



**Sruti**

The India Music  
& Dance Society,  
Philadelphia

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*Prithvi Krish*

# Thyagaraja Aradhana Souvenir

March 22, 2025

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The content in this magazine is published with a spirit of openness of communication and freedom of expression. The opinions contained herein do not necessarily reflect the views of SRUTI, its board or its members. The articles have been published as is with some minimal corrections for clarity.

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# From the President's Desk

Dear Sruti family,

As we herald the coming of spring, it is with great joy and gratitude that I welcome you all to Sruti's annual Thyagaraja Aradhana, a celebration of and an homage to the timeless legacy of Saint Thyagaraja. At Sruti, we are honored to uphold this tradition of Aradhana, fostering a space where the community comes together in the spirit of dedication and reverence.

Sruti is entering its thirty-ninth year with your continued support and participation. I want to thank and congratulate the outgoing board, led by Lata Suresh for a diverse, satisfying and well appreciated set of events in 2024. I am excited to introduce the talented, enthusiastic and committed members of the Board of Sruti 2025.

**Uma Nagarajan - President Elect.** Uma was the President of Sruti in the year 2020 and had put in immense efforts towards the year's programming, which was unfortunately thwarted by the pandemic. Uma brings in many years of experience on the Sruti Board. She is also a music teacher running her own school of music.

**Venkat Kilambi - Treasurer.** Venkat has been the financial pillar for Sruti for a decade and more. His dedicated work, many times unseen, has helped us to scrupulously maintain our books year after year. Venkat is also a past president of Sruti.

**Murthy Ravinuthala - Secretary.** I welcome Murthy for his first foray into the Sruti Board. Murthy and his family have been committed Sruti members for many years.

**Nari Narayanan - Director of Marketing.** Nari has been the "marketeer extraordinaire" of Sruti for the last decade and more. Nari's relentless work has ensured that Sruti continues to have a healthy membership and audience. Nari is also a past president of Sruti.

**Sriram Satagopan - Director of Resources and Development.** Sriram has spearheaded many grant applications for this year and past year. Sriram also brings a wealth of musical knowledge as a Mridangam teacher and performer.

**Ravi Iyer - Director of Publications & Outreach.** This souvenir that you are reading is the labor of love from Ravi's team of passionate connoisseurs. Ravi is also a Mridangam and Ghatam exponent and teacher.

**Lavanya Sambasivan - Director 1.** Lavanya has been effectively guiding the Sruti Youth Group's activities for the past couple of years and encouraging our youth in conducting artist interviews and supporting event logistics.

**VS Narayan - Director 2.** Narayan has been greatly supporting many key event logistics as well as sharing his valuable insight on multiple initiatives, given his vast corporate experience.

We are deeply appreciative of the members of the Marketing, Publications and Resources committees for their dedication and support.

Sruti Board is excited to share with you the spring line up consisting of artists representing diverse groups of the Carnatic Music ecosystem. We are presenting talented youngsters like the flute duo Heramb &

Hemanth and Ramana Balachandhran on the Veena, seasoned artists like Vidushi Amrutha Venkatesh and Vidwan Saketharaman as well as the extraordinary musicians, Vidushis Ranjani and Gayatri. In the fall season, we are looking forward to the Bharatanatyam by Rama Vaidyanathan and team and vocal concerts by Sanjay Subrahmanyam and Ashwath Narayanan. As always, we will keep the [www.sruti.org](http://www.sruti.org) updated with the event details and look forward to seeing you all at these events.

The Sruti Youth Group (SYG) is an excellent opportunity for our youth to connect, collaborate and curate with like-minded peers. As always, SYG will be involved in helping with Aradhana day activities, ushering at our events, contributing to publications, artist interviews etc. We hope to provide the SYG with more opportunities to participate as the year progresses.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the sponsors, donors and patrons of Sruti without whose support none of this would be possible. We are grateful to the Pennsylvania Council of Arts for the Creative Sector Flex fund award. Sruti is especially grateful to the teachers of the community for training their students to perform in the Aradhana and in the group singing of Utsava Sampradaya and Pancharatna Krithis. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers, the Sruti Youth Group members, students, musicians, and audience members who make this Aradhana possible and memorable year after year.

May the spirit of tyAgarAja's music continue to inspire and elevate us all.

Musically Yours

**Rajee Padmanabhan**



## From the Publications and Outreach Committee

On behalf of the Publications & Outreach (P&O) Committee, it is my immense pleasure to present the 2025 edition of the **Aradhana Souvenir**. This report consists of two key sections:

1. A glimpse into the content featured in this edition.
2. The objectives and goals set for the P&O Committee in 2025.

### Highlights from the 2025 Aradhana Souvenir

This year's **cover page** is an exquisite piece of art—a pencil-outlined drawing, meticulously painted with acrylics using a brush. This beautiful artwork has been conceptualized, designed, and executed by **Prithvi Krish**, a young Carnatic vocalist from Philadelphia, under the tutelage of **Guru Smt. Kiranavali Vidyasankar**.

### Featured Articles

This year's publication includes contributions from both seasoned scholars and young enthusiasts.

- **Sri. Subramanian** delves into the **Influence of Sanskrit on the Kṛtis of Tyāgarāja Svāmi**. He examines how, despite his preference for Telugu, Tyāgarāja seamlessly incorporated "Sanskritised Telugu," evident in compositions like *Elā nī dayarādu* and *Amma Dharmasamvardhani*.
- **Sri. Mohan Santhanam** presents *Three Ragas Resurrected by Tyāgarāja*, focusing on **Simhavāhini, Rāgapanjaram, and Bindumālini**. His analysis of *Nenarunchara (Simhavāhini)*, *Sārvabhauma Sāketa Rāma (Rāgapanjaram)*, and *Enta Muddō Enta Sogasō (Bindumālini)* showcases Tyāgarāja's genius in reviving these rare ragas.
- **Rajee Padmanabhan** reflects on her **25-year journey with Sruti's tyAgarAja Aradhana in Philadelphia**, reminiscing about young musicians who have grown to perform full-fledged concerts. She cherishes memorable performances by children, physically challenged artists, and visiting musicians.
- **Vikram Pyapali** reminisces about his foray in to enjoying carnatic music and specifically shares his experience of the tyAgarAja krithi, *Emi jEsithEnEmi* by Hyderabad Brothers.
- **Ravi Iyer** explores the 39<sup>th</sup> Melakarta raga, *JhAlavarALi*—a rare and complex raga known for its intense emotional depth as a fitting topic to explore as Sruti celebrates its 39<sup>th</sup> year.
- **Jayram & friends** offer an insightful analysis of **Dr. M. Balamuralikrishna's rendition of Sangīta Jñānamu in Dhanyāsi rāga**. Their exploration highlights his use of flat notes, subtle *gamakās*, and masterful voice modulation.
- **Aravind Balasubramaniam** examines the **profound intricacies of tyAgarAja's sAhitya**, emphasizing the challenges in rendering it with authenticity.

### A special acknowledgment goes to our Young Contributors

- **Sai Sri** for her **bAla bhAvam review** and for graciously agreeing to contribute to a future SRUTI publication cover page artwork.
- **Sanjana & friends** for a lively discussion on **Kalpanaswarams and the Art of Improvisation** in Carnatic music. Through humor, they explore the complexities of balancing creativity with rhythmic structure and raga constraints.

- **Krithi Iyer** for her **interview series with ChatGPT as tyAgarAja**. In *Episode 2*, she delves into tyAgarAja's approach to **melakarta and janya ragas**, the role of his disciples, his impact on Carnatic concerts, folk influences, and the authenticity of later-discovered *kritis*.
- **Dyuthi, Jeevesh, Shritika, Srividya, Sanjana, Varsha, and Prisha**—who have enriched this edition with **musically themed crossword puzzles and word scrambles**.

I am truly inspired by the enthusiasm, knowledge, and dedication of these young minds. The future of Carnatic music is in excellent hands, thanks to the encouragement of their parents and Gurus.

## **P&O Committee Goals for 2025**

In 2025, the committee will focus on three major initiatives:

### **1. Themed Curated Playlists from Past SRUTI Concerts**

We have begun sharing **curated audio playlists** for the enjoyment of SRUTI rasikAs. Past themes include **karaharapriyA and its janyAs, Go EAGLES, mOhanam, mahAshivarAtri, and hOli**. Our goal is to continue this effort throughout 2025 and beyond. Feedback and suggestions are welcome to help us refine and expand this initiative.

### **2. Project Concert Chronicle (pCC)**

The name *Concert Chronicle* reflects our mission: to meticulously document and preserve the rich history of SRUTI concerts.

*pCC* aims to **streamline and archive SRUTI concert recordings** by:

- Centralizing all past concert audio files.
- Establishing a standardized naming convention.
- Creating a database repository of SRUTI event performances.

Special thanks to **Dinakar** for his support in these initiatives. This is a time-intensive project, and we will soon reach out to volunteers—both youth and adults—interested in contributing to this effort.

### **3. Scanning and archiving missing Sruti Ranjani's and TA souvenirs in the SRUTI website**

#### **Acknowledgments**

My sincere gratitude to the **P&O Committee members—Jayram, Prabhakar, and Raman—for their unwavering support and teamwork** in executing our vision. A heartfelt thank-you to my wife **Lakshmi**, who not only supports me but also assists with website updates and maintenance under **Raman's guidance**.

As always, the Publications & Outreach Committee remains committed to identifying and conducting outreach events. We encourage SRUTI sponsors and members to share outreach ideas via [publications@sruti.org](mailto:publications@sruti.org)

Finally, I extend my deepest appreciation to the **current SRUTI Board of Directors** for their fantastic teamwork. Looking forward to yet another fulfilling and melodious year!

**On behalf of the SRUTI Publications & Outreach Committee,  
Ravi Iyer, Prabhakar Chitrapu, Jayram Sataluri, Raman Visweswaran**



## About the Cover

This painting depicts Sri tyAgarAja's devotion and unwavering love towards Lord rAma. He expresses this affection through his musical compositions, many of which focus on Lord rAma's virtues and character.



One such classic masterpiece is “rAma bhakti sAmrAjam”. This literally translates to “The Empire of Devotion to Lord rAma”. He describes the immense pleasure by the mere darshan of those enlightened souls who immersed themselves in the ocean of rAma bhakti. Moreover, he highlights the path to attain this bhakti:

In this composition Sri tyAgarAja says,

“lAgani vivarimpa lEnu  
cAla svAnubhava vEdyame”

Attaining this empire of greater bliss is possible through self-experience.

Sri tyAgarAja essentially considered rAma as the ultimate source of spiritual fulfillment and dedicated his entire life praising Sri rAma through his beautiful compositions. The greatest treasure Sri tyAgarAja created not only for himself, but for the whole mankind is the Bhakti sAmrajyam. Let us join hands in following this divine path of Bhakti, that Sri tyAgarAja has shown us to immerse in the bliss of Sri rAma!

\*\*\*\*\*

Prithvi Krish, a Senior at Central Bucks High School West, started her Carnatic musical journey at the Lofty Heights School of Music since the age of 10. Her dedication and love for this divine art form has been nourished by Guru Smt. Kiranavali Vidyasankar, who has inculcated the importance of focus, perseverance, and discipline apart from Music. Through Carnatic Music, Prithvi has gained a deeper understanding of the rich Indian culture. Prithvi has participated in various prestigious music competitions and performances and has sung in esteemed venues including Cleveland Thyagaraja Aradhana Festival, CMANA, SVBF, and the Hindu temple of Delaware. She intends to continue pursuing Carnatic Music as she believes it keeps her connected to her culture.



