nagar) and the TAG center. My goal was to attend concerts and lec-dems. I had scoured the internet before I left for India and had also asked my parents to retain the Hindu newspaper issues that contained the schedules for all the Sabhas. One truth was quite evident – that human cloning needed no justification during the Chennai music season. There were clashes of concerts and lec-dems everyday that one had to sacrifice one concert for another equally attractive one.

Arriving at a concert, it was exciting to see people of different ages milling around, chatting about a just-finished concert. Most evening concerts were certain to draw women to attend in grand sarees. Also, in all Sabhas, the first row or two were reserved for VIP's – the perfect location for music star-gazing. It was great to see other musicians happily walk in and out of concerts. Chennai audiences are definitely discerning and almost everyone was armed with the famous 'kutcheri kaiyedu' (concert handbook) – a little book containing a list of songs, ragams and their composers.

One of the biggest news items was that T. M. Krishna skipped the music season. He started performing on January 1st at the Music Academy. The other side note was that he was traveling from Sabha to Sabha on his geared bicycle to be environmentally conscious. In between concerts, you could see many musicians involved in lively discussions. It was fascinating to see their interactions.

I took my notebook to write down the song lists and to make observations. Things that piqued my interest – people would show up for an hour and leave, people would compare notes on concerts they attended, the same group of people would show up in different Sabhas that I began to exchange friendly nods with many of them. Some Sabhas had more than half a dozen monitor speakers all around the stage for the artists. Some of the ushers had no idea whether a person was a VIP or not – I saw Shri T. K. Govinda Rao being asked vacate a first row seat after he had just arrived to listen to a concert.

I attended concerts of Vijay Siva, Shri R. K. Srikantan, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Vidushi Neela Ramgopal, Chitravina Ravikiran and Gayathri Girish. I also attended lecdems by Vidushi Suguna Purushothaman (ideal structure of a composition), Prof. S. R. Janakiraman (variations of Madhyamavati), R. K. Shriramkumar (raga delineation with the aid of compositions), Guruvayoor Dorai (how to accompany for different compositions), Sriram Parasuram (interpretation and presentation of compositions on the violin) and Sangeetha Kalanidhi Nedunuri Krishnamurthy with the Malladi Brothers.



At one concert that I attended, the ticket person offered that there were only available seats were on the stage. It was a classic ‘karumbu thinna kooliyaa’ moment (a Tamil idiom roughly translated as ‘getting paid for doing something you really like’). I liked this view so much that I returned the next day to the same spot for Chitravina Ravikiran’s fusion concert where in addition to Ravi’s magic, I heard wonderful konnakkol from Shri T. H. Subhash Chandran and melodious bowing from Charumathi Raghuraman.

What I also realized was that there is a big following for young singers such as Bharath Sundar, Prasanna Venkataraman, K. Gayathri, Swarna Rethas, Sruthisagar to name a few. These are names I am sure we will hear more in the future.

Clearly, Chennai is the place to be in December for the music but another discovery was – *nothing can beat Madras coffee!* No, really, the coffee at every sabha was just to die for and that at the Music Academy was just divine. In addition to the coffee, there were exotic offerings such as *paal kozhakattai*, *masaala badusha* and *raagi adai* to name a few. The culinary aspect of the season should not be overlooked and it has to be enjoyed to make the visit complete.

