

SRUTI RANJANI

TENTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
SPECIAL EDITION



A PUBLICATION OF

SRUTI

THE INDIA MUSIC & DANCE SOCIETY
PENNSYLVANIA - NEW JERSEY - DELAWARE
SEPTEMBER 14, 1996

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From the Editor

As I start to compile this special issue of *Sruti Ranjani*, some major events and milestones come to my mind, as also some individuals who have made highly significant contributions to the growth of SRUTI.

During the first years, the fledgling committee headed by M.M. Subramaniam (Mani) presented concerts by renowned artists. The Committee made great strides, learnt many lessons. P. Swaminathan, T.S. Venkataraman and Mani successfully put a Hi-Fi system in place and produced high quality recordings of music concerts. In 1990-91, Swaminathan and his committee brought to the Delaware Valley, for the first time, a *Jugalbandi* featuring Pandit Bhimsen Joshi and Dr. M. Balamuralikrishna. This memorable event produced a surge of interest and membership soared. The Library Committee came into existence and the first issue of *Sruti Ranjani* was published in 1990 (a Thyagaraja Aradhana Souvenir, a precursor to *Sruti Ranjani*, was brought out by Prabhakar Chitrapu). In 92-93, again with Mani at the helm, SRUTI presented many programs, notably Dhananjayans' *Sanghamitra*, IDA's *Krishnam Vande Jagadgurum* and the violin concert by the Lalgudi Trio. SRUTI gained non-profit status through the efforts of Sudhakar Rao and Swaminathan of the Resource Committee with help from Kumud Gandhi, CPA. In 1994, Anand Kuchibhotla and his committee presented the highly acclaimed *Jaya Jaya Devi*. Under Renuka Adiraju, SRUTI presented its first full length Hindustani concert in 1995 and received its first grant from the PA Council on Arts through the efforts of the Resource Committee headed by Mani. SRUTI is now in the able hands of Dinakar Subramanian and his committee. Their dedication to SRUTI is obvious in the tremendous effort that has gone into organizing the tenth anniversary celebrations with two great presentations - Sitar by Ravi Shankar and *Siva Sakti*. The Gala Committee headed by Meena Seth has provided a strong support.

As I look back at these achievements of the past decade with great pride, I realize that SRUTI, by insisting on quality and excellence, has carved a unique niche for itself among the many cultural organizations. Embracing all styles of Indian Classical Music and Dance in its mission, SRUTI has brought together lovers of Carnatic and Hindustani Music and the many classical dance forms of India.

So it is with great pleasure that we present this special issue of *Sruti Ranjani* commemorating the tenth anniversary of SRUTI. Through pictures, letters and articles, we have attempted to walk the reader down memory lane, highlighting events, artists, committee members, their families, and other SRUTI supporters.

We salute such legendary artists as M.S. Subbulakshmi, D.K. Pattammal, M.L. Vasanthakumari, Rukmini Devi and composer Yoganarasimham through articles providing personal glimpses by their kith and kin. We are delighted to present a unique reflection on Sangeetha Kalanidhi Mysore Chowdiah by another Sangeetha Kalanidhi Veena Doraiswamy Iyengar. We pay tribute to T.N. Bala, a musician, composer and teacher who is being honored by SRUTI on this special occasion. We also present a biographical sketch of Pandit Ravi Shankar who has been primarily responsible for introducing Indian Classical Music to the West.

We thank the many artists who wrote to convey their best wishes to SRUTI and the authors who contributed to this edition. Our special thanks go to Swaminathan, who diligently and meticulously recorded the memorable events of these past years in the beautiful photographs which he made available to *Sruti Ranjani*. We are grateful to Renuka Adiraju, Uma & Prabhakar Chitrapu, Aarti Shrivas, Sudhakar & Gayathri Rao, Ponnal Nambi, Suresh & Sumanth Swaminathan for their invaluable assistance in the compilation of this issue. They shared in this daunting task and labor of love with great enthusiasm. My thanks to Sumathi Sarangan and Shrivas Sudarshan, fellow members of the Library Committee, for their support.