# Adithiya Karthik - Bala Bhavam

By Sai Sri Ravinuthala

As part of the SRUTI Day celebration on December 2, 2024, Adithiya Karthik, a rising star in Carnatic music performed for the bAla bhAvam. He was accompanied by Sameth Sitaram on the violin and Navneeth Gopinath on the Mridangam. The concert showcased an engaging and diverse array of compositions, highlighting the artists' talent and dedication.

Adithiya opened the concert with *nin pAda bhajaname* in the ragam *malayamArutham*, a composition of Sangita Kalanidhi Guru Sri. Neyveli Santhanagopalan. This kriti set a bright and auspicious tone, with the brisk notes of *malayamArutham*, serving as a welcoming invocation to Lord Ganesha. Adithiya prefaced the composition with a brief, yet fluid *AlApana* in *malayamArutham* seamlessly transitioning into the Kriti, beautifully paralleled by Sameth on the violin. His rendition, rich in devotion, embodied bhakti and divinity. He then continued with his own *chiTTa swaram* to the composition, which was brisk and elegant, with Navneeth mirroring with apt *solkaTTus* for the *chiTTa swarams* on the mridangam. This interplay excited the audience with the power of *rAgAs* and crisp *swarams*, adding rhythmic grandeur to the performance. All while keeping the flavor of the *shAdava rAgam* intact by emphasizing the *antara gAndhAram* and further curating the *rAgam's* flavor in the *chiTTa swaram*.

Following this refreshing piece was a popular composition of *tyAgarAja*, *dvaitamu sukhamA* in the ragam *reeti gowLa*. With a nice contrast from the brightness of *malayamArutham*, *reeti gowLa* evoked serenity and elegance. Saint *tyAgarAja's* profound piece questions whether true happiness lies in the realization of oneness with the divine (*Advaita*) or in devotion with a sense of separation (*Dvaita*). Adithiya's *AlApana*, with its flowing phrases and exquisite *gamakAs* that emphasized the *rAgam's* emotional depth, masterfully conveyed the meditative and calm spirit of *reeti gowLa*, all while masterfully adding hints of the upcoming composition to keep the listeners engaged. Sameth's violin responses enhanced the atmosphere further adding melodic richness. Adithiya's *neraval* at "*Gagana Pavana*" was especially poignant, highlighting the sublime glory of Lord *rAma* while showcasing his technical mastery and lyrical expression. The *kalpana swarams* on the same line were captivating and lively, progressively intensifying, and culminating in a well-structured *kOrvai* that gave the composition a magnificent and fulfilling conclusion.

A magnificent and incredibly moving moment of the performance was Adithiya's rendition of *himAdrisutE pAhimAm* in *kalyANi*, a composition of *shyAmA shAstrI*, which showcased the *rAgam's* majesty and emotional depth. This tribute to *Goddess pArvati*, highlighted *kalyANi's* grandeur and devotion. Adithiya's *AlApana* was meticulously structured, with extended phrases that explored the *rAgam's* rich *gamakAs*, especially the distinctive *madhyamam (M2)* and *nishAdam (N3)* glides, lending a luminous and expansive quality to the piece. The grandeur reflected in Sameth's melodic violin accompaniment adding layers of melodic beauty, further enhancing the *rAgam's* *bhAvam*. The kriti's graceful progression captured the stately yet deeply expressive nature of *kalyANi*.

The thani Avarthanam by Navneeth which followed, offered a thrilling rhythmic contrast. His intricate mridangam patterns amplified the concert's rhythmic vibrancy adding an exciting dimension to the performance. Adithiya's performance, which combined technical skill with sincere devotion elevated the concert to great heights!

Overall, the bAla bhAvam concert was a vibrant and engaging showcase of young talent, blending technical mastery with classical expression. The performances were brisk, versatile, and rich in Carnatic aesthetics, leaving the audience with a sense of deep appreciation for the music.

*Sai Sri is a sophomore at Central Bucks High School South, who learns Carnatic music and dance, and enjoys the artforms.*



# Influence of Sanskrit on the kṛtis of Tyāgarāja svāmi

By Subramanian Chidambaran

Looking at the evolution of languages in India, we see that though Sanskrit was among the earliest languages used in the Indian sub-continent, Prākṛt gained popularity even during the times of the great playwrights such as Bhāsa and Kālidāsa which in due course gave rise to many regional languages. It is however interesting to note that Sanskrit continued to be the preferred language for many philosophers as well as vāggeyakāras to compose their works. Though Tyāgarāja svāmi chose Telugu as the primary language for his compositions, he seems to have not escaped the attraction of Sanskrit which is amply seen in his compositions.

## Use of Sanskritised Telugu

Most of the compositions of Tyāgarāja svāmi are in Telugu. However, if we look at some of these in detail, we find that a significant portion of the lyrics in these would be Sanskrit with some colophons/ concluding/ starting lines in Telugu. This is what has been indicated here by the term 'Sanskritised Telugu'. Below are some popular examples of these:

1. In the Aṭhāṇā kṛti Elā nī dayarādu, except for the line 'Elā nī dayarādu parāku jese elā samayamu gādu' and the terms 'Rā Rā', everything is Sanskrit!
2. In the kṛti Amma Dharmasamvardhani again in Aṭhāṇā, except for the pallavi and anupallavi, the three charanas are all in chaste Sanskrit.

## Use of innovative epithets

The Sanskrit proficiency of Tyāgarāja svāmi is seen in the different innovative epithets he uses in his compositions. He uses the term 'Sāmaja' extensively for the elephant. However, we don't find many references to the term 'Sāmaja' used for the elephant in Vedic or classical Sanskrit literature. Thus, in a way, this could be termed an innovation of Tyāgarāja svāmi. Literally 'born of Sāma', the term connects the elephant with the Sāmaveda. Referring to Kumbhakarṇa, he calls him 'Ghaṭakarṇa' replacing 'Kumbha' by its synonym 'Ghaṭa' in the Huseni kṛti Raghuvīra Raṇadhīra. In the same kṛti, he uses two ways to describe Indra – one as Balārāti i.e. arāti or enemy of demon Bala (or Vala) and Nagāri i.e. enemy of mountains. Ṛg veda describes how Indra cut the wings of the mountains which were once flying and made them immobile. This led to him becoming their enemy and they fear his name! He also uses other lesser known epithets of Indra namely Saṅkrandana in anupallavi of the kṛti Niravadhi sukhadā in Ravichandrikā (Nata Saṅkrandana).

He uses a number of terms to indicate Rāma as the scion of 'Sūrya vamśa':

- In the Jaganmohini kṛti 'Māmava Satatam', he says 'Śrīmad Inānvaya Sāgara chandra' i.e. the moon (Chandra) in the ocean (sāgara) of the dynasty (anvaya) of the sun (Ina)
- In the Bṛndāvana Sāraṅga kṛti, he says 'Kamalāptakula kalaśabdhi chandra' i.e. moon (Chandra) of the ocean (abdhi) of the dynasty (kulakalaśa) of the friend of the lotus i.e. the Sun (kamala – āpta)

- In the Nāṭa pañcharatnam, he says ‘Gaganādhīpa satkulaja’ i.e. born (ja) of the noble dynasty (satkula) of the lord of the skies i.e. the Sun (gagana + adhipa)
- Tyāgarāja svāmi also employs the same word many times in the composition but having different meanings in each usage.
- In one of the charanas of the kṛti ‘Ninnuvinā’ in Todi as well as ‘Elarā kṛṣṇa’ in Kāmbhoji, he refers to Rāma as the connoisseur of Rāgas and also free from attachment (also called Rāga in Sanskrit) – Rāga rasika Rāga rahita
- Similarly, in the charana of the Madhyamāvati kṛti Deva śri tapastīrtha, he says Nāga pūjita nāga danuja hara i.e. one who is worshipped by the snakes and one who killed the elephant-demon (gajāsura)?
- In the charana of the kṛti Niravadhi sukhadā in Ravichandrikā, he says ‘Bhīma parākrama Bhīma karārchita’ i.e. one who is tremendous in his valour while at the same time being worshipped by Bhīma (one of the five Pāṇdavas)
- He plays with the word ‘Graha’ in the kṛti ‘Grahabalamemi’ in Revagupti using it as Graha (planet), anuGraha (blessing), viGraha (idol), āGraha (desire) and niGraha (destruction)!

Graha bala memi Śri Rāmā-  
 Anugraha bālame balamu  
 Graha bala memi tejo maya vi-  
 Grahamu dhyaniche vāriki nava (graha)  
 Graha pīdalū pañcha pāpamulanā-  
 Grahamu gala kāmādi ripula ni-  
 Grahamu jeyu harina bhajiñche

### Concluding thoughts

In conclusion, we can infer that though Telugu was the preferred choice of Tyāgarāja svāmi owing to probably its simplicity and suitability to music, Sanskrit had a great influence on him and it remained a language close to his heart which he chose very prudently to extol the qualities and virtues of the Lord while at the same time expound profound philosophical truths.

*Sri. Subramanian is a student of carnatic music, post-graduate in Sanskrit, and pursuing his PhD in Indic leadership.*



# Three Ragas Resurrected by Tyagaraja

*By Mohan Santhanam*

There are multiple articles on how Tyagaraja was solely responsible for resurrecting a number of ragas by composing kritis in them. In this article I wish to highlight three ragas and compositions that have personally appealed to me very much. It is also interesting to note how some of these ragas inspired successive generations of composers to compose kritis in them, and yet, how Tyagaraja's kritis continue to be appealing and retain their freshness

## **1. Nenarunchara – Simhavahini – Adi**

As a teenager in the 1980s, I first heard this kriti sung by a senior vidushi in an All India Radio broadcast in New Delhi. Two things ensured I was instantly attracted to nenarunchara – the way the kriti was sung (what is commonly referred to as the kriti “version”) and its sprightly gait. The version of the kriti was especially appealing in the anupallavi. After the first line sanakAdi yOgi bRnda vandyA pAda was sung, the second line sAKeta vAsa sad-bhakta pOsha, contained a quasi swaraaksharam for the syllables sA and kE. The power and the attraction of the swaraaksharam immediately made me resolve to record, notate and learn this kriti!

Simhavahini is a janya of the 27<sup>th</sup> melakarta raga sarasAngi. Structurally, the raga is straightforward. The aarohana – avarohana structure is linear, without any vakra pidi. Simhavahini eschews the rishabham in the aarohanam, making it S G M P D N S'. The avarohanam is sampooranam and matches that of its parent raga Sarasangi.

Hence ostensibly we could say that Simhavahini isn't very different from its parent raga other than the absence of the rishabham in the aarohanam.

nenaruncarA nApaini cAla  
nI dAsuDanu kAdA Srl rAma

However, here is where Tyagaraja's composing skills come to the fore. In the common version I learnt, the words nenaruncarA, begin with the notes P M G,, R S. Fair and straightforward. In the next section of the Pallavi sahityam (nApaini cAla), the syllables 'nA' and 'pai' are couched in emphatic S and G notes, thus establishing Simhavahini beyond doubt. The S G phrase in any raga, especially with the gandharam being the antara gandharam (G3) seems to emphatically have a flavour of its own. Small wonder that ragas having S G in their structure bring a more assertive and a certain definitive relish. We experience this in ragas like for example Bahudari, Amritavarshini, Sunada Vinodini and Nagaswaravali; and especially in rakti ragas Begada and Kannada. To me it seems that Tyagaraja employs the same principle of exploiting the S G notes and succeeds brilliantly even in a relatively lesser sung raga like Simhavahini. The S G phrase recurs regularly throughout the kriti and thus nenarunchara with its plaintive appeal by Tyagaraja to Rama to give his bhakta refuge, acquires a sheen of its own, quite different from its parent raga Sarasangi.

