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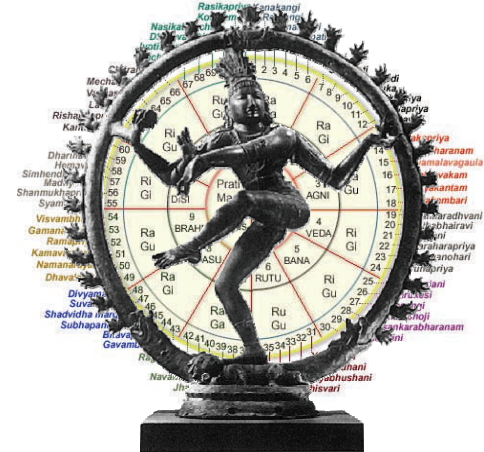
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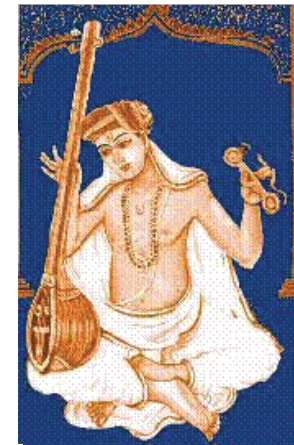
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Thyagaraja Aradhana

Villanova University

March 4, 2006



SRUTI

The India Music and Dance Society

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News Buzzzz..

From Kutcheribuzz News Round Up February 24, 2006

Honors for S. Rajam

Chennai based Sruti Foundation honored veteran musician-painter S. Rajam with the 'Vellore Gopalachariar Memorial Award' on 10 February, 2006 in Chennai. The award function was followed by a talk on S. Rajam's life and work by writer and arts historian Sriram.V The Vellore Gopalachariar Award has been instituted by mridanga vidwan Vellore Ramabhadran in memory of his father the late Vellore Gopalachariar.

Special Postal Cover on Papanasam Sivan

A special postal cover in commemoration of the 115th birth anniversary of well known composer Papanasam Sivan, was released on February 3, 2006 in Chennai.

From the Hindu, Feb 17 2006

Saintly gems glitter with new charm—Sangeetha Sangam was a unique homage to Thyagaraja at the Narada Gana Sabha recently. Dhananjayan danced to the music of Pasupathi, accompanied by Vellore Ramabhadran on the mridangam and V.V. Subramaniam on the violin. Shanta Dhananjayan was the nattuvanar.

Answers to Crossword Puzzle

Across:

3. Sixty 6. One 9. Kakarla 10. Nidhichala 11. Thiruvapur
12. Sonthi 13. Cleveland

Down:

1. May 2. Giriraja 4. Seven 5. Thodi 7. Ramabrahmam
8. Narada 11. Two

76. Dr. N. Ramani (Flute) 2004- 1 Cd
C.S. Anuroop (violin)
P.K. Swaminathan (mridangam)
77. Kanya Kumari (violin) 2004- 2 Cd's
Embar Kannan (Violin)
Thiruvapur Vaidyanathan (Mridangam)
78. Sanjay Subrahmanyam (vocal) 2004 - 3 Cd's
Nagai Muralidharan (Violin)
Mannargudi A. Easwaran (Mridangam)
79. Umayalpuram K. Sivaraman (Mridangam) 2004 - 2 Cd's
Nemani Somayajulu (Jalatharangam), E. M.
Subramanian (Ghatam),
Nagai Sriram (Violin),
Mattanur Sankarankutty (Chenda)
Unnikrishnan (Thimila, Edakka & Sanku)
80. T. N. Bala (vocal) & party 2004 - 2Cd's
Murugaratnamala
81. Savitha Rao (Vocal) 2005 - 2Cd's
Sandhya Srinath (Violin)
Srinath Bala (Mridangam)
81. Ravikiran (Chitravina) & Shashank (flute) 2005 - 3Cd's
Satish Kumat (Mridangam),
Phalgun (Kanjira)
Sukanya Ramgopal (Ghatam)
82. T. M. Krishna (Vocal) 2005 - 3 Cd's
R.K. Sriramkumar (Violin),
K. Arun Prakash (Mridangam)
B. Purshothaman (Kanjira)

Thyagaraja Aradhana Festival 2006

The 159th Thyagaraja Aradhana Festival in Thiruvaiyaru was celebrated between the 16th and 21st of January 2006. On the inaugural day of the festival, mridangam maestro Umayalpuram K Sivaraman made the following observation: "It was saint-composer Thyagaraja who was instrumental in raising the position of Carnatic music to its pinnacle of glory among the different systems of music in the world today".

On *pushya bahula panchami*, the anniversary of the day that Saint Thyagaraja attained Samadhi, a group singing of the Pancharatna Kritis at Thiruvaiyaru is traditionally observed. Vocalists, instrumentalists and rasikas from all over the world gather at Thiruvaiyaru on the banks of the Kaveri and take part in the Aradhana celebration. After Thyagaraja's demise, his shishyas started a tradition of offering worship at his samadhi. The Aradhana festival as it is celebrated today at Thyagaraja's Samadhi is the result of the efforts of Bangalore Nagarathnammal, a musician and a staunch devotee of Thyagaraja. On the *Pushya Bahula Panchami* day, the musicians emulate Thyagaraja's Unchavriti (walking down the streets singing songs & collecting rice from the residents).

On March 4th, 2006, Sruti will be celebrating Thyagaraja Aradhana Festival for the 19th time (officially) in the Greater Philadelphia region. This is one of the many Aradhanas that take place in the Indian Diaspora. The number of observances is growing all over the globe. For Sruti, this day marks the launch of the music and dance season for the year. The members of the Sruti community look forward to the group rendering of Saint Thyagaraja's Pancharatna Kritis. This is also an opportunity for newcomers in the commu-

nity to join in with the very committed group of vocalists and instrumentalists who take on this responsibility year after year. The group rendition is followed by individual performances- vocal and instrumental. This year, the culmination of the day long observance will be the featured vocal concert by Kiranavali Vidyasankar.

The 2006 Sruti Aradhana booklet includes four articles by eminent rasikas. Sri V.K. Viswanathan elaborates on the "Musical Influence" of Thyagaraja especially with respect to the compositions of Papanasam Sivan. His scholarly article is complete with analysis of the interpretations of various musicians. *Rasikan's* erudite article focuses on the genius of the compositions with respect to one Melakarta raga and its janya (offspring) ragas. Thyagaraja is a well known *Rama Bhaktha* and his compositions overflow with devotion and philosophical content. Sri Parasaran gives the reader insight into the compositions dedicated to deities other than Sri Rama. Sri Prabhakar Chitrapu's informative article is at the same time a plea directed to the more discerning amongst music lovers. He echoes the feelings of many of us as we struggle to understand why some pieces of music move us and take us to great heights. These thought provoking articles provide us with insight into various aspects of music and whet our appetite for the pursuit of knowledge

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Sundari Balakrishnan
Rangaprabhu Parthasarathy
Ramaa Nathan
Rungun Nathan

