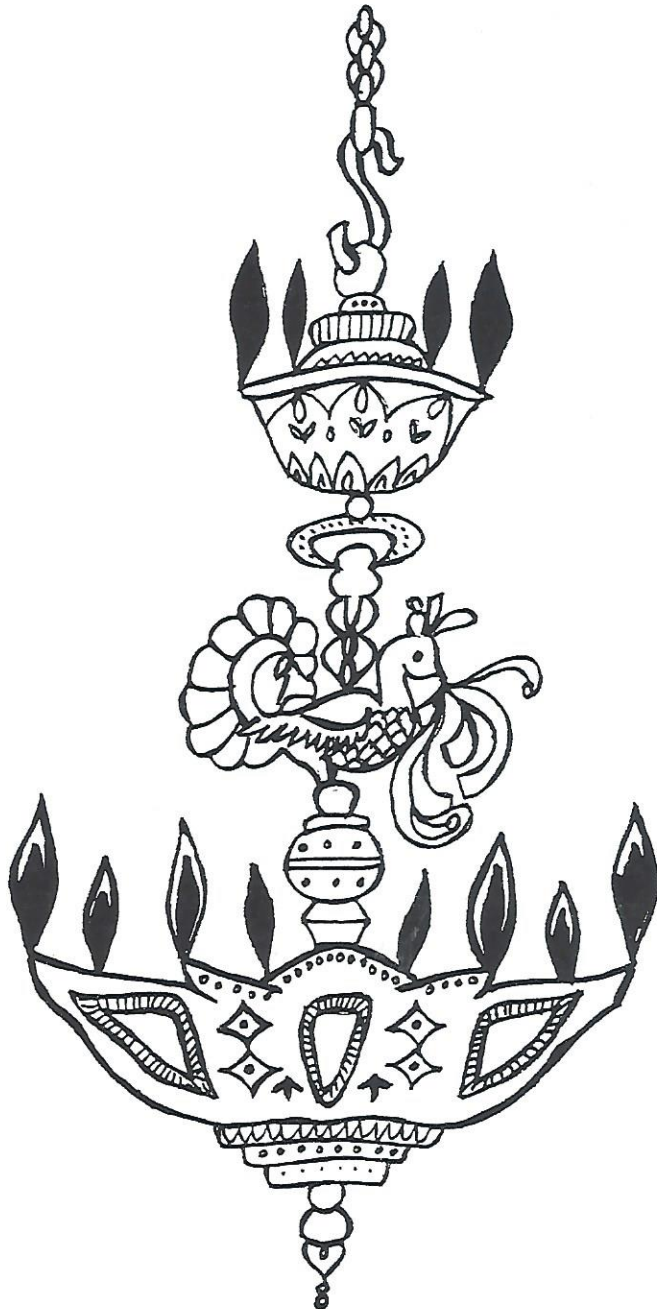


SRUTI RANJANI



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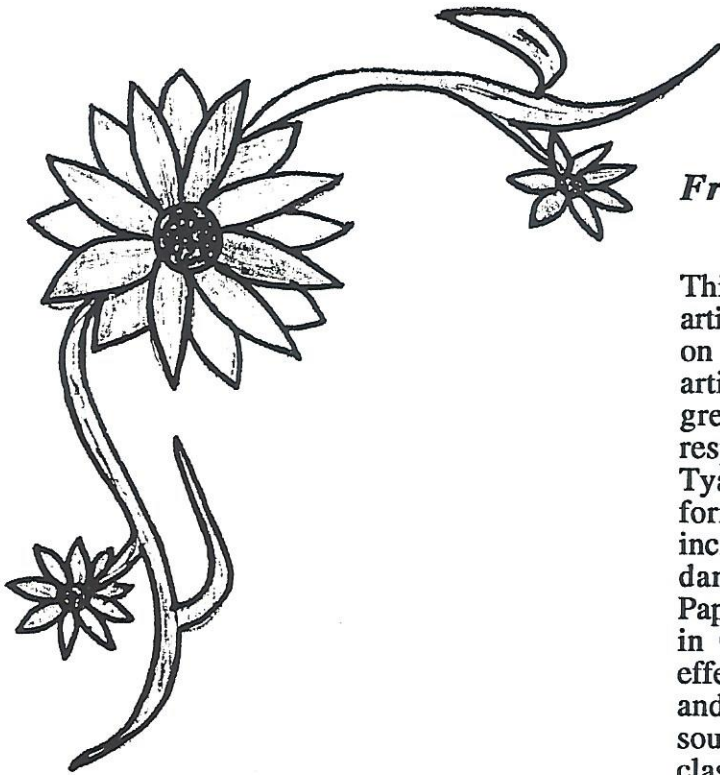
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From the Editors

This issue of Sruti Ranjani presents a variety of articles and reviews. Most appropriately, coming out on the occasion of Tyagaraja Aradhana, it features an article on Bangalore Nagarathnamma, who was a great devotee of Tyagaraja and was largely responsible for the organization and conduct of Tyagaraja Aradhana at Tiruvaiyaru in its present form. We also got a good start on our plans to include biographies of musicians, composers and dancers with articles on R.K. Srikantan and Papanasam Sivan. The technical aspects of *gamaka* in Carnatic music has been presented in a very effective way by T.N. Bala, an experienced musician and teacher. We have also included, purely as a source of information, a bibliography of books on classical music of India which we feel will be very useful to our readers. We thank all those who contributed enthusiastically to this issue of Sruti Ranjani.

We plan to bring out a special issue of Sruti Ranjani in September, 1996, to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the founding of Sruti. We invite all music lovers to contribute in any form they can for the special issue and for further growth of Sruti Ranjani.

We thank Aarathi Sudarshan for designing the beautiful cover for this issue of Sruti Ranjani and also the cartoons. We thank the many Sruti supporters who have made generous donations to make this publication possible.



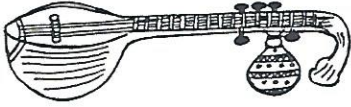
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NEWS - BRIEFS

• Veena Chittibabu Passes Away



The world of Indian classical music mourns the death of a well-known musician. Eminent veena exponent Chittibabu died of a heart attack in a Madras hospital on 9 February. He was 59. He is survived by his wife and three sons. Born in Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh, he started learning the veena at the age of 5. He gave his full fledged concert at the age of 12 and gained recognition as a child prodigy. A disciple of the late Emani Sankara Sastry, he received the Sangeetha Natak Akademi award in 1990.

• R.K. Srikantan receives Sangita Kalanidhi Award

Sri. R.K. Srikantan was awarded the coveted title of *Sangita Kalanidhi* at the 69th Annual Conference of the Music Academy on New Year's Day, 1996. He is the fifth musician from Karnataka to receive this honor. (See article in this issue)

• Classical Dance Awards

The International Dance Alliance, Madras Council and the Music Academy recently celebrated "Dance Week" and conferred the title of *Natya Kala Praveena* on well-known artistes Sitara Devi (Kathak), Kanak Rele (Mohini Attam), Kelucharan Mahopatra

(Odissi), Vempatti Chinna Satyam (Kuchipudi), Kalanidhi Narayanan (Bharatanatyam) and Darsana Jhaveri (Manipuri). A two-day program included performances by several dancers and a session of lecture-demonstrations.

• Compositions of Sri H. Yoganarasimham

The Sri Tyagaraja Sangeeta Sabha Charitable Trust of Mysore held a three-day festival from November 27 to 28, 1995 devoted to the compositions of Sri H. Yoganarasimham in its annual series on Vaggeyakaras of Karnataka. The festival, inaugurated by U. R. Anantha Murthy, President, Sahitya Academy, featured many of the prominent musicians of Karnataka, including R. N. Srilatha, G. S. Kamala and G. S. Rajalakshmi, M. Raghavendra, and Sukanya Prabhakar. The program also included a scholarly lecture by the renowned musicologist Mahamahopadhyaya R. Satyanarayana. The program was organized with the help and direction of Neeraja Achuta Rao (the composer's daughter) and her daughter Jyothi Suresh. Sri Yoganarasimham's kritis (in Kannada, Telugu, and Sanskrit) have been hailed by music lovers and critics as remarkable for capturing the essence of Ragas and their extraordinary lyrical quality. A book of his compositions was published posthumously under the title *Geetha Kusumanjali*. M.S. Subbulakshmi has recorded several of his compositions in a cassette released by HMV a few years ago. Some of the Sruti members may remember the concert by Neeraja Achuta Rao (with Meena Mani) in 1994 in which she sang several compositions of his.



Best Wishes

From

Hema & Ramamurthy

She Followed A Dream
The Life of Bangalore Nagarathamma

H. Y. Rajagopal

Recently, on a visit to Arsha Vidya Gurukulam at Saylorsburg, Pa., I stopped at the bookstore, and found a new book on Tyagaraja by a western scholar. I hadn't known of any book on him by a western writer until then, and the title was rather intriguing: Tyagaraja and the Renewal of Tradition, with a byline that said: "Translations and Reflections." The author was William J. Jackson, an Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Indiana University, who, I learned from the dust jacket, had written a book on him earlier ("Tyagaraja, Life and Lyrics"). The book contained a translation of the opera, Nauka Charitram. I browsed through a few pages and liked, at least tentatively, what I read. I have since been reading it more carefully, and the initial promise seems to hold. The book contains many interesting topics which need to be read, discussed and debated. I would like to share my thoughts on the book on a later occasion, but for now I would like to concentrate on one of its chapters, the one on the fascinating life story of Bangalore Nagarathamma, a great devotee of Tyagaraja, who was largely responsible for the organization and conduct of Tyagaraja Aradhana at Tiruvaiyaru in its present form. It is but fitting that when we venerate the Guru, we also pay homage to an ardent devotee of his.

Jackson's account of Nagarathamma's life is based largely on two biographies of her, one by Banni Bai, and the other by T. Sankaran, and to some extent on Nagarathamma's last will and testament. Jackson uses the name in its Tamilized form as Nagarathammal, probably because both his source biographies were in Tamil, but I shall use the name in its original Kannada form as Nagarathamma. That is the way she is referred to by her illustrious contemporaries vageyakara Vasudevacharya (in his brilliant memoir of the musicians of his day 'Na Kanda Kalavidaru') and D. V. Gundappa, the great Kannada writer and authority on culture, in a short pen portrait of her.