It is worthwhile to note here that Simhavahini and nenarunchara seems to have inspired the genius descendant disciple of the Tyagaraja sishya Parampara Patnam Subramanya Iyer to compose his brilliant *evarunnaaru nannu brochutaku* in adi tala. Patnam goes one step further and straightaway establishes the S G phrase in the first two syllables of the kriti's pallavi!

## 2. sArvabhauma sAkEta rAma – Ragapanjaram – Adi

A rarely heard kriti in a rarely heard raga. And yet, the kriti has an intrinsic charm as was evident to me on the couple of occasions I've had the opportunity to listen to this composition.

This particular kriti brings to fore an aspect of the varied expression of the sentiment of devotion of Tyagaraja – something his kritis are replete with and are well-known for. The richness of feelings and moods impart to them a lyrical appeal and brilliance, and this is very evident in this charming kriti.

We all know that for anyone expecting a favour, the first thing needed is to catch the eye of the listener. Once this is done, then the devotee longs for his lord to speak to him, and in this kriti, Tyagaraja yearns to listen to Rama's charming words.

“O King of Kings! Can you not heartily talk a few words to me? The charming words you spoke before had not reached my ears and I have been uneasy with an unfulfilled desire. Am I to keep on living, hoping to have that privilege on some further occasion?” (From Dr. Raghavan's The Spiritual Heritage of Tyagaraja)

### **pallavi**

*sArvabhauma sAkEta rAma*

*manasAra palka rAdA dEvatA (sArva)*

### **anupallavi**

*pArvatI ramaNArcita pAda rama*

*pati vandya parAtpara dIna bandhO (sArva)*

### **caraNam**

*muddu mudduga mATalADinadi*

*mundu rAka sadA veta jenducunu*

*kaddu kaddanucu cira kAlamunu*

*karagucuNDa valenA tyAgarAja nuta (sArva)*

So, what is Ragapanjaram? A janya of Harikambhoji (28<sup>th</sup> melakarta raga), Ragapanjaram has the aarohanam and the avarohanam defined as:

SRMPNDS'

S'NDMRS

Technically Ragapanjaram could be classified as a janya of Kharaharapriya as well. However intuitively perhaps it “sounds closer” to Harikambhoji and hence the classification of it being derived from Harikambhoji. On examining the aarohanam and the avarohanam, it is evident that apart from the P N D S' phrase, Ragapanjaram is rather similar to the better-known Andolika! Andolika with its instantaneous and

continued appeal and consequent popularity of the intense and attractive Raagasudhaarasa, seems to have eclipsed Ragapanjaram!

However, to come back to the P N D S' phrase and employing it skilfully throughout, it CAN ensure that Ragapanjaram and its compositions can very well have an identity of their own, quite apart from the more popular Andolika.

Tyagaraja seems to have realized this and has hence bequeathed us \*two\* kritis; Andolika has only one by him! The second kriti in Ragapanjaram is varadA navantASa in misra chapu tala and is completely in Sanskrit. I have not heard this kriti so far. It is clear that these two kritis by Tyagaraja are worth exploring further!

### **3. enta muddO enta sogasO – Bindumalini – Adi**

An \*extremely\* popular kriti in an extremely popular raga that truly is well-deserved! Bindumalini as a raga instantly captivates and musicians have revelled in playing alapana, swaras, ragam, tanam and pallavis, and tillanas. Some of the renditions that I have personally enjoyed tremendously and have been inspired, are those by maestros Lalgudi Jayaraman, N. Ramani, U. Srinivas and Madurai T. N. Sheshagopalan.

And despite the potential of the raga, apart from Tyagaraja, it is curious that no one in his sishya parampara seems to have attempted creating any composition. That include his direct disciples, second generation super vaaggeyakara Patnam Subramanya Iyer, and also the prominent composers of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century like Mysore Vasudevacharya and Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar.

Enta muddo falls into the category of kritis where Tyagaraja unequivocally condemns *Kaama*. There are numerous examples of this in his kritis. Menu joochi mosa (Sarasangi), his grand Natakurinji piece *manasu vishayanata* and the well-known Todi kriti Emi jesite nemi, are a few examples.

Though he was immersed in Raama bhakti, the happenings of society around Tyagaraja did not escape unnoticed by him and he has captured his observations candidly in some of his kritis. One very striking example is the popular Abhogi kriti *manasunilpa sakti* where, in the charanam he refers to a "Somayaji" who conducted a yagna along with his spouse. Tyagaraja questions how Somayaji will get the fruits of the yagna performed by him, if his spouse is running after beautiful/handsome paramours!!! Clearly adultery was prevalent and was not lost upon our genius bard at Thiruvaiyyaru! Tyagaraja ends the kriti by asserting that a person who's a slave to lust and anger, no amount of tapas will be the saviour.

Coming back to Entamuddo, Tyagaraja is as blunt and outspoken as he can be. The Pallavi begins innocuously enough with a routine theme – the bard asks if there could be anyone who can describe the magnificent beauty of the Lord adored by him. In the Anupallavi he moves into the theme that if someone is continuously engaged in thoughts of lust, that will definitely make him/her blind to the beauty of the adored Lord.



And the Charanam is where things get really spicy!

*atta mIda kanulu-Asaku dAsulai*  
*satta bhagavata vEsulairi*  
*dutta pAla ruci teliyu sAmyamE*  
*dhurINuDau tyAgarAja nutuDu (enta)*

Some moderate translations give the first line of the charanam to be speaking of people fearing their own mothers-in-law due to desire or lust. However, upon examining the sahyam closely, the correct translation appears to be that people who are swayed by their lust are not even above eyeing their own mothers-in-law amorously!

We must remember that in Tyagaraja's times, child marriages were very common. Hence it was natural for a mother-in-law barely in her 30s to welcome a son-in-law. And this definitely would give scope for whatever Tyagaraja has stated in his usual forthright way, to happen!

Tyagaraja ends the kriti with "will the simile that the milk jug can never know the taste of milk." I would interpret this as the people who are under the sway of lust are mere inanimate objects like the milk jug and will have no idea of tasting the exquisite bliss of the Lord.

Incidentally, the praasam in the charanam – atta, satta, dutta – gleefully employed by Tyagaraja is also worth noting!

Simhavahini, Ragapanjaram and Bindumalini – three drops in the body of Tyagaraja's monumental work handed down to us. Yet these shine as coruscating crystals, ever giving us musicians and rasikas the pleasure of these unusual ragas and the joy of experiencing and identifying with Tyagaraja himself, his various thoughts and ideas that he wished to convey through these compositions. And he does it with such flourish and elan that we return to his kritis again and again and again!

*This article is a contribution of Sri. Mohan Santhanam, an active concert performer, and one of the foremost disciples of the renowned maestro Sangeetha Maha Mahopadhyaya Sri. T.R. Subramanyam (TRS) and descendant of the renowned archetypal composer Sri. N. Kotiswara Iyer (sishya parampara).*



# sanglta jnAnamu (A Musical Appreciation)

*By Deepak Varma Maliakal, Ananthakrishna Panuganti and Jayram Sataluri*

*In the 2023 tyAgarAja Aradhana souvenir, Sri Prabhakar Chitrapu wrote an article about how tyAgarAja deals with the topics nAda and sanglta. There were many kritis listed in the article but a few muraLi gANam admirers decided to take up the assignment to dissect Dr. Balamuralikrishna's (BMK) rendition of the kriti "sanglta jnAnamu" together. This article is written by the same set of muraLi gANam admirers Jayram, Deepak and Ananthakrishna who wrote about "telisi rAma cintanatO".*

*If you have read our earlier articles, we make sure that every single aspect of any muraLi gANam rendition of tyAgarAja's kritis is scrutinized to the minutest degree. It is believed that the sanglta jnAnamu that we often hear was tuned by Kanchipuram Naina Pillai. Of course, we know that there is no way to find out how exactly tyAgarAja originally rendered it. However, we are told that there are manuscripts available with a different notation leading to a totally different tune. Dr. BMK has said that the version he is singing is according to those old manuscripts. Since we are unable to find the manuscripts for the time being, for this article, we are referring to the rendition by Dr. BMK in a commercial album called tyAgarAja kritis released by the Indian music recording company sanglta in 1986. The accompaniments are VV Ravi (violin), Madurai Srinivasan (mridangam) and TH Subash Chandran (ghatam). We hope our conversation enlivens and enlightens the rasika community.*

*DM: I think of dhanyAsi as a very popular rAga, having similarities with asAvEri and tODi. The gamakAs exhibit a dual nature - heavy and soft. Usually, I hear singers really leaning into the gamakAs, especially on the gAndhAra (G) and nishAda (N). To me, however, BMK's rendition feels noticeably less heavy. I do hear him oscillate these notes, but without the usual weight. For the remaining parts, he reduces the gamakAs to flat notes. This alternation between flat notes and gamakAs is striking. I've noticed this when BMK sings rAgAs like tODi, dhanyAsi and bhairavi. While I personally feel Dhanyasi can be interpreted as a heavy rAga, BMK's approach offers a unique perspective. Thoughts?*

*AP: The question of what makes a rAga heavy is certainly interesting! I am not sure there exists an objective definition for what a rakti rAga is, but certainly an important aspect to it is the depth of the rAga, or equivalently the extent of its scope. Such rAgAs that lend themselves to significant elaboration that doesn't seem contrived or repetitive would fit the bill of a rakti rAga. Essentially, rAgAs that can be built using phrases rather than merely the notes that constitute it, would be 'heavy' in my opinion. Karnatik music today heavily relies on Kampita gamakAs, however merely utilizing the kampita gamakA liberally does not make a rAga heavy. dhanyAsi is heavy even when BMK sings it with the flat notes, precisely because dhanyAsi allows for such wide interpretations and broad expressions. The manifold possibilities in rendering phrases, the wide choice in dealing with gamakAs, make dhanyAsi 'heavy'.*

*JS: To me, dhanyAsi is more of a philosophical rAga which doesn't need much acrobatics. We can feel some influence of hanumatODi in it. The BMK approach to dhanyAsi may sound a bit alien to listeners who are used to the "gamakA-laden" version, but it brings more uniqueness with the flat notes, especially at G and N.*

AP: If we were to look at the rAgalakshanam as we understand it today, dhanyAsi is an upAnga janyam of the 8th melakarta rAga hanumatODi. It has the scale S G2 M1 P N2 S - S N2 D1 P M1 G2 R1 S. A rAga with strong hints of vIra, bhakti and karuNa rasAs, it is capable of being elaborated in all three octaves. Strong kampita gamakAms on the G and N, and emphasis on using G and N as nyAsa swarams are characteristic features of dhanyAsi. This is a rAga with a very broad scope, and can be sung at fast as well as slow speeds, and offers a wide scope for interpretation for how its phrases are to be handled. Being a very old rAga, it has been dealt with by multiple vAggeyakArAs.

DM: The rAga AlApana lasts only two minutes. He begins with a shuddhadhanyAsi-like “PNN” with oscillations, but the immediate introduction of the characteristic dhanyAsi descent SNDP clarifies the rAga. The position of N leans more toward the exact note. In the other versions of dhanyAsi, I have heard the N positioned slightly closer to D, with subtle oscillations. The same applies to G, with its proximity to R.

AP: What I found rather interesting about the AlApanam was its pacing. It is seamless without superfast phrases and any unexpected jumps. While short, it paints a complete picture of the rAga and leads into the krithi very naturally.

JS: G-R is a unique phrase he sings as the R is more flat. Another unique phrase is the “PNSGRS” without the gamakAs. Could it be a Hindustani Bhairavi influence?