Viji Swaminathan
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September 14, 1996

SRUTI RANJANI

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About the Cover

The cover page depicts four great composers of Carnatic Music. Revered as the Kanrnataka Sangeetha Pithamaha, Purandaradasa (top) lived in the later part of the fifteenth and early part of the sixteenth century. He is known to have composed more than 50,000 songs in Kannada and Sanskrit. The Carnatic Music Trinity Muthuswamy Dikshitar (bottom, 1775-1835), Syama Sastry (left, 1762-1827) and Saint Thyagaraja (right, 1767-1847), all lived in Tanjavur, and composed in Sanskrit and Telugu.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends

We are ecstatic to note that this special issue of *Sruti Ranjani* will commemorate a significant milestone in our organizations history - our TENTH anniversary. The very first brainstorming session to start such an organization was held at the residence of Praba and M. M. Subramaniam in May 1986. The discussions snowballed into giving birth to The India Music and Dance Society called SRUTI which had its first concert on September 14, 1986 (exactly 10 years to the day). The first artist to perform for SRUTI was the late virtuoso M. L. Vasanthakumari. Since then, legendary artists like Lalgudi Jayaraman, M. Balamuralikrishna, Pandit Bhimsen Joshi, Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia, Padma Subrahmanyam, Sanjukta Panigrahi and Dhananjayans have all performed under SRUTI's banner and contributed to the cultural richness of the Delaware valley.

SRUTI has gained prominence outside of the Asian-Indian circles by being recognized by organizations like the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, the Philadelphia Foundation and the Community Affairs division of the Philadelphia Inquirer. We have had consultants work with us in the recent past to take us to greater levels.

Our concert series this year presented a good blend of young talent and experienced artists of the classical music and dance world. We had vocal concerts by Savithri Ramanand (of Long Island NY), M.S.Sheela and Nityashree, a Bharatanatyam dance recital by Pavithra Prasad and a veena duet by Padmavathy Ananthagopalan and Jayanthi Ravikiran. Please watch out for a flute concert by child prodigy Master Shashank on 19th October.

In anticipation of SRUTI's tenth anniversary celebrations, preparations started early this year. Numerous meetings and discussions later, we present before you the events for our celebration. This celebration will not be possible without the efforts of all the well-wishers of SRUTI, notably the Gala Committee headed by Meena Pennathur, our Vice-President. The presence of Pandit Ravi Shankar is indeed an honor for SRUTI and is symbolic of SRUTI's growth. We are also proud to host a dance ballet choreographed by the fine dancer/choreographer Rhadha. On this occasion, SRUTI is also pleased to recognize Mr. T.N.Bala, a well-known composer and music teacher in the area.