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 66. Malladi Brothers (Vocal) | 2002(3) |
| R. Swaminadhan (violin), Palani C. Kumar (mridangam) | |
| 67. Pandit Vishwamohan Bhatt (Mohan Vina) & Chitravina Ravikiran (Chitravina) | 2002(3) |
| Subrata Bhattacharya (tabla), Subhashchandran (mridangam) | |
| 68. T.M. Krishna (Vocal) | 2002(3) |
| B.U. Ganesh Prasad (Violin), J. Vaidyanathan (Mridangam) | |
| 69. Rama Ravi (Vocal) | 2002(3) |
| B.V. Raghavendra Rao (Violin) Prakash Rao (mridangam) | |
| 70. Aparna Balaji (vocal) | 2003(2) |
| Radha Mani (violin) Vijay Gopalakrishnan (mridangam) | |
| 70. Aruna Sairam (Vocal) | 2003- 3 Cds |
| B.V. Raghavendra Rao (Violin) J. Vaidyanathan (mridangam) | |
| 71. Ganesh & Kumaresh (violin duet) | 2003- 3 Cds |
| Neiveli Venkatesh (mridangam) Giridhar Udappa (ghatam) | |
| 72. Kadri Gopalnath (Saxophone) | 2003- 3 Cds |
| A. Kanyakumari (violin) Denkanikotta Mani (Thavil) Sumanth Swaminathan (saxophone) | |
| 73. O.S. Thiagarajan (vocal) | 2003- 3 Cds |
| Delhi Sundararajan (violin) Neiveli Narayanan (mridangam) | |
| 74. V. K. Raman | 2004- 2 Cds |
| Jay Shankar Balan (violin) Mali Santhanakrishnan (mridangam) | |
| 75. Vijay Siva (vocal) | 2004 - 2 Cd's |
| R.K. Shriramkumar, Violin J. Vaidyanathan, Mridangam | |

- M. Chandramouli (Violin)
Kumbakonam Ganesh (Mridangam)
56. M.S.Gopalakrishnan 2000(2)
Narmadha (Violin)
Tiruvaroor Bhakthavatsalam (Mridangam)
57. Priya Sisters (Vocal) 2000(2)
B. Raghavendra Rao (Violin)
J. Vaidyanatha (Mridangam)
58. Mysore Nagaraj & Manjunath (Violin) 2001(2)
Srimushnam Raja Rao (Mridangam)
59. M.S. Sheela (Vocal) 2001(2)
Radhika Mani (Violin),
A. R. Dattatreya Sharma (Mridangam),
V. Kashinath (Kanjira),
Rudrapatnam Sathyakumar (Ghatam)
60. P. Unnikrishnan (Vocal) 2001(2)
Vittal Ramamurthy (Violin)
Trichur Narendran (Mridangam)
61. Hyderabad Brothers (Vocal) 2001(2)
Delhi Sundararajan (violin),
S. Raja Rao (Mridangam)
62. Bombay Jayashri (Vocal) 2001(2)
R.K. Sriramkumar (Violin),
K. Arun Prakash (Mridangam)
63. Rajeswari Satish (Vocal) 2002(2)
Radhika Mani (Violin),
C.G. Balachandran (Mridangam),
Murali Balachandran (Ghatam)
64. S. Shashank (Flute) 2002(2)
B.U. Ganesh Prasad (Violin),
Satish Kumar (Mridangam),
T. Radhakrishnan (Ghatam),
M. Gururaj (Morsing)
65. Ustad Shahid Pervez Khan (Sitar) 2002(2)
Ustad Kadar Khan (Tabla)

Thyagabrahmam- His Musical Influence

V.K.Viswanathan

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 Lal-gudi.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 Thyagaraja 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

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|-----|--|----------|
| | Ganesh Prasad (Violin) | |
| | Poongulam Subramaniam (Mridangam) | |
| 43. | T. .N. Krishnan & Viji Krishnan Natarajan (Violin) | 1997(2) |
| | B. Harikumar (Mridangam) | |
| | Vaikkom R. Gopalakrishnan (Ghatam) | |
| 44. | Kadri Gopalanath (Saxophone) | 1997(2) |
| | Kanyakumari (Violin) | |
| | Guruvayur Durai (Mridangam) | |
| 45. | N. Ramani-Flute | 1998(2) |
| | Srikant Venkataraman (Violin) | |
| | Srimushnam Rajarao (Mridangam) | |
| 46. | Lalgudi G.R. Krishnan (Violin) | 1998(2) |
| | Vellore Ramabhadran (mridangam) | |
| | V. Nagarajan (kanjira) | |
| 47. | Sanjay Subrahmanyam (Vocal) | 1998(2) |
| | Ananthakrishnan (Violin) | |
| | Palghat Raghu (Mridangam) | |
| 48. | T.M. Krishna (Vocal) | 1998(2) |
| | Bombay Gayathri (violin) | |
| | K. Arun Prakash (mridangam) | |
| 50. | N. Ravikiran (Chitravina) | 1 998(2) |
| | Ananthakrishnan (Violin) | |
| | Master Anand (Mridangam) | |
| 51. | Neyveli Santhanagopalan-Vocal | 1999(2) |
| | Delhi Sundararajan (Violin) | |
| | Srimushnam Rajarao (Mridangam) | |
| 52. | Mysore Nagaraj & Manjunath (Violin) | 1999(2) |
| | Thiruvavur Bhakthavathsalam (Mridangam) | |
| 53. | Sikkil Mala Chandrasekhar (Flute) | 1999(2) |
| | H.N. Bhaskar (Violin), M. Suresh (Mridangam) | |
| 54. | T. .N. Seshagopalan (Vocal) | 2000(2) |
| | Jayasankaran Bala (Violin) | |
| | Vaidyanathan (Mridangam) | |
| 55. | Maharajapuram Ramachandran | 2000(2) |

30. Vijay Siva (Vocal) 1993(2)
Shriram Kumar (Violin)
J. Vaidhyanathan (mridangam)
31. Charumathi Ramachandran (Vocal) 1994(2)
M.S. Anantharaman (Violin)
Skandaprasad (Mridangam)
32. Bombay Jayashri (Vocal) 1995(2)
Vittal Ramamurthy (Violin)
Palani Chakravarthy (Mridangam)
33. Sowmya (Vocal) 1995(2)
Narmada (Violin)
Balaji (Mridangam)
34. Sanjay Subramaniam (Vocal) 1995(2)
R.K. Sriramkumar (Violin)
K. Arun Prakash (Mridangam)
35. Vani Satish (Vocal) 1995(2)
Satish (Violin)
Mahesh Krishnamurthy (Mridangam)
37. Nithyasree (Vocal) 1996(2)
Embar Kannan (Violin)
Siva Kumar (Mridangam)
38. M.S. Sheela (Vocal) 1996(3)
Nalina Mohan (Violin)
Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma (Mridangam)
Sukanya Ramgopal (Ghatam)
39. Jayanthi & Padmavathi (Veena Duet) 1996(2)
Thiruvurur Vaidyanathan (Mridangam)
40. Shashank (Flute) 1996(2)
Gopinath (Violin)
Satish Kumar (Mridangam)
Tripunithira Radhakrishnan (Ghatam)
41. O.S. Thyagarajan (Vocal) 1997(3)
Srikanth Venkataraman (Violin)
Srimushnam Raja Rao (Mridangam)
42. Balaji Shankar 1997(2)

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 Panasm 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", "Kanakkankodi", 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