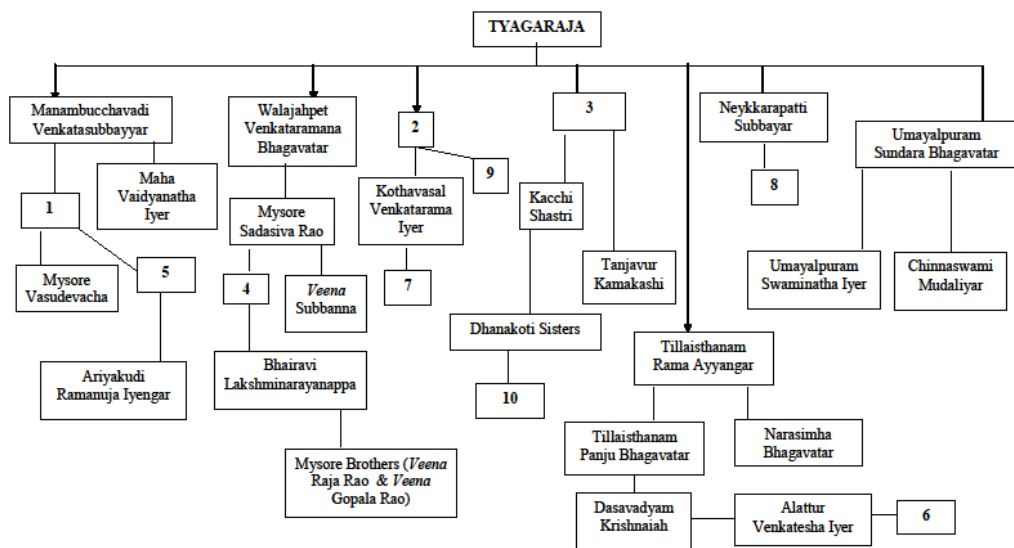
The concert of Vijay Siva that I attended with my mother at Music Academy was special in many ways. My last concert was that of Sanjay Subrahmanyam which ended abruptly thanks to a severe downpour at an open air venue. I had seen it all when the tani was completed with one of the organizers holding an umbrella to shield the mridangist from the rain. A very enjoyable trip where I attended several excellent concerts, missed a few, met old friends and met Sruti friends too. I cannot wait to get to Chennai in December again!

Dinakar Subramanian is an avid listener, teacher and fan of Carnatic music. He also enjoys other forms of music including Hindustani, film and classic rock. He lives in Audobon, PA,

THE TYAGARAJA SHISHYA PARAMPARA

Rumya Venkateswaran & Veena Kanumalla

Use the clues given below to fill in the blanks for the missing *guru* or *shishya* within Sri Tyagaraja's Shishya Parampara. The clue numbers correspond with the numbers assigned to the blanks.



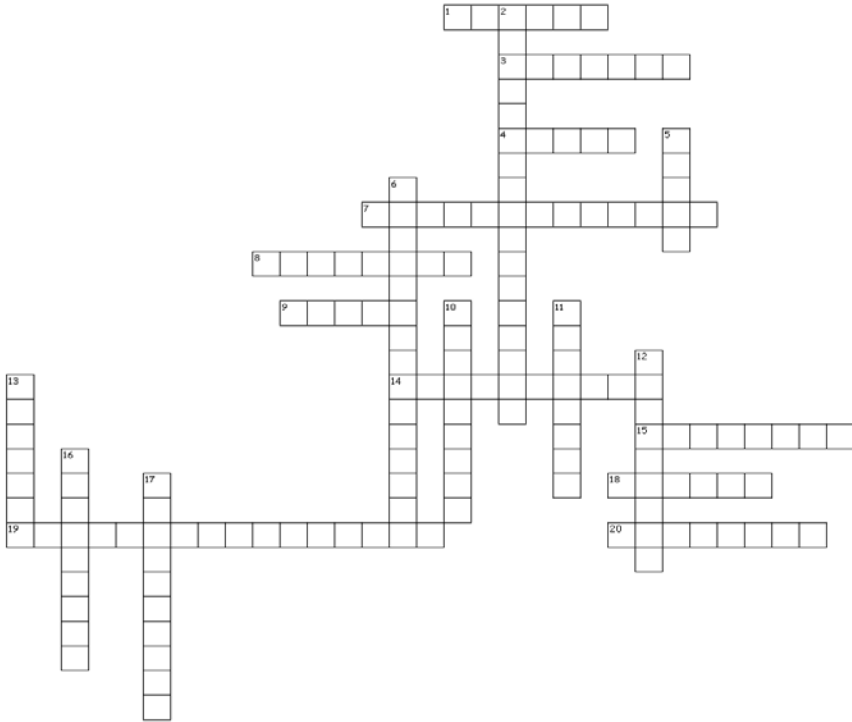
1. This prominent composer was born in 1845 in Tanjavur. He was an asthana *vidwan* at the courts of Tiruvananthapuram, Mysore, Vijayanagaram and Ramanathapuram. He composed over 100 pieces throughout his lifetime and used the mudra *Venkatesha*. He is supposed to have created the raga Kadanakutuhalam.
2. This composer, also a skilled *vainika*, was born into a musical family in Tiruvottiyur. He became a Sanskrit and Telugu scholar, and got the opportunity to learn violin as well. He has composed several kritis, and is one of the prominent composers of varnams. His used the mudra *Gopaladaasa*.
3. This composer was born in Tanjavur in 1803 and earned the unique distinction of being the only person to have learnt under every one of the Trinity of Carnatic composers. Using the mudra *Kumara*, he has composed several masterpieces of such a high order that they are often confused for his father's creations!