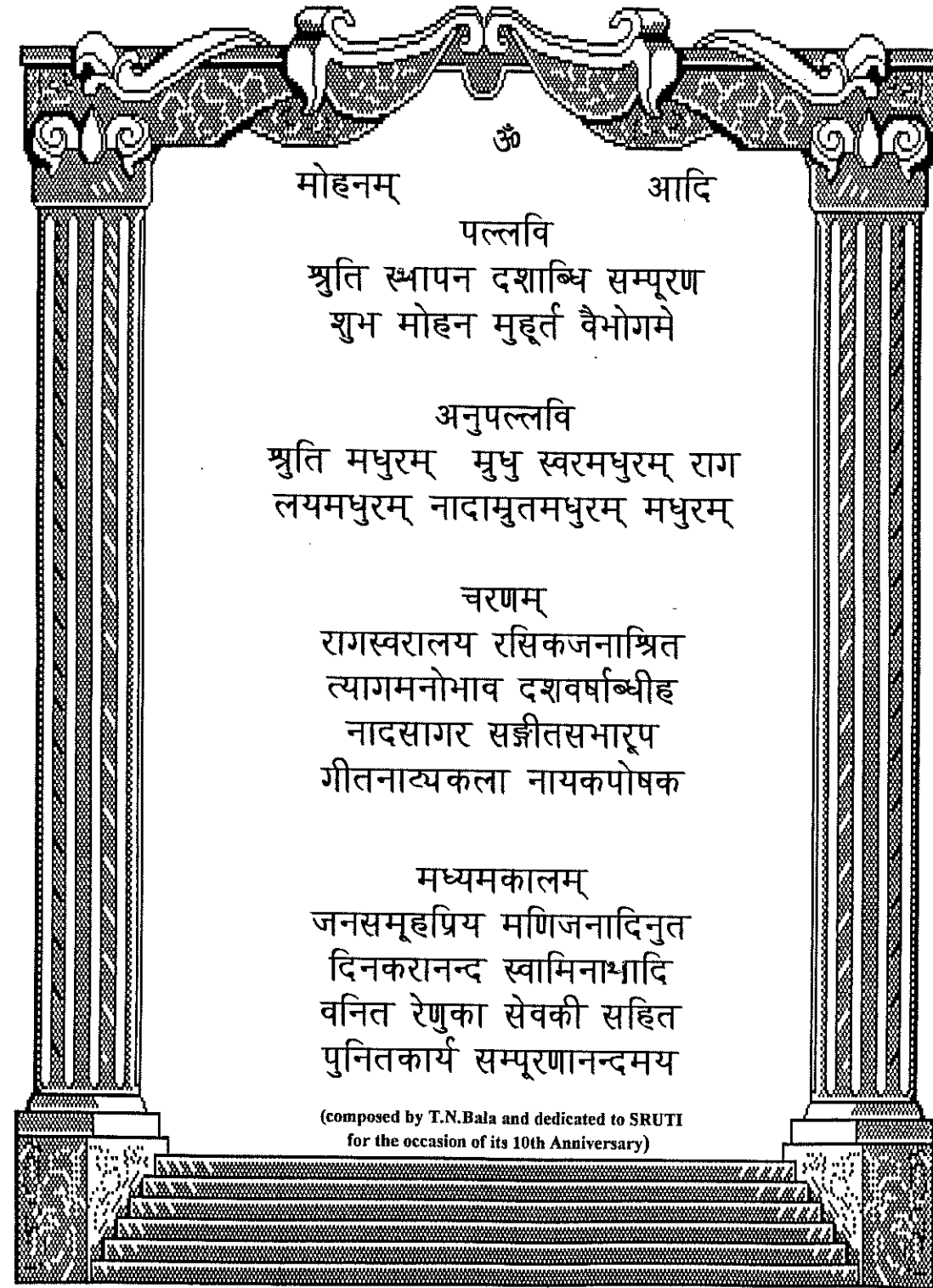
This Anniversary celebration program has attracted a large and a diverse audience. It would be a tremendous boost if the interest generated by this event extends to all of Sruti's prgrams. Please become a member; volunteer your help, time and ideas to further the cause of Indian classical music and dance in the Greater Delaware region.

We have reached only the first peak in SRUTI's growth and this is largely due to the sterling work done by the past Managing Committees led by Presidents M. M. Subramaniam, P. Swaminathan, Anand Kuchibotla and Renuka Adiraju. Our gratitude goes to the members of all the committees and their spouses and the volunteers who have helped in propagating SRUTI's mission thus far. Looking forward to the exciting times ahead!

Best regards,

Dinakar Subramanian

Dinakar Subramanian



mOhanam

Adhi

pallavi

Sruthi sthApana daSApithi sampoorana
Subha mOhana muhoorththa vaibOhamE

anupallavi

Sruthi madhuram mruthu swara madhuram rAga
laya madhuram nAdAmrutha madhuram madhuram

charaNam

rAga swarAlaya rasikajanASritha
thyAga manObhAva daSavarshApdheeha
nAdha sAgara sangeetha sabha roopa
geetha nAtya kala nAyaka pOshaka

Madhyama kAlam

janasamoochapriya maNijanAdhinutha
dhinakarAnandha swAminAthAdhi
vanitha rENuka sEvaki sahitha
punitha kArya sampoorana nandhamaya

(Free Translation of the song , "Sruthi Sthapana")

Hail , as we celebrate the auspicious and beautiful occasion of the
completion of the 10th year of the institution of "SRUTI"!

