



Sruti

The India Music
& Dance Society,
Philadelphia

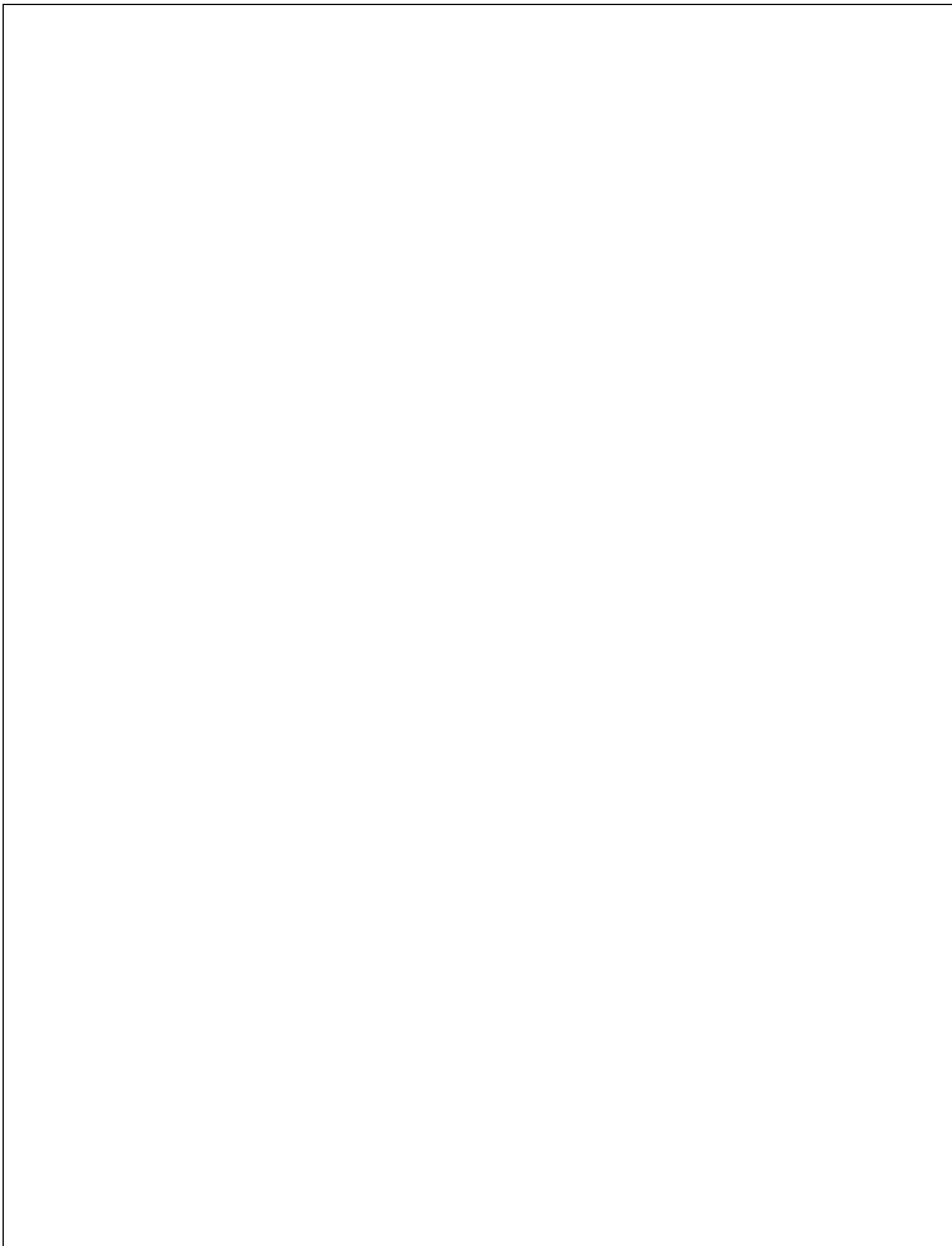
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Sri Thyagaraja Aradhana

March 25, 2017

Hindu Delaware Temple



Thyagaraja Aradhana Souvenir & Spring 2017 SRUTI Notes

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

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From the President's Desk

Dear Sruti supporters and Rasikas,

Welcome to 2017 Sruti music season! Hope everyone enjoyed the winter. Your patience is being rewarded today with our full day programming of Thyagaraja Aradhana today followed by an event-packed Spring season.

I would like to extend warm greetings to you on behalf of the 2017 Sruti Board of Directors. We are committed to working hard this year to maintain the Sruti traditions that have been developed over the last 31 years while continuing to look for innovation opportunities to ultimately please your eyes, ears and mind! We would like to maintain an open dialog with the Sruti community and welcome feedback at all times, especially using our audience satisfaction surveys.

I would like to thank the previous board, under the excellent leadership of Balaji Raghothaman, for a very successful 2016 season. Balaji's hard work and direction delivered excellent programs including several well-attended concerts by upcoming and established artists.

The 2017 Board of Directors maintains the quality composition of the experienced 2016 board with some re-alignment of responsibilities as below and brings in ex-President Dinakar Subramanian back to the board as Secretary.