Nagarathamma was born on November 3, 1878 (probably in Mysore). Her mother, Puttalakshamma, belonged to the traditional

Devadasi class of artists. Her father, Subba Rao, a lawyer by profession, deserted the family when Nagarathamma was barely one and a half years old.

The young mother went through many hardships, but she seems to have overcome them by a resolute will. She was determined to have her daughter well educated in the arts and Sanskrit, and put her under the tutelage of Giribhatta Thammayya. A fast learner and a keen student, Nagarathamma made so much progress by the time she was nine, that it evoked the envy of many detractors who caused bad blood between the teacher and the student. The distraught mother did everything in her power to prevail on him, but the guru would not relent. Once again, the resolute mother, instead of meekly surrendering to the circumstances, left Mysore in search of a guru for her talented daughter, vowing never to return home except triumphantly with her daughter established as an accomplished artist.

Her search first took her to Madras, then to Kanchi and Srirangam, and finally to Bangalore, where she met the great violin vidwan Muniswamappa, who was a disciple of Walajapet Venkataramana Bhagavatar or his son Krishnaswami Bhagavatar, both of whom were direct disciples of Tyagaraja. Thus started a spiritual link with Tyagaraja, which only became stronger with time, and ultimately transformed her life completely.

During the next four years, under the able guidance of her guru, and the watchful eye of her mother, Nagarathamma made tremendous strides in music and dance. Puttalakshamma was pleased. But, unfortunately, just when her daughter was about to launch on her illustrious career, she died. Nagarathamma was only fourteen at that time.

Sometime thereafter, a performance she gave at the home of Veena Seshanna, the legendary musician of the Mysore court, attracted the attention of the art connoisseurs and patrons. She was invited to perform at the Palace, where she was later appointed as the Durbar musician and dancer. Her fame began to spread.

When she was 25, her guru Muniswamappa died, and then began another chapter in her life. She moved to Madras where one Rajarathna Mudaliar became her patron. She bought a house in a neighborhood where many other musicians lived, including Veena Dhanammal, who became a close friend to her.

Nagarathamma either did not have any children of her own or lost an only child, a daughter, at a very young age. Yearning for a child, she adopted a young girl from a poor family. By this time, Nagarathamma had amassed so many riches that the parents of the adopted girl, coveting her wealth, plotted to murder her. They were so blinded with greed, they did not hesitate to employ their own little girl to be part of their scheme. As the girl approached Nagarathamma with a cup of milk laced with poison, Nagarathamma sensed some danger. Maybe the girl's faltering steps gave her away but Nagarathamma later said that she felt someone was tugging at her hand, cautioning her not to drink that milk. She forgave the child, but the shattering experience brought on a deep sense of disillusionment concerning her wealth, her desire for a child, and her very existence. The child died shortly thereafter.

One night in October 1921, Nagarathamma had a vision of Tyagaraja in her dream. As she recorded in her last will and testament:

"It was a rare blessing to me to have the vision of Sri Tyagaraja Swami in the form in which I have conceived him in my daily worship. It was for me a call to pay my homage to the great soul at his samadhi and I obeyed it."

Nagarathamma was mystified, wondering what to do as she had no knowledge of Tiruvaiyaru. However, the next day, as if to help her set in motion the great task that was to consume her for the rest of her life, Bidaram Krishnappa, the great vocalist of Mysore came to visit her. Nagarathamma told him of her dream. Bidaram Krishnappa listened to her carefully, and explained to her the meaning of her dream, that she had been called upon to dedicate her wealth to the service of Tyagaraja. He took her to Tiruvaiyaru the very next day and what she saw there deeply pained her. The place was in utter disrepair and was subject to all kinds of abuse. As she recalled later, "there was then only the Brindavan with the stone slab on one side feebly

announcing to the world that the remains of the great soul lay interred within."

The very pain she felt turned into an inspiration. She lost no time in following up on the call. Endowed with great strength of will and single-mindedness in the pursuit of a goal, which she must have inherited from her mother, Nagarathamma succeeded in laying the foundation for Tyagaraja's temple the very same month. It took another four years of work before the temple was completed and dedicated.

Nagarathamma felt, however, her work was not done. Although the temple had been completed, there were no facilities for assembly or food preparation. In those days there were three groups that performed the Aradhana separately. The smaller group would hold it on the bathing ghats of Kaveri for five days concluding it on the anniversary date, while the larger group held it at the Sanskrit College for four days starting on that date. Nagarathamma and her group of women conducted their worship in front of the samadhi. In 1938, she decided to sell away all her jewelry to raise funds for making the much wanted additions, an assembly hall and a kitchen; and in 1940, largely due to her efforts, the three groups decided to form a single organization, the "Sri Thiaga Brahma Mahotsava Sabha."

Nagarathamma lived in Tiruvaiyaru in her final days, devoting herself completely to the service of her Guru Sri Tyagaraja, who was also her ishtadevata, and to the teaching of his music. In 1952, her health deteriorating, she heard about the passing of one of Tyagaraja's descendants (brother's lineage). Grieving over his loss, she felt acute pain in the chest. A doctor was summoned who prescribed some injection which she refused. She said Rama's name alone was sufficient for her. She told one of the devotees present, "Touch my forehead; the name of Rama is contained within me....." Though in pain, she remained cogent, thinking of her own ishtadevata and his ishtadevata. She lay her head in a disciple's lap and died peacefully, with the names of Rama and Anjaneya on her lips. The day was May 19, 1952.

As instructed by her will, her friends arranged for her samadhi on the banks of Kaveri. But the residents of Tiruvaiyaru, who so dearly loved and revered her, buried her mortal remains in front of Tyagaraja's samadhi, so she would always remain at her master's feet.

Nagarathamma was a colorful personality, enormously capable and courageous, compassionate and witty. She had an amazing talent for putting people together and getting things done. And what is even more remarkable in a person of such religious fervor is that she had a great capacity to make people laugh. She won many honors and titles, but the one that gave her much satisfaction was "Tyagarajasevasakta." In 1951, around the Aradhana time, Rajaji said of her: "All the musicians and vidvans should offer homage to this sannyasini of our times." Nagarathamma, however, was never one to rest complacently on honors and tributes. She spoke out against the way the Aradhana was conducted: "Though the celebrations were spectacular, the element of bhakti was lacking in the atmosphere. There was more pomp and show than a simple offering and dedication."

Nagarathamma never forgot the trauma of her childhood, the slights and humiliation and hardships she and her mother had to suffer, their valiant efforts to lift themselves out of a place society did not look upon with any kindness but never ceased to exploit, to a rightful place of honor and dignity. Once she was invited to a conference of Telugu and Sanskrit poets where a noted poet (Kaviraja Sarvabhauma Krishnamurti Sastri) spoke admiringly of a translation of Andal's Tiruppavai by one Muttu Palani whom he mistakenly referred to as a man. Nagarathamma burst out laughing and chastised the great poet: "Shame on you! Despite all your learning, you do not know that Muttu Palani had the honor of being a devadasi, like me." She tirelessly championed the cause of women artists. Her will charges the executors "never to depart from the real spirit of principle and purpose underlying the celebration," and forbids anyone from trying "to debar lady artists and singers including devadasis." She wanted more women to spread the music of Tyagaraja.

Tyagaraja always denounced those who used music for material gain. How then did he call upon her, one who had become rich through her art, to build a temple for him? There is a universal belief that the pure at heart are always dear to God regardless of their outward status in life. There are innumerable stories in religious literatures of all lands attesting to it. As for the guru, Indian tradition believes, as Swami Rama says in his book "Living with the Himalayan Masters," "When the disciple is prepared, the master appears..... when the wick and oil are properly prepared, the master lights the lamp." When Purandaradasa was in search of a guru, after renouncing all his wealth following his encounter with the poor brahmin asking for donation to perform his son's upanayanam, a vision appeared in his dream telling him to go to Vyasaraaya. Non-believers in such mystical experiences and proponents of the western psycho-analytical approach may contend that Nagarathamma's vision was a self-induced one, for after all, by her own admission, Tyagaraja appeared in the same form she had conceived him in her daily worship. Perhaps, in the final analysis, all this really doesn't matter. Go east, or go west, if you go far enough, you reach the same point.

A devadasi turned into a devotee. Nagarathamma's story has all the archetypal elements of a bhakta's journey through life: abandonment by the father, a childhood of hardship sustained only by the mother's will and determination, relentless pursuit of art, accumulation of wealth and fame, the trauma of a murder attempt, disillusionment, the vision of a saint, renunciation, and dedication to a life of service. I believe it offers rich material for a fine dance drama. Here is wishing that some imaginative artist will soon make use of it.

(Jackson's book was published in India by Motilal Banarasidass of Delhi in 1994. His other book was published by Oxford University Press in 1991.)

[Dr. H.Y. Rajagopal is an engineer by profession and also teaches at Villanova University. A very enthusiastic supporter of Sruti, he has previously served as a member of Sruti's executive committee.]



R.K. Srikantan

A Profile

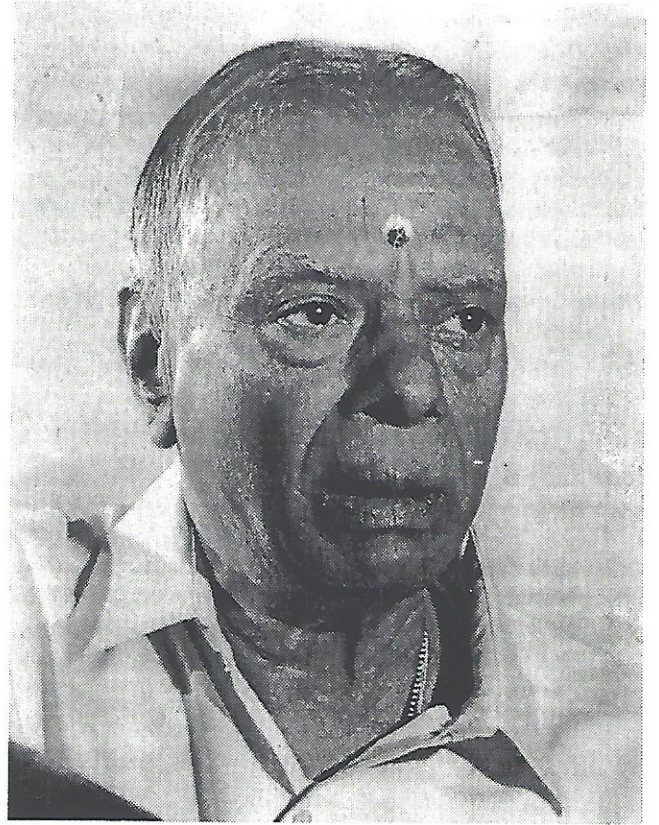
Viji Swaminathan

R.K. Srikantan has been a household name in Karnataka for over five decades. To me the name brings back memories of the days I was growing up in Mysore. I remember, at about the age of four (my earliest recollection), one of my sisters holding me by the hand and rushing to a concert of R.K. Srikantan to get 'good seats' (we sat so close to the 2-ft raised platform seating the artists that I could have just reached out and touched one of the artists). Though I did not understand much of Carnatic Music at the time, I enjoyed listening and accompanied my parents and sisters to every concert. The Dasara, Ramanavami and Vinayaka Chaturthi concerts I attended, particularly at the Bidaram Krishnappa Mandira and Aralikatte Rama Mandira are still vivid in my memory. Of all the beautiful voices I came to love, R.K. Srikantan's was the most familiar one. Not a day went by without hearing his voice either in a concert, a devaranama in the morning, or the Ganavihara, the music class he held over the All India Radio (my sister, who learnt music from a disciple of RKS, sang along with the students, trying to writing down the *swaras* at the same time).