Sruthi, how sweet it is ! Think of soft notes ? How sweet it is !
Think of melody and rhythm? How sweet it is! Think of the nector
of the sound of music? How sweet it is! How sweet it is !!

Oh! Be it a temple of melody and rhythm!

Oh! Be it patronized by all music lovers!

Oh! Be it with a sense of "Thyaga" (on this
occasion of the 10th year of dedication)

Oh! Be it an ocean of celestial music! In the form of a "Sabha"

Oh! Be it an abode for all those practising the art of music and
dance!

Those like Mani, with love for and venerated by the community,
along with service-minded Dinakara, Anand, Swaminath, and
Renuka have successfully carried out the "blessed" task, the bliss
of marking the completion of which we HAIL!

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History and Growth of SRUTI

By
M.M. Subramaniam and H.Y. Rajagopal

On 14 September 1996, SRUTI will celebrate its tenth anniversary. From small beginnings, today SRUTI has grown to be the premier institution presenting classical Indian music and dance in the Greater Delaware Valley. It is fitting that the day's events include a dance program, a music concert and recognition of a member of our community for his contributions to music. From its inception, it has been among SRUTI's goals to have a mixture of dance and music programs and to regularly recognize talented artists in our midst.

It all started in March '86 at the Thyagaraja Aradhana organized by S.Rao Yadavalli and M.M. Subramaniam (Mani) at the community hall in Broomall, PA. At lunch time, the general conversation turned towards the lack of regular classical music or dance programs in the Greater Philadelphia area. Indeed, during the previous years, as part of the Festival of India programs or otherwise many well known artists had visited U.S. and given performances. Among them were Lalgudi Jayaraman, Maharajapuram Santhanam, Padma Subramanyam and T.N. Seshagopalan. None of them had performed in the Philadelphia area. The big question was why?

We should hasten to point out that it was not as if there were never any concerts in this area. Some dedicated individuals, notably T.N. Bala, had expended herculean efforts to bring reputed musicians to this area. Inevitably they were few and far between. Dance programs were fewer still.

To explore the question more fully and find solutions, Mani offered to call "a meeting of minds" gathering of people who had organized programs or were interested in such activities.

About 20 persons met on a warm July afternoon at Mani's place in Broomall. The consensus among the gathering was that only a structured organization with its own by-laws and elected Board will be able to arrange programs in a consistent, professional manner.

The group elected an interim committee with Mani as convener and consisting of T.S. Venkataraman (Secretary), K. Ramakrishnan (Treasurer), Usha Ari and Indira Rajan as members at large. Simultaneously a by-laws committee was constituted with H.Y. Rajagopal as chair. C.P. Ramaswami and A.K. Srinivasan were the other members of this committee.

At the recommendation of the interim committee, the name SRUTI, The India Music and Dance Society was adopted for the proposed organization.

As the group went about the organizational efforts, they were looking for a big name artist to help them get going. The late Sangeetha Kalanidhi M.L. Vasanthakumari was scheduled to tour U.S.A. and SRUTI jumped at the opportunity to present one of the foremost musicians of the day as its inaugural program. It took place on 14 September '86, ten years ago to the day. It was an unqualified success. The audience of over 200 attested to the fact that SRUTI was fulfilling a felt need.

True to its name, the second program was a Bharatanatyam program by Jothi Raghavan of Boston. Her program also underlined another part of SRUTI's mission, namely to present talented artists resident in N. America.

SRUTI decided in its first year itself to celebrate Thyagaraja Aradhana as its first event of a calendar year. At this day long program, anyone who can sing or play an instrument is given an opportunity to perform one of that great composer's songs. In addition, each year SRUTI also recognizes a highly talented artist in this vicinity and invite that person to perform with suitable accompaniments. [Vicinity here extends upto Pittsburgh and N. Carolina.] Many children and young artists also keenly participate each year. Occasionally one among the youth is also chosen to give a short concert.