4. This musician and composer is perhaps the most famous proponent of the acclaimed Mysore Bani School of Veena. Born in 1852 at Mysore, he is credited with having started the new trend of playing the Veena horizontally instead of vertically. He has composed over 50 pieces in rare ragas, but he is best known for his Tillana in Raga Chenchurutti (Jhunjooti).
5. This singer and composer was born in Ramanathapuram in 1860 and was one of the prominent shishyas of the person in Clue no. 1. Following his guru's style and methods, he is considered to be a highly versatile composer, having composed in several different musical forms ranging from the Varnam to the Tillana.
6. These musicians were one of the most successful duos of the mid-21st century, and created the benchmark for duos. They were considered to be experts in laya and have handled some of the most complex Ragam Tanam Pallavis.
7. This distinguished Carnatic violinist was also a major composer of Tana varnams. Born in 1857, he was considered a child prodigy for his exceptional talent on the violin. He specialized in producing *jaaru* (glides) and has accompanied the top-class vidwans of his times such as Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Iyer.
8. Born in 1842, this composer trained under his own father, Shri Neykkrappatti Subbayyar. He was considered such an expert at Ragam Tanam Pallavi that "Pallavi" got prefixed to his name. He also enjoyed singing and composing in rare ragas such as Kanakangi, Manavati and Pushpalatika, and set his own compositions in notation, a rare element among most compositions. His known compositions include the kritis *Ninnuchala Nammina* (Harikamboji) and *Dasarathapala* (Kanakangi).
9. This magnificent composer of Varnams was the son of the person in Clue no. 2. He used the mudra *Tyagesha* and its variants.
10. This great musician was the son of one of the Dhanakoti Sisters (Kamakshi Ammal). He performed full-bench concerts and was considered another great laya expert. He had a big penchant for Ragam Tanam Pallavis and other laya-oriented compositions such as *Tiruppugazh*, many of which he had tuned himself. Among his brilliant shishyas were the famous Brinda-Mukta duo and Chittoor Subramanya Pillai.

Rumya Venkateswaran (17 years) is an 11th grader at Garnet Valley High School. Veena Kanumalla (16 years) is a sophomore at Wissahickon High School. Both of them are learning Carnatic Vocal Music from Smt. Kiranavali Vidyasankar.

Carnatic Crossword Puzzle

Suguna Chaganti & Jyotsna Soundararajan



CLUES:

Across

1. What is it called when a note is held for an extended period of time?
3. What are the simplest music forms that combine melody and rhythm with lyrics called?
4. In which speed do you sing four notes per beat?
7. The 28th melakarta ragam
8. What raga is the swarajati *Rara Venugopabala* in?

9. This is the Tala system currently in vogue

14. Which raga was considered the sixteenth melakarta in the system that Muttuswami Dikshitar followed?

15. Lyrics are called this in Carnatic music

18. What is the name of a laghu that has seven units?

19. Which raga is equivalent to the major scale in Western music?

20. What piece is usually sung at the end of a concert?

Down

2. Which piece is typically considered the centerpiece of a concert?

5. What are the finger counts in a tala called?

6. What is the 15th melakarta raga?

10. Shyama Shastri, _____, and Muttuswami Dikshitar are the three composers of the Carnatic Trinity.

11. An _____ is a raga's specific ascending sequence

12. He composed using the mudra *Guruguha*

13. The seventy-two melakarta ragas are divided into twelve equal parts called _____.

16. What is another name for a parent or sampoorana raga?

17. What is the collective name for the five ragas used in Tyagaraja's Pancharatna Kritis?

***Note:** any answer that is more than one word should be written into the crossword puzzle without spaces.

Suguna Chaganti is 17 years old and a senior at Methacton High School while Jyotsna Soundararajan is a 15 year old freshman at Parkland High School. They both learn Carnatic Vocal music from Kiranavali Vidyasankar.