The coveted honor of the Sangita Kalanidhi award to R.K. Srikantan by the Music Academy has come late, but has been widely welcomed in the Carnatic Music world. I cannot think of another musician who has so pervaded the classical music scene in Karnataka or worked so tirelessly for the cause of music like R.K. Srikantan. He is the fifth musician from Karnataka to receive the honor [earlier recipients are Mysore Vasudevacharya (1935), Mysore T. Chowdiah (1957), Rallapalli Ananthakrishna Sarma (1974), and Mysore Doreswamy Iyengar (1984).] In relating the facts about his life and career, I have taken excerpts from the many articles that appeared in the Sruthi magazine from India.

R.K. Srikantan (Rudrapatnam Krishnasastry Srikantan) was born in 1920 into a Sanketi family from Rudrapatnam village in Hassan district in Karnataka. Srikantan's father Krishna Sastry was a distinguished musician, a playwright, a scholar in Sanskrit and Kannada

and also a Harikatha exponent. His mother Sannaka was a well trained vocalist. His paternal grandfather, Veena Narayanappa was also a well-known musician and a very close friend of Veena Seshanna, while his maternal grandfather Bettadapura Narayanaswamy, was a vainika and



R.K. Srikantan

a vocalist. With such a pedigree, it is no wonder that Srikantan and his brothers revealed an aptitude for music at a very young age. Srikantan's elder brother R.K. Venkatarama Sastry, was a disciple of Mysore T. Chowdiah and a distinguished violinist. R.K. Narayanswamy, another elder brother, was a good vocalist trained by Musiri Subramania Iyer. A third brother R.K. Ramanathan, was a vocalist as well as a professor of English.

Srikantan learnt Carnatic music for about eight years from his father, and later from his elder brother R.K. Venkatarama Sastry who was greatly responsible for molding Srikantan's music. When Venkatarama Sastry relocated to Madras to facilitate his career as a violinist, Srikantan's training continued through his own avid desire to reach perfection. Over the years, his music was greatly influenced by many leading musicians from the South like Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Musiri Subramania Iyer, Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer, Chowdiah, GNB and others.

With the rich musical heritage, Srikantan is still widely regarded as a self-made man. He established his name in the Carnatic music field by his firm adherence to *sampradaya* (tradition), and his own *manodharma*. He developed his own rich pattern and chaste form of exposition of ragas and it is his style of rendering ragas that won him great admiration. Clear-cut pronunciation of the text, emphasis on *bhava* and *bhakthi* aspects of music, strict adherence to *sruti* and equal emphasis on rhythm are noteworthy features of Srikantan's music.

An arts graduate of the University of Mysore, Srikantan chose a career in Carnatic music at a time when the profession was not very remunerative. The Mysore palace and the Maharaja (a musician and a composer himself) attracted eminent musicians from the music world who visited Mysore for the recognition and honor bestowed by the Maharaja. People were treated to the free concerts of these musicians throughout the year and many connoisseurs of music had the pleasure of listening to them at the courtesy concerts at the residences of Veena Subbanna and Muthiah Bhagavathar. Hence concert opportunities for a budding artist like Srikantan were few and far between. However, Srikantan stayed firm in his choice of career and eventually found a job as a music producer in the broadcasting field with the Mysore state radio station. In late nineteen forties, when the Maharaja-ruled state became a part of the Indian union and the radio station was taken over by the All India Radio, Srikantan was transferred to the AIR station in Bangalore.

As a young budding artist in the late forties, Srikantan sang with a full throated voice rich in timbre. According to many of his peers who have followed his career, his singing was robust but impulsive. However, there is no doubt that

over the years, his performances gained depth and maturity and he came to be regarded as an accomplished vidwan and an upholder of traditional values. Ganabhaskara, Ganakala Praveena, Karnataka Sangeeta Ratna, Gayaka Chudamani are just a few of the titles and honors that have been bestowed on him before he received the coveted title of Sangitha Kalanidhi from his peers at the Music Academy.

While Srikantan became well-known through the many concerts throughout the nation, he became a household name in Karnataka for the yeomen service he rendered to the cause of Carnatic music in the state and for his reputation as a fine teacher. During his position as a music producer at the AIR for more than three decades, he popularized Ganavihara, a radio program in which he taught all aspects of Carnatic music. His teaching techniques made the program a great success and earned for him many indirect disciples. The program was so popular that when it was terminated a decade ago, students and connoisseurs alike protested and succeeded in having it restored. As a music producer, Srikantan produced numerous musical features based on unfamiliar as well as familiar compositions, song-forms, raga-s, tala-s, etc. In addition, he also set numerous songs to music with a deep knowledge of historical, theoretical and technical aspects of music.

Besides his service to the cause of music education, there is another very important reason for which he deserves the gratitude of music lovers and that is his yeomen contribution to the preservation and propagation of the invaluable musical tradition of the Dasakoota of Karnataka. Srikantan has been particularly instrumental in giving wide popularity to the Devaranamas of all Haridasas and especially Purandaradasa. This involved another aspect of his career, namely tunesmithy, the setting of lyrics to music. While setting several compositions of the Haridasas to music, Srikantan has retained the traditional tunes and tala-s and embellished them. He also tuned several *vachanas* of Saivite savants like Basaveswara, Akkamahadevi and Allmma Prabhu. He also set to music the poetry of many contemporary poets like D.V. Gundappa, Kuvempu, P.T. Narasimhachar (PuThiNa) and Bendre. He also tuned, sang and taught many songs composed by Narayana Teertha in Krishna Leela Tarangini. Many of the musical features he produced show the uniqueness of the simultaneous popularity of both Carnatic and Hindustani music in Karnataka (Karnataka has

been a seat of Hindustani music and has produced many of the leading Hindustani musicians). Among the numerous musical features he produced for broadcast, one of his own favorites is Sree Krishna Vaibhavam which consisted of kriti-s, varna-s, sloka-s and bhajans in Hindustani style.

A guru always lives on through his disciples and this is particularly true with Srikantan. He has trained many talented students who have gone on to become distinguished musicians themselves. He strongly believed in the *gurukula* style of one-to-one training and demanded the best from his students. His disciples include among others, M.S. Govinda Rao, Gowri Kuppaswamy, K.S. Sathyavathy, M.S. Sheela, Seethalakshmi Madhavan, S.K. Vasumathi, M.S. Shashank (flute) and Vidyabhushana Teertha Swami. Many other leading musicians of Karnataka claim him as their guru through the Ganavihara program and the kriti workshops conducted by him. Srikantan's son Ramakanth was trained by his father and also by his uncle Venkatarama Sastry. Ramakanth still accompanies his father in concerts, but is also

blossoming into an independent concert musician. His daughter Rathnamala Prakash is one of the leading *Sugam Sangeet* singers of India.

At the age of 75, Srikantan continues to work tirelessly for the cause of music. Having retired after 32 years of service as the music producer of AIR, Bangalore, he has been giving lecture-demonstrations in all leading sabhas of the country. His voice continues to be very powerful and steady and his adherence to sruti unwavering. According to M.S. Sheela, Srikantan still devotes certain amount of his time for his music practice everyday without fail. Another disciple T.S. Sathyavathy, pays him a great tribute when she describes his virtues as a teacher, quoting Kalidasa. "*One person may be at his best when exhibiting his art in person, another may have as his special qualification the power of communicating his skill. He who possesses both these skills should be placed at the head of teachers.*" Srikantan epitomizes the covetable virtues of a conscious performer and a conscientious teacher.

[A member of the Sruti library committee, Viji Swaminathan is a physicist and a computer scientist]

Ethical Effect of Music

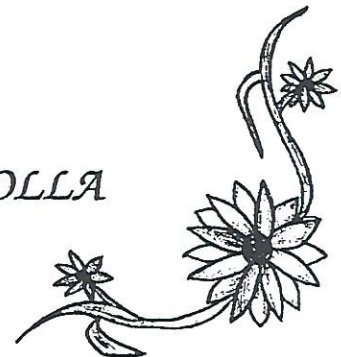
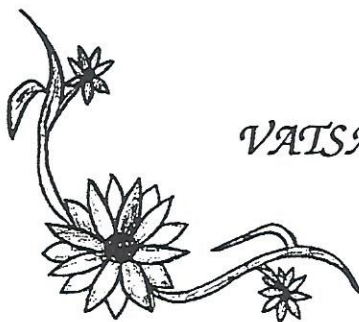
Harmony is the power that aims to bring heaven down to earth. It instils into man the love of good and a sense of duty. If you want to know whether or not a realm is well-governed, whether or not the customs are good or bad, examine the kind of music it cultivates.

*A chinese Chronicler,
(A. Kraus Figlio on the Music of Japan)*

Best Wishes

From

VATSALA & SHRIPATHI HOLLA



TYAGARAJA

"On whose art no human hand can improve"

The life and work of Tyagaraja, the bard of Tiruvayyaru, is a miracle of miracles. For no musician, with exception of Purandaradasa, revolutionized and gave direction to Indian music as he did. So creative a musician and saint was he that he has come to be known as Sri Tyaga Brahmam, which is a reference not only to his creativity but carries with it a part of his father's name, Ramabrahmam.