Among the other guidelines that SRUTI adopted right from the beginning were: set admission rates to primarily meet the expenses of a program, start programs punctually, make available recordings of concerts using quality cassettes at reasonable prices.

As with any fledgling organization SRUTI went through "teething" troubles, including skepticism among some and even open antagonism. It was hardly possible to break even on a concert. Only the seed money provided by Life Membership helped the organization to keep afloat.

Meanwhile, the by-laws were adopted in December '87. The by-laws contain the following mission statement: (1) promote and foster the classical music and dances of India, and (2) bring together, in a spirit of cooperation and unity those people of the Delaware Valley that are interested in these arts and effectively serve their common interests.

The first full fledged Managing Committee (MC) was also elected at the same meeting. Following this article is a list of all Managing Committees through the years.

SRUTI was registered as a non profit organization in the state of Pennsylvania in May '88. The IRS recognition came later in December '92, thanks to the efforts of the

SRUTI is a well structured organization. An elected MC carries out all the tasks involved in planning of events

[M.M. Subramaniam and H.Y. Rajagopal are two of the founder members of SRUTI]

PAST SRUTI COMMITTEES

1994, 95	1992, 93	1990, 91	1988, 89	1986, 87 (Interim Committee)
<p>(1) On "PAST SRUTI COMMITTEES" on page 13</p> <p>Under 1994, 95, please read</p> <p>President</p> <p>Anand Kuchibhotla (1994)</p> <p>Renuka Adiraju (1995)</p>	<p>Vice President</p> <p>Anand Kuchibhotla (1994)</p> <p>Renuka Adiraju (1995)</p>	<p>Renuka Adiraju (1994)</p> <p>P. Narayanan (1995)</p>		
<p>Under 1992, 93, please read</p>	<p>Library Committee</p>	<p>Lakshmi Govindan</p> <p>P. Srinidhi</p> <p>Dinakar Subramanian</p> <p>Kannan Ranganathan</p>		
<p>Under 90, 91, please read</p>	<p>Resource Committee</p>	<p>Prabhakar Chitrapu</p> <p>Sitaramiah Ari</p>		

ERRATA

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| (1) On "PAST SRUTI COMMITTEES" on page 13 | | | |
| • Under 1994,95, please read | | | |
| President | Anand Kuchibhotla (1994) | Vice President | Renuka Adiraju (1994) |
| | Renuka Adiraju (1995) | | P. Narayanan (1995) |
| • Under 1992, 93, please read | Library Committee | | Lakshmi Govindan |
| | | | P. Srinidhi |
| | | | Dinakar Subramanian |
| | | | Kannan Ranganathan |
| • Under 90, 91, please read | Resource Committee | | Prabhakar Chitrapu |
| | | | Sitaramiah Ari |
| • Under 86,87, please add | By-laws Committee | | H.Y. Rajagopal |
| | | | C.P. Ramaswamy |
| | | | A.K. Srinivasan |
| (2) On page 55, please add the vocal concert of Mrs. Shashi Nanadakumar Baliya to the list of performances in 1991. | | | |

We apologize for the errors. Editor.

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*** The Treasurer and the Vice President are ex-officio members of the Resource Committee

We of the PENNATHUR family
greet SRUTI, on the happy occasion of its tenth
anniversary celebration on September 14, 1996,
and offer our best wishes for its continuing
prosperity and growth from strength to strength.