- Srikant Raghavachari who has developed excellent Sruti expertise and experience as Secretary has been elected as President-Elect and I look forward to working very closely with him this year for organizing our events.
- Balaji Raghothaman, after a busy 2016 season as President, has volunteered to continue in the board and lead the Publications and Outreach committee he was part of, in the past.
- Santi Kanumalla, Shankar Muthuswami and Uma Sivakumar are continuing their outstanding contributions as Treasurer, Resources & Development Director and Director 1 respectively.
- Srinivas Raghavan has stepped up to become the Marketing and Publicity Director to deploy his real-life business development skills to benefit Sruti.
- Rao Donthineni has been appointed as Director 2 to complete the term of Srinivas Raghavan who has transitioned to the marketing role.

I am grateful to have such an extremely talented, hardworking and experienced board.

This year, we have a schedule packed with several outstanding concerts. We start with the Thyagaraja Aradhana on March 25, for which the Utsava Sampradaya Kritis and Pancharatna Kritis will be rendered by groups led by Dinakar Subramanian and Kiranavali Vidyasankar respectively. Sangeetha Swaminathan will lead our afternoon main concert. We will also have community singing slots throughout the day as per our tradition.

The spring season will continue with vocal concerts by Amritha Murali on April 8 and O.S.Thyagarajan on April 22. On April 29, we are pleased to present in partnership with CrossRoads Music, a percussion based concert “Vibrations 2017” led by Thiruvapur Vaidyanathan. We will conclude the spring season with an instrumental concert by Shashank on the flute and Purbayan Chatterjee on the Sitar.

We already had some outreach and co-sponsorship events for the spring celebrating “Hello India!” event with Penn Museum on March 11 and a lecture-demonstration and performance by one of Sruti sponsors and dance teachers, Arathi Narayan at Cosmopolitan Club of Philadelphia on March 24, to educate them about Indian classical performing arts.

Our fall event schedule will present a pair of attractive dance programs, one by Shijith and Parvathy, and another by Mythili Prakash, and also has concerts by our own Kiranavali Vidyasankar and Ashwath Narayanan, both in September.

Unlike 2016, we do not have substantial external funding this year and we urge everyone, especially our life members who have not yet purchased 2017 sponsorships to do so and support our own organization. We have a premium Concert Patron category of \$2000, which the patron can designate to the concert of his/her choice. Sruti will recognize the patron(s) on stage and in our publicity material. I request people who are interested in this category to contact me directly or at srutiphila@gmail.com.

Please investigate donation match by your companies that can double your donations to Sruti and choose Sruti as your preferred charity for your United Way contributions. Donations to Sruti are fully tax deductible. Please join us for an exciting and enriching journey during 2017. If you have any questions or concerns regarding any issue, please do not hesitate to contact me or any other member of the board. We are here to serve you and ensure the highest level of Sruti event experience to the best of our abilities.

Thank you for your continuing support of Sruti!

Sincerely,

Nari Narayanan, President

On behalf of the Board of Directors

From the Publications & Outreach Committee

Dear Sruti Supporters, Music and Dance Enthusiasts,

The Publications & Outreach committee welcomes you to the 31st annual Tyagaraja Aradhana celebrations and is pleased to present the first Sruti publication of 2017, which includes the aradhana souvenir and Sruti Notes for spring. In addition to the notes from the various committees, you can also read some very interesting articles written by some long-time Sruti patrons, and learn about the exciting spring and fall Sruti concert calendar.

Today's day-long event traditionally marks the beginning of Sruti's spring concert series and is a showcase for our local Carnatic music artists and students. This year's featured artist is Vidushi Sangeetha Swaminathan, accompanied by Kamalakiran Vinjamuri on the violin and Vijay Ganesh on the mridangam. We also had an overwhelming interest in the individual and group-singing category with over 60 slots, compared to the planned 50. So, sit back, relax and enjoy this music-filled day.

SRUTI welcomes suggestions to improve the publications, outreach and website content to make them more relevant and engaging to you. Please send email with your comments and suggestions to srutiphila@gmail.com.

Thank you and wish you an exciting SRUTI music and dance season ahead.

With best wishes,

Balaji Raghothaman, Chair, Sruti Publications and Outreach Committee

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

From the Resources and Development Committee

On behalf of the Resources and Development Committee (RC), it is my pleasure to introduce the members of the Committee and report our ongoing and upcoming efforts. The committee this year enjoys the continued membership of Renuka Adiraju, Raji Venkatesan, Rajee Padmanabhan, Nari Naryanan & Pichumani Sivakumar. We welcome Srinivasan Raghavan and Srikant Raghavachari, the two new committee members working with us this year. The season started off with several proposal activities already in progress. Proposals have been submitted and approved by the Pennsylvania Council of Arts for continuation of its support of Sruti programming for the next three years. A proposal for a grant from Sam Fels Foundation to be used towards operations costs is in process. Grant proposals have been submitted to Bank of America Foundation, Sunoco Foundation & Versaia for general operating cost and program specific requests. Several foundation and corporation grants are currently being pursued with submission deadlines during spring 2017. We are continuing to pursue United Way funding from Sruti patrons for donations made by them via large corporates. As there are no large foundation grants for programming this year, we need support from generous Sruti patrons and matching corporation grants. Your help and support for securing matching grants or donations from corporations and friends / family are essential to achieve Sruti's mission of presenting high-caliber programming to the Philadelphia area communities. Please contact (srutiphila@gmail.com) the RC committee with any grant and donation opportunities that we can pursue to support our programming.