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|-----|--|---------|
| | M. Narasimhamurthi (Violin) | |
| | T. Narendran (Mridangam) | |
| | M. Govindarajan (Ghatam) | |
| 19. | Ravi Kiran (Chitra Veena) | 1994(2) |
| | P. Sunder Rajan (Violin) | |
| | Vellore Ramabhadran (Mridangam) | |
| 20. | K.V.Narayanaswamy (Vocal) | 1993(2) |
| | Nagai Muralidharan (Violin) | |
| | Vellore Ramabhadran (Mridangam) | |
| 21. | Kadiri Gopalnath (Saxophone) | 1987(2) |
| | T.S. Srinivasan (Violin) | |
| | T.R. Ramakrishnan (Mridangam) | |
| 22. | T.V. Sankaranarayanan (Vocal) | 1994(2) |
| | T.K.V. Ramanujacharyulu (Violin) | |
| | B. Harikumar (Mridangam) | |
| 23. | Trichur V. Ramachandran (Vocal) | 1992(2) |
| | V. V. Ravi (Violin) | |
| | S. V. Raja Rao (Mridangam) | |
| 24. | Lalgudi Srimathi Brahmanandam (Violin) | 1990(2) |
| | Prakash Rao (Mridangam) | |
| 25. | Rudrapatnam Brothers (Vocal) | 1991(2) |
| | R.N. Thyagarajan (Violin) | |
| | R.N. Tharanathan (Mridangam) | |
| 26. | T.K. Govinda Rao (Vocal) | 1990(2) |
| | N. Shashidhar (Violin) | |
| | Satish Pathakota (Mridangam) | |
| 27. | T. R. Subramanyam (Vocal) | 1988(3) |
| | Vasanth Kannan (Violin) | |
| | Trichur Mohan (Mridangam) | |
| 28. | T. N. Bala (Vocal) | 1994(2) |
| | Sashidhar (Violin) | |
| | Balachander & Murali (Mridangam) | |
| 29. | S.P. Ramh (Vocal) | 1994(2) |
| | Shashidhar (Violin) | |
| | Satish Pathakota (Mridangam) | |

8. Lalgudi G. Jayaraman (Violin) 1993(2)
G.J.R. Krishnan & J. Vijayalakshmi (violin)
Trichy Sankaran (Mridangam)
Vinayakaram (Ghatam),
V. Nagarajan (Khanjira)
9. N. Ramani (Flute) 1989(2)
N. Muralidharan (Violin)
S. Raja Rao (Mridangam)
10. N. Ramani (Flute) 1992(2)
Kanyakumari (Violin)
Guruvayor Dorai (Mridangam)
11. Dr. C. Chittibabu (Veena) 1994(2)
N. Somayajulu (Mridangam)
U.K. Narayanaswamy (Ghatam)
12. U. Srinivas (Mandolin) 1990(2)
Sikkil Bhaskaran (Violin)
Palghat Raghu (Mridangam)
13. U. Srinivas 1993(2)
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K. V. Prasad (Mridangam)
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T. Vaidyanathan (Mridangam)
15. Maharajapuram Santhanam (Vocal) 1989(2)
& Srinivasan
Nagai Muralidharan (Violin)
Vellore Ramabadhran (Mridangam)
16. T.N.Seshagopalan (Vocal) 1992(2)
G. Chandramouli (Violin)
Neyveli Narayanan (Mridangam)
17. Nedunuri Krishnamurthi 1991(2)
Thiruparkadal S. Veeraraghavan
Padmasri Umayalpuram
K. Sivaraman
18. Saroja & Lalitha (Bombay Sisters)(Vocal) 1989(3)

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!

About the author: 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.

SRUTI Concert Recordings

The following recorded tapes and CDs of Sruti concerts are available for distribution among patrons of Sruti. To order any of these tapes or CDs, please contact Dr. P. Swaminathan (215-643-2145). The year of the concert and the number of cassettes (within parentheses) are given. CDs are marked as such.

1. M.L. Vasanthakumari (Vocal) 1986(2)
Kanyakumari (Violin),
Ramnad Raghavan (Mridangam)
2. Kadri Gopalnath (Saxophone) 1987(2)
T.S. Srinivasan (Violin),
T.R. Ramakrishnan (Mridangam)
3. Smt. Sheela Ramaswamy (Vocal) 1987(2)
K.S. Mani (Violin),
M.S. Venkatesh (Mridangam)
4. T. R. Subramanyam (Vocal) 1988(3)
Vasanth Kannan (Violin),
Trichur Mohan (Mridangam)
5. Dr. M. Balamuralikrishna (Vocal) 1989(2)
Purna Chandar (violin)
B. Balasai (flute)
Dara Appala Srinivas (mridangam)
6. Dr. M. Balamuralikrishna (Vocal) 1990(3)
Pandit Bhimsen Joshi (Vocal)
Solo & Jugalbandi
7. Dr. M. Balamurali Krishna (vocal) 1991(3)
Raghavendra Rao (violin)
Dara Appala Srinivas (Mridangam)
Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia (flute)
Anuradha Chaurasia (tanpura)
Madan Misra (tabla)

mpdsdp - part of the 4th prayoga mpdsdppmR - in the 5th & 6th Pallavi Sangathis
 mpdsdpmr - part of the 4th prayoga mpdpmRS - in the last line of Pallavi
 mpdpmr - part of the 12th prayoga - mpdpmRS - in the 5th and 6th sangathis,

4. Concluding Remarks

With all this, where am I in music understanding and appreciation? I have drawn and shown some graphs. How different is it from seeing the notations? I guess it is visual, but what additional insight has it brought to you and to me? I do not know. Perhaps I should stop now, go to the family room, put on a CD and listen to these Gems of Thyagaraja, in stead of vainly trying to write about them!

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About the author: Prabhakar has been a Sruti volunteer since its inception. His interests include music, language and philosophy

Thyagaraja and HariKambhoji

Rasikan

The Carnatic music that we hear today can justifiably be termed as Thyagaraja music. It is in large measure due to the many wonderful kritis that he composed. It is true that many other composers, especially his contemporaries and those who followed have contributed to the rich repertoire of the artists. But, barring Dikshitar, they all, basically, followed Thyagaraja's lead. However, there is one aspect of Thyagaraja's output that few, if any, have succeeded in emulating. I am referring to his uncanny ability to take some ragams which may have been nascent or even "not existing" at that time and compose kritis of unbelievably high caliber in them such that the structure of these ragams are held in our mind primarily through those kritis. Indeed, these kritis have covered such wide reaches of these ragams that practically no other composer has any kriti of deep merit in many of them.

Two such ragams are Karaharapriya (mela 22) and HariKambhoji (mela 28). After hearing the marvelous pieces of Thyagaraja in these ragams one wonders how such a creative and deep composer like Dikshitar may have totally missed them. [At least there are no kritis extant of his in these ragams.] One simple explanation, albeit rather naïve, is that Dikshitar following the asampurna mela scales proposed by Venkatmakhin was satisfied in using the then current ragams in various melas; for example, Sri ragam for mela 22 and (Hari) Kedaragowla for mela 28. Thyagaraja, on the other hand, used the sampurna scheme of Govindacharya; hence had a chance to 'discover' more melakarta ragams which may or may not have been prevalent in his times.

The above two ragams are among the most popular ragams heard today. In fact, thanks largely to his wondrous kritis in Karaharapriya, this ragam is deemed by many as one of the Big Six ragams, the others being Todi, Bhairavi, Sankarabaranam, Kambhoji, and Kalyani. Harikambhoji does not enjoy the same status. One reason suggested by some is the closeness of this ragam to Khamas which is a popular and lilting ragam. This may be true for lesser composers but not for Thyagaraja who has composed some really outstanding kritis in Harikambhoji. Some oft hearded kritis are: Dinamani vamsa (Adi), Rama nannu brova (Rupakam), Enthara nee thana (Adi), Enduku nirdaya (Adi). The last one has many charanams with different dhatus and they are all usually sung.

