



Sruti

The India Music & Dance Society, Philadelphia
Presents

Sanjay Subrahmanyam

accompanied by

S.Varadarajan (Violin)

Neyveli B. Venkatesh (Mridangam)



Saturday, September 15, 2012 4.30 pm
Great Valley High School
Malvern, PA

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

Every year, around 10 or more world class music and dance recitals are presented during the Spring and Fall seasons by SRUTI in the Greater Philadelphia area. SRUTI also collaborates with other presenting organizations like the Painted Bride Arts Center, Kimmel Center for Performing Arts, Annenberg Center at the University of Pennsylvania, Drexel University, and Montgomery County Community College.

SRUTI has received generous grants from private foundations and public organizations including the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Dance Advance and Philadelphia Music Project (funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts) and the Sam Fels Foundation and also a loyal and appreciative audience.

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About Carnatic Music

*Adapted from an article on Carnatic music by
Kiranavali Vidyasankar*

Carnatic music is one of the two major systems of classical music in India, the other being Hindustani music. The latter predominantly belongs to the north, east and western parts of India, while Carnatic music originated in South India. Before they evolved as two different streams of music, India seemed to have only one classical form of music that had its roots in the sacred hymns called the *Vedas* (approx. 5000BC – 1000BC). The cultural, religious, political and regional changes of several hundred centuries caused the divergence of these systems, the most recent and powerful being the invasion of India by the Islamic civilization around the 13th century. Whereas the classical music of north India picked up Persian, Arabic and Turkic influences, the music of the more peaceful southern India remained relatively unaffected by these developments and evolved independently. Carnatic music remained closely tied to the Hindu *Bhakti* (devotional) traditions as also to the folk and classical cultures of the Dravidian people. As a result, the exposition, the relative focus on the various aspects of music, and the repertoire developed in divergent ways between the north and the south.

Carnatic music is a very dynamic system that takes in desirable aspects from other systems and adapts them without prejudicing its originality and individuality. For instance, the violin has been successfully adapted from the West, just as a few *Ragas* have been incorporated from Hindustani music.

Carnatic music takes a three-pronged approach where melody, rhythm and lyrics are given equal importance. A noteworthy feature is that both classical music forms in India have developed as melodic systems as opposed to Western classical music, which is based on the principle of harmony.

Melody: Melody in Indian music is embodied in the concept of *Raga*. A *Raga* can be loosely described as a melodic scale that is embellished with ornamentations (*gamaka*) that are unique to Carnatic music. Some of the characteristic ornamentations are oscillations between two notes, glides, accents on notes and special kinds of microtonal emphases around particular notes. Several thousands of *Ragas* are theoretically possible but only a few hundred have been named and are in vogue.

(Continued on page 4)

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Rhythm: Carnatic music has been recognized one of the most advanced in terms of rhythmic sophistication. Not only is there an inherent rhythm (*laya*) to the various aspects of music, but this is expressed physically through hand gestures (*tala*). Another dimension to the rhythmic aspect is that one can find the common patterns of 4 and 3 counts, the relatively uncommon 7 and 5 count patterns, and also the quite rare 9 count pattern. These patterns are used for the external *Tala* count as well as the inner gait of the *Tala*. Using this broad base, endless arithmetical patterns are created to embellish the music both melodically and rhythmically.

Lyrics: Prosody or lyrics (*sahitya*) is the other important part of Carnatic music. Most of the well-known composers were adept at all the three aspects of music (melody, rhythm and lyrics). Although the underlying theme of most Carnatic compositions is devotion to various Hindu deities, there are also compositions in other themes like philosophy, love and patriotism. The Carnatic pool has compositions in the four South Indian languages (Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam) in addition to Sanskrit. Compositions are borrowed from other Indian languages and adapted as well.

One of the striking features of Carnatic music is the beautiful balance it offers in terms of compositions and creativity. It is as important to render compositions with discipline and perfection as it is to make creative forays into the melodic or rhythmic aspects. A whole range of improvisational features are found in this music system.

Ingredients of a Carnatic concert:

As with most other music systems, Carnatic music can also be better appreciated if one understands what happens in the concert. With the right blend of compositions and creativity, a Carnatic concert can satisfy a listener at all levels – emotional, intellectual and spiritual. The main performer would normally chart out the general direction of a concert keeping in mind the need to provide contrast in terms of raga, tala, composer, language and tempo. Different musical forms are also covered during the concert. He also tries to ensure that the creative elements of the music are distributed at various phases of the concert to prevent monotony. A variety of listeners with diverse interests can thus look forward to something in a Carnatic concert.