Shankar Muthuswami

On behalf of Resources & Development Committee

tyAgarAja and nArada

By Prabhakar Chitrapu & M.M.Subramanian

tyAgarAja is, by common consent, regarded as the greatest composer of Carnatic music. While we do not know how many kritis he composed, more than 700 of them are extant. tyAgarAja was an ardent devotee of rAma. So, obviously a large percentage of his kritis are on his ishTa daivam, extolling His greatness, seeking His blessings and so on. In many of these kritis, Thyagaraja has referred to episodes from rAma's life and history. Using segments from these compositions it may be possible to construct a (musical) rAmAyaNa. Thus, from this point of view or otherwise, many believe that tyAgarAja was an incarnation of vAlmiki, the original narrator of rAma's story. According to mythology, vAlmiki was initiated into the japa (or meditation) of rAma nAma by the divine sage nArada, which in turn must have led Valmiki to compose rAmAyaNa. So, here also, the belief is that nArada played an important role in the maturation and development of tyAgarAja's genius.

The legend goes as follows: One day an old man visited tyAgarAja. After some preliminaries, the visitor presented him a book— svarArNavam, a rare work. The book was such an intricate and deep musical treatise that tyAgarAja was immediately and totally absorbed in it. When he looked up after some time, he found that the visitor had vanished! tyAgarAja immediately realized that the guest was none other than nArada himself who had come to bless him and gift him that treatise.

Viewed from a Hindu mythological perspective, such a supposition by tyAgarAja seems entirely believable due to the general attributes of nArada, who is the divine sage repeatedly mentioned in the ancient Hindu scriptures and purANa-s. Indeed, according to these descriptions, nArada is a complete and consummate devotee of Lord vishNu, with the Lord's name constantly on his lips and in his heart, and who composed the well-known (& presently available) treatise on bhakti, called the nArada bhakti sUtra. By comparison, tyAgarAja was also an ardent devotee of Lord rAma, an incarnation of Lord vishNu.

Perhaps even more relevant to the supposition of tyAgarAja is the attribute that nArada was a divine musician, who actually sung in praise of Lord vishNu. He is generally pictured, even in ancient temple carvings, as carrying the musical instrument vINa (named as mahati) slung across his chest and as having a pair of kara-tALa (cappaLa-kaTTai in Tamil) in his hands. It is an obvious comparison to recall that tyAgarAja is a musician and also is often portrayed with tambUra and kara-tALa.

And finally, nArada is also generally thought of as a mentor, a teacher and one who travels the three worlds (bhu-Ioka, bhuvar-Ioka and suvar-Ioka), educating and advising erring and ardent people with wisdom and knowledge.



According to the legend referred to earlier, the event happened early in tyAgarAja's life, when he was apparently struggling for the break-through in the knowledge and mastery of music, that was needed for the dam that held the vast and deep reservoirs of his inner devotion to break open and flood into hundreds of rivers and tributaries, big and small. So, who else other than the personage of the divine sage nArada to have appeared before him and blessed him with the svarArNavam?

While we do not know the veracity of this incident in specific historical terms, we do know that tyAgarAja worshipped nArada in various forms – as guru, musician par excellence, rishi, devotee of rAma and so on. In this article, we explore some of those aspects through his compositions.

tyAgarAja has mentioned nArada in at least 27 kritis*. In most of them he refers to nArada as a worshipper/devotee of vishNu/rAma, or one among divine musicians and so on. However, five of them are in direct praise of nArada and his greatness. We shall now provide an appreciation of the lyrics of these five kritis.

We shall present them in a certain connected order, although there is absolutely no reason to suggest they were composed in this spirit at all.

The five major kritis of tyAgarAja on nArada are:

1. “nArada muni veDalina suguNAtiSayamu kanarE!” in pantuvarALi rAgam & cApu tALam
2. “vara nArada, nArAyaNa smaraNAnanda anubhavamu kala” in vijayaSrI rAgam & Adi tALam
3. “nArada gurusvAmi, ikanaina nannAdarimpavEmi?” in darbAr rAgam & Adi tALam
4. “SrI nArada muni guru rAya kanTi” in bhairavi, Adi talam
5. “SrI nArada, nAda sarasIruha bhrunga” in kAnaDa rAgam, rUpaka talam

In the first kriti, tyAgarAja provides a vivid imagination and visualization of the divine Sage nArada, in which he describes even the physical appearance of nArada!

This is followed by him asking nArada to bless him in the vijayaSrI kriti. As if after waiting for long in vain, tyAgarAja in the third kriti shows his impatience and frustration at the delay and pleads to be relieved of his own worries.

Let us once again revisit the anecdotes that tell us that tyAgarAja once was visited by an old man, who gave him a manuscript of the science of Carnatic music, the svarArNavam, and promptly disappeared. Perhaps after this vision, tyAgarAja bursts into ecstasy and could have composed the fourth kriti, in which he talks about the vision and wondering if it was not the fruit of penances performed by him in the distant past.

Still in this state of bliss, tyAgarAja in the fifth composition pours out his heart in exuberant praise of his divine teacher, divine Sage nArada.