Thyagaraja seems to have had a special affinity to janyas of Harikambhoji, ragams that take the swarams of Harikambhoji in their scales. In his Reetigowla kriti (satha) Ragaratnamalikinche, Thyagaraja claims that he has composed in hundred ragams. Rangaramanuja Iyengar's book, Kriti mani malai, lists 36 janya ragas of Harikambhoji in which Thyagaraja has composed one or more kritis. It includes kritis in some ragams which many may regard as janyas of Sankarabaranam (e.g. Suddha Saveri, Sama). On the other hand, Chtiravina Ravikiran, in his CD on Begada makes a compelling case for including Begada as a janya of Harikamboji rather than Sankarabaranam. Be that as it may, it appears that almost a third of the ragams in which Thyagaraja composed take the swarams of Harikamboji in their aarohanam or avarohanam or both. Not only did Thyagaraja compose in the staple ragams like Yadukula kambhoji, Kedaragowla, Sahana, Surutti, he also brought out the beauty of Ravichandrika, Balahamsa, Bahudari and

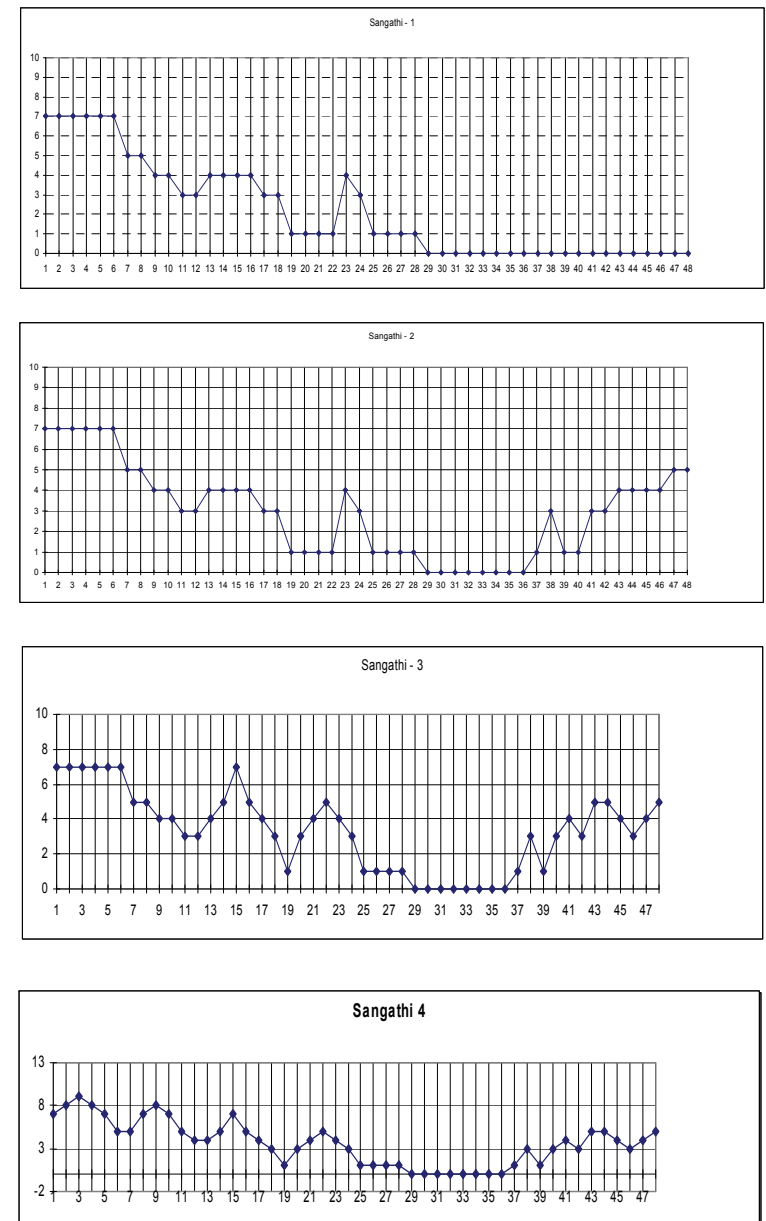


Figure 8

find soothing beauty in simple songs of Thyagaraja, Ramadasa, etc. A knowledgeable rasika may need a more sophisticated musical work to be moved emotionally. (A side question here: does knowledge enable one to appreciate more or less of the popular musical works?).

With these provisos, let me approach these aspects cautiously, appealing to your help for corrections and improvements. Thyagaraja is famous for the so-called Sangathis, which are essentially musical variations on a line of lyrics. They are said to be the original concepts of Thyagaraja, elaborated and enriched to varying degrees in various kritis. I myself feel that proper use of sangathis can be used to produce a gradual build-up of emotional appeal to the listener - and I am convinced Thyagaraja demonstrated this beyond words.

The Pallavi of the simpler kriti, Kaala Harana has 4 Sangathis, whereas the Pallavi of the heavy-weight Daarini Telusukonti has 8 sangathis. I have shown the sangathis of the Kaala Harana Pallavi in Figure 8. Note how the simple graph gradually becomes more dynamically varied. That they sound beautiful, of course, one has to listen to.

Next, let us look at Thyagaraja's use of the jiva swara (r) in the Suddha Saveri raga. My counts indicate that he has used it up to 15-20% of the time.

Next, I would like to look at the various proyogas listed in section 2 and see if and how Thyagaraja used them in these kritis. I must confess that at this stage, I was running into difficulties of time, space and knowledge, and will only make a passing statement, reserving this to later work (hopefully). In the Daarini Telusukonti kriti, I found the following:

composed in not so often heard ragams like Gana varidhi, Gunjari. But he seems to have reserved his creative best for Kambhoji, the crown jewel among the janya ragams of Harikamboji.

Rangaramanuja Iyengar's book lists seven kritis in Kambhoji including the evergreen "Evarimata", the ninda stuthi "Ma Janaki", "Sri Raghuvara", which the D.K. Jayaraman school sing in the form of a swarajathi. While most of them take off in the madhya sthayi, "Elara Krishna" stays mostly in the mandara/madhya sthayi. Perhaps the greatest of his kritis in Kambhoji is the masterpiece "O, Rangasayee". This one is significant in the sheer economy of words especially in the pallavi allowing scope for a spate of sangathis and innovations. Thyagaraja has used just eight or nine words for two full avartanams in slow (two-kalai) Adi talam (64 swarams, if you are counting). Amazing skill in composing indeed! . [One other such kriti is "Dharini telusu konti" in Suddha saveri.]

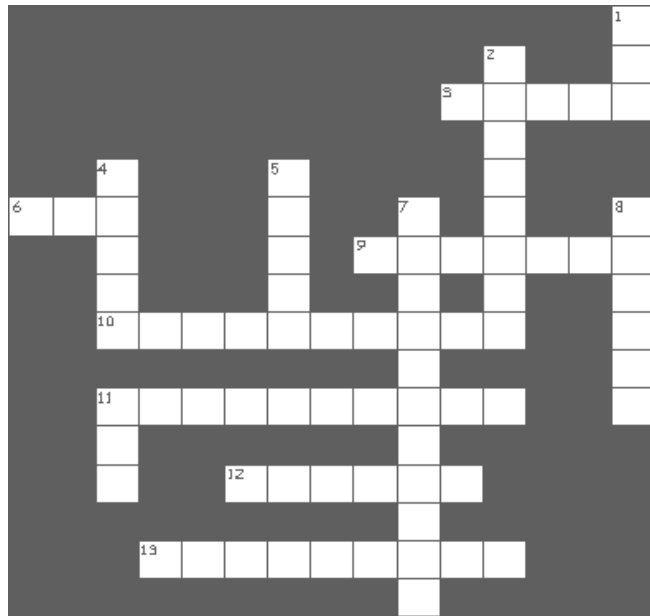
An interesting feature of all Thyagaraja's kritis in Kambhoji is that he did not use his own penchant for the kriti format that he perfected in which the dhatu of last segment of the charanam is the same as that of the anupallavi. NONE of his Kambhoji kritis has that format! [I should thank Vidwan O.S. Thiagarajan who pointed out this feature to me during one of his visits.]