**Pennathur Narayanan
Rajalakshmi Narayanan**

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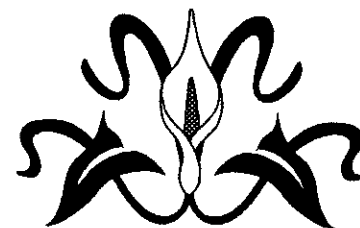
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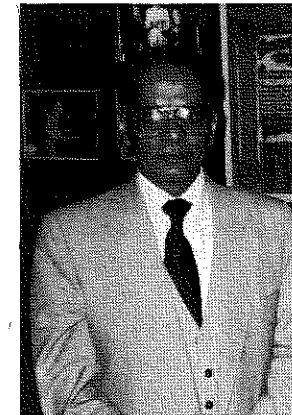
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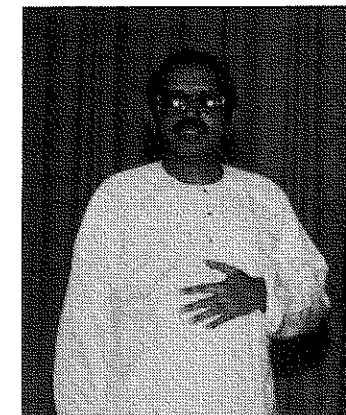
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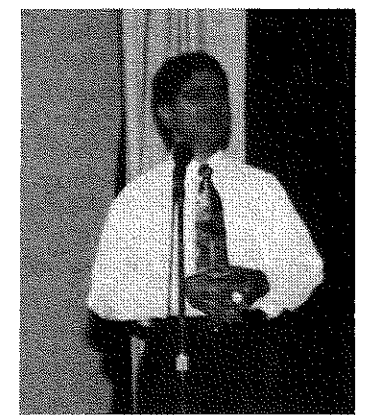
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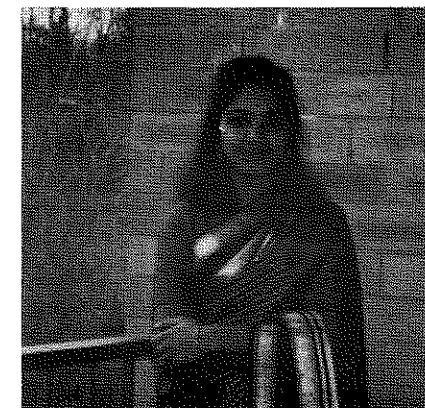
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1986-89, 1992 - 93



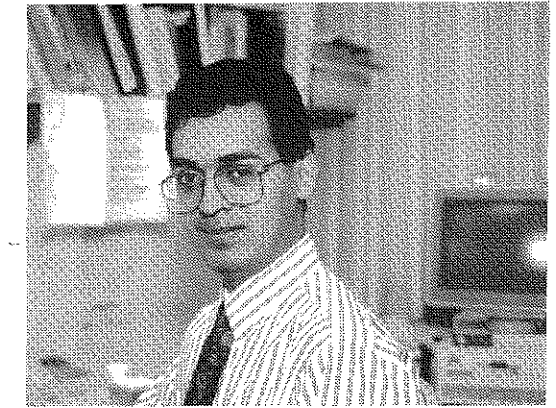
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1990 - 91



Mr. Anand Kuchibhotla
1994

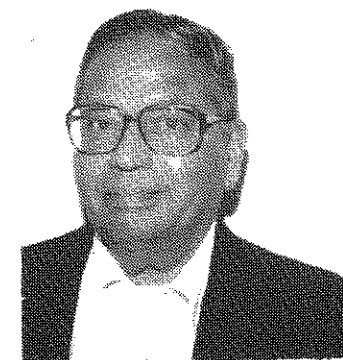


Mrs. Renuka Adiraju
1995



Dr. Dinakar Subramanian
1996-

AND SOME FOUNDER MEMBERS



Dr. C.P. Ramaswamy



**Mr. Ram Krisn (left)
Dr. T.S. Venkataraman (middle)
Dr. A. Srinivasa Reddy (right)**

CONGRATULATIONS & BEST WISHES
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ON ITS TENTH ANNIVERSARY
FROM
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IN GREATER PHILADELPHIA

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FROM THE ARTISTS...

We thank the artists who wrote to express their good wishes to SRUTI on the occasion of the Tenth Anniversary.

Sruti Ranjani

I am extremely delighted to hear that SRUTI is celebrating its tenth anniversary. I was fortunate to perform before SRUTI audience twice, once in 1990 and again in 1993. I am very proud to see that SRUTI is promoting Indian cultural heritage by doyens of Carnatic music and dance during the past ten years. I wish all the best and continued success to its efforts for many years to come. I can never forget the enjoyable time and hospitality shown by the committee members of SRUTI during my visit.