We shall now provide a more in-depth appreciation of these narratives. Lyrics in various south Indian languages, along with complete word-by-word meanings etc may be found in the excellent website of Sri V. Govindan “Thyagaraja Vaibhavam” <http://thyagaraja-vaibhavam.blogspot.com/2009/03/tyagaraja-kritis-alphabetical-list.html#N> We shall provide only selective appreciations here.

“nArada muni veDalina suguNAtiSayamu kanarE!” in rAgam pantuvarALi”

In the pallavi of the first kriti, tyAgarAja uses a rather uncommon and beautiful phrase ‘suguNa+atisayamu’, which literally means the ‘abundance/excess of good qualities’. In its entirety, he is asking the audience to “Listen

to the abundance of good qualities of nArada, who just left(to be elaborated in the rest of the kriti)". Audience indeed, since it is one of the compositions of the musical drama prahlAda bhakti vijayam.

In the anupallavi, tyAgarAja explains how nArada has left: meditating on Sri hari's lotus-like feet and singing the names of nArAyaNa.

In the first caraNam, tyAgarAja elaborates on why nArada left: to tell with joy good things to prahlAda. Here, he characterizes nArada beautifully as "bhEda+abhEda rahitamagu vEdAnta rasa bharituDu", meaning "one who is filled with the essence of vEdAnta, which is devoid of difference and lack thereof".

The second caraNam has a lovely image of nArada: one with a golden colored vINa shining on his fair complexioned body. And he is playing this vINa with love every step of his way.

He concludes with the last caraNam, saying that success and victory shall be to those in this world, who listen to this friend of tyAgarAja!

**"vara nArada, nArAyaNa smaraNAnanda anubhavamu kala" in rAgamvijayaSri &
"nArada gurusvAmi, ikanaina nannAdarimpavEmi?" in rAgam darbAr**

In this short vijayaSri-rAgamkriti, tyAgarAja makes his first request to be 'saved' in the anupallavi. He says, now do save me well, Oh the sinless one, Oh the one whose body is like the radiant autumn moon!

The caraNam is interesting because in it tyAgarAja is saying that Lord hari Himself declared that nArada is the sadguru of all the worlds and that he is Lord hari himself. What a status for nArada!

In the next kriti in rAgamdarbAr, tyAgarAja's pleading become more fervent, as he states in the pallavi and the caraNam: Oh nArada guru swami! Why do you still not take care of me? Why this dearth? Why do you not take care of me, by removing the worries?

He uses the rest of the kriti to extol the qualities of nArada: He is an expert in music, yOga and naigama-s. By him, legends, purANa-s, AgamA-s and history are created; Due to him, satyabhAma got the idea to gift away her husband (so that she may acquire him back for ever) etc.

"SrI nArada muni guru rAya kanTi" in rAgam bhairavi

Did tyAgarAja compose this kriti on the same day of the afore-mentioned anecdote of nArada visiting him and presenting the svarArNavam? The meaning of the kriti indeed strongly suggests it, as you will see now.

In the pallavi, tyAgarAja clearly says that he** beheld the esteemed SrI nArada guru, and wonders if it was due to the penances from some former time.

tyAgarAja pours forth his thoughts and feelings in his ecstatic state in the four caraNams of the kriti***.

In the first caraNam, he further says that he saw nArada on that very day to his eyes' delight, and that he had desired it with all his heart. He goes on to say in the second caraNam that he obtained the opportunity to serve him (nArada) and that his worldly bonds were removed.

In the concluding caraNams, tyAgarAja asserts that he (nArada) is indeed one who is ever happy in the right knowledge and is a fire to false knowledge. And that he carries a resplendent vIna, and is the good teacher who has redeemed tyAgarAja.

"SrI nArada, nAda sarasIruha bhrunga" in rAgam kANaDa

We do not know when exactly tyAgarAja composed this kriti, but if he composed it after the previous one, the meaning of the lyrics would be a fitting sequel! For, in this brief composition, we see an unadulterated, undistracted, expansive exaltation of nArada.

O Lord SrI nArada! O Bee which drinks the nectar of the lotus called nAda! O Auspicious bodied!
 O Protector of the honour of the humble people! O Lord of the Universe! O Lord who resembles the moon! O
 Expert player of blessed lute – born of vEdas! O Lord who removes afflictions! O Lord who is beyond the triad
 of afflictions! O Lord praised by tumburu – the gandharva! O Friend of kRshNa! O Lord whose heart is always
 in a state of bliss! O Lord sought by ascetics! O Bestower of prosperity! O Lord praised by this tyAgarAja! O
 Lord who causes prosperity! [2]

Footnotes:

* The kritis are:

(1) aDigi sukhamu – madhyamAvati, cApu (2) dorakunA iTuvanTi sEva – bilahari, Adi (3) duDukugala – gouLa,
 Adi (4) endarO mahAnubhAvulu – Sri, Adi (5) hari hari – punnAgavarALi, Adi (6) jnAnamosaga rAdA - pUrvi
 kalyANi, rUpakam (7) kaligiyunTE gadA – kIravANi, Adi (8) kanakana ruci rA – varALi, Adi (9)
 koluvaiyunnaDe - DEva gAndhAri, Adi (10) mApAla velasi – as Averi, Adi (11) mElukO dayAnidhi –
 sourAshTram, rUpakam (12) mElukOvayya – bouLi, khanDa cApu (13) nArada gAna lOla - aTAna,
 rUpakam (14) nArada guru svami – darbAr, Adi (15) nArada muni – pantuvarALi, cApu (16) nInAma
 rUpamulaku – sourAshTram, Adi (17) sangIta jnAnamu – dhanyAsi, Adi (18) sAramE gAni – pantuvarALi, cApu
 (19) sItamma mAyamma – vasanta, rUpakam (20) Sri nArada gAna – kAnaDa, rUpakam (21) Sri nArada muni
 – bhairavi, Adi (22) Sri rAma srungAra rAma - yadukula kambhOdi, Khanda chapu (23) uyyAla lUGa vayya –
 nIlAmbari, Khanda chapu (24) vara nArada – vijayaSri, Adi (25) vidhi cakrAdulaku dorakuna - yamuna kalyANi,
 rUpakam (26) vidulaku mrokkeda - mAyAmaLava gouLa, Adi, dArini telusukonTi, Suddha sAvEri, Adi

**It is intriguing that both in the pallavi and further in the first caraNam, tyAgarAja uses the plural tense,
 suggesting that “we” saw nArada, rather than “I” saw nArada!

*** It is interesting that tyAgarAja did not use the kriti structure (with an anupallavi), for which he is famous for.
 Is it possible that he perfected the kriti form, after the nArada incident?

References:

- [1] R. Rangaramanuja Iyengar - Kriti mani malai , vols. 1 and 2
 [2] V. Govindan “Thyagaraja Vaibhavam” <http://thyagaraja-vaibhavam.blogspot.com/2007/08/thyagaraja-kriti-sri-naarada-nada-raga.html>

Note on Transliteration:

The Transliteration was based on Modified Harvard-Kyoto (HK) Convention

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| a; A (or aa); I; I (or ii); u; U (or uu); e; E (or ee); ai; o; O (or oo); au; M (H or :) | T; Th; D; Dh; N; T; th; d; dh; n; P; ph; b; bh; m; y; r; l; L; v; S; sh; s; h; ksha | a, i, e, u, o – short A, I, E, U, O – long kh, ch, Th, th, ph - stressed |
|---|---|--|

Prabhakar Chitrapu is a long time supporter of SRUTI and has served the organization in various capacities since its inception, including President. An engineer by profession, Prabhakar has a deep interest in classical music, language, literature and philosophy and contributes his views frequently to Sruti publications. He maintains a website devoted to Saint Thyagaraja at www.thyagaraja.org.

M.M.Subramanian is one of the founding members and long time regular contributor and supporter of SRUTI and has served the organization in various capacities including President.

From the Marketing Committee

Sruti Marketing team would like to thank you for your outstanding support of Sruti events during 2016 and would like you to continue your support in attending our events in greater numbers. Sruti Marketing team is currently reaching out to augment its Committee with additional members to continue providing excellent contributions to the marketing committee in 2017. As mentioned in the President's note in this issue, Sruti continues the trend of providing varied and exciting programs for you during 2017. This lineup includes performances by leading musicians and dancers. They include Amritha Murali, O.S. Thyagarajan, Vibrations - a percussion ensemble, renowned flautist Shashank, Aswath Narayanan, Mythili Prakash, Shijith Nambiar and Parvathy Menon.

You can enjoy all these concerts and events at a single low price by signing up for Sruti 2016 sponsorship at <http://sruti.org/sruti/srutiMembership.asp>

The Sruti sponsorship provides you with priority seating for the concerts and MP3 music downloads of the full concerts. You will also have the satisfaction of supporting a world class organization such as Sruti that is working hard to maintain the Indian classical performing arts alive in our region.

We encourage you to participate as a "Concert Sponsor" for supporting specific concerts and events. We are actively looking for families to be Concert Sponsors for 2017. Please email srutiphila@gmail.com if you would like to be recognized as a Concert Sponsor. To ensure that Sruti can continue bringing these outstanding concerts to our area, we would need your support in publicizing Sruti. We look forward to seeing you at all Sruti events.

We are looking forward to Bheem Bhat, Nari Narayanan, Gayathri Krishnan, Balaji Raghothaman and Rao Donthineni to provide their invaluable contributions to the marketing committee in 2017.

Srinivasan Raghavan,

On behalf of the Marketing and Publicity Committee

Sruti Youth Group (SYG) - Call for Participation

SRUTI is pleased to invite local youth to be a part of the Sruti Youth Group (SYG) with an aim to promote involvement of young and energetic kids in Indian performing arts and music. Children of SRUTI members who are in grades 6 and above are eligible. SYG members support Sruti by helping with event management, artist interviews, outreach activities, presentations and audio/video recordings as well as managing Sruti's YouTube presence. The SYG provides an excellent platform to learn and grow and to have an opportunity to interact with like-minded peers and high caliber artists. In addition, all SYG members receive a certificate and volunteer credits. Interested members should contact the SYG co-ordinator, Uma Sivakumar sivakumaruma1@gmail.com