Reference:

Rangaramanuja Iyengar, R. (1965-67) *Kriti Mani Malai*, Sabarmati, Madras

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

Anil Chitrapu



Down

3. Born in 17__7
6. Number of daughters
9. Thyagaraja's family name
10. Song Thyagaraja sang when the king offered him expensive gifts
11. Birthplace of Thyagaraja
12. Thyagaraja's teacher's first name
13. City in U.S. where Indians gather once a year to pay

1. Month born in
2. Grandfather's name
4. He died in 184__
5. Raga he composed most in
7. Father's name
8. God who gave Thyagaraja a divine book of music
11. Number of songs he composed in Natai

Anil Chitrapu is a seventh grader interested in both Indian and western classical music. His interests also include drama and tennis.

- | | | | |
|-----------|--|--|--------------------------------|
| A.1. | D,SD, D,SD, P,., M,P,M,D,PMR, R,P,M, P,D, DPPM MP,., .,.,.,. | 'R,'M,'P,.,.,.,. | DPMP |
| | mā ru nī ja na ku dai na | | am bā |
| 2. | D,SD, D,SD, P,., M,P,M,D,PMR, R,P,M, P,D, DPPM MP,., .,.,. | MPD, PDŠ, DŠ,D PD,P | MP,M |
| | mā ru nī ja na ku dai na | | am bā |
| 3. | PDŠD RŠD, P,., MPDŠ DPMR R,P,M, P,D, DPPM P,., P,SD D,P, D,., Š,., Š,RŠSD Š,., R,., | | |
| | mā ru nī ja na ku dai na mā da ša ra tha ku- | | |
| 1. | R,M,R, R,M,R, Š,., D,Š, D,P, M,., M,R, /P,M, P,DŠ D,Š, P,D, P,., P,R, R,P,M, P,., D,- D, | | |
| | mā ru nī sō da ri da yā pa ri mō ksha-ku | | |
| 2. | SRM, RMRRŠ,., PDRŠ DŠDDP,., DDPM PDPD S, DSDSR,S, DSDDDPM MPMMSR MRMPMP, D, | | |
| | mā ru nī sō da ri da yā pa ri mō ksha(dāri) | | |
| C.1,.,.,. | *D,D,., D,., D,., D,P, PDŠDŠ,., | Š, D RŠ,D D,P,P,., | M,P MP,M R,S,R, M, P, D,SDPM* |
| | rā ji ta ma nī ga ṇa bhū sha nī ma da ga ja | | |
| 2. | *D,D,., D,., D,., D,P, PDŠDŠ,., | Š, D RŠ,D D,P,P,., | M,P MP,M RMPD Š,Š, DPMP,M* |
| | rā ji ta ma nī ga ṇa bhū sha nī ma da ga ja | | |
| 3. | *D,D,., D,., D,., D,P, PDŠDŠ,., | SRMR RMPM MPDP PDŠ SDPM PMRS RMPD Š,Š, DPMP,M* | |
| | rā ji ta ma nī ga ṇa bhū sha nī ma da ga ja | | |
| 4. | *D,D,., D,., D,., D,P, PDŠDŠ,., | SRM RMP MPD PDŠ PDRŠ SDPM PMRS RMPD Š,Š, DPMP,M* | |
| | rā ji ta ma nī ga ṇa bhū sha nī ma da ga ja | | |
| 5. | *D,D,., PDŠ, D,- DŠR, Š, ŠDPMR, DP | MRS, MMR PPM DDP RŠŠ SDPM PMRS RMPD Š,Š,ŠŠ DPMP,M* | |
| | rā ji ta ma nī ga na bhū sha nī ma da ga ja | | |
| 6. | *D, DPMRSS MMRRSS MMR PPM DDP RŠŠ SDPM RSS, SDRSR RSRM MRMP PMPD DPDŠ PDRŠ DPMP,M* | | |
| | rā ji ta ma nī ga ṇa bhū sha nī ma da ga ja | | |
| 7. | *D,D,., D,., D,., D,P, PDŠDŠ,., | Š, D RŠ,D D,P,P,., | M,P MP,M R,S, R,.,.,.,. * |
| | rā ji ta ma nī ga ṇa bhū sha nī ma da ga ja | | |
| | *MP,M,R,., SRMR RSSD Š,., -S,., /R,., R,P,M P,.,.,., D,SD | | D,SD D,RŠSD D,P, P,., |
| | rā ja ga ma nī lō ka śan ka ri da nu ja | | |
| | P,D, DPPM P,., D,., Š,., Š,D, Š,.,.,.,.,.,. | R,M,R, R,M,R, R,Š, Š,D, DPPM., P,D,., | |
| | rā ja gu ru nī vā sa ra sē va ta na | | |
| | D,Š, D,RŠ,Š,.,.,., Š,D, RŠ,D,P, P,DDPM, P,D,Š,., D,Š,D,P, PMDPPM RM SR,S Š,., | | |
| | kē jan ma pha la mō ka nu ko ṇṭi ni | | |
| | D,D, P,., D, P, M,., P, P, M, R,M,R, R,S,., R,D, S,R, M,., M,R, M,P,., P, D, D,D,P, | | |
| | ā jan ma mu ped dala ta mamadi lō nī japa mē mu kti mār ga manukona | | |
| | M,., P,D,.,Š, R,., R, R,M,R,Š, Š,D,P,D, D,RŠ, - Š, Š,D,P, P, D,Š, D,- D, P,M,P, D, | | |
| | rā ja sē kharuṇ ḍa gu śrī tyā ga rā ja ma nō har i gau ri pa rā tpa ri | | |
| | D,P, D P M P,M R,M,R R,S, RDS RM, MRMP, P D D D P PMPD Š, R, R,M RŠSDPD DRŠ Š, D, PP DŠD D PMPD | | |
| | ā janma mu peddala tamamadi lō nī ja pamē mukti mārgamanukona rā ja sē kharuṇḍaḡuśrī tyā garā ja manō hari gauri pa rā t pū ri | | |