The bulwark of a great culture, the Vijayanagara Empire, with all its glory, fell at the end of the 16th century. The invasion from the North brought in its wake new, though not always commendable, trends in living. Quite a few Hindu families had to flee to Southern areas which were still peaceful. Many found shelter under the benign rule of the Nayakas and the Maratha kings of Tamilnadu. Particularly, a number of Telugu families went South and formed nuclei of art and culture and Tyagaraja's ancestors belonged to one such stock, as he describes himself as descending from the Kakarla family (Kakarla is a village in the Kurnool District of Andhra).

Tiruvarur in the Tanjavur district of South India is a small hamlet; it is small in size, but has great sanctity hallowed by the memory of the three composers, the Trimoorthy, of Karnatak music. In this village lived one Girija Kavi, a poet-composer attached to the Court of Tanjavur. His daughter and wife of Kakarla Ramabrahmam, Seetamma (Santamma?), gave birth to a son on Sarvajit, Chaitra, 27th Soma, Sukla saptami, Pushya (4th May, 1767). According to another tradition the year of his birth was 1759. The boy was named Tyagaraja, after Lord Tyagaraja, the presiding deity of Tiruvarur. In one of his songs, Tyagaraja sings, "Seetamma mayamma, Sri Ramudu ma tandri" - Seeta is my mother and Sri Rama my father - perhaps with a double meaning.

Ramabrahmam shifted to Tiruvayyaru, leaving Tiruvarur. The king of Tanjavur had gifted a house to him in this village and here Tyagaraja not only spent the major part of his life but also attained samadhi. Tiruvayyaru, on the bank of

the Kaveri and known as Panchanada Kshetra, was the abode of saints, poets and musicians;

and of this place Tyagayya sings, "...the Panchanada Kshetra in the beautiful Chola country, nestling on the banks of the Kaveri over which blows the gentle zephyr where holy brahmins chant the vedas...a town to be coveted even by Lord Siva".



Tyagabrahmam married, at the age of eighteen, a girl called Parvati who died without leaving any children. He then married her sister, Kanakamba. A daughter, Seetalakshmi, was born to them and she was given in marriage to Kuppuswami. They begot a boy who was named Tyagaraja (Panchapakesa?) who died issueless; thus came to an end the direct lineage of the composer.

Born and bred in a highly cultured family, Tyagaraja was a profound scholar and poet. He studied Sanskrit, astrology and was, of course, well versed in his mother tongue, Telugu.

Besides, he was a highly trained musician, having been the disciple of Sonthi Venkataramanayya, one of the foremost singers of the day. His genius is evident in every song of his; but his immortal Pancha ratna kritis (the five gems) reveal the mastery he had over musical technique. Apart from thousands of songs of kriti type, he composed utsava sampradaya keertanas and divya nama sankeertanas which are sung in devotional congregations. He has also created two operas: Prahlada Bhakti Vijayam and Nauka charitram. While there are a number of songs in Sanskrit, the majority of them, including the operas, are in Telugu.

One can speak of Tyagabrahmam's music only in superlatives and even these adjectives are pitifully inadequate to convey the exquisite beauty of his art. There is no hitch, there is no unwanted phrase, there is no laboured juxtaposition of word, music and feeling. To him music was so creative that he could not be bound in mere traditional grammar. He saw the potentiality in new melodies and from them gave forms to ragas like Kharaharapriya, Harikambhoji and Deyagandhari; at least he must have breathed life into such simple tunes to make them into ragas, if not produced them de novo. The rhythms used by him are also simple and are generally confined to talas such as Adi, Triputa, and Roopaka. Complex temporal and melodic patterns would not have expressed the lyricism of his mystic adoration. A beautiful elaboration introduced by him was the sangati as a built-in part of his kriti. These melodic variations convey so many shades of the main mood that all the finer nuances of text and music find expanded expression. It need not be offered as an excuse, but it is a fact that he was also as much capable of technical musicality as any learned grammarian. Tyagaraja's "five gems" in ragas Nata, Gaula, Arabhi, Varali and Sri, his songs in slower tempos and his famous kriti, Mariyada kadayya in Bhairavam wherein he, effortlessly, brings in a shade of Yaman Kalyan - all these and many more show a mastery of design and structure very much beyond the ordinary.

Tyagaraja's literary genius was as great as his musical genius. His command over Telugu and Sanskrit lent not only an erudite dignity to his songs but gave a rare felicity and homeliness to his diction. He drives home great truths with unerring aim but with extreme simplicity of simile. "What does it matter whether the fool, who does not, gain punya (religious merit) when opportunity presents itself, lives or is dead?...Of

what avail is it whether blind eyes, however large, are open or closed?". Again, "The fault or goodness is not yours, Lord! It is mine. (Why blame Thee?). If one's daughter is unable to bear the labour-pains, why blame the son-in-law?".

Spiritually he was one of the rare souls who gave up everything except bhakti and cared for nothing else beyond the Grace of God. The early influences on his life make this trend more pronounced. The Bhagavata of Bammera Potana, the mystic poet of Andhra, was for him a book of daily parayana (recitation). Indeed there is a close parallel between the thoughts and lives of these two. The devaranamas of Purandaradasa were fed to him as if they were his mother's milk. Such early environments led to a positive direction by initiation into yoga. It is supposed that he was given the Rama Taraka Mantra by one sanyasi, Sri Ramakrishnananda. Tyagaraja's father's fellow scholar and a yogi, Sri Upanishad Brahmendra of Kanchipuram, also exerted a great influence on him. So also the works and personality of Narayana Teertha, the author of Krishnaleela Tarangini, had considerable effect on the musician.

The only things that mattered to Tyagayya were music and bhakti - they were synonymous. "Is there a sacred path than music and bhakti?". "O Mind, salute the gods of the seven notes". "The knowledge of music, O Mind, leads to bliss of Union with the Lord". Music was to him the meditation on the Primordial Sound: "I bow to Sankara, the embodiment of Nada, with my body and mind. To Him, the essence of blissful Samaveda, the best of the vedas, I bow. To Him who delights in the seven swaras born of His five faces I bow".

Tyagaraja was a great bhakta; the only meaningful act for him was complete surrender to Him whom he called Rama. In the song Ika gavalasina, he sings, "What more do you want, O Mind! Why are you not happy? When the Lord of the Universe has rested in your heart - what more do you want, O Mind?"

There was not a moment of his life which was not filled with Rama. His songs sing of Him who was a friend, a master, a father,- anything he could conceive of. Hearing of Rama's name was to Tyagaraja like "obtaining a large kingdom". And how could he desist from singing His praises - "Is there any bliss greater than this: to dance, to sing and to pray for His

presence." "Did not the Lord incarnate wish to wear the garland of ragas woven by Tyagaraja?"

The worship of His feet (padasevana) was a privilege; but to worship his sandals, (padua) was indeed a fortune. "Rama, clear my doubt. Are Your holy feet worshipped by Narada, great or Your sandals? The sages who worshipped Your feet became equal to You; but Bharata worshipped Your sandals and got Your very self". Day in and day out His worship became a matter of daily living to Tyagaraja. He sang songs to wake the Lord, to bathe Him, to feed Him, to please Him and to put Him to bed - "You are tired after wandering in the forest and conquering Ravana; rest in the lotus of Tyagaraja's heart". Of course, being close to Rama he could chide Him. "If you present Yourself before me, what wealth will You lose? Why this intractability?"

The word Rama (RA-MA) was to him a Numen that transcended all names. It would be more than absurd to attribute any sectarian leanings to Tyagaraja. He sings, "As what did they define You? How did they worship You? - as Siva, as Madhava, as Brahma born of Lotus or as Parabrahma, the Trans-Godhead? I prostrate myself before those who know the secret of MA as the life of Siva-mantra and RA as the life of Narayana-mantra".

This complete surrender naturally made him live a life of detachment, though he was a house holder. The first and foremost result was that he refused to earn a livelihood. He had a house to live in and that was enough shelter. For food, every morning he would go round the village asking for alms - unchavritti, as it is called; and he would not gather even alms more than his daily need.

A life which steadfastly was uncompromising was not at all to the liking of his elder brother, Japasa, to put it mildly. Japasa fondly hoped that the great art and learning of his younger brother could be put to pecuniary uses, which the saint would not agree to. In desperation, the brother not only partitioned the ancestral house but went to the extent of throwing the Rama idol which Tyagayya worshipped into the river. The sorrow of the devotee cannot even be imagined. Many a song he sang begging the Lord to come back to him. In a dream he is told where to find the idol and his life becomes full.

Honours and wealth could have been his, if only he had asked for them; but he would not ask. He spurned an invitation of the King and sang, "Is wealth (nidhi) the source of happiness or is the proximity (sannidhi) of Rama?"

Tyagabrahma undertook an extensive pilgrimage of the sacred places of South India. Wherever he went he sang of the deity of the place. There is the famous incident of his visit to the Venkateswara temple at Tirupati. He goes into the temple to have darsan (vision) of the Lord; but the entrance of the sanctum sanctorum is covered with a curtain which prevents him from seeing the idol. The priests refuse to part the curtain. In great sorrow he sings, "Will you not remove the curtain?" ...and characteristically adds, "the curtain of vanity and jealousy in my mind". The curtain miraculously slides aside by itself and he is face to face with Him.

So much sincerity and surrender drew the ire of people around him and he could not stand their hypocrisy either. He speaks out bluntly about their pretences. "One who does not think of devotion to God, however learned, will be a slave of the senses and not be free from coveting others' women and wealth". There is a vast difference between seeing the Lord and going to the temple. "O Siva, is it possible for me to have your darsan? I have seen the spires, the pillars, the idols, the temple dancers, the rows of lights and made the due circumambulations. My mind has turned towards things external. But it is no child's play to instal Your glorious Form in the lotus of my heart!" Again, "Of what use is the possession of scholarship, in purana, agama, shastra, veda and the doing of japa to a deceitful mind? It is like dressing a corpse with a lace turban and precious jewels. Oh, give me the alms of highest (satvika) devotion".

Tyagabrahmam took sanyasa towards the end of his life and attained samadhi on Pusya Bahula Panchami in Prabhava (6th January, 1847). There is a poignancy about his absorption into the Godhead. He says in one of the most moving songs, "Unerringly I saw Sri Rama installed on the hill...Thrilled with ecstasy, with tears of joy, I tried to speak. He promised to bless me in five days." And so it happened.