With best wishes

Mandolin U. Srinivas

We are all delighted to learn that 'Sruti' will be ten years old in September '96. I still have very pleasant memories of my association with your wonderful organization. It is needless for me to state that our Indian community living in USA needs an organization like 'Sruti' where they can regularly keep in touch with our own culture, our great heritage and get to know about various artistes by attending their concerts. Above all, what is more important is that the children are exposed to our Indian culture and your organization has in the last decade, done a great service in the field of performing arts in particular.

My brother Balakrishnan, his wife Shyamala, my nephew Kannan, his wife Gayathri and their four month old daughter Mahati join me in conveying our warmest personal greetings all the members of Sruti. Let me take this opportunity to reassure you of our whole-hearted and full cooperation in all your constructive activities.

With best wishes

Padma Subrahmanyam



We are extremely happy to know that Sruti will be completing ten years of fruitful service to the cause of our classical music and dance.

We really appreciate how difficult it is to run an organization dedicated to Indian Arts outside India. That Sruti has done it successfully for ten years is really commendable.

our congratulations to Sruti and to every member of this organization. May the Almighty bless Sruti to continue serving the cause of Music and Dance and the Indian community with the same verve and vigor for many more years to come.

Lalgudi G. Jayaraman

Lalgudi Krishnan

Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi



Both Shanta and I are very happy to know that SRUTI is celebrating the tenth anniversary. First of all we offer our hearty CONGRATULATIONS to all who are responsible for the success of this cultural organization.

Sruti as we have heard and personally experienced, is certainly one of the best Indian Cultural Organizations that exist in the U.S.A. It offers only quality programs and adheres to total professionalism. Nurturing a cultural organization is no mean task. When there is so much commercial exploitation of art and artists, and so much of sensational entertainment that attracts the weak minds of the generation, to uphold the value system through the classical arts is a Herculean task. I know sometimes the organizers get frustrated when the community does not come forward to support such culturally oriented ventures. In pursuit of materialistic pleasure, people do not realize that there is no true life without culture, and one's cultural identity could be established only through classical art forms. Art and culture are inseparable aspects of human existence.

Therefore it is the duty of every Indian to support SRUTI in helping the art and artists to grow.

We wish your celebrations all success and wish many more years in the service of Indian art and culture of which we can justifiably be proud of.

V.P. Dhananjan

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Sruti i congratulate the organization on its achievements and wish it many happy returns. I am very happy that sruti is doing great service for the cause of the growth of carnatic music in the USA. I am also very glad to mention here that i had participated in the sruti twice i.e in the years 1989 and 1992. All the very best.

N. Ramani

I am delighted to know the young but great SRUTI has crossed a decade of existence creditably and stepped forward to another decade. It is really a pleasure and honor for artists like me in cherishing the memory of our participation with you in promoting the fine arts of our country. I am stuck with wonder the dedicated enthusiasm shown by every member of the association to satisfy the needs of the artists to their hearts' content during their sojourn there. Never can I forget the warm welcome I received both as an artist and a Common man.

Our culture makes us ask 'what is greatness?'. 'Greatness is a spiritual condition worthy of exciting love, interest and admiration'. This is what SRUTI stands for. May the tenth anniversary celebrations be a grand success. Let the organization flourish like a banyan tree spreading its branches throughout America.

I thank you very much for the opportunity given to me to associate with you on this great occasion.

Vellore Ramabhadran

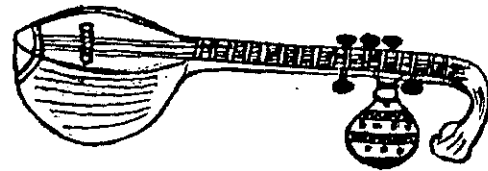


CONGRATULATIONS to SRUTI for successfully completing 10 years to the cause of Indian culture. May I pray that I shall take active part in all other milestones of SRUTI - silver, golden, diamond, platinum Jubilee celebrations and also its centenary year! Seriously speaking, SRUTI is an organization I am particularly proud of in the whole world.

I have had occasions to move with