Figure 7

namely the use of prayogas, the temporal development of the music and so on. This requires sound musical knowledge and a sensitive ear. Both of these skills are in need of major improvements in me! Coming to beauty of Thyagaraja's music, we arrive at an even harder-to-write-about aspect. Not only can aesthetics and beauty not be put into words, but they are also highly subjective. A naïve person in music may

| | Äro: SR'M'PD'S | Avarô:ŠD'PM'R'S | 16x4 |
|-----|--|--|----------------------------------|
| P.1 | DŠ., , ŠD., , P., , M., , MR., , S., , S.R, RSSD dā ri ni te lu su koŋ | DŠ., , , , , , , , R, R, PM, P., , ti pu ra sun | D,Š, DŠR, |
| 2. | Š.RŠ., D.ŠD, P.DP., M.PM., R.MR., S.RŠ., S.R, RSSD dā ri ni te lu su koŋ | DŠ., , , , , , , , R, R, PM, P., , ti pu ra sun | D,Š, DŠR, |
| 3. | Š.RŠŠ, Š.D ŠD P.DPP, M.PM.M.R.MR.S.R.S SRMR RSSD dā ri ni te lu su koŋ | DŠ., , , , , , , , RS R, PMP., , ti pu ra sun | D,Š, DŠR, |
| 4. | SRŠŠ DŠDD PDPP PMPM RMRR SRSS SR/MR RSSD dā ri ni te lu su koŋ | DŠ., , , , , , , , MR R, PM, P., , ti pu ra sun | D,Š, DŠR, |
| 5. | DRŠŠ DŠDD PDPP MPDŠDP MPDPMR SRMR RSSD dā ri ni te lu su koŋ | S., , , , , , , , MR R, PM, P., , D ti pu ra sun | PMRS RMPD |
| 6. | DRŠŠ D,ŠD P/D,P MPDŠDP MPDPMR SRMR RSSD dā ri ni te lu su koŋ | S., , , , , , , , MR R, PM, P., , ti pu ra sun | PMPD DPDŠ |
| 7. | DŠRŠ RŠDŠ PD/RŠ /ŠDDP PM MR SRMR RSSD S., , , , , , dā ri ni te lu su koŋ | , , , , , , , , R, MPD, PDŠ, ti pu ra sun | DDŠŠ RŠRM |
| 8. | /MRŠR /RŠDŠ/ŠDPM PD/RŠ /ŠD DPPMRRSRMR RSSD S., , , , , , dā ri ni te lu su koŋ | , , , , , , , , MR R, PM, P., , ti pu ra sun | D,Š, DŠR, Š,* D,Š, DŠR, Š,* |
| 1. | *ŠD DRŠSD D,P, M,PD PM R, R,S, R., , MP,M R., , , S, da ri nin nē ša ra ŋa | S., , , , , , , , MR R, PM, P., , ti pu ra su | D,Š, DŠR, Š,* D,Š, DŠR, Š,* |
| 2. | *ŠD DRŠSD D,P, MPDŠDP MR, RS, RM,RP, MPDPPMR SR,S S., , da ri nin nē ša ra ŋa | R,D, S., , , , , , , , , , , , | |

3.The Sophistication and Beauty of Thyagaraja's Music

26

T. Parasaran

Sri Thyagaraja wrote a number of Kritis on Siva and Sakthi when he visited some kshetras and also on the presiding deities in Thiruvaiyar where he lived. There are 12 kritis on Panchnadeswarar and Dharmasamvardhani of Thiruvaiyar. Popular amongst them are, "Ilalao Pranatharthihara", in Atana, "Karuna Judavamma", in Thodi and "Sive Pahimam" in Kalyani. His "Siva Siva" in Panthuvrali, "Nannu Kanna Thali" in Kesari and "Sambo Mahadeva" again in Panthuvrali are outpourings of great Bhakthi. In Kanchipuram he composed the famous, "Vinayukuni valenu" in Madyamavathi. When his student Veenai Kuppayyer requested him to visit the famous Tiruvottiyur, (one of the six places where Thyagaraja Swami is the presiding deity) he wrote five kritis on the presiding Sakthi, Thirupurasundari. His "Dharini" in Suddhasaveri is one of those exquisite compositions

that continues to delight Rasikas even to this day.

No one knows the extent of friendship between him and Sundara Mudaliar but when the latter asked him to visit his abode on Kovur near Chennai, Sri Thyagaraja did so with grace and speed and also composed five Kritis on the presiding Deity, Sundareswara Swami.

Many of Sri Thyagaraja's students were from Lalgudi and so as their Guru he visited Lalgudi and also wrote the famous Lalgudi Pancharatnam on the presiding deities, Sri Saptarishiswar and Srimathi, well known amongst them being, "Isa Pahimam" in Kalyani. His songs on Lord Ganapati are the familiar, "Giri Raja Sutha Thanaya" in Bangala, "Sri Ganapathim" in Saurashtram, "Sri Gananatham Bhajamyaham" in Kanakanghi. The last one does not carry his Mudra but is believed to be used by his Sishya Parampara frequently.

We do not hear much of "Nivanti Daivamu Shatanana" in Thodi but it is on Lord Subramanya Swami which Sri Thyagaraja composed in Sirkazhi. He had composed numerous songs on Vishnu, Sri Krishna, Sri Venkateswara, Narasimha and also on Garuda. Examples are "Vinata sutha" in Jayantasena, and "Pahi rama" on Hanuman in Vasantha varali. His songs on Narada are many. "Vara Narada" in Vijayasri, "Narada Guruswami" in Darbar are two of them.

For most of us amateurs and lay people these are different deities but for Sri Thyagaraja who was steeped in the true purpose of religion these different forms were all paths leading to the one Supreme Being.

Note: A more elaborate article on the same theme ap-

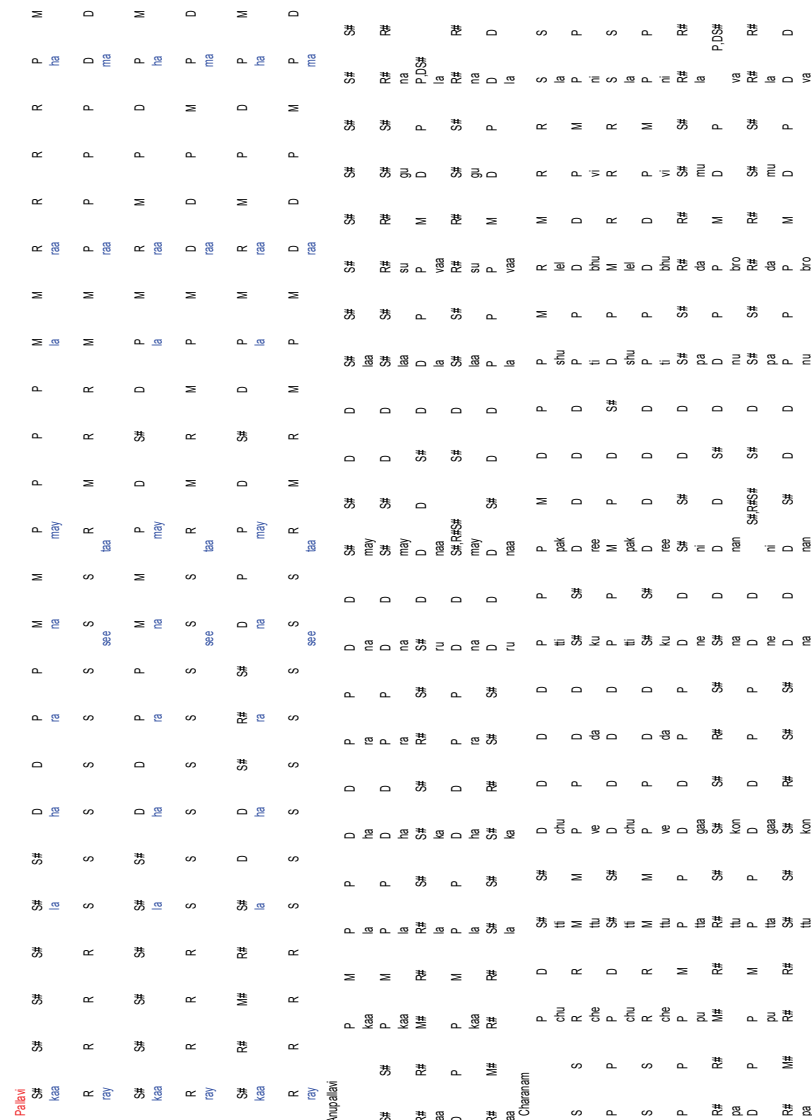


Figure 5

2. About the Kritis

Now, let us look at the two kritis, Kaalaharana melara and Daarini Telusukonti. The lyrics and the musical notations are given below - in Figures 4 and 5 for Kaalaharana melara and in Figures 6 and 7 for Daarini Telusukonti. They are taken from [4] and [5]. Please note that there would, typically, be slight variations in the musical notations, even though Thyagaraja's music is said to be well preserved. For one thing, apparently the musical notations were originally written by more than one Thyagaraja's four main students and there are, I believe, slight variations even in these different versions of the same kriti.