Aradhana Program - March 25, 2017

08.00 am - Pooja
08.15 am - Saxophone recital by Sumanth Swaminathan
08:45 am - Utsava Sampradaya Kirtanas led by Dinakar Subramanian
09:45 am - "Chetulara (Bhairavi)" Flute Recital led by Balachander Krishnaraj
10:15 am - Pancharatna Kritis led by Kiranavali Vidyasankar, with Swetha Narasimhan on the Violin and P.Sivakumar on the Mridangam
11:30 am - Individual/Group Singing
12:30 pm - Lunch Break
01:15 pm - 2017 Sruti BOD Introduction
01:30 pm - Vocal Concert by Sangeetha Swaminathan, Kamalakiran Vinjamuri Violin and Vijay Ganesh Mridangam
03.45 pm - Individual/Group Singing (Contd.)
08.00 pm - Mangalam and Harathi

About the Artists



Sangeetha Swaminathan had her early lessons under her father Karur Shri. D. Krishnamurthy and later had advanced training under Padma Shri Sudha Raghunathan. Sangeetha has now emerged as the torchbearer of the GNB/MLV school of music among the next generation of musicians, receiving the “Outstanding Lady Vocalist” award from the Music Academy in December 2012. She is a graded artist of the All India Radio and is the recipient of several awards. She has performed in most major sabhas in Chennai and other cities in India and at venues all over the world. Sangeetha currently lives and teaches music in New Jersey.

Kamalakiran Vinjamuri learnt the violin under his grand-father Sri Parthasarathy Iyengar, his father Sri Subhash Vinjamuri and Smt. Malladi Vijayalakshmi, and is currently under the tutelage of Kalaimamani Kanyakumari. He has achieved many accolades at a young age, and has accompanied many senior artists, as well as given solo performances through the USA and India.

Vijay Ganesh studied mridangam under the great Sri. Kumbakonam Rajappa Iyer. He has accompanied many leading artists in USA, Canada and India. Among his many honors and awards are the best mridangist awards from the Chennai Music Academy (1999) and Sri Krishna Gana Sabha (1998) and the Government of India Cultural Scholarship for mridangam. He currently works as a business analyst in Virginia while teaching mridangam and performing for artists around the country.

Many moods of Sri Thyagaraja

By T. Sarada

Sri Thyagaraja* as we all know is not only a great devotee of Sri Rama but a highly proficient Musician and had a remarkable expertise in using languages.

More often he chose to use simple words, mostly what was prevalent in the place he lived. He often used Telugu spoken where he was born and lived, “Vadukka” Telugu rather than, “Kavya” Telugu. This made his songs appealing and easily accessible to many listeners. But he was well versed in his mother tongue, Telugu, Sanskrit and also Tamil, we understand; and he did write many scholarly pieces. These enabled him to write songs and set them to music based on the capabilities and levels of his numerous students. His knowledge helped him to present his feelings, thoughts, moods and emotions in songs succinctly. He liked to use simple analogies, to make the songs lively and interesting.

Just like a superior artist that he was, both in music and writing he left a wealth of extraordinary songs and music. It is interesting to note that when he pleaded helplessly, when he felt totally worthless and pleaded with his Ishta Devata for help or offered his prayers to Rama his lyrics reflected his feelings perfectly. He would also complain and even accuse Rama just like Badrachalam Ramadas. On the other side of the spectrum he expressed his self confidence very boldly, even with fancy and wrote songs that will make the listener smile. He set his songs to music to match his moods.

This article presents examples of some of the feelings and moods he went through and how he expressed them.

1. **Pahi Rama Ramana. Ragam**, Varali. Talam Adi. (*Pleading and complaining*)

“O Rama, God of Sat Gunas, protect me. Know that your grace will not be there if one forgets you even for a short time. How much more suffering should I be having?

How long should I tolerate this agony? (Here he gets theatrical in the analogies he uses to make his point clear)

Is it fair to attack a poor parrot with Brahmastram?

A cucumber (dosa pandu) can not be tied with an iron belt.

Jadi Jasmine should not be crushed with a stone pestle.

And my lord, should butter be hit with a knife?

You are father and mother to me and if parents do not protect the child where can I go?

O Rama you are the only refuge to Thyagaraja

2. **Na Moralanu Vini**, Ragam, Arabi. Talam Desadi. (*Pleading, complaining and accusing*)

O Rama, even after listening to my appeals you are slighting me. Do my words sound like Tomara (a weapon) and arrows to your ears?

What big bribe did Gajendra give you to help him?

When Draupati was put to shame in the court what bribe did she give you to help her?

(They say that) you are the protector of Bhagawatas, Bhaktas and Rasikas. You are always alert to protect them.

Is that only in name?

Don't you protect Nadhopasana devotees like Thyagaraja?

3. **Atu Kaaraadani**, Ragam Manoranjani. Talam Adi. (*Here he goes into admonition and slowly starts proclaiming how good, versatile, learned is Thyagaraja*)

Have you no grace to show me? You know I am very pious, and am well versed in Vedas, Sastras, Upanishads and so on. I tread a path of righteousness. When I am accused without deserving it should you not find which Devata is responsible for making that happen and tell him to stop the injustice to Thyagaraja?

4. **Dasarati Ni Runamu**. Ragam Todi; Talam, Adi. (*Now he clearly expresses his self confidence and says how great he is, of course with the grace of Rama*)

Dasarati, how can I repay the debt I owe you? To my heart's content you have made my name shine in far off places, too. Knowing that many so called pundits do not understand the inner meanings of (real spiritual writings) you have appeared in my dream and taught Thyagaraja to write songs and music that will give those who use them fulfillment in , "Iha and Para", this and after lives.