DM: Speaking of gamakAs, the way he sings the M-G-R and G-R combinations stands out distinctly from the other versions I have listened to. The key here lies in the reduced oscillations and flatter notes. I notice a similar use of flat notes in the N-D usage as well. The way he handles the transitions, particularly the less prominent G and N strongly reminds me of sindhubhairavi. That being said, he emphasizes and employs a medium-to-heavy oscillation on the G and N in the Arohana passages.

To do justice to the sAhitya and the meaning of the kriti, a slower pace would be more appropriate, and BMK achieves this effectively in 2 Kalai Adi tALam. Additionally, the emotional depth of the sAhitya is better conveyed through flatter gamakAs rather than heavy oscillations.

JS: With this “slow” tempo along with BMK’s rAga approach makes this more profound in nature. I feel it goes in line with the overall theme: mere understanding of music without bhakti will not take us on the right path to salvation. He starts off the kriti with a tAra shadja swarAkshara at “San” followed by SNDP, MP(D)PMP for “gIta” and PMG,MP for “jnAnamu” with the G given the kampita gamakA treatment. This is followed by PMG,M in “bhakti” and “vinA” as P,PN,N,N.

DM: The kriti starts off at tAra Shadjam as you correctly noted. As the pallavi unfolds, the sangatls remain relatively similar to one another.

JS: In the subsequent sangatls before he transitions to the anupallavi, for “O manasA” he does a meend gamakA to tAra gAndhAra: GM PN SS SN->G.

DM: The slow paced ending of “manasA” at the tAra gAndhAra gives me the impression that BMK is genuinely calling out to his mind or intellect. I am used to hearing versions with brugAs and fast sangatls with numerous notes notably in the line “sanmArgamu galadE manasA”. But in this version, the “galadE” and “manasA” are rendered slowly, seamlessly aligning with the kriti’s tempo. The fast phrases appear in

“Mu” of “sanmArgamu”, which can be notated as “GMPNDPMP,M” and in “bhakti” of “bhakti vinA” notated as “PMNPMG,M”.

JS: In the third Avarthanam, VV Ravi switches to mandra sthAyi during, “sammargamu galadE O manasA”. This complements BMK at this point by adding more lustre to the rendition.

AP: The progression of sangatis as a whole is very interesting to look at. Firstly, it is noteworthy that BMK treats the entire pallavi sAhityam as one single line for sangatis, thus ensuring that the meaning of the lines are complete. The first sangati has straight notes throughout except at “Bhakti vinA”. The accents on the G and N, especially the kampitam at vinA (a good use of swarAksharam here - the ‘na’ is sung with the NishAdam!), establish dhanyAsi. At “sanmArga”, there is again a swarAksharam at ‘ga’, and now the ga is rendered straight, unlike at “jnA’namu”. Both approaches to the gAndhAram are juxtaposed in the sangatis. This is highly instructive in how the same swaram can be delineated in such different yet equally beautiful ways. This juxtaposition of the oscillated and flat G in the poorvAngam and uttarAngam of the pallavi remains constant across all the sangatis presented. Thus, there is a continuity in the musical ideas and no sangati seems disjointed!

DM: While we have discussed flatter gamakAs so far, BMK introduces oscillation right at the very beginning of anupallavi. In ‘naTESa”, he sings “M,PNP PMG,,R” avoiding the flat gAndhAram there and adding a touch of heaviness like other singers.

JS: Yes. He renders “bhRngi” as P NDP, “naTESa” as MPNP PMG,R and “ghaTaja” as PMGMPPM.

DM: The rendition of “samlraja” also stands out and deserves a special mention. What are your thoughts?

JS: I was going to put “samlraja” as a separate point. As you know “samlraja” means son of the Wind God aka Lord Hanuman and BMK always had a great affection for him from his childhood. Notice that he sings samlraja by starting with a madhya shadja swaraksha at “sa”, SNS gamakA at “ml” and SGM at “raja”, but brings those subtle differences in each Avarthanam. Each sangati he sings in the first half of the anupallavi line is strikingly different. He does a bit of meend gamakA from tAra shadja down to panchama.

He sings the line “ghaTaja matanga” as PMGMPPN S, GRS. “nAradAdulu” as SRS SRN S->P(meend) PDPMPM and “upAsincE” (first time) is GMP, GMPNS,RS S,. At the end of the second Avarthanam, he does the same meend gamakA G from N to transition back to the pallavi.

AP: We find in the anupallavi that significant care was taken to maintain dwitlyAkshara prAsa in sangatis. “bhRngi” begins two beats off the samam, and so does ‘tanga’ of “matanga”. Everytime the second line “matanga nAradAdulu upAsincE” is sung, we can observe that the dwitlyAkshara prAsa rule is not violated. This teaches us how we must pay attention to such details when we construct our own sangatis or perform neraval, as this is an important feature of the kriti structure as a compositional form.

DM: Just like the ending of pallavi, the ending “cE” in “upasincE” closely resembles the manasA ending on tAra gAndhAra in the pallavi, serving as a delightful finishing touch. And when he goes back to the pallavi and concludes the anupallavi, he sings the akAram “NSG->R” with deep bhAvam yet it stands out from the usual due to the subtlety of the oscillations.

Throughout the rendition, the listeners can notice impeccable voice modulation by BMK in many instances. His use of delicate gamakAs and nuanced voice modulations enhances the emotional depth/bhAva of the kriti. It is quite unfortunate that the so-called traditionalists dismiss this type of rendition as “filmy”.

JS: Moving to the charaNam, “nyAyAnyAyamu” is rendered as one word meaning what is right and what is not right: MGMP, MPD(gamaka)P, MG(gamaka),RS, whereas “telusunu” is NS,GM and “jagamulu” is PMGMPMP. He has sung it in the correct cadence instead of elongating or shortening certain syllables.

DM: Speaking of sAhitya, I observe that BMK has added “O” before “manasA” in the pallavi. While it does not alter the meaning, it intensifies the pleading nature of the call to the mind.

JS: Now next is the most telling observation in this rendition - BMK does a very flat GMG and follows with GMPM MPDP, PMGRS and “telusunu jagamulu” is rendered as NS GM (like “samlraja”) PMGMPMP. For this “nyAyAnyAyamu” starting with flat GMG, the mood suddenly switches to beseeching us to follow the right path to salvation. Afterwards for “mAyamayamani telusunu”, he sings it as GMPN NRSDP PMGRS NSNDP and elongates the pa.

DM: I absolutely love how BMK omits the “durguna” when he sings the second line as “mAyamayamani telusunu ..” and places “durguna” before “kAyajAri”. The phrasing makes sense only when sung as “durguna kAyajAri Shad-ripula jayincE”. At the end of the charaNam, he sings the “tyA” in “tyAgarAjuniki” as “PDPM” in his signature, incorporating micronotes within each of the swarAs P, D, and P.

AP: The way he eschews fancy phrases and connections while halting at “telusunu” before repeating the charaNam is also of note. It ensures the focus is on the sAhityam and is a very simple and elegant way of repeating the charaNam lines. There is a silence, a pause which is pregnant with music, and to take up the charaNam again does not sound jarring. As Keats once said, ‘*Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter*’. The use of silence and pauses in BMK’s music merits closer attention, especially in how they elevate the rendition of the kriti.

JS: He renders the line “mAyamayamani telusunu” as GMPN, NS(R)NS,NDP, P(gamaka)MGRS, NS(R)NDP but this time he adds “durguna” as MGPMG,RS.

“kAyajAri shaD-ripula jayincE” is rendered similarly to “bhRngi naTesa samlraja ghaTaja” except this time he renders “jayincE” for the last 2 Avarthanams as MPMG(gamakA)MPNS; the first Avarthanam of the last 2 is MPMGMPNSP (meend gamakA).

DM: If someone asked us to summarize this version, how would we do it? We can talk about dhanyAsi and this rendition forever. However, the most captivating experience would be to hear BMK perform it live, allowing the full beauty of the raga, kriti, and swarakalpana to be realized.

JS: Me too. Not only an extended version, I would request him to sing swaraprastAra. Imagine us singing alongside him!!

DM: If I hear him do that, I wouldn't be able to resist singing along !!.

JS: I have not heard anyone else sing this pATAntaram. 'On that note', while I wish that more people sang it this way, we can declare that his version is here to stay forever.

(AP) - Ananthakrishna Panuganti is a 4th-year BS-MS (Chemistry) student at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Thiruvananthapuram and a passionate admirer of music.

(DM) - Deepak Varma Maliakal is a passionate rasika and musician who spends time on focusing on the nuances of swarAs, swara patterns, subtleties in gamakAs and popularizing Carnatic music by focusing on the sAhitya, bhAva and voice modulation aspects.

(JS) - Jayram Sataluri is an ardent rasika of music and supporter of SRUTI.

Ananthakrishna, Deepak and Jayram are passionate admirers of Dr. Mangalampalli Balamuralikrishna's music, otherwise known as muraLi gANam.

*To listen to sangIta jnAnamu bhakti vinA by Dr. Balamuralikrishna, please scan the QR code below with the camera on your phone.*



# Exploring 39<sup>th</sup> Melakartha on Occasion of Sruti's 39<sup>th</sup> Anniversary TA Celebrations

By Ravi Iyer

As this marks the 39th year of Sruti, I thought it would be interesting to explore tyAgarAja's compositions in the 39<sup>th</sup> Melakartha rAga and provide some commentary on its lyrics and musical characteristics. Upon researching, I discovered that the 39<sup>th</sup> melakartha is jhAlavarALi, and interestingly, tyAgarAja has only composed only one composition in this rAga.

In this discussion, I will delve deeper into

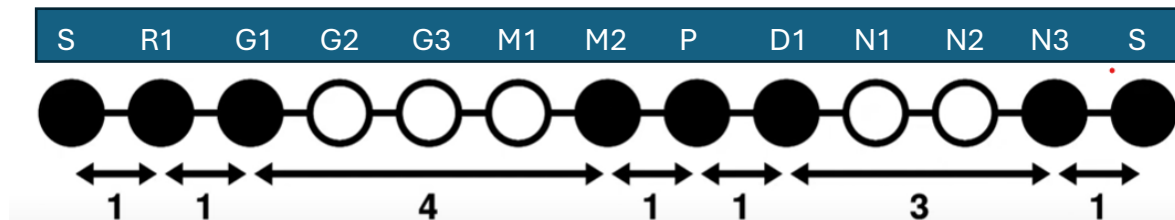
- 1) rAga lakshana of jhAlavarALi, and
- 2) a synopsis of the lyrical beauty of tyAgarAja's composition in this raga.

**jhAlavarALi:** JhAlavarALi is the 39<sup>th</sup> Melakarta and is classified under the tOdi family of rAgas. Pronounced Jhlavarali, meaning "A moon with the sun's heat." jhAlavarALi is a prati Madhyama rAga, and its scale is as follows:

**ārohāṇa:** S R<sub>1</sub> G<sub>1</sub> M<sub>2</sub> P D<sub>1</sub> N<sub>3</sub> Ś

**avarohāṇa:** Ś N<sub>3</sub> D<sub>1</sub> P M<sub>2</sub> G<sub>1</sub> R<sub>1</sub> S

jhAlavarALi is a rich and complex rAga with a distinct structure that shapes both its musical phrasing and emotional impact. In the Muthuswami Dikshitar school of music, it is referred to as DhalivarALi. The prefix "Jhala" was added to the rAga to conform to the *KatapayAdi* formula of rAga naming conventions. This rAga is known for evoking a deeply serious and intense mood, often associated with devotion, longing, and heightened emotions. Compositions in jhAlavarALi are rare. The notes S, R<sub>1</sub>, and G<sub>1</sub> are closely clustered together, followed by a wider gap leading to M<sub>2</sub>. Similarly, M<sub>2</sub>, P, and D<sub>1</sub> are tightly spaced, with a relatively large interval before reaching N<sub>3</sub>.



jhAlavarALi is also classified as a *vivAdi rAga*. *vivAdi rAga* are a category of rAga in Indian classical music that incorporate specific note combinations, resulting in a distinct emotional or aesthetic effect. Theoretically, *vivAdi rAgas* can be understood as follows:

Although there are only seven basic *swaras* (*Sapta Swaras*), there are twelve semitones in music, represented as: S, R<sub>1</sub>, R<sub>2</sub>(G<sub>1</sub>), R<sub>3</sub>(G<sub>2</sub>), G<sub>3</sub>, M<sub>1</sub>, M<sub>2</sub>, P, D<sub>1</sub>, D<sub>2</sub>(N<sub>1</sub>), D<sub>3</sub>(N<sub>2</sub>), N<sub>3</sub>

The bracketed notes indicate overlapping tones (e.g., R<sub>2</sub> overlaps with G<sub>1</sub>, R<sub>3</sub> overlaps with G<sub>2</sub>, and so on), while R<sub>1</sub>, G<sub>3</sub>, M<sub>1</sub>, M<sub>2</sub>, P, D<sub>1</sub>, and N<sub>3</sub> are independent notes.