| ŚUDDHASĀVĒRI | MĒLA 29 | RŪPAKAM |
|---------------------------------|---------|--|
| P. KĀLAHARAṆA MĒLARĀ HARĒ | | ŚĪTĀRĀMA! (KĀLAHARAṆA MĒLARĀ) |
| A. KĀLAHARAṆAMĒLA SUGUṆA- | | JĀLA KARUṆĀLAVĀLA! (KĀLAHARAṆA MĒLARĀ) |
| C.1. CUṬṬI CUṬṬI PAKSHULELLA- | | CETTUVEDAKU RĪTI BHUVINI |
| 'PUṬṬULĒKA NĪ PADAMULA- | | BAṬṬUKONNA NANNU BRŌVA (KĀLAHARAṆA) |
| 2. POḌAVUNA ENTĀDUKONNA - | | BHŪMINI TYĀGAMBU RĪTI |
| KADU 'VĒLPULA MUNNA NĪVU- | | GĀKA YEVARU NANNU BRŌVA (KĀLAHARAṆA) |
| 3. DINADINAMUNU. TIRIGI TIRIGI- | | DIKKULĒKA ŚARAṆU JOCCI |
| TANUVU DHANAMU NĪDĒYAṆṬI- | | TYĀGARĀJA VINUTA! RĀMA! (KĀLAHARAṆA) |
| 4. ISHṬADAIVAMĀ MANŌ- | | BHĪSHṬAMĪYALĒKA YINKA |
| KASHṬAMĀ! TYĀGARĀJU- | | KĀMITĀRṬHA PHALAMOSANĠA (KĀLAHARAṆA) |
| 1. PUṬṬAGĀNĒ 2. VELASIYUNNA | | |

Figure 4

peared in the 2001 Thyagaraja Aradhana issue of Sruti written by P.P. Narayanaswami and Mohan Krishnamoorthy.

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

"If there is a paradise on earth for Carnatic musicians, it is Thiruvaiyaru. Vidwans who sing in the aradhana get the "anugraha" of Nathabrahmam Thyagaraja and become famous musicians."

- Mridangam maestro Umayalpuram K. Sivaraman as he inaugurated the 159th aradhana of Sri Thyagaraja at the saint's 'samadhi' on the banks of the Cauvery at Thiruvaiyaru

Appreciating Thyagaraja's Music – Please Help!

Prabhakar Chitrapu

Above all else, Thyagaraja is known as Sangeetha Brahma. He also created beautiful lyrics and embedded valuable ideas into them, but these take a secondary place compared to his monumental contributions to music. He is said to have poured life into so many ragas that were hitherto only known theoretically, in terms of their arohana-avarohana, prayogas (musical phrases) and sancharas (flows). He is said to have created so many new ragas, decorating them with sparkling beauties via his kritis. Are there not so many ragas, in which the only musically significant work is Thyagaraja's kriti, with none before and none later? Has it not been written that Thyagaraja's music is one which no human hand can improve?

As we celebrate Thyagaraja's life today, I ask myself "what do I know of this essential aspect of Thyagaraja? How do I appreciate his music?" Upon some reflection, it became clear to me that most of my knowledge and appreciation of Thyagaraja came through his songs first and then the music, as the carrier of the lyrics. I became curious to try to know and appreciate Thyagaraja's music, stripped off the lyrics.

This has proved to be and continues to be frustrating. Firstly, I tried looking for articles and books on Thyagaraja, hoping to be enlightened on his music. Sad to say, I discovered that most books and articles were limited to either his life or the lyrics & meanings of his songs or anecdotes associated with some of his songs. So was the situation with the classic "Spriritual Heritage of Thyagaraja" by Ramanujachari & Raghavan, the elaborate 3 volume series

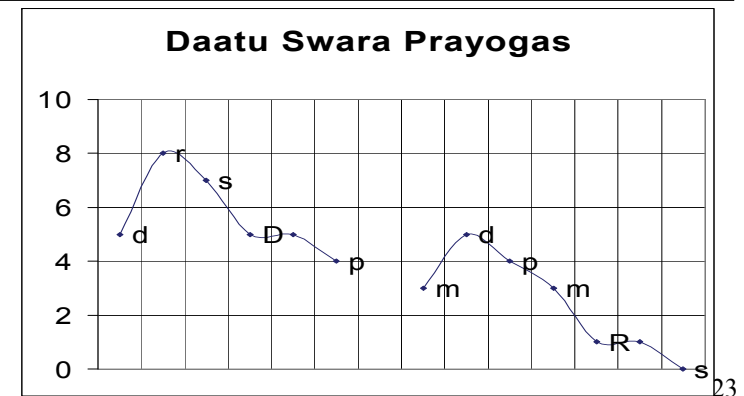
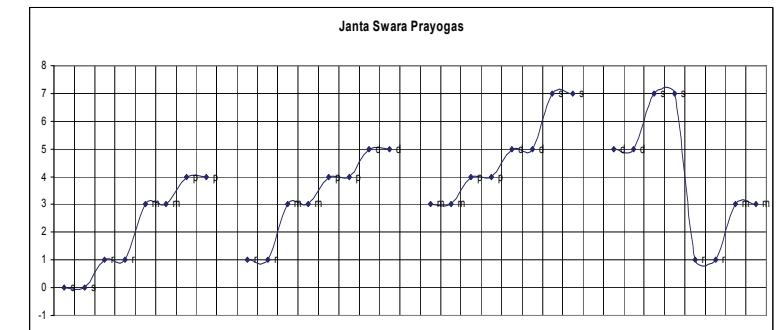
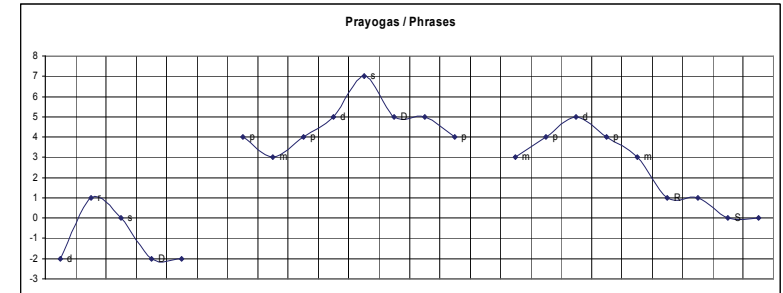
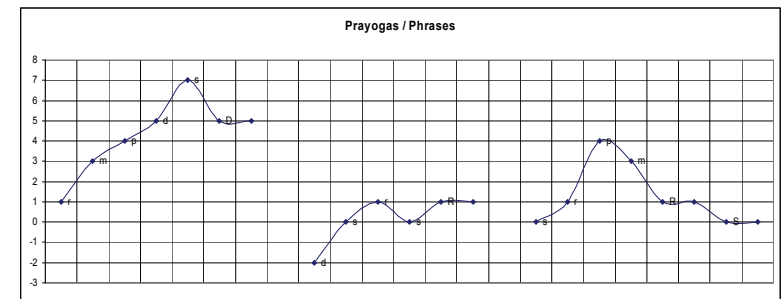