Some useful links:

1. <http://www.carnatica.net/appreciation-main.htm>
2. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carnatic_music

Saturday September 29, 2012 7:00 PM
SPIRIT

The Painted Bride Art Center,
230 Vine Street,
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Sruti proudly presents Spirit, a
Classico-Folk Musical Treat by
Flautist **Shashank**
and Rajasthani Folk Musicians
The Manganiars



\$25 (Non-Members), \$20 (Members), \$15 (Students/
Seniors), \$5 (4 to 18 years old), Free (Children under 4)

Details and tickets at www.sruti.org

"Sounds of India : Influences and Integration of
Folk Melodies in Carnatic Music " program. Sup-
ported by the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage
through the Philadelphia Music Project.



Saturday Nov 3, 2012, 8PM
Rama Vaidyanathan
Bharatanatyam

**Zellerbach theatre at the Annenberg Center,
The University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
3680 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104**

**Sruti proudly co-presents
with The Annenberg Center
for the Performing Arts:**

Rama Vaidyanathan
**"Bharatanatyam: New
Dimensions to a traditional
repertoire"**

Live Orchestra

Nattuvangam -

K. Sivakumar

Vocal - Vidya Srinivasan

Mridangam - Arun Kumar

Violin - Vikram Raghukumar

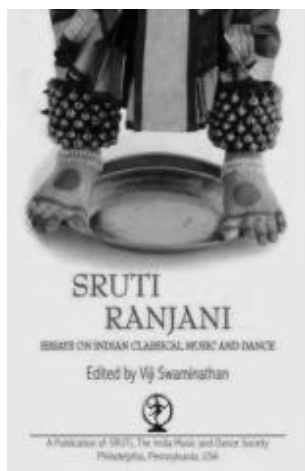


Price varies from \$20 to \$45 based on seating preference

For Tickets

267-797-7006 (SRUTI)
(215) 898-3900 (Annenberg Center Box Office)

www.sruti.org
<http://www.annenbergcenter.org/tickets/?id=226>



Sruti Ranjani

Essays on Indian Classical Music and Dance

Edited by Viji Swaminathan

Sruti Ranjani is a collection of essays contributed by professional concert artists, scholars, historians, critics, dancers, choreographers and connoisseurs in the field of classical music and dance of India. It includes writings on the evolution of Indian music and dance, Carnatic and Hindusthani music systems, biographies, perspectives and personal reflections.

<http://bookstore.xlibris.com/Products/SKU-0019920002/default.aspx>

Copies available for sale at the front desk

Music Collection from Sruti Performers at Amazon.com

New in 2012, Sruti has launched a music download page making it easy for patrons to browse and buy music by all professional artistes who have performed in Sruti events in recent years.

<http://www.sruti.org/sruti/inc-newsAmazon.asp>

About Today's Artists

Vidwan Sanjay Subrahmanyam began his musical journey at the age of seven. He was trained on the violin and in vocal music by many renowned music teachers, including violin maestro V. Lakshminarayana, Rukmini Rajagopalan, and Nadaswaram maestro Semponarkoil SRD Vaidyanathan. After the age of 15, Sanjay specialized in vocal music.



Sanjay is now an outstanding exponent of Carnatic Music. Sanjay is also a dedicated teacher and a role model for his students.

His concert career began in 1986, and since then he has performed across India at premier institutions. He has also toured cities across the United States, Europe, Australia, and South-east Asia.

Sanjay has also released several CDs and cassettes. His career has been portrayed in a documentary film *Aaraar Aasaippadaar* by filmmaker Prasanna Ramaswamy. Some of the numerous awards he has received are: 'A' Grade artiste of All India Radio, Chennai, 'Isai Peroli' from Karthik Fine Arts, Chennai, (2000), and Sangeetha Kalasarthi Award from Sri Parthasarathy Swami Sabha (2006). Besides being an outstanding singer and violinist, Sanjay is a Commerce Graduate and a qualified Chartered and Cost Accountant.



Vidwan S. Varadarajan initially learnt violin under Kanchi Janardhanam. He later learnt from the multi-faceted genius T.V. Gopalakrishnan. Starting at a very young age Varadarajan has been accompanying leading artists of carnatic music and has established himself as a front ranking musician. His style of play is characterized by excellent control over the instrument with brilliant repartees that in-

spire the main artiste. He has been conferred with several titles and awards and has for more than 20 years, given solo concerts and traveled the world on several concert tours as an accompanying artiste.