A *rAga* becomes a *vivAdi rAga* when one or more independent notes are combined with one or more overlapping notes.

Popular examples of *vivAdi rAgas* include:

- nAttai: S R3 G3 M1 P D3 N3 S
  - Here, R3 overlaps with G2, while G3 is an independent note, and D3 overlaps with N2, while N3 is independent.
- gAnamurti: S R1 G1 M1 P D1 N3 S
  - In this case, G1 overlaps with R2, while R1 remains independent.

The term *vivAdi* translates to “dissonant” or “contradictory,” as these *rAgas* include notes that are not traditionally used together in more commonly accepted *rAgas*. Their unique tonal structures often create a sense of tension or dissonance, allowing them to convey deep and complex emotions. While they may sound unconventional, *vivAdi rAgas* hold a special place in Carnatic music, offering a distinctive aesthetic and emotional appeal.

### **Compositions in jhAlavarALi**

Although compositions in jhAlavarALi are rare, its *vakra sampoorna janya rAga*, varALi, is highly popular and features extensively in Carnatic music, with compositions by many renowned composers – a topic worthy of further exploration.

The number of compositions attributed to tyAgarAja in jhAlavarALi varies across sources, ranging from one to fourteen. However, the only widely recognized composition is "Namami Sri Rama." Unfortunately, I was unable to find any available renditions of this composition – or any other Thyagaraja kriti in JhAlavarALi – performed by artists.

It is believed that tyAgarAja composed around 24,000 *kritis*, of which only approximately 705 are available today. It is possible that "Namami Sri Rama" is among those that were lost over time. One can only imagine the lyrical and melodic beauty of these compositions.

If anyone has access to the lyrics or a rendition of a tyAgarAja *kriti* in jhAlavarALi, please share it with us at [publications@sruti.org](mailto:publications@sruti.org)

While I could not find a tyAgarAja composition to present, I did not want to leave readers disappointed. Hence, I am sharing some available renditions of jhAlavarALi *kritis* composed by other composers. Enjoy!

[Madhava Dayaya Palaya – JhAlavarALi - Dr. M Balamuralikrishna](#)

[From a lecdem on Vivadhi ragas - a kriti of Kotiswara Iyer by S Rajam](#)

[Varna \(JhAlavarALi\) Composer: Vainika Shikkamani Veene Seshanna Artist Dr. Suma Sudhindra](#)

*Ravi Iyer is a music enthusiast and long-time supporter of SRUTI. He plays the percussion instruments Mridangam and Ghatam.*



# A Score and Five years at the Aradhana

*By Rajee Padmanabhan*

As I was driving to the first practice session for the 2025 tyAgarAja Aradhana a few weeks back, it struck me that this is my 25th year, a silver jubilee, of looking forward to Sruti's tyAgarAja Aradhana.

In the pre-Google days of 1999, once I knew I was moving to the suburbs of Philadelphia from Atlanta post my marriage, I searched online for Carnatic Music in Philly and hit up on the Sruti's website, very well done even for those days (Thanks to Kishore Pochiraju). I promptly sent off a version of my resume to the Sruti email listed there, half in jest. The CV of this passionate rasika (fan) highlighted critical skill sets like driving artists to and from the airport, setting up chairs in the auditorium and so forth. And I got a response pronto, inviting me to join Sruti! Thus began my journey with Sruti in February of 2000!

In the spring of 2000, my husband Ram and I drove to the Hindu Temple at Berlin, NJ for our first Aradhana. Smt. Prabha Subramaniam and Smt. Sumati Sarangan were leading the Utsava Sampradaya Krithis and Pancharatnams. I heard many enthusiastic youngsters from the Sruti community for the first time that day. There was lunch served for everyone. The most exciting part was getting a copy of this [Aradhana Souvenir](#) and enjoying the articles and the crossword in it. As an unabashed TNS fan, I could not believe my luck when I came to know that the first concert I was going to attend with Sruti was Vidwan T N Seshagopalan's.

From 2001 onwards, I mustered enough courage to participate in the individual singing portion of the Aradhana. If I recall correctly, I sang the KalakAnti kriti "shri janaka tanayE" the first time I participated. One indelible memory was Rajeswari Satish's concert in the 2002 Aradhana. For one, I was happy to see a fellow Keralite as the artist. What is etched in memory though is the KalyAni krithi, E varamaDugudurA, charmingly sung by her precocious five year old daughter, Shyamala. A loud applause followed.

Over the years, Sruti moved the Aradhana from Berlin, NJ to school auditoriums in the suburbs of Philly. I remember a couple of memorable Aradhanas at the Villanova University Auditorium where Vidwan Flute Raman and Vidwan Balu of Wesleyan were featured for the afternoon concerts. One young boy named Carl played a tyAgarAja kriti on the cello! Another distinct memory was being amazed by a young boy who whistled an entire kriti (I think it was bAgAyanayya in chandrajyOti). This young boy was physically challenged and bound to a wheelchair. His mother was a student of Thanjavur Kalyanaraman, who himself has given whistle kutcheris!

As the years passed by, one could see the gradual progression of youngsters from varalla gAnaLOla to kAla haraNa mElara harE to banTu reeti kOLu to manasa eTulOrtunE. In 2006, Sruti was blessed when Kiranavali Vidyasankar moved to the Philly area. Kiranavali trained a bunch of youngsters and others on Pancharatnams and started to lead that during the Aradhana while Prabha Mami continued to lead the Utsava Sampradaya kritis. Dinakar Subramaniam has ably taken over the mantle from Prabha Mami in the last few years.

Over the last two decades, the quality of music from our youngsters heard at our Aradhana has soared to great heights, due to the tireless efforts of the teachers. It's very gratifying to watch many of the talented participants go on to achieve enough musical proficiency to perform concerts and some of them indeed have done the bAla bhAvam concerts with Sruti.

Another remarkable feature of our Aradhana has been the afternoon concerts from visiting artists, comprising only of tyAgarAja kritis. We have had memorable concerts from North America based artists like Salem Sriram, Ashwin Bhogendra, Toronto Brothers, Sangeetha Swaminathan etc. in addition to the ones I mentioned earlier. Sruti's audience has heard many of the current top ranking musicians - Abhishek Raghuram, Ramakrishnan Murthy, Aishwarya Vidya Raghunath etc. - for the first time when they were featured in our Aradhana.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the Aradhana souvenir. Over the years, we have had many great articles, games, and artwork adorn these pages. We have connoisseurs with deep knowledge of tyAgarAja's oeuvre like Prabhakar Chitrapu who has penned many informative write ups. One can see the breadth of our publications, viewing it by [year](#).

I have never missed an Aradhana in all these 25 years, except the year my son was born and one year when work kept me away, even though my son sang at that Aradhana. Every time as we sing in chorus "rAmabhaktuDaina tyAgarAjanutuni nija dAsulaina vAr - endarO mahAnubhAvu", it's an emotional and enriching moment, with absolute gratitude and reverence to the great vaggeyakara who left us this immeasurable legacy of music.

As I look back at the gift of music, community, camaraderie and many happy concert memories that these twenty five years of being part of Sruti's Aradhanas have provided me, I can't but think of the responsibility that we all have to do our best to ensure this tradition sustains and continues to grow. I profusely thank the founders, the board and committee members and the many volunteers of Sruti who have successfully steered the Aradhana for this long!

*Rajee Padmanabhan is a music aficionado, long-time supporter of SRUTI, and is the current SRUTI board President.*



# A Brief Layman Perspective of Emi jEsitEnEmi

*By Vikram Pyapali*

Growing up in Hyderabad, my twin brother and I were heavily into film and pop music. Though we were exposed to devotional and Carnatic music thanks to our mother and sisters, we never paid attention. Our sisters were learning Carnatic vocal from Sri. Neti Srirama Sharma gAru who was a sought-after guru for vocal and violin at that time. For a short time, my brother and I learned vocal music from this great guru, but we never took the lessons seriously, playing truant very often. Sharma gAru advised our parents to re-start the lessons when we were older, which never happened.

Consequently, ABBA, Michael Jackson, Whitney Houston and pop music ruled our lives. Soon Ilaiyaraaja, AR Rahman and new Telugu and Hindi film songs also became part of our music collection. Both of us had a strict policy back then, “No Carnatic music allowed!”

In the spring of 1998, we moved to the US and initially stayed with my sister’s family in New Jersey. Her son was obsessed with Carnatic music and would listen to cassette tapes and CDs of MS Subbulakshmi, Balamuralikrishna and the Hyderabad Brothers. At first, we ignored it, but thanks to the constant playing of Pancharatna Krithis by Balamuralikrishna in the background, we gradually got hooked and before we knew it, film and pop music were expunged from our minds. To everyone’s surprise, we started requesting Pancharatna Krithis, kaddanuvAriki, and kSIra sAgara shayana by the above stalwarts. A massive U-turn from “No Carnatic music allowed” to “Carnatic music forever!”

As the years went by, my nephew continued to share his extensive MP3 collection of Carnatic music, leading me to be exposed to other musicians. But my favorites have always been MS Subbulakshmi, Balamuralikrishna and the Hyderabad Brothers. I keep listening to them and I can’t help but sing along. Even my wife and my younger son don’t hesitate to join in!

One kriti I have admired is Emi jEsitEnEmi rendered by the Hyderabad Brothers, who are renowned for their exceptional mastery of Carnatic music. Their rendition of this kriti in tODi is a perfect example of how they expertly blend their classical rigor with beautiful bhAvam. Their voice modulation and use of gamakAs, such as kampita (oscillations), jAru (sliding), and sparsha (touching the swara lightly), bring out the emotional richness of tODi. The oscillating of R1, G2, D2, and N2 is their prominent trademark.

One remarkable aspect is the way they ably harmonize the pensive mood of tODi rAgam with the poignancy of the sAhitya. The Anupallavi line "kAma mOha dAsulai shrI rAmuni kaTTu teliyani vArilalO" is rich in emotional depth and its association with the rAgam elevates it even further, in my opinion.

The brothers’ approach to the rest of the kriti, starting with "guruvu tAnaitE nEmi kaNTiki mEnu guruvai tOCitE nEmi," makes the listener pay attention to tyAgarAja’s sharp chastising of deceptive gurus who have no love for Sri rAma and mislead their sishyas. The ending line “vara tyAgarAja nutuni dayalEni vArilalO”, is sung with great pathos.