Figure 3

1. r is the jiva-swara
2. Sanchara includes the following prayogas: (p1) dsDp- (p2) mpdpmr- (p3) rmpdsdp- (p4) mpdsdppmR- (p5) mrpmdpmmrs- (p6) dsrM,r- (p7) rmpdsD- (p8) dsrsR- (p9) srpmRS- (p10) drsD- (p11) pmpdsDp- (p12) mpdpmRS. (Capital letter for a swara indicates 2 time measures and a comma next to a swara indicates an additional time measure.)
3. Janta swara (double notes) prayogas shine well in this raga. They are: ssrrmmp - rrmppdd - mmpddss - ddsrrmm.
4. Daatu swara (jumping notes) prayogas shine well in this raga. They are: drsDp - mdpmRS

Figures 2 and 3 below depict the various sanchara prayogas (or musical phrases), Janta swara & daatu swara prayogas. Of course, the right way to understand these is to try to sing these or play them on some suitable musical instrument. Since these are claimed to be characteristic musical phrases of the Suddha Saveri raga, we should expect to and will try to find them in the Suddha Saveri kritis of Thyagaraja.

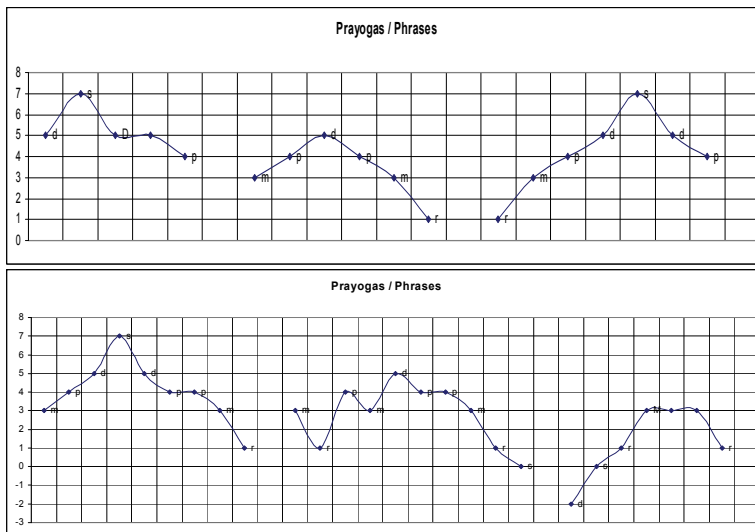


Figure 2

"Thyagaraja Kirthanalu - Vishesha Vivaranamu" by Kalluri Veerabhadra Sastry, the modern classic "Thyagaraja - Life and Lyrics" of William Jackson and so on. The monumental work "Compositions of Thyagaraja" by T.K. Govinda Rao is a sort of an exception, since he includes the musical notation of his nearly 1000 songs! However, he does not discuss or elaborate on the musical sophistication and beauty, thus not really helping a beginner student to learn to appreciate the music better.

It is written that the Ghana Raga Pancharathnas are so sophisticated that each of them equals a hundred individual kritis. Why? How does one see that or hear that? They say that kritis like Daarini Telusukonti in Suddha Saveri and Naa Jivaadhara in Bilahari are among the most complex compositions he wrote. Sadly, I came to the conclusion that most written material does not help you answer any of these questions to any degree of satisfaction. Why? Perhaps because music cannot be written about. And what can be written about music is perhaps not music anymore but only husk around the kernel.

Yet, between the darkness of tone-deafness and the light of the internal enjoyment of rasikas, there must be shades of gray for wanting people like me. It SHOULD be possible to educate people in appreciating music and move them 'to the right' of the scale! Hence my plea to those more knowledgeable in Carnatic music: How about taking a kriti of Thyagaraja and pointing out all the musical beauties that you hear in it? Please be specific and avoid general goodly appreciations, that are too easy to write and too unsatisfying to read. Perhaps you can give the musical notation and highlight the parts that have technical and aesthetic appeal to you. Even better, perhaps you can take a Sruti concert RECORDING and "mark it up" showing us what you hear

when and why you nod your head in appreciative agreement or close your eyes saying 'AHA!'

From the shady light/darknesses of my own musical knowledge/ignorance, I have attempted to make a beginning. I picked, for no clear reason, Suddha Saveri raga. I would start with the theoretical (abstract) characterization of the raga, in terms of the Arohana-Avarohana, prayogas, sancharas etc. Then I would choose the two popular kritis of Thyagaraja, namely "Kaala Harana melaraa" and "Daarini Telusukonti". I would try to see how the abstract characterizations of the Suddha Saveri raga are projected onto the kritis. The other way around, I would try to see how Thyagaraja innovated and extended his art beyond the bookish definitions.

1. About the Raga

Suddha Saveri is a so-called audava raga, meaning that it is made up of only 5 of the 7 notes - s r m p d. The raga is also symmetric raga, meaning that the ascent (arohana) and descent (avarohana) are simple reflections of each other: Arohana - s r m p d s# & Avarohana - s# d p m r s. See Figure-1.

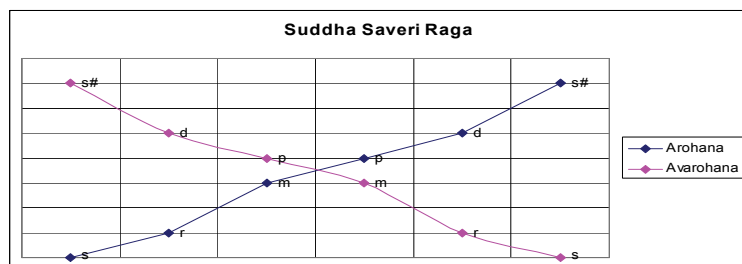


Figure 1

Starting from the Arohana-Avarohana characterization of a raga, one can go into the 'microscopic or macroscopic' aspects of the raga. I am using the word 'microscopic' to refer to looking at various ways in which these swaras (notes) are rendered. For example, some swaras are sung with 'oscillations'. Such a note is referred to as a 'kampita swara' and such oscillations as 'gamakas', although there seem to be other connotations for the word gamaka. Some notes slide in characteristic ways from adjacent notes ('jaaru'). These microscopic aspects are also referred to as 'ornamentations' [1] and can bring sparkle to the music, much as beams of light shine and sparkle on little ripples in water. In both cases, each sparkle is local (in time or space respectively) in nature, but can bring certain light and texture to the entire musical piece. Since it is difficult to describe such microscopic aspects of various notes, I will not focus on these aspects any more in this article, except to say that in this particular raga, Suddha Saveri, the swara 'd' is said to be a 'kampita swara'.

Similarly, I am using the word 'macroscopic' to refer to how groups of swaras are put together to form musical phrases or patterns (prayogas). Although, in theory, infinite variety of groups of notes can be formed, only those that are aesthetically pleasing are used. While a little math will tell you that one can form 25, 125, 625, 3125, 15625 ... possibilities out of groups of 2,3,4,5,6... successive notes, it needs an artist to have the intuition and sensitivity to beauty to select those pleasing to the ear!

In order to gather some of the macro characteristics of the Suddha Saveri raga, I referred to a few books [2,3]. I picked up the following for further understanding.