Carnatic Word Jumble

Priyanka Dinakar & Sriranjani Srinivasan

[illegible]

										F					
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	---	--	--	--	--	--

CLUES

1. Fast paced part of a song
2. Parent raga
3. Descending scale of a raga
4. The concept of improvisation
5. Series of swarams sung in a particular raga
6. A ragam that has four out of seven notes
7. Imaginative swarams
8. Swaram after the anupallavi in a Varnam
9. A swaram that does not belong
10. Ragas that omit one or more swaram from its parent melakarta
11. Component of a talam that is only one beat
12. Talam that follows this: “ta ki ta ta ka dhi mi”
13. A ragam with a zigzag pattern
14. Twenty-sixth melakarta
15. Muthuswamy Dikshitar’s *mudra* (signature)

FINAL CLUE: This jumble is all about the _____ F _____

Priyanka Dinakar is an 8th grader at The Wyndcroft School. Ranjani Srinivasan is an 8th grader at Great Valley Middle School. They are both currently learning music from Kiranavali Vidyasankar.

CARNATIC WORD SEARCH

By Neha Nataraj

K C W U H E Z M X X J I V A R I A H B T H G C T A
I I N A Y L A K L J Z A R H S I M P E J M A Z J O
L A E O K D V I A R H S I T N A D N A H K Z A U S
W J W N P S A N K E E R N A L R W Y S E B R S G C
O I G D N W R M G R P Y T I N I R I A L A G U B C
B I B W F A U J M I V P A T T A O A D G P N L K W
V B F X G A P A N T U V A R A L I Z A Q S P H W O
H D R A A M D S N B V I N Q H D C Y R Z S V I W K
L I E D J R Y Q W L P O H I H E H Z A L K D L N V
D K I H I I H T J A Z B S B L T O H D O N U A S A
B S G T X D N P M X T T Q R A O I G N P Q T R S F
C H V O V A A V U Y P I S H I R I P A Q Q Z A O C
N I S U V N A R X E G Z T Y T R A V R K C X V P V
K T T A R G Y P C O E B B I D I A A U E O B M T B
V A Q B J A H A S B R R E F R S G N P Y T L A V L
T R I R T S A H S A M A Y H S U D O J V W L A C W
A W K T I A M S K A N J I R A G N A H A A M B L L
M R R P X F P K R X T F Z H A V V A L B N E K P U
B N A E I R W G D B G A N A H O M V L W A I K F H
U F N D H O T H B Y H I N D O L A T N B O Z G A V
R M J L V O B A I R S P K N A A T A B F C G Z C B
A X A I E P H T L W C I T A N R A C G N M K M R B
Q O N B E A S A N A R A H B A R A K N A H S U H P
R B I T N K W M B M U S D Q L Y H Y Y C H Y H U P
C H M J A A C X D G T E A Y R A H C A M A N N A Q

CARNATIC	AARABHI	KALYANI	ROOPAKA	MISHRA	VEENA	SHYAMA SHASTRI
RAGA	PANTUVARALI	BOWLI	AADI	SANKEERNA	TAMBURA	PURANDARA DASA
SRI	BHAIRAVI	SHANKARABHARANA	ATTI	KANJIRA	GHATAM	ANNAMACHARYA
NAATA	ABHOGI	RANJANI	EKA	MRIDANGA	TRINITY	SWATI TIRUNAL
GOWLA	HINDOLA	SRIKARNANI	TISHRA	KOLALU	THYAGARAJA	
VARALI	MOHANA	TALA	KHANDA	VIOLIN	DIKSHITAR	

*****Neha Nataraj is a 10th grader at Tredyffrin High School and is pursuing her Carnatic Vocal Music under the guidance of Kiranavali Vidyasankar."