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GAMAKA in Carnatic Music

T.N. Bala

Indian Musicologists are fond of tracing the history of Indian Music to "SAMA VEDA". They claim that the system of music was the same throughout India before the advent of Muslim rulers in the North. Almost all of them trace the tradition to ancient works from Bharatha's Natya Sastra of 5th Century B.C to Sarngdeva's *Sangeetha Rathnakaram* of 13th Century A.D. For example, it is believed that the Hindustani and Carnatic Music are only two divisions of one and the same Indian Music system and not two different or separate systems.

In this matter there are different schools of thought. There is more than one theory about even the very origin of Indian Music particularly in the light of references and evidences in ancient Tamil literature. For one thing, in the South, musicians have predominantly handled SHADJA GRAMA RAGA system, while in the North MADHYA GRAMA system was mostly followed. To explain briefly, in the Shadja Grama system scales start with SA, while in the other system scales begin with MA.

However there are many commonalities between the two systems, such as :

1. Both systems have the same basic seven notes.
2. Both systems use same variations of the note.
3. Both follow the basic Sruthi concept
4. Both have many Ragas with same notes.
5. In both, Tala plays an integral part.

Yet Ragas having same notes (Swaras) "sound" different . Why?

Where is the essential divergence which makes it a sound of a different "Style" ?

The answer to this question leads us to an examination and understanding of an attribute very unique to Carnatic music, very subtle in application, and very intricate to comprehend. It is referred to as GAMAKA based on the concept of 22 sruthi system. Without getting too technical, let us examine the nature of GAMAKA.

The word GAMAKA is derived from the sanskrit word GAM - to go - as in GAMITHI or GACHCHATHI, which symbolically means motion or movement as against ACHAL, that is, to stay still. What are these GAMAKAS, these movements? In simple terms, they are oscillations of a musical note. These movements can be slow or fast; long or short; in slow or fast succession; zig zag and/or jerky except straight or flat. They are like electrons around a nucleus always in orbit. This is a concept totally unacceptable in the classical Western Music, where a note has a finite place. It is this GAMAKA that gives Carnatic music system its distinctive "Style" and "Character". In fact, to have a "sound" knowledge to render Carnatic Music, training is usually given in GAMAKAS in the form of VARNAMS. It is even said that no musician is worth the mettle unless he can render a few VARNAMS. It is a kind of testimonial to a musician. Essentially, VARNAMS are mere exercises in technicalities of music with emphasis on various types of GAMAKAS . There were as many as 15 of them during the days of Sarngdeva , now reduced to 10, which we will enumerate with examples later in this article. This is not to say that Hindustani Music does not have GAMAKAS. It does. However, the difference is that while in one system GAMAKA is based on the 22 sruthi concept , in the other system it is limited to the 12 sruthi concept. To comprehend the difference, one should understand what this "22 Sruthi " is all about, which, as I said before, is unique to Carnatic Music.

Briefly, "The 22 Sruthi concept " is a conceptual division of the basic 7 musical notes. This division is beyond our physical perception , which is limited to a division of only 16 notes. This is to say that any note beyond that range can only be perceived as a note in "motion". GAMAKA consists of such notes.

Now let us understand the place of GAMAKA within the 22 Sruthi concept. As we all know, a note or swara gets embellished in many ways. First, the 7 notes give rise to 12 which add color and contour to the musical phrase. The

melodic structure of that musical phrase gets further embellished when those very same 12 notes give rise to 16 and then to 22 notes. In this division of 22 notes, all except 2 fixed notes become a subtle blend of light and shadow, so much so that each such note becomes an individually indivisible unit - which we may call a GAMAKA, in technical terms. Thus each GAMAKA blurs the demarcation between one note and another. Obviously, some of these notes are only conceptual in nature.

This difference explains why ragas having the same musical notes in both the systems sound not the same; why certain Carnatic Ragas do not have counterparts in the Hindustani system, except in "name"; why certain instruments like Harmonium of the keyboard family were not considered suitable for Carnatic Music - to name a few points never discussed among pandits unemotionally. However, these points do not deter the tremendous appeal both systems have to lovers of music.

(This article should be taken only in the context of the concept of GAMAKA and its nature and contribution to shaping the distinctive style of Carnatic Music and should not be misconstrued as evaluating the merits and demerits of any system)

Back to GAMAKAS, there are 10 types, known as DASAGAMAKAS. It is assumed that there can be 10 positions in motion, each having a name and a pattern of movement which are as follows with examples:

1. *Kampitha* - oscillation from a lower note to a higher note starting with the actual swarasthana as in:

G in Thodi (C) &

R in Madyamavathi (C).

If the Gamaka rule is not observed, R in Madyamavathi will tend towards Brindavana Saranga.

2. *Spurita* - oscillation of note going one way from low to high.

SRGMP in Sankarabharanam (C)

NRGMDN in Kalyani (C)

3. *Prathyahata* - oscillation of note going one way from high to low as in:

NNDDPP in Kalyani (C) Vanajakshi Varnam

RgRgR in Ahirbhairavi (H).

4. *Jaru* - Note sliding between two notes - either ascending or descending

SRGS in Kambhoji (C)

S to P in Anandhabhairavi (C)

G in Dharbharikanada (H)

5. *Kandippu* - note rendered with a pause between two notes

MG P MR in Surati (C)

S D N in Hindolam (C)

G N S in Malkauns (H)

M G R in Puriyadanasri (H)

The other types, namely, Nokku, Odukkai, Orikkai, Ravai and Vali are of less importance. Here you will notice the names have their origin in Tamil literature, except the first four. This leads us to believe that the Gamaka was confined to only four types for a long time and assumed more nuances after the advent of Veena.

It is due to the GAMAKA that the following ragas or melodies stay put as strictly Carnatic Ragas even though the names may be found in Hindustani Music. They are: Thodi (not the same as Bhairavi in HM); Varali (not the same as Thodi in HM); Bhairavi; Atana; Ahiri; Anandhabhairavi. Another limitation that used to govern the structure of Carnatic Ragas was that succession of two adjacent notes was not allowed though many ragas like Behag, Kapi, Thilang - to name a few, have come to stay. Obviously the limitation existed because a duel note cannot sustain GAMAKA treatment.

Lastly, Harmonium was not considered suitable for Carnatic Music due to its inability to produce the GAMAKA nuances because of the fluid nature of the note. However, it has passed the test of time at the hands of stalwart Harmonists with their extraordinary skill to improvise the slurs of GAMAKA by creating an illusion of oscillation of notes. Result, Harmonium has come to stay.

Since the days of "Sangeetha Rathnakaram", GAMAKA in Carnatic Music has assumed enormous stature and has reached its peak in the post-Thyagaraja period. Compositions of Kshetragnya to Thyagaraja, laden with gems of Gamaka prayogas stand as monumental testimony to the value and beauty of GAMAKA!

Let me conclude with one observation as a Carnatic music teacher, if I may. On the subject

of GAMAKA, I am sure every teacher will agree that when it comes to teaching Carnatic music to children or beginners with western musical background the toughest task is to impress the value of GAMAKA as they are totally unfamiliar with the "sound" of it. To be true to the system, and I belong to that school, one should be trained in, or have an "ear" for GAMAKA from the very

beginning of learning process. This gap could be filled, perhaps, only by environmental conditioning by way of learning to "listen" and "practice"! In this regard, I compliment the organization "SRUTI" for promoting this understanding by providing a forum for those willing to benefit by it.

[Sri. T.N. Bala is a well-known musician and composer. He is a dedicated teacher and teaches Carnatic music to a large number children and adults in the Delaware valley area.]

Malini Rajurkar's Evening Concert

A review by Mohan Ranade

Malini Rajurkar, born in Ajmer (Rajasthan) is a Mathematics graduate of Rajasthan University, a "Sangeet Nipun" from Ajmer Music College and a recipient of the two-year merit scholarship from Rajasthan Sangeet Natak Academy, Jodhpur.

Her training began under Pandit Govindrao Rajurkar (her father-in-law), a nopted disciple of Pandit Govindrao Poonchwale of Gwalior Gharana. Today Malini Rajurkar is ranked high among India's top classical vocalists. This was her second visit to USA and of course second visit to the Delaware valley. Her first performance in the area was held on 7 November 1980. Therefore, the music listeners attended the concert organized by Sruti with a great anticipation and Malini Rajurkar fulfilled all the expectations.

Malini Rajurkar started the concert with Raga Marubihag (even though it was a bit early according to the time scale of the raga). She started the Khayal with a composition in slow Ek Taal (12 beats). She developed the raga with a superb "Saragam" and presented various catching

"taans" to arrive at the "sama". After the khayal she presented another composition in fast teen tal (16 beats) carrying the presentation to its peak. She marvelously demonstrated her ability and command on the raga by superb "tihias" in this composition. She presented a small piece in Raga Khamaj before the intermission.

At the request from a Sruti member, Malini started with Raga Chandrakans after intermission. She presented the Khayal in slow teen taal and after that sang a fast composition also in teen taal in Raga Malkans. She concluded her concert with her favorite Tappa in Raga Bhairavi which was presented in a Punjabi taal.

She was accompanied on Tabla by Subhash Kamat and on Harmonium by Dr. Arvind Thatte. The intermediate duets between the two were as thrilling as the vocal presentation by Malini. Prabha Subramaniam and Poornima Narayan provided the tanpura accompaniment.

[Mohan Ranade is a connoisseur of Hindustani Music and plays Tabla]



Best Wishes

From

*Prasanna & Madhava Rao
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"O Rangasayi" **A gem right from the heart of Saint Thyagaraja**

Santosh Adipudi

Over the past eight to ten years, I have listened to and learned several of Sri Thyagaraja's compositions. "O Rangasayi" (Khamboji Raga, Janya of Harikhamboji-28th Melakarta, Adi Thala) is one of my favorite pieces. It is a rare piece allowing one to express the feeling (bhava) fully. Its moving lyrics have the power to captivate any audience. Because of this, O Rangasayi falls in the same category as Dorakuna in Bilahari Raga, Ksheera Sagara (Devagandhari) and Darini Telusukonti (Sudha Saveri) - all of them well known for Bhakti Rasa Bhava.