Before I conclude, I'd like to share something very meaningful to me. I consider myself blessed that I got introduced to Seshachari gAru at one of his solo concerts in DC by my elder son's guru Sri Subhash Vinjamuri gAru. Subhash gAru told Seshachari gAru how much I loved their version of Emi jEsitEnEmi. Seshachari gAru took an immediate liking to me and nicknamed me "Emi jEsitEnEmi" man!

In 2022, Seshachari gAru rendered Emi jEsithEnEmi specifically for me! He insisted that I sit in the front row to record it. Of course, no words are enough to describe the rendition; it felt like he was possessed by tODi rAgam and the soulfulness rubbed off on Kamalakiran's violin accompaniment. I feel incredibly fortunate to have experienced this masterpiece live; it was an unforgettable moment of pure musical and spiritual bliss.

Seshachari gAru, you are missed tremendously. Hyderabad Brothers' music has brought me the best moments of my life. Thank you and your brother from the bottom of my heart.

*Vikram Pyapali is a Carnatic music rasika based in DC.*



# Have some KalpanA!

By Sanjana Kanvar

Takes place before summer camp 2024 with Kiranavali aunty because we know what we're doing now.

**Sanjana:** Oh my Kadavule! I literally can't believe so much time has passed! It seems like just yesterday we were learning Sarali Varishais!

**Prisha:** I know! Now we're learning *Kalpanaswarams*?

**Shritika:** I'm so excited! I listened to so many different Carnatic Music artists, looking at their techniques.

**Varsha:** Dear, you haven't even *learned* it yet! What *techniques* do you know??

**Shritika:** Um, you don't have to know anything to look at their techniques!

**Srividya:** You can't exactly look inside their brains! See the gears turning? Not gonna happen!

**Akshara enters the room**

**Akshara** (pausing): Wow, ok. Don't turn on each other! I've got you. When you think of Kalpanaswarams, it's pretty easy, right? You just make up the different swarams in your head, right?

**Sanjana:** Yea... but is that wrong?

**Akshara:** In a way... no, but that's a little vague. To further explain, Kalpanaswarams are like musical improvisations in Indian classical music, where the musician makes up their own melodies on the spot.

**Shritika:** So it's like playing a game where you have to follow certain rules, but you can make up the details as you go along!

**Prisha:** So like those Role-play games on Roblox?

**Akshara:** LOL yea! The musician takes a simple tune or melody and then adds their own twists, using the notes of a scale (called swaras) in creative ways.

**Varsha:** I think that's so cool! I can't wait to do that!

**Akshara:** Hold up! We have to talk about *talam*!

**Everyone:** Oh...

**Akshara** (*rolling her eyes*): Get used to it. When someone does kalpanaswarams, they have to do it while keeping in mind the *talam*. So even though they can be creative with the notes, they still need to make sure the notes fit within the rhythm or "beat" of the *talam*.

**Srividya:** Ok... So if I were to sing Hamsadhwani Varnam's charanam, I would have to cut it off somewhere and finish with it landing on *Samam*?

**Akshara:** I'm sure you guys will get the hang of it! Plus, *JalajAkshi* is in *double* *Adi* which gives you even more time to think. But, you'll have to produce more. And, say you cut off at do-ra in the charanam, which ends on the first beat or *dhritam* (you can add another, you do not have to start immediately.) You have 6 beats multiplied by however many swarams you want to fit in one beat. Say we were doing 2 per beat, which would be 12.

**Akshara** (*Continuing*): You can hold notes to count as more than one beat like holding the *kAkali nishAdam* in Hamsadhvani for 2 beats instead of one. Either way, you also must end at the note before your starting line. With Nisati, that's Pa. Occasionally, you can end it afterwards but this is only for smooth transition into the line.

**Sanjana**: (sarcastically): Is that all?

**Varsha**: Haha, I bet this is just the beginning.

**Akshara**: It most certainly is just the beginning. My mom will help you practice and try it out; I just told you the basics.

**Prisha**: That wasn't everything?! I could have rewritten the declaration of independence *three* times with how much info you just gave us!

**Srividya**: HAHA! But seriously...

**Akshara**: Don't worry, you guys are smart! You'll get it in no time! Practice is extremely important when it comes to Kalpanaswarams. Your mind will get used to picking up on notes faster, making it easier to think before it's your turn to sing the swaras. If you lose that, you go straight back to square one!

**Sanjana**: I bet we'll have to write them out. My sister had a notebook full of old kalpanaswarams.

**Akshara**: Definitely! You should definitely write them down at first. It makes it so much easier on your brain, from all of the preprocessing. Remember not to write any notes that aren't in the ragam, or make it too long or short. *KalpanA* means imagination and creativity, so use some!

**Shritika**: Ok...but there aren't any rules for taking somebody else's right? Say you were singing a song in Arabhi and you took a swaram from *JagadAnandakArakA*. tyAgarAja isn't gonna rise up from the dead and come for me because I plagiarized. Right?

**Akshara**: Are you kidding me? Of course not. But, already composed swarams are called Kalpita swarams. So no... in both the real and Carnatic world you cannot plagiarize.

**Sanjana**: Don't believe her about that. tyAgarAja will definitely rise up from the dead. The next time you come to tyAgarAja Aradhana, he's gonna be lurking around every dark corner! Oooo Scary.

**Srividya**: Shhh! You might scare the children.

**Varsha**: I would pay to see that

**Akshara**: You're in luck! tyAgarAja's gonna live in the shadows next tyAgarAja day if you use Kalpita swarams instead of KalpanA. Like Sanjana just did, you have to use your imagination.

**Sanjana**: Have some KalpanA! (winks at the camera)

*Sanjana Kanvar is a student of Smt. Kiranavali Vidyasankar studying in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. She has been learning Carnatic music since she was 6 years of age. Sanjana also learns to play the piano and guitar. Aside from her musical orientation, Sanjana finds joy in reading and creative writing.*

*All participants in the conversation are students of Smt. Kiranavali Vidyasankar.*



# Musings on tyAgarAja sAhitya pramANam

*By Aravind Balasubramaniam*

There is no topic more well researched than the trimurthy's sAhitya crafting abilities. It seems to the uninformed listener, that given a sequence of sAhityam, the music emanates from it naturally, in the exact manner that it is rendered, with no hints as to the notation of the composition.

Once, while presenting raghuvIra raNadhIra in rAga husEni, the great violinist Sri Annavarapu Ramaswamy remarked of the legendary Dr M. Balamuralikrishna, professing of his rendition "Is there not a picture in the sound? He (sic) was a great artist who was able to look at that (form) and sing, that was not something many would be endowed with. He gestured with his hands that people looked as if Lord rAma had come". It is this innate quality of the structure, lyricism, phrasing and pace that appears as a convolution of divine providence in the form of sAhityam.

Consensus dictates that a superlative performance of sAhityam requires the mastery of diction and pacing, along with a performance of the sangathi that the words, even with the right intent does not indulge in the soul of the composition, possibly, nothing can. Perhaps it is essential to be not only perfect in rendition, but in the right frame of mind, in the right place, at the right time. Since it is not possible to go back in time, or occupy the mind of the composer, we must resort to the essence of the composition itself.

Such a feat however, is far easier said than done. Phrases rarely link together intuitively. In the majority of his compositions, for instance, tyAgarAja Swamy maintains symmetry in the layam and kala pramANam. Many take solace in this consistency, but it is precisely this sequencing that presents such an enormous challenge to the sahitya pramANam. Take the pallavi of the asAvEri krithi, mApAla Velasi Ika. In this case, the symmetry is not nearly as prevalent, but the phrasing is exceptionally challenging. At the tail end of "Nanu brOvaga rAdA – Sri rAmachandrA", linking the words into their respective phrases presents an immense challenge to the performer. More often than not, it is sung as "Nanu Brova Ga – rAdA Sri rAma – Chan-dra" (or some variation thereof) – and while that is the intended structure, it decimates the intent in the sahitya. Even if sung with the correct word splits, the phrase "nanu brOvaga" is extremely tricky due to the swara progression at that point, and the pace of the sAhityam. There is one, and precisely one way to sing it correctly, and this is where we diverge into what constitutes a sangathi, to link it back to the ideal of correctness.

Every guru parampara has its variation on a sangathi, originating from generally a disciple of tyAgarAja. A sangathi is more than a progression of patterns and swarams, correctly sequenced, it incrementally demonstrates the intent of the composer, and the evolution of the mood. Thankfully, there are only very few sangathis in every composition that actually manage to demonstrate this intent, and through continuous iteration, every single parampara has managed to perfect its version of the sangathi, and this is where the nuance is demonstrated in all its vigour. Despite this, however, it is extraordinarily tricky (and takes an extraordinary eye for detail) to accurately reproduce said sangathi. Even the kAla pramANam

affects the elongation of vowels, for instance, and can entirely throw off an otherwise excellent performance.

There is no perfection in music, but strife is essential and inevitable. It is the only true path to divinity.

*Aravind is an aspiring musician and novice musicologist who takes delight in absorbing critical and nuanced information from across the musical spectrum. He plays the violin and is a supporter of SRUTI.*





# Interview with ChatGPT from the Perspective of Sadguru tyAgarAja (Episode 2)

By Krithi Iyer

In this issue of the tyAgarAja Aradhana Souvenir, I am continuing with me, Krithi Iyer (KI) and ChatGPT as Sadguru Thyagaraja using OpenAi.com. To refresh, I started this out of curiosity as I was beginning to hear a lot of things about Artificial Intelligence, ChatGPT, Machine learning in my school and elsewhere. To know more about the background and context how this started, please see [Interview with ChatGPT from the perspective of Sadguru Thyagaraja : Episode 1](#) (Pages 25 – 27)

So, continuing with my interview....

**KI:** Let's continue from where we left off in episode 1. You shared with me the deities, gods, and goddesses other than lord rAma that you have composed on. Similarly, did you also draw inspiration from other saints and composers?

**ChatGPT as Thyagaraja:** Yes, my devotion to Lord Rama was at the core of my life and compositions, but I also found inspiration in great saints like Narada and Valmiki. Narada, the celestial sage, is revered as the divine messenger of music, and I often saw myself as his humble follower. Similarly, I was influenced by Bhadrachala Ramadas, another great devotee of Lord Rama, whose life and works deeply resonated with me.

**KI:** In my music class I am beginning to learn about melakartha rAgas. I was wondering if you have composed in all the 72 melakarthas

**ChatGPT as Thyagaraja:** No, I did not compose in all 72 Melakarta ragas. While I explored a vast range of ragas in my compositions, my focus was primarily on ragas that best conveyed the emotions and devotion I sought to express. Many of my kritis are in well-established janya (derived) ragas, which offer rich melodic possibilities for bhakti and musical depth.

However, I did compose in several Melakarta ragas, for example Chakkani rAja in karaharapriyA, dASharathI in tOdi, kaliginyunNTE in KeeravANi, and my Pancharatna Kritis, for instance, are set in five major ragas nATTai, Gowlai, ArabhI, varALi, and Sri—which are derived from the Melakarta system. My compositions emphasize bhava (emotion) and sAhitya (lyrics), making them timeless in their appeal and spiritual significance.

**KI:** How has your influence shaped Carnatic music over the years?

**ChatGPT as Thyagaraja:** For over a century, my kritis have played a dominant role in Carnatic music. Earlier, concerts focused on elaborate raga expositions and Pallavis, but with the advent of my compositions, the structure of concerts evolved to include kritis as the core. My approach to sAhityams containing Madhyama Kala tempo and the use of sangatis enriched the singing tradition. Even compositions of later composers like Patnam Subramania Iyer, Poochi Iyengar, and Muthiah Bhagavatar bear my stylistic influence.