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES

ANSWERS: TEST YOUR CARNATIC MUSIC AND THYAGARAJA_I.Q

1. [2, Thyagaraja]; 2. [1, Purandara Dasa]; 3. [2,3,5]; 4. [5, Syama Sastri]; 5a. [2]; 5b. [4, Swati Tirunal]; 6. [1]; 7. [3]; 8. [5]; 9. [20]; 10. 1767; 11. [10]; 12. Sonti Veena Venkataramanayya; 13. Lord Rama and Music; 14. Rama;] 15. Tirupati Venkataramana, Ranganatha, Dharmasamvardhini etc.;] 16. Thyagaraja; 17. 200; 18. Anandabhairavi; 19. Paramathmudu (ragadheeswari) & Parithapamu (Manohari); 20. Lord Rama on a hill - He promised Thyagaraja in a dream that He would take him to His kingdom in ten days; 21. Ghana Raga, Kovur, Sri Rangam, Tiruvottiyur & Lalgudi; 22. see 21; 23. Prahlada Bhakthi Vijayam, Nauka Charitam; 24. Walajapet Venkataramana Bhagavatar; 25. Mundu Venake, Rama & Lakshmana.

ANSWERS TO THE TYAGARAJA SHISHYA PARAMPARA QUIZ

1. Patnam Subramanya Iyer
2. *Veenai* Kuppayyar
3. Subbaraya Shastri
4. *Veena* Sheshanna
5. Ramanathapuram (Poochi) Srinivasa Iyengar
6. Alathur Brothers - Sivasubramanya Iyer and Srinivasa Iyer
7. Tirukkodikaval Krishna Iyer
8. *Pallavi* Seshayyar
9. Tiruvottiyur Tyagayyar
10. Kanchipuram Nayana Pillai

ANSWER KEY- CARNATIC CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS:

- | | | |
|----------------------|--------------|------------|
| 1. Karvai | 3. Geetams | 4. Third |
| 7. Harikambhodhi | 8. Bilahari | 9. Sapta |
| 14. Vegavahini | 15. Sahityam | 18. Mishra |
| 19. Shankarabharanam | 20. Mangalam | |

DOWN:

- | | | |
|------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 2. Ragam Tanam Pallavi | 5. Laghu | 6. Mayamalavagowla |
| 10. Tyagaraja | 11. Arohanam | 12. Dikshitar |
| 13. Chakras | 16. Melakarta | 17. Ghana Ragas |

ANSWERS – CARNATIC WORD JUMBLE

1. Madhyamakalam
2. Janaka
3. Avarohanam
4. Manodharma
5. Prayogam
6. Svarantara ragam
7. Kalpanaswaram
8. Mukthayi swaram
9. Anya swaram
10. Varjya
11. Anudhrutam
12. Misra chapu
13. Vakram
14. Charukeshi
15. Guruguha

ANSWER TO THE FINAL CLUE: DIMENSIONS OF MUSIC

Sruti, The India Music and Dance Society

SRUTI- The India Music and Dance Society is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in the Philadelphia area and founded in 1986. Sruti's principal mission is to promote and present Indian classical music and dance. In addition Sruti also seeks to educate the Philadelphia community at large about Indian arts. Sruti is a volunteer-run organization. Its leadership comprises of an elected Board of Directors and several committees. Sruti publishes an annual magazine Sruti Ranjani and a periodical, Sruti Notes.

During the past twenty three years, SRUTI has grown from presenting three to four concerts a year to presenting eight to ten concerts a year. All this has been made possible with recognition and funding from many granting agencies and corporations in addition to a loyal and appreciative audience. SRUTI has received generous grants from private foundations and public organizations including the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, the Philadelphia Foundation, Dance Advance and Philadelphia Music Project (funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts), the Stockton-Rush Bartol Foundation, Sam Fels Foundation and the Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily News.



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(Left to Right: Raghu,Ravi,Raji,Gayathri,Uma,Ramana,Usha,Ramaa,Sunanda)