The setting of this song is the temple in Srirangam. On Margasira Vaikunta Ekadasi, the Mangala Vighraha of Sri Ranganathaswamy is decorated with pearls (Muthangi Seva). It is an occasion when devotees come in large numbers to Srirangam to receive the Lord's blessings.

In this kriti Sri Thyagaraja is imploring Lord Ranganatha to answer his call. "O Lord, won't you please answer my call and come to me? Did Siva not become the ruler of Kailasa upon seeing your Murthi? O Ranganatha, thinking that Srirangam is heaven on earth (Bhooloka Vaikunta Midiyani), if you enjoy yourself with Lakshmi Devi, indulging in pleasant pastimes, when will our grief be relieved? I have suffered much among jealous people and have come to witness your Divya Roopam and your broad chest, beautifully decorated with pearl garlands. You are the jewel of my heart. Please, Ranganatha, come answer my call."

As is the case with most of Sri Thyagaraja's compositions, this is an extemporaneous kriti, composed in ecstasy after seeing the pearl-decorated vighraha of Lord Ranganatha. Sahitya (Maatu) and Swara (Dhatu) are both by Sri Thyagaraja himself. The seven sangatis in the pallavi - like the waves of the sea, form a mounting crescendo going across two octaves (Mandarasthayi Panchama to Tharasthayi Madhyama). As the pallavi line is repeated with swelling emotion, the tempo increases with each

repetition; the audience (even those that may not know the language) feel the emotion, devotion, and bhakti-rasa of this priceless piece. It is a perfect example of Thyagaraja's "Draksha Rasa" style using simple day to day words to build a visual image.

There is a touch of Ninda Stuti here, taking the Lord to task for enjoying himself with Sridevi while not answering Thyagaraja's call. Thyagaraja's utter devotion and identification with God is so complete that he takes Him to task in other compositions as well (Brova Bharama - Bahudari, Chesinadella - Todi).

There is also a nice wrap-around in "migula nogili divyarupamunumu-thyala sarula" just like in "Tripura sun-darini" (Sudha Saveri) and "Kanta judumi oka pari kri+kanta" (Vachaspati). It seems Sri Veena Kuppayyar was inspired by this kriti in composing "Koniyaadina" in the same ragam with clear similarities between "Bhooloka Vaikunta Midiyani" in O Rangasayi and "Baludou Markandeyuni bhaktiki" in Koniyaadina.

I personally like this song because it reminds me of the breathtakingly beautiful vighraha of Sri Venkateswara at the Pittsburgh temple after Poolangi Seva. I hope I will have the opportunity to visit Srirangam and see for myself the beautiful idol of Sri Ranganatha on our next trip to India.

In closing, this kriti aptly illustrates Thyagaraja's inimitable mastery of emotional expression and devotion. That is why Thyagaraja Aradhana is celebrated all over the world even 200 years after he is no longer with us physically. This saint-composer and god-like man will always live in our hearts through his music.

[Santosh, a 9th grader, is a promising young musician and has been earing Carnatic Music from his mother Rajalakshmi.]



Papanasam Sivan (1890-1973)
The Architect of Tamil Music

Shrivas Sudarshan

When I was growing up, some of the songs like "*Naan Oru Vilayattu Bommayai*" (in Navarasa Kannada), and "*Enna Thavam Seidhanai*" (in Kapi) captivated me because of their beautiful choice of words, expression of spirituality which invoked devotion and the charm of the ragas. The songs were relatively short, crisp and the language simple, straight and yet appealing. The composer of these beautiful songs was none other than Papanasam Sivan.

Papanasam Sivan was neither born at Papanasam nor was his real name Sivan. Polagam Ramiah was his real name and came to acquire the now familiar name of Papanasam Sivan due to his productive stay at Papanasam during 1917 to 1930. The name "Sivan" is usually addressed to people of learning and spiritual dedication like Nilakanta Sivan, Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan, Ramaswamy Sivan and hence Papanasam Sivan.

Born to Ramaratinam Ayyar and Yogambal on September 26, 1890, Polagam Ramiah had the misfortune of losing his father at a young age. Destiny drew him to Trivandrum where he studied Sanskrit at the Maharaja's Sanskrit Pathasala. He got the diplomas of 'Upadhyaya' and 'Vyakarani' at the Pathasala.

That was the time when Nilakanta Sivan's bhajans were popular. Young Ramiah drank deep the spiritual exhilaration of Nilakanta Sivan's bhajans and songs for two years. He took to bhajans instantly. His bhajans along the streets of Mylapore in Madras and several other places are still praised and remembered. His *manasika* guru was Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Ayyar. Sivan was in great demand for bhajans and concerts were not his forum of musical expression, although he had made his debut at the Tiruvaiyaru Thyagaraja Aradhana in 1918 with competent accompanists like Papa Venkataramayya on the violin and Azhagappa Nambi Pillai on the mridangam. In 1934, Papanasam Sivan became a teacher at Besant

Theosophical High School in the Kalakshetra campus, Adyar, Madras.

His very first composition "*Unnai thudhikka Arul Thaa*" in the raga Kunthalavaraali was an instant success. "Bless me to worship thee" was the request and the divine response was copious and immediate. The film world sought for his compositions and his songs were very well received. His simple and yet captivating songs for films brought him fabulous fame. Soon he took to acting, and took on the lead roles in films like Thyagabhoomi, Bhaktha Chetha and Kuchela.

His compositions were featured in most concerts by leading singers like Madurai Mani Iyer, G.N. Balasubramaniam, Ariyakudi Ramanujam Iyengar, and Palladam Sanjeeva Rao. Some of the songs like '*Karthikeya Kangeya*' in thodi, and '*Kana Kan Kodi*' in Kambodi were often featured and made popular. Raga delineation is outstanding in other masterpieces of Sivan like '*Kaa Vaa Vaa*' in Varali, '*Tathvamariyatharama*' in Ritigowla. All the compositions have a perfect blend of sahitya and raga lakshana. His compositions total more than 2000 in number of which most of them are in Tamil and a few in Sanskrit. Like Thyagaraja, he brings to focus exquisite bhava-rasa features and was hailed as the 'Tamil Thyagaraja' by the respected musician Simizhi Sundaram Ayyar. The range of his compositions cover Kritis, Viruttams, Padams, Tillanas, Darus, and Ragamalikas. His mudra is 'Ramadasa'.

Papanasam Sivan was a sincere devotee of God from Youth and the spiritual flow and content of his songs are immeasurable. Some of his songs are modeled to that of Thyagaraja :

<i>Karunai Seivaai</i>	: in Hamsadhvani, modeled on <i>Raghu Naayaka</i> .
<i>Manakkurangu</i>	: in Abhogi, modeled on <i>Manasu Nilpa</i> .

Bhava-rasa is a key factor of Sivan's songs. The compositions are filled with devotion, melody and inspiration. Sahitya excellence, melodic beauty and structural elegance are hallmarks of his compositions. Never deviating from the ethics of music, his compositions are divine, soulful and overflowing with bhakthi. Papanasam Sivan stands unparalleled in Tamil and revolutionized the Tamil Isai (music) movement. His compositions are outstanding not only for their lyrical diction, structural elegance, raga-tala and bhava rasa but also to melodic tuning and compositional finesse. Each piece is concert-worthy and not merely tuned verses.

Papanasam Sivan was awarded lot of honors and titles by different music organizations. The Music Academy of Madras awarded him 'Sangita Kalanidhi' in 1972, Government of India

awarded him 'Padma Bhushan' in the same year. Other awards include 'Sangita Sahitya Kala Sikhamani', 'Isai Perarijnar' and the Presidential award.

Papanasam Sivan truly is the one of the finest architects of Tamil music. His compositions revived the Tamil Isai and provided inspiration and appeal to one and all. If Nilakanta Sivan provided the inspiration for his songs and bhajans, Konerirajapuram Vaidhyanatha Ayyar was his ideal inspiration for rendition. Papanasam Sivan's compositions appeal to both novice music listeners and the finest music connoisseurs.

[Shrivasa Sudarshan, a member of Sruti's Library Committee, is a Biomedical Engineer and a violinist]

Shakespeare on Music

For do but note a wild and wanton herd,
Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,
Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud,
Which is the hot condition of their blood,
If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,
Or any air of music touch their ears,
You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,
Their savage eyes turn'd to a modest gaze
By the sweet power of music; therefore the poet
Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones and floods;
Since not so stockish, hard and full of rage,
But music for the time doth change his nature.
The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils.
The motions of his spirit are dull as night
And his affections dark as Wrebus.
Let no such man be trusted.

From "The Merchant of Venice"



Ragas with Multiple Names

Rasikan

What is in a name? That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet.
-Shakespeare -*Romeo and Juliet*.

It was a nice summer afternoon in June '91. Young Rudrapatnam Brothers were regaling the SRUTI audience at the Hindu Temple, Berlin (NJ). After a few warm-up kritis, one of the Brothers announced that they will be singing a Thyagaraja kriti in Udhaya Ravichandrika ragam.

Udhaya Ravichandrika! Some in the audience were scratching their heads. Don't seem to have heard of this ragam or any kriti in it; must be a rare ragam; so sat upright expecting a rare kriti in a rather obscure ragam.

SRUTI audience, like all connoisseurs of Carnatic Music are ever so curious and continuously expanding their knowledge base.

So, as one of the Brothers started the alapana, the head scratching continued more rigorously. Hey, that sounds like a familiar one! The SRUTI sharpies quickly deciphered the scale: Sa, Ga₁, Ma₁, Pa, Ni₁, Sa; Sa, Ni₁, Pa, Ma, Ga, Sa. Say, isn't that the scale of Suddha Dhanyasi? And it was 'confirmed' when the Brothers started the well known kriti "Enta nerchina".

Of course it was Suddha Dhanyasi. So what was going on? Were the Brothers pulling a fast one?

Of course not. The good Brother(s) was quite honest in announcing the ragam as Udhaya Ravichandrika. What gives? See, it happens that Suddha Dhanyasi and Udhaya Ravichandrika are the names of the same ragam.

Questions? (1) Are there many ragams with more than one name?

(2) If so, why? What is the history behind such nomenclature?

The answer to (1) is Yes. We will explore some of them in this article. I will leave to a historian to answer (2).