5. **Cintistunade. Ragam Mukhari**; Talam Adi. (*The ultimate confidence written with a fanciful creation.*)

Seeing that good people are doing Nama Sankeerthanas and Bhajans, Yama is getting worried and anxious. He is immersed in sad thoughts.

He looks at his servants who are ready with nooses and tridents and tells them that the time has come for them not to be so exuberant since people are reciting Taraka mantras. That saves them from the worst hell just as sage Agastya could drain the ocean when he was angry.

Yama is further very worried since he falsely thought that people are wandering without knowing the right path and he thought that they will be easy targets. But he noticed that they are all singing Sri Thyagaraja's songs and so are also really unapproachable!

*Being born and spending his childhood in, Valmika Kshetram which is , "Thiruvavur", Thyagaraja felt his bond with Valmiki reinforced and adopted the name of the presiding deity, Thyagaraja as his Mudra

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Sarada and her brother Parasaran have been supporters of Sruti for many years. Sarada worked in the library/publication committee for a few years. Parasaran participates actively in everything Sarada undertakes They both enjoy Music, Indian and western classical including operas.

They both have been volunteers for Bharatiya Temple for many years. Sarada also organizes seminars once in an year in Temple University Life Long learning programs.

Saint Thyagaraja's Compositions

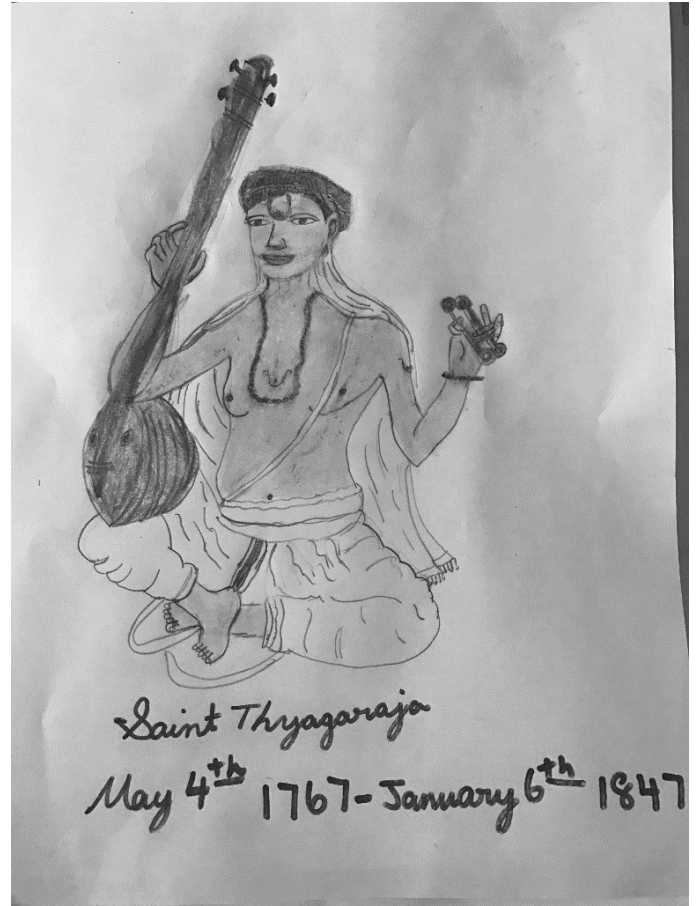
By Rasika Sivakumar

Every year I look forward to participating in the SRUTI Thyagaraja Aradhana. It is an event that I very much enjoy, because I can listen to all my friends and singers in the community and interact with them. I am thankful to Sruti for hosting this event and many concerts during the year, which is very helpful for students like me. During the Aradhana this year, I want to share my thoughts on Saint Thyagaraja and present my drawing of His portrait as a humble offering.

I have been very lucky and blessed to learn Carnatic music from excellent Gurus for the past five years. While learning, I am always interested in knowing the composer of the song and the meaning so I can sing it with bhavam. Although I have learnt songs of different composers, Saint Thyagaraja's songs have been very special to me. I spent a lot of time reading about the life of Thyagaraja and was very excited to know about his simplicity and strong devotion to Lord Rama and other deities. His songs are very simple but very powerful at the same time. The pallavi, anupallavi and charanam flow very nicely and gives us a chance to sing with passion.

When I was 4 years old, Sruti Aradhana was my first stage where I sang Saint's composition "Isha Pahimam" and I am thankful to Sruti for this opportunity. The song that got me a first prize in a competition was also a Thyagaraja song, Ma Kelara. One of my favorite songs is "Bala Kanakamaya" in Atana, which I enjoyed learning and singing. I also like listening to the "Pancharatna Krithis" that are set in beautiful ragams. The swarams in the pancharatna krithis are very helpful in learning important aspects of the ragas. Saint Thyagaraja's songs teaches us how to love god and be good and simple. I am very much inspired by the values contained in his songs. I would like to pay my respects to this wonderful

composer that has given us hundreds of precious songs. My drawing of Saint Thyagaraja's picture is my humble offering to the Saint during this time when we celebrate the aradhana.



Rasika Sivakumar is 9 years old and a third grader at Eagleville elementary school in Collegeville, PA. She learns Carnatic music from Guru Smt.Rajarajeshwari Bhat, as well the western and Indian violin and Bharatanatyam. She also loves to draw and write poems.