**KI:** What is unique about the way you structured your compositions?

**ChatGPT as Thyagaraja:** My compositions blend lyrical depth with melodic excellence. I introduced innovations such as the extensive use of sangatis—a method of gradually developing a musical phrase,

which enhances both the bhava (emotion) and the raga bhava (melodic essence). I also employed rare Vivadi melakarta ragas, which were previously underexplored. Some of my kritis, like Idi samayamurA (chalanATTai) and naDachi naDachi, demonstrate my ability to bring out the beauty of these unconventional ragas.

**KI:** Could you tell us about the Pancharatna Kritis and their significance?

**ChatGPT as Thyagaraja:** The Pancharatna Kritis, or "Five Gems," are among my most celebrated works. They are composed in five major Ghana ragas:

1. jagadAnanda kArakA (nATTai)
2. duDuku gala (gowLa)
3. sAdhinchene (Arabhi)
4. Kana kana ruchirA (varALi)
5. endarO mahAnubhAvulu (Sri)

These kritis are composed in Adi tala and represent the pinnacle of my musical and devotional expression. They embody different moods—from joy and celebration to humility and deep reflection. endarO mahAnubhAvulu is particularly special, as it is a tribute to all great saints and musicians who came before me.

**KI:** What role did your disciples play in preserving your musical legacy?

**ChatGPT as Thyagaraja:** I was blessed with devoted disciples who carried forward my tradition with great sincerity. My direct disciples, such as Walajapet Venkataramana Bhagavatar, Umayalpuram Krishna Bhagavatar, and Tillaisthanam Rama Iyengar, meticulously preserved my kritis. The Walajapet manuscripts, in particular, became a vital source for documenting my works accurately. These disciples ensured that my compositions were passed down in their purest form, free from distortion.

**KI:** How did your compositions spread beyond Tamil Nadu, and what efforts were made to popularize them in other regions?

**ChatGPT as Thyagaraja:** During my lifetime, my disciples traveled to various parts of South India, carrying forward my music and teachings. My kritis gradually spread beyond Tamil Nadu, particularly to Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Kerala. Mysore had a strong connection to my compositions, with royal court musicians like Mysore Sadashiva Rao and Veena Seshanna actively propagating my kritis. Similarly, in Andhra Pradesh, musicians like Manambuchavadi Venkatasubba Iyer and Chinnaswami Mudaliar contributed to the widespread adoption of my songs.

A significant role was played by my sishya parampara (disciplic lineage). The Walajapet school, led by Walajapet Venkataramana Bhagavatar, was instrumental in meticulously documenting and preserving my kritis. The Umayalpuram school and Tillaisthanam school also nurtured my compositions, ensuring they remained part of the Carnatic tradition.

Beyond South India, efforts were made to introduce my kritis in the Hindi-speaking regions. In the mid-20th century, musicians and scholars like Sri B. Subba Rao and Sri Srirangam Kannan worked on Hindi adaptations of my songs, making them accessible to a broader audience. The All India Radio (AIR) played a crucial role in this dissemination, with my kritis being translated and broadcast across the country.

Furthermore, my kritis were adapted into different languages, including Kannada and Tamil, while maintaining the original musical structures. Kannada versions were created by composers like Anavatti Rama Rao, and Tamil adaptations were done by Kausalya Venkatacharya. These efforts helped my music transcend linguistic barriers, allowing devotees and music lovers from different backgrounds to experience the spiritual depth of my compositions.

Internationally, my compositions gained recognition through the efforts of musicians like M. S. Subbulakshmi, who performed my kritis worldwide. The annual *Tyagaraja Aradhana* in Tiruvaiyaru, where musicians gather to pay homage by singing my Pancharatna Kritis, has also played a vital role in keeping my legacy alive across generations.

**KI:** How did folk and devotional music influence your compositions, and were any new kritis discovered after your time?

**ChatGPT as Thyagaraja:** My compositions were deeply rooted in classical Carnatic traditions, but I was also influenced by folk and devotional music. I often incorporated simple, direct, and heartfelt melodies that resonated with common people, making my kritis accessible to both the learned and the layperson.

One of the biggest influences on my work was the bhajan and harikatha traditions, where music was used as a means to narrate stories and invoke devotion. My *divyanAma Kritis* and *Utsava Sampradaya Kritis* were composed in a style that encouraged congregational singing, much like the folk traditions of bhajana and nama sankeertana. These compositions were designed for public participation, ensuring that devotion to Lord rAma could be expressed collectively.

Additionally, many of my kritis show traces of folk musical elements, especially in their rhythmic structures and melodic simplicity. Use of ragas like *jOnpuri*, *manOhari*, and *madhyamAvati* reflects an assimilation of folk and semi-classical idioms into my compositions.

Some kritis were preserved through oral tradition and later documented, while others were found in manuscripts passed down by my disciples. In 1967, during my bi-centenary celebrations, certain kritis were presented as newly discovered works. These compositions, reportedly given to Tiruvaiyaru Subramania Bhagavata by his guru Tillaisthanam Rama Iyengar, described temples in and around Tiruvaiyaru.

However, the authenticity of these newly found kritis remains a subject of scholarly debate. Some experts argue that they align with my compositional style, while others believe they might have been composed by later musicians in my name. In cases of uncertain authenticity, scholars often examine factors such as lyrical style, raga choices, and musical phrasing to determine if a kriti truly belongs to my oeuvre.

Despite such debates, the essence of my music remains unchanged. Whether sung in traditional or adapted forms, my kritis continue to serve as a bridge between the divine and the devotee, bringing people closer to the spiritual essence of music.

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Just like in my first episode, I learnt new information this time around as well. I learnt that Thyagaraja's music was deeply rooted in devotion to Lord Rama, but he also drew inspiration from saints like Narada and Valmiki. His compositions introduced innovations such as *sangatis* and the use of rare *Vivadi* melakarta ragas, enriching Carnatic music. The Pancharatna Kritis stands as some of his most revered works, reflecting both musical and spiritual excellence. His disciples played a crucial role in preserving and spreading his kritis beyond Tamil Nadu, leading to their adaptation in KannaDa, Hindi, and Tamil. Folk and devotional traditions significantly influenced his music, making his kritis accessible to both scholars and common people. I am beginning to see how his music continues to inspire generations, uniting people through its divine essence.

**Disclaimer:** Although I am excited with the responses I was receiving, I am also aware of the limitations given these responses are machine generated, they are prone to inaccuracies that I will not be aware of, especially given that I am a novice. My apologies if any of this information is inaccurate. I am open to learning and correcting them as an ever learning student in the field of Carnatic music. I am looking forward to bring more in subsequent episodes.

*Krithi Iyer is a 10<sup>th</sup> grade student and is a Sruti Youth Group Member. She is pursuing her vocal Carnatic music from Smt. Uma Sivakumar.*



# Raga Anagram (Puzzle 1)

By Dyuthi Iyer

The Anagrams may sound funny. But these are some of the rAgas that I am learning. Can you find them?

HOMAMNA



GOBHIA



NASHAA



DUDHAS VERISA



JIMBOKA



MASKAH



BIHARILA



BHANKARASHARANAM



LUNKA VARATILA



**Bonus Clue:** The tyAgarAjA kriti “rAma kOdanNDa rAma” is based on this rAga



*Dyuthi Iyer is an 7<sup>th</sup> grade student and a Sruti Youth Group Member. She is pursuing her vocal Carnatic from Smt. Uma Sivakumar.*

# Song Jumble and Crossword (Puzzles 2 and 3)

By Prisha Parthasarathy, Srividya Karra, Sanjana Kanvar, Shritika Sriram, and Varsha Lakshmanan

## Tyagaraja's SONG JUMBLE

Can you unscramble the well-known Carnatic songs?

- 1) MARSIRA █
- 2) BILHLSOUH █
- 3) TARAPUDMAMAU █
- 4) AAARJVNAGSMAAAMA █
- 5) ROJUPUA █
- 6) KAIJNAMA █
- 7) NAVNADUMA █
- 8) LAUTDISAAL █
- 9) RAMARAGUEL █
- 10) GUANHRYKAA █
- 11) LKAKANDPUAU █
- 12) BAHRVOMBAARA █
- 13) YMSAURDIIMAA █ █
- 14) RCHVREAVERA OBE █
- 15) GUAELUMNSU █
- 16) LAEEENDYAADARU █
- 17) EAAKMALRA █
- 18) INIIRSHTAPAGAN █

Write all the highlighted letters into the box and organize them into the hidden message.

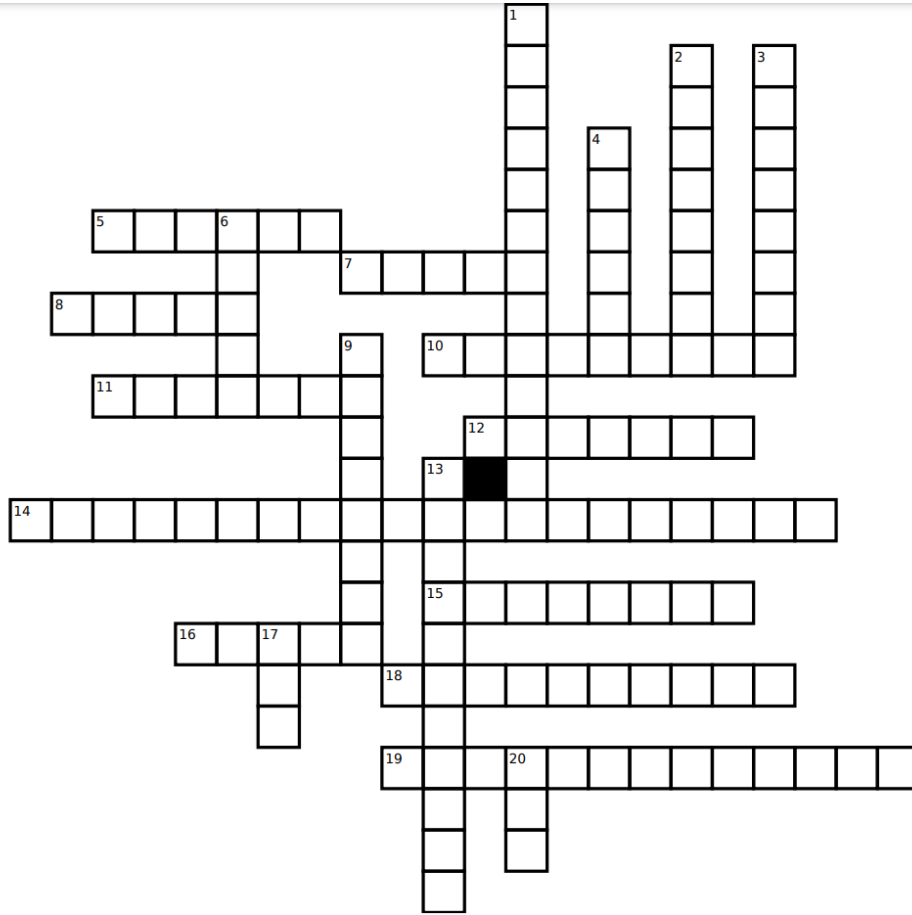
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**Down:**

1. The Pitamaha or Great Father of Carnatic music
2. 2nd Nishadam
3. The mudra of the composer who often embeds the name of the song's raga into the lyrics
4. The 5-count Jaati
6. A beat followed by finger counts
9. The famous Ata Tala varnam composed by Sri Pachimiriyam Adiappayya
13. Pancharatna kriti in the ragam Arabhi
17. The number of Melakartas in each chakra
20. The most common tala