First some ground rules: We will exclude Carnatic/Hindustani raga pairs like Hindolam/Malkauns, Abheri/Bhimpalas,

Mohanam/Bhoop, Suddha Saveri/Durga. Each of these pairs have identical scale; yet I claim they are distinct ragams. As an example, Hindolam and Malkauns both have the scale: Sa, Ga₁, Ma₁, Da₁, Ni₁, Sa; Sa, Ni₁, Da₁, Ma₁, Ga₁, Sa. But well rendered alapanas by purists, e.g. D.K. Jayaraman (Carnatic) and Bhimsen Joshi (Hindustani) will clearly bring out the total individuality of each. Remember, scale alone does not a ragam make! It is quite another matter that some south Indian musicians render Hindolam with a generous mixture of Malkauns.

We will also not consider ragams like (Hanuma) Todi, (Dheera) Sankarabharanam, (Mecha) Kalyani in which the prefix (e.g., Mecha for Kalyani) is affixed to conform to the Katapayadi system in the nomenclature of Venkatamakhin's 72 melakarta scheme.

And again Muthuswami Dikshitar, adhering to the asampurna mela scheme, used the names Kanakambari for Mela 1, Ratnambari for Mela 2 etc. It was Govindayya at about the time of Thyagaraja who systematized the melakarta scheme requiring that the scales of melartas should contain all the seven swarams in the proper ascending and descending order and they must be the same in both orders. This more scientific scheme, referred to as the Kanagangi, Ratnangi scheme, was followed by Thyagaraja and all others since, Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer immortalized this nomenclature in his magnificent (72) melakarta ragamalika (one of the longest pieces of compositions in any genre). [M.S. Subbulakshmi has superbly rendered this monumental composition: available both in cassette and CD.] Thus there are a number of melakarta ragams with dual names, some of them of purely theoretical interest.

On another matter, even for many janya ragams Dikshitar followed a nomenclature quite different from the current usage followed by Thyagaraja and others. Some examples follow: In the Dikshitar school Abheri (kriti Veenabheri) is a janya of Nata Bhairavi taking the small

Dhaivatam. Otherwise the scale is the same for the modern Abheri (kriti Nagumomu). He uses Karnataka Devagandhari as the raga mudhra in his well known kritis "Panchashat peeta rupini" and "Kaya rohanesam", which we will recognize as Abheri. Similarly his Suddha Saveri kriti, Ekambresa nayike is a janya of Mayamalavagowla with scale of Sa, Ri, Ma, Pa, Da, Sa; Sa, Da, Pa, Ma, Ri, Sa. He uses the raga mudra Devakriya (modern day Suddha Saveri) in the kritis "Sri Vatukanatha" and "Sri Guruguhaya". Thus we not only have ragams with more than one name, but also different ragams with same name!

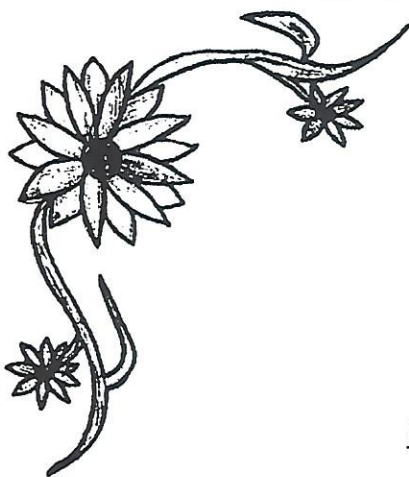
Now shall we say the present day Suddha Saveri and Devakriya are the names for the same ragam? Well; Yes and No. No, because very few probably think of these kritis in anything but Suddha Saveri. Incidentally the ragam for Ekambresa nayike is referred to Karnataka Suddha Saveri.

Now back to the question we raised earlier. How many ragams have more than one name? We will list a few here. The list is limited by two constraints. One is obvious: the small knowledge base of the author. On the other hand, if we scan the Sampurna/Asampurna mela schemes, there are numerous ragams with dual names. We have already seen two of them earlier. Many of these are not heard often and are of theoretical interest only. We will thus list only the 'well known' ones.

So here goes. D in the parantheses refer to the Dikshitar scheme.

- Udhaya Ravichandrika - Suddha Dhanyasi
- Andolika - Mayuradwani
- Shanmukhapriya - Samaram (D)
- Simhendramadyamam - Sumathyuthi (D)
- Rama Priya - Rama Manohari (D)
- Devamruthavarshni - Nada Chintamani
- Gowri Manohari - Gowri Velavali (D)
- Pantuvarali - Kamavardhini - (Kasi)Ramakriya (D)
- Poorvi Kalyani - Gamaka Kriya (D)
- Subha Panthuvarali - Siva Panthuvarali (D)
- Reetigowla - Naari Reetigowla (D)
- Kedaragowla - Hari Kedaragowla (D)
- Suddha Saveri - Devakriya (D)
- Abheri - Karnataka Deva Gandhari (D)
- Kesari - Sindhu Ramakriya
- Denuka - Natabharanam (D)
- Kokilapriya - Kokilaravam (D)
- Chakravakam - Vegavahini (D)
- Suryakantam - Chayavathy (D)
- Sarasangi - Sowrasena (D)
- Vagadeswari - Bhogachayya (D)
- Bhayapriya - Bhavani (D)
- Dhamavathy - Dhamavathy (D)
- Vachaspathy - Bushavathy (D)

The author will be most delighted if any of the readers communicates to him of more such ragams (subject to the ground rules given earlier).



Best Wishes

From

Renuka & Ramesh Adiraju

Letters to the Editor

Technical committee and what next?

During the last general body meeting of SRUTI, I witnessed, and also participated in the formation of a technical committee, (supposedly a satellite committee), consisting of members appointed and not elected by the general body. The main responsibilities of this committee (as I understood on the day of the general body meeting) are to manage, upkeep, setup and monitor the audio system belonging to SRUTI. It is also responsible for recording and preparing the master tapes of all SRUTI concerts.

It is ironic to recall that during the time I was the president of SRUTI (1990,1991), a library committee was formed with the sole purpose of maintaining and distributing the audio tapes of SRUTI, apart from publishing the SRUTI Ranjani. This was the case until the last general body meeting. The formation of the technical committee on December 15, 1995 was justified so that the executive committee and the library committee can be relieved of the mundane duties

of maintaining the audio system and the master tapes.

In my opinion, only the executive committee (elected by the general body) is responsible for managing the organization. If need arises, the executive committee can seek outside help on an ad-hoc basis in carrying out their activities. Formation of a satellite committee to accomplish the tasks of the executive committee is tantamount to undermining the role and responsibilities of the executive committee. Technical committee is one too many committee for SRUTI. This is the surest way to dilute the focus and the mission of SRUTI, resulting in the fragmentation of the association with increased organizational burden. This is neither in the interest of SRUTI nor it falls within the spirit of the by-laws of SRUTI. I regret that I supported the resolution to form the technical committee on December 15, 1995.

P. Swaminathan

*athyo jaathaathi pancha vaktharaja
sarigamapadhani vara saptha swara
- Thyaaga Brahmam*

In the couplet here, Saint Thyagaraja attributes the five swaras to Lord Maheshwara. Sathyojaatham, Thathpurusham, Vaamam, Eesaanam, and Akoram denote five heads of Lord Maheshwara. It is believed that the swaraas originated from these five heads. According to Saarngadevaa, during Rig Vedic times, the five notes Dha, Ni, Sa, Ri, Ga constituted the swaras. Ravana is said to have added Pa (panchamam) and Ma (madhyamam) to the five swaraas to make it seven.

[Source: S. Balachandiraraju, Raaga Baavaartham, Narmada Publishers, Madras, 1990.]



Longing for Rangaraju

Prabhakar Chitrapu

Once upon a time, Sri Thyagaraja made a trip to Sri Rangapatnam. During his stay there, he composed five kritis addressing the Lord of the main local temple - Rangaraju. These five kritis are referred to as the Sri Rangam Pancharathnas. They are all very beautiful to hear: Juthamu raare in Arabhi raga, Karuna chudavayya in Saranga raga, Vinarada naa manavi in Devagandhari raga, Raju vedale chuthamu raare in Thodi raga and O Rangasaayi in Kambhoji raga. The last one is a very majestic one, musically. The sahithyam is very interesting too: it reveals a sweet longing for Rangaraju. There is also a biographical hint. In general, Thyagaraja's kritis don't say much about his personal historical life. The few exceptions include Naadupai palikeru narulu in Madhyamavathy raga, in which he laments about people's accusations that he was responsible for the splitting of the joint family with his brother. Another is the O Rangasaayi kriti. Here is my appreciation of it:

Pallavi

O Rangasaayi ! Ani Pilichithe O+Ani Raa Raada !

When I beckon you saying (Pilichithe) O Rangasaayi,
Why can't you come to me (Raa Raada), saying O (O+Ani) again ?

Anupallavi.

*Saaranga Dharudu Chuchi
Kailasa+Adhipathi Kaaledha ?*

Hasn't Saarangadhara become (kaaleda)
The master of Kailasa (Kailasa+Adhipathi)
After seeing (chuchi) you ?

Charanam

Bhooloka Vaikuntham Idi+Ani,
Ni Loona Nive+Uppongi,
Sri Looludai+Unte,
Maa Chintha+Thiredi+Ennado ?
Meelu+Oorva Leni Janulaloone Migula Nogili,
Divya Roopamunu, Muthyala Sarula+
Uramunu+Kana Vacchithi,
Thyagaraja Hrud+Bhushana ||

If you gloat (Uppongi) within yourself (Ni Loona Nive) Saying that this is (Idi+Ani) Heaven on Earth (Bhooloka Vaikuntham),
If you are forever obsessed (Looludai+Unte) with your wife Sri Lakshmi,
When (Ennado) will our woes (Maa Chintha) be resolved (Thiredi)?

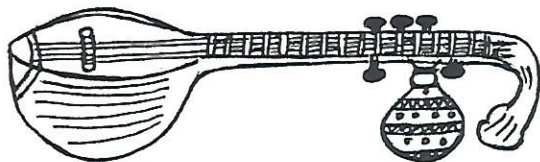
Having suffered immensely (Migula Nogili)
Among those (Janulaloone) that cannot bear others' well being (Meelu+Oorva Leni),
I came (Vacchithi) here to see your divine (Divya), bejeweled form.

The adornment of my heart (Hrud+Bhushana),
O Rangasaayi,
Why can't you respond and come to me,
When I beckon you saying
O Rangasaayi ?

Note: The first line is sung in a slightly different way by MS Subbulakshmi and Bombay Sisters. The meaning is only slightly altered. The MS/BS version is:

O Rangasaayi ! Pilichithe O+Anuchu Raa Raada!

[Dr. Prabhakar Chitrapu who lives in New Jersey, is an electrical engineer and a great music enthusiast]



Musical Instruments of India

Sumanth Swaminathan

The Indian classification of musical instruments is quite similar to the Western system of classification. According to the Natyasastra of Bharatha, there are four classes of instruments Tata (stringed), Avanaddha (drums), Ghana (cymbals), and Sushira (flute).

Ghana Vadya (Idiophones)

These are solid instruments which do not need any further tuning. These are some of the Ghana Vadyas:

Cymbals	Kanch-tarang
Jaltarang	Kasht-tarang

Avanaddha Vadya (Membranophones)

Avanaddha means to be covered. Most of the percussion instruments that have one or two faces covered with hide fall under this category. Some of the Avanaddha Vadyas are:

Chenda	Khanjeera
Dhol	Mridangam
Dholak	Pakhawaj
Ghatam	Tabla

Sushira Vadya (Aerophones)

Sushira means hollow. All wind instruments belong to this class. Some of the Sushira Vadyas are:
Bansari (Flutes)

Nadhaswaram
Shehnai

Tata Vadya (Chordophones)

Tata is derived from the root tan, which means to stretch in tension. Most of the stringed instruments belong to this class. Some of the Tata Vadyas are:

Dilruba	Sitar
Gottuvadyam	Surbahar
Rudraveena	Swaramandal
Sarangi	Tambura
Sarod	Veena
Santoor	Violin

Sources

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[Sumanth Swaminathan is a 7th grader who has been learning Carnatic Music from Sri. T.N. Bala]



Best Wishes

From

Dr. & Mrs. C.P. Ramaswamy

THYAGARAJA ARADHANA

Music Event of 1995

A Review

Children's Program

(reviewed by Rangarao S Sudhakara)

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

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

Mini Concert by Santosh Adipudi

(reviewed by Poornima Narayan)

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

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

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

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

Santosh, belying his 13 years, showed maturity in presenting an even paced concert in a traditional style. I am sure we will have many occasions to hear him in the years to come.

It was a great pleasure to hear Shashidhar's melodious violin. Kharaharapriya, Kambodhi and Poorvikalyani sounded extra sweet on his violin. Prakash Rao gave excellent support on mridangam. It is commendable that professional accompanists like Shashidhar and Prakash Rao supported Santosh in his efforts.

Adult Program

(reviewed by Prabhakar Chitrapu)

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

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

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

Nanupalimpa is another famous kriti of Thyagaraja in raga Mohana, which P. Swaminathan rendered next. There are two

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

This was followed by a veena recital of the kriti Koluvaivunnade in raga Bhairavi by Amba Balakrishnan. Ponnal Nambi, Padmini Venkatraman and Vatsala Ramaprasad rendered a crisp and sweet Manasaa Etulorthune in raga Malayamarutham. In this song, Thyagaraja rather cutely advises the listeners to take his little clues to achieve liberation and not waste time in the company of people filled with Rajas and Tamas Gunas. As you may be aware, Hindu philosophy classifies human characteristics into three Gunas, Sathva (detached, gentle), Rajas (action oriented, ambitious), Tamas (lazy, inattentive) tendencies. (I wonder what 'you' would think is a dominant guna these days among our people in this country ?!!)

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

small number of kritis in Ananda Bhairavi and the Bhagavathar would be remembered !!!

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

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

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

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

Smt. Bhavani Rao's veena concert was like icing on the cake. Thyagaraja Aradhana 1995 was concluded with the melodious veena concert on March 4th at the Berlin temple. The concert enhanced the day's program. Smt. Bhavani was accompanied by the already well acclaimed musician Sri Prakash Rao on mridangam.

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

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

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

Goethe on Music

The sacred in music is entirely in conformance with its dignity, and it is here that it has its greatest effect on life, which through all time and through all the epochs ever remains the same.

The sacredness of church music, the joyfulness and frolicsomeness of folksongs are the two pivots around which revolves true music. And it is from these two points that it will ever have the inevitable effect: devotion and dance.

Future of Carnatic Music safe in the hands of Sanjay Subramanyam

Rasikan

"The future of Carnatic Music is well and safe in the hands of musicians like Sanjay Subramanyam" quote from the well-known critic Subbudu, per Renuka Adiraju, President of Sruti at the end of a superb concert by Sanjay on October 14, 1995. Renuka herself opined that Sanjay's concert "was the best Sruti concert of the year". I can assert that neither of the statements is an exaggeration.

The evening was devoted to South Indian music of a high order with emphasis on classicism. Sanjay was accompanied by two other young musicians R.K. Sriramkumar on the violin and Arun Prakash on the mridangam.

The stage was set with the Swati Tirunal's Kambhoji raga Ata tala varna "Sarasija" followed by a crisp "Jaya jaya" in Nattai of Purandara Dasa. The detailed alapana in Begada next, only whetted our appetite. The Sivan kriti "Gana rasamudan" is not heard often these days. Madurai Mani Iyer used to sing it.

The Bhairavi alapana had classicism written all over it. To say it was beautiful is to put mildly. The maturity of Sanjay's rendering came out especially in the higher octave where he competently eschewed phrases resembling Karaharapriya; a failing even senior artists are wont to have. The Thyagaraja kriti "Sri raghuvara sugunalaya" used to be a favorite of Ariyakudi. Sanjay sang the kriti with great bhavam.

Sanjay then rendered another Ariyakudi favorite: the Atana piece "Anupama Gunambudhi" of Thyagaraja. A significant feature of this kriti is the liberal use of the same ravai type of gamakams in all the three angikas (pallavi, anupallavi, charanam).

And now came the piece de resistance. An elaborate Mayamalavagowla and the majestic Thyagaraja kriti "Meru samana". What a grand Mayamalavagowla! This raga used by almost all the musicians in the early training exercises at least from the times of Purandara Dasa, is somehow not given enough importance in concerts. Quite often it is rendered in the early

part of a concert with minimal exposition. Sanjay just let himself go and the audience was treated to a masterly rendition.

The tani by Arun Prakash after the kriti was quite crisp.

After a quick "Enneramum", the Devagandhari kriti of Gopalakrishna Bharathy, Sanjay took up Bilahari of RTP. Bilahari is a beautiful lilting raga and is heard quite often in the first half of a concert. But it does not lend itself to the varieties of elaboration to merit a RTP. Frankly, after the weighty pieces earlier, I was quite ready for the choice of Bilahari [I understand Sanjay was responding to a request from one of the organizers].

There seems a tendency these days to treat Pallavi rather peremptorily and quickly move to ragamalikai swarams and Sanjay also fell for it.

Pallavi, in this context stands for Padam, Layam, Vinyasam. A well rendered Pallavi would include neraval, anuloma/pratiloma, trikalam, tisram. Not all musicians render all of them, but modern day musicians seem to totally ignore all of them. With his earlier emphasis on classicism, I was surprised that Sanjay left himself open to this criticism.

The post Pallavi period started with a Kabir bhajan "Hey Govinda" in Madhuvanti. Madhuvanti is a rather modern raga. Except for this one, the ragams rendered by Sanjay that day were all time worn and traditional. I felt a bit let down although Sanjay was responding to 'chit' request. [I have strong feelings about this 'chit' thing. But more about it later.]

After the brief interlude to modernism, Sanjay went back to the classical mold rendering a bhava laden Senchuriti kriti "Pitham theliya" from the Nandanar Charitram of Gopalakrishna Bharathy. A vigorous "Sapasthsya Kaushalya" in Jonpuri and a serene Tiruprakash "Eyal esai" in Huseni rounded off a highly enjoyable concert.

Both Sriramkumar and Arun Prakash blended well with the main artist and gave very good

support throughout. It was so refreshing to see these young artists on the stage performing at this high level of classical music. Carnatic music is indeed alive, well and safe in the hands of such musicians and is sure to grow.

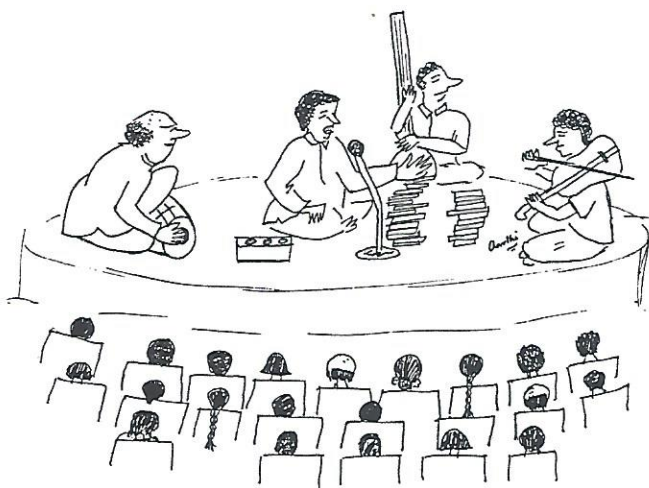
Now about sending chits in the middle of a concert:

When I go to a concert (Indian or Western), I expect to hear what the musicians have planned to present according to their moods and (in the case of Indian music) manodharma. The choice and variety of ragams, the weightiness of kritis in various talams all have a logic allowing for a smooth flow of music. The passing of chits disturbs the flow in more than one way.

Firstly it is distracting to see someone walk down

the aisles to hand over the chit. It may affect the concentration of the musicians. A particular composition requested may not quite fit with the logic of the concert (as happened with the Sanjay concert) or the mood of the artists. The artist may not be able to satisfy all the requests, and if he/she responds to one and not to another, he/she may be unfairly derided. And in the worst case, each member of the audience may have a different favorite and if everyone were to make a request, it will be nothing but chaos.

I suggest that the members of the audience should listen with discipline to what the musicians have to offer and not disturb the flow of music. They should keep their favorites to themselves and not ask for them unless a musician specifically solicits requests.



Give me somme music. Now good morrow, friends.
Now, good cesario, but that piece of song,
That old antique song we heard last night:
Methought it did relieve my passion much,
More than light airs and recollected terms
Of these most brisk and giddy paced times;
Come, but one verse.

From "Twelfth Night"