Vidwan Neyveli B. Venkatesh was initiated into mridangam at a tender age of seven by his first guru, his father A.S. Balaraman. Before he could comprehend the matter, mridangam found a place in his petite hands. Later he underwent advanced training in Mridangam under Sri. P.P.Venkatesan &



Sri. Ramanathapuram M.N.Kandaswamy. He caught the attention of the media during his maiden performance at ten.

He has played in all the temples in and around Neyveli. The spark to achieve was ignited by his supportive family members. Fortune smiled on him when he performed a 28 hrs non-stop marathon session in Neyveli in 1986. It proved a turning point in his life as

it left an indelible imprint in the music world. The then governor of Tamilnadu K.K. Shah applauded his feat. Adept in playing kanjira konnokal he stormed the world with his percussive expertise. He is an 'A' grade artist with All India Radio, Chennai. He has accompanied all frontline musicians and has toured extensively in India and other countries over the past 20 years.



SANJAY SUBRAHMANYAN

A Musician of integrity

By Savita Narasimhan

(This article was originally published in the August 2012 issue of the Sruti magazine.

These excerpts are reprinted here with permission from the editor.

To read the entire article and subscribe to the magazine please visit www.sruti.com)

Sanjay Subrahmanyam - Soaring creativity, a powerful and robust style, recalcitrant voice and a reclusive personality - these are the immediate associations that arise at the mention of this musician's name. One of the most established performing vocalists of our times, Sanjay has held his own in the field for well over two decades. He is one musician who has achieved an envious balance between two seemingly paradoxical elements with a style that is as classical in content as it is unorthodox in execution.

...

To quote his uncle Suresh: "The family environment was always completely supportive in a totally non-intrusive way. Sanjay was always his own man, kept his own counsel, but was quick to pick up important tips from his gurus and other senior performers he admired. Seeing his enormous self-belief and confidence, I rather suspect family members felt it was better to leave him alone than to keep prodding him. One thing though: his parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles were always ready to take him to concerts and he was only eager to go. Of course, when he came of age, he did not need anyone to take him. There was not a sabha in Chennai you did not see the young Sanjay in. He was like a sponge, absorbing everything."

...

Style

Interestingly, Sanjay never had the experience of a traditional gurukulam (and the resulting pathantharam or style imbibed during such an experience) for any prolonged period of time. By his own admission, he was drawn to the music of some of the most legendary musicians of earlier generations. One can sense the influences in his music - G.N. Balasubramaniam, Madurai Mani Iyer, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, M.D.Ramanathan, Ramnad Krishnan, S. Kalyanaraman, and at times even T.N. Seshagopalan. Nevertheless, there is not a hint of imitation in his music, only an original amalgamation and recreation of the styles which inspired him.

Sanjay has a voice, which, at the best of times, can be described as rough, coarse and unmelodious in the typical sense of the term. But he is living proof that a perfect voice is not a prerequisite to express the best in artistic thought. When he sings, we do not hear the voice, we listen to his creativity and power of expression. His audience imagines

more than it hears - his music is more an engagement for the mind than the heart. People go to his concerts to re-experience the music of the 'golden era' of Carnatic music. His fans are drawn to him as to a cult - they will not listen to many other musicians.

Sanjay's music reflects his reputation as a rebel. He is unpredictable. He prefers not to tread the safe, familiar paths. Instead, he chooses unusual flavours and ragas in his concerts or a totally new way of presenting the familiar. The flip side to all this experimentation is that the same raga can sound brilliant one day and off colour or unidentifiable the next. Nevertheless, his rebelliousness is not an attention-seeking, gimmick but a projection of his personality that places a premium on originality and spontaneity. In many ways, Sanjay is a natural. He carries off extremely difficult and complex things on stage with ease. His music has the high authority of tradition. Like the great musicians of the past he sings for himself even in the presence of an audience, and his immersion in his music in turn immerses his audience in its spirit.

...

While outwardly casual about regular practice, Sanjay is said to be disciplined about the learning process, not merely in terms of time spent in practice, but also in expanding his wide and impressive repertoire. His close associates describe him as an insatiable learner, constantly on the lookout for new compositions. Armed with a huge collection of books on music, he is said to spend much of his time updating his stock.

Known for his love of the Tamil heritage, Sanjay has extensively researched Tamil composers and their works and performs thematic concerts to highlight these composers.

...

Despite his hectic schedule, he manages to do a fair amount of reading. While Tamil fiction and P.G.Wodehouse feature in his list of favourites, and he is up to date with the Harry Potter series, he also regularly downloads e-books off the Internet.