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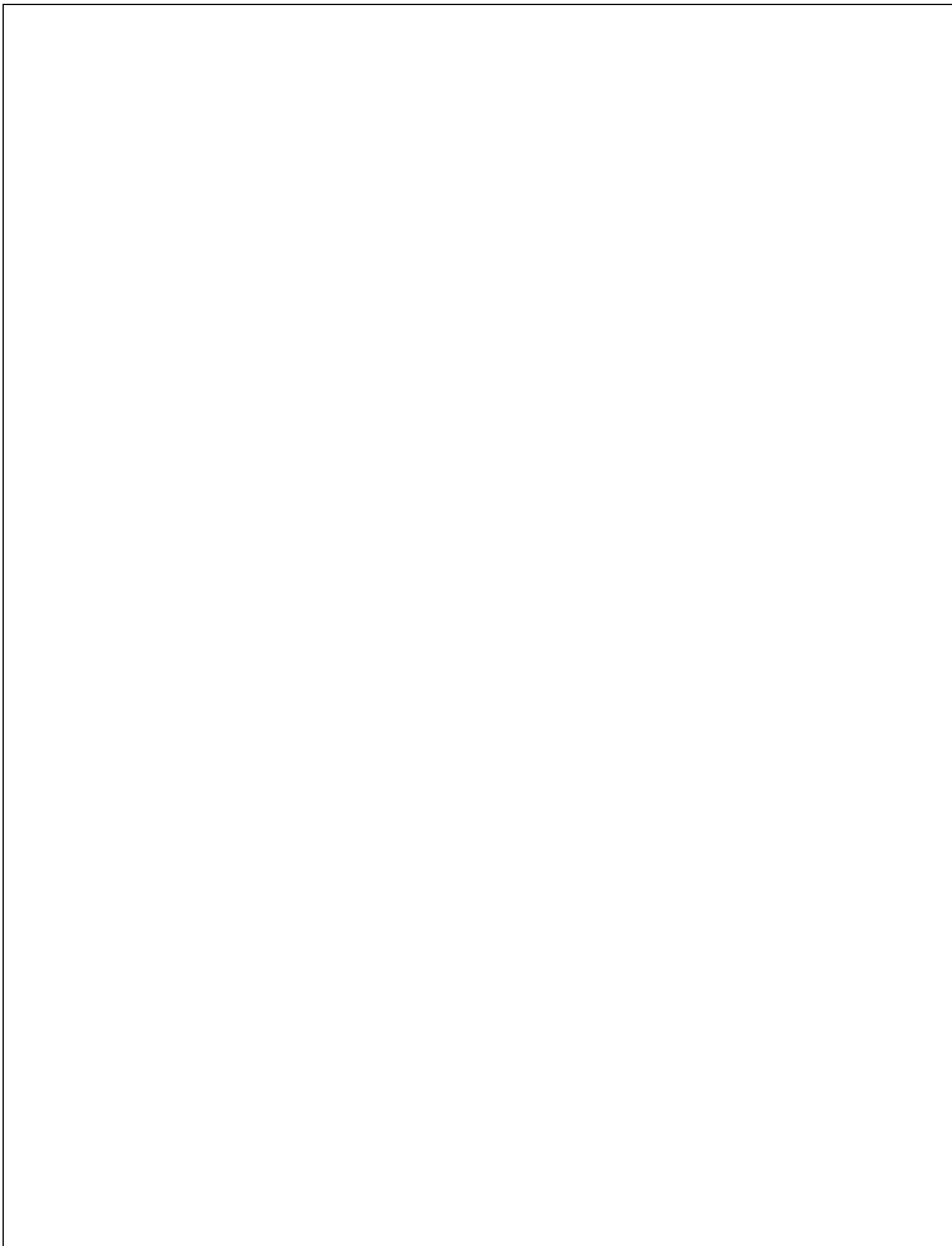
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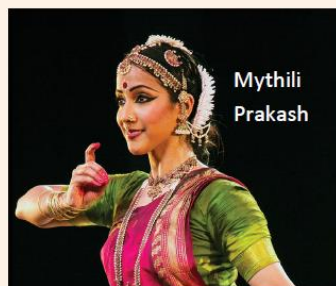
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| Amritha Murali Carnatic Vocal | Apr 8 |
| O.S. Thyagarajan Carnatic Vocal | Apr 22 |
| Vibrations - percussion and rhythm in tune with melody | Apr 29 |
| Shashank Flute and Purbayan Sitar Instrumental Concert | May 13 |

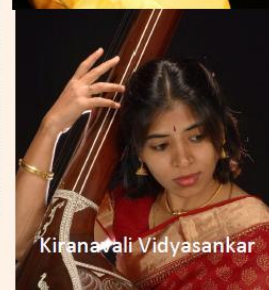
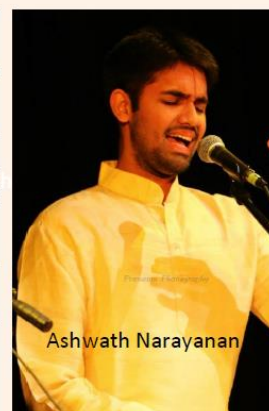
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| | |
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| Kiranavali Vidyasankar Vocal | Sep 9 |
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| Mythili Prakash Bharatanatyam | Oct 28 |
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