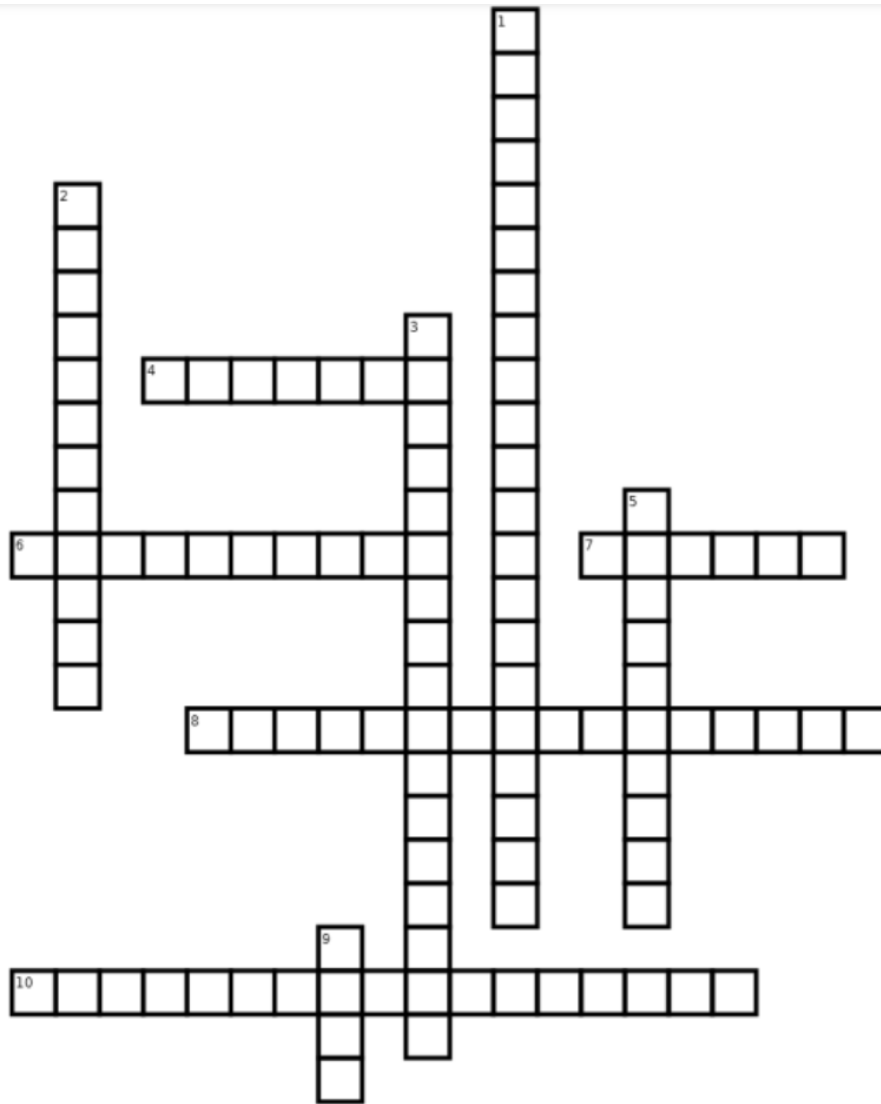
**Across:**

5. The total number of counts in Sankeerna Jaati Jhampa talam
7. Talam structured as Laghu + Dhrtam + Laghu
8. Annamacharya's Narayanate namo namo has been tuned and popularized in this ragam
10. The 36th Melakarta
11. A raga used to signal the end of a concert
12. Imagination, especially in Carnatic swarams
14. Composer of Abhogi Varnam (Evari Bodhana)
15. The ragam of Samajavaragamana
16. The 10th chakra
18. One beat of the palm
19. The composer of the Bhairavi Swarajati (Amba Kamakshi)

*Prisha Parthasarathy, Srividya Karra, Sanjana Kanvar, Shritika Sriram, and Varsha Lakshmanan are all disciples of Smt. Kiranavali Vidyasankar.*

# tyAgarAjA (Puzzle 4)

By Jeevesh Ramasamy



## Down:

1. Tyagaraja's guru name
2. Tyagaraja's birth name,
3. The festival done to honor Tyagaraja,
5. Ragam of Tyagaraja's first composition,
9. The God Tyagaraja composed most of his songs on

## Across:

4. The group of 3 famous composers,
6. Tyagaraja's birth place,
7. The language Tyagaraja mostly composed in
8. Tyagaraja's last composition
10. The famous Kritis consisting of 5 songs,

*Jeevesh Ramasamy is an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student and Sruti Youth Group Member. He is pursuing vocal Carnatic from Smt. Uma Sivakumar.*



# Puzzle Answers!

## Raga Anagram (Puzzle 1)

MOHANAM; ABHOGI; SAHANA; SUDDHA SAVERI; KAMBOJI; KHAMAS; BILAHARI;  
SHANKARABHARANAM; KUNTALAVARALI

**Bonus Clue Answer:** BHAIRAVI

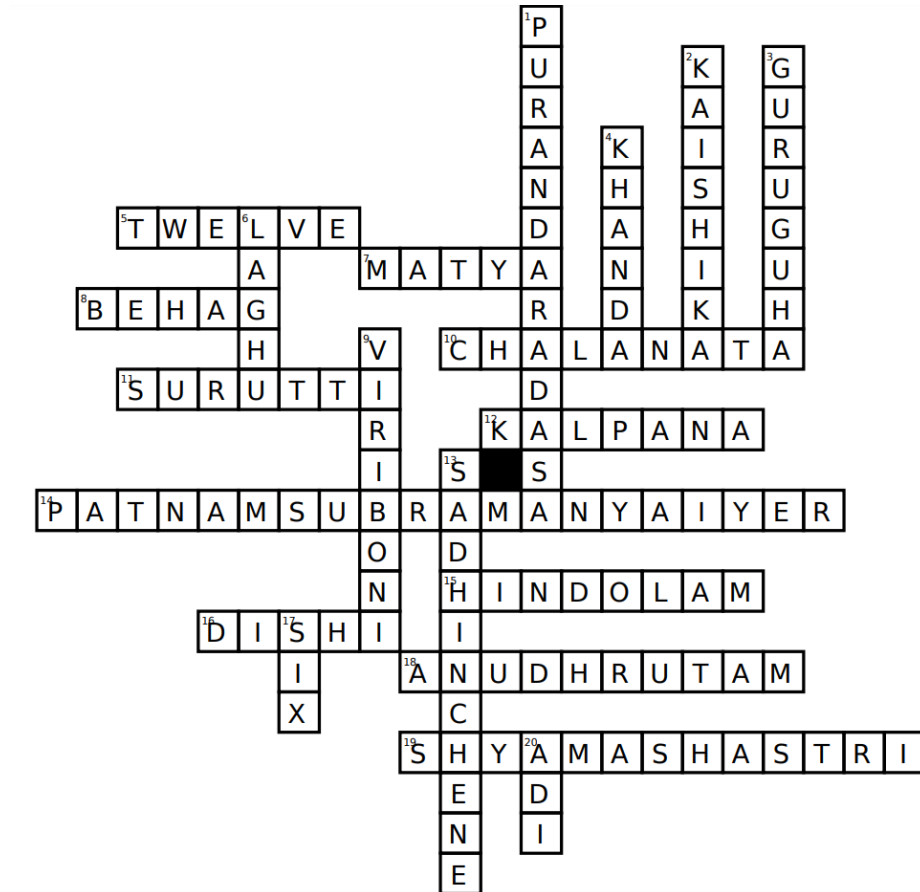
## Song Jumble (Puzzle 2)

Song (Letter)

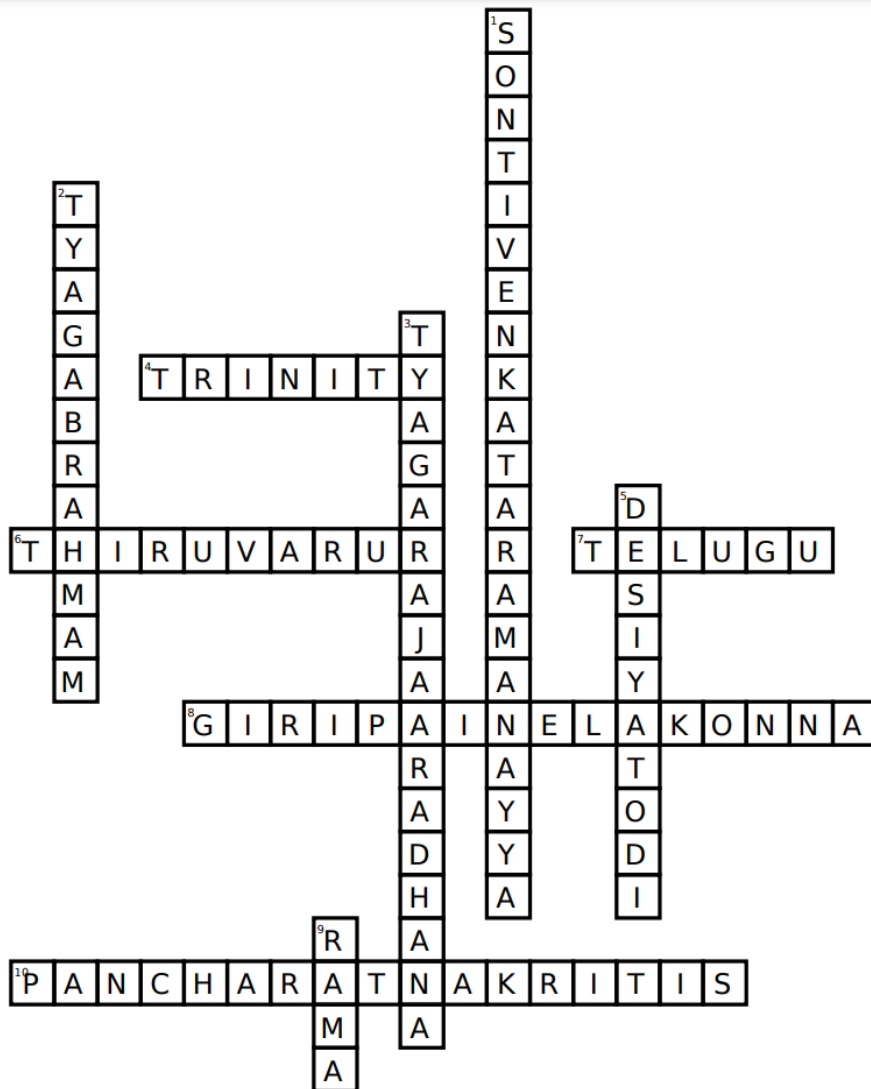
1) Srirama (R)	2) Shobhillu (S)	3) Paramaatmudu (A)	4) Samajavaragamana
5) Orajupu (J)	6) MaJanaki (K)	7) Vandanamu (M)	8) Tulasidala (T)
9) Marugelara (M)	10) Raghunayaka (H)	11) Palukukanda (A)	12) BrovaBharama (B)
13) Idi Samayamura (Y & I)	14) Brochevarevare (A)	15) Sugunamule (M)	16) ElaNeeDayaradu (A)
17) Maakelara (R)	18) Sri Ganapathini (A)		

**HIDDEN MESSAGE:** Rama Bhakti Samrajyam

## Crossword (Puzzle 3)



# tyAgarAja (Puzzle 4)





# Sruti

The India Music & Dance Society, Philadelphia

www.sruti.org

## 2025 Sruti Lineup

Thyagaraja Aradhana -  
Heramb Hemanth  
Mar 22



Amrutha Venkatesh  
Apr 5



Saketharaman  
Apr 26



Ranjani & Gayatri  
May 10



Ramana Balachandhran  
Jun 7



Rama Vaidyanathan  
Sep 6



Ashwath Narayanan  
Sep 20



Sanjay Subrahmanyam  
Oct 25



More events are being planned.  
Tickets and Sponsorships  
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[www.sruti.org](http://www.sruti.org)  
(Artists and dates subject to change)