...

Off the stage, Sanjay is known to keep to himself. A largely private person, he refuses requests for interviews or guest appearances. Not for him any social or public relations-driven activity. He prefers to spend time with his family and his books. He lives in Chennai [India] with his wife Aarthi and their two children.

The author Savita Narasimhan is a Carnatic vocalist, teacher and writer.

Sruti is a subscription based Monthly Magazine on Indian Performing Arts devoted to Indian classical music, dance and theatre and is published in Chennai, India. (www.sruti.com)

Fall 2012 Music Appreciation and Lecture / Demonstration Sessions

(All are Free and Open to All)

September 25th: (Tuesday) Bryn Mawr College, 7.30 - 9.30 PM *

Lecture Demonstration by Dr. Laxmi Tewari

Dr Tewari will focus on the folk music performed during life milestone events namely, childbirth, hair shaving, sacred thread, and wedding. He will talk about songs sung by special groups in rural Uttar Pradesh, India during occasions like the festivals of Holi, Divali, Navaratri and the rainy season. He will play relevant audio and also show footage from his recordings. Dr. Tewari has produced numerous CDs and books based on his 40 years of research on this topic.

**September 26: (Wednesday) University of Pennsylvania,
2 - 3:20 PM ***

September 27: (Thursday) Temple University, 5:30 - 6.30 PM *

Common threads in Indian Folk and Classical Music

Flautist Shashank and the Manganiyars present a workshop demonstrating the common threads in Indian folk and classical music but which receive different treatments in each of the forms hence resulting in a different musical effect being produced. They will also take the students and guests through a sneak preview of their September 29th concert performance.

October 6: (Saturday) Hindu Temple of Delaware, 4 - 6PM *

Emotions of life through folk songs

Workshop with folk composer and singer Smt. Anasuya Devi and her daughter Smt. Rathna Pappa.

November 8: (Thursday) Swarthmore College, 4:30-6 PM *

Songs of the Saints: Hindu Devotion in Indian Folk and Classical Music

A lecture/demonstration presented by S.Sowmya and troupe co-sponsored with Asian Studies, The Department of Music and Dance, DESHI, and the Department of Religion at Swarthmore.

November 9: (Friday) Montgomery County Community College,

An Appreciation of two Classical Operas

7-8:15PM *

Dr. Indira Peterson's talk "The songs of the fortune-telling Kuruvanni: Folk themes and music in an operatic drama of 18th century south Indian royal courts".

**November 9: (Friday) Montgomery County Community College,
8:15–9:30 PM ***

Demonstration by Sowmya and group on the “Influence of Kathakalakshepam in the Nandanar Charitram”.



Upcoming Concerts.....

**September 29: (Saturday) The Painted Bride Art Center,
7 PM ***

‘SPIRIT’ concert by Flute Shashank & the Manganiyar folk musicians from Rajasthan.

**November 3: (Saturday) University of Pennsylvania, 8 PM **
*Rama Vaidyanathan in a Bharatanatyam concert***

November 10: (Saturday) Montgomery County Community College 4.30PM*

Vocal Concert by S.Sowmya & Bharat Sundar

**December 1: (Saturday) Bharatiya Temple
SRUTI community day**



**** Sounds of India: Influences and Integration of Folk Melodies in Carnatic Music has been supported by The Pew Center for Arts and Heritage through the Philadelphia Music Project***

*****Rama Vaidyanathan’s dance performance is supported in part by the Sam Fels Foundation***

Events, locations, and times are subject to change. Please check www.sruti.org closer to the dates for the most updated information.

Saturday November 10, 2012 4:30 PM

Sowmya & Bharat Sundar

Science Center Auditorium,
Montgomery County Community College
340 Dekalb Pike, Blue Bell, PA 19422

Sruti is pleased to present a
Grand Vocal concert by

Sowmya & Bharat Sundar

showcasing
"Influences of Folk Music on
Carnatic Music"

Accompanied by
Violin:

M S Ananthakrishnan
B.U. Ganesh Prasad

Mridangam:
Neyveli Narayanan
Trivandrum Balaji

Kanjira:
K.V. Gopalakrishnan



\$25, \$20, \$15, \$5 (ages 4 - 18)

Call 267-797-7006 or E-Mail srutiphila@gmail.com
Details and tickets at www.sruti.org

"Sounds of India : Influences and Integration of Folk Melodies in Carnatic Music " program. Supported by the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage through the Philadelphia Music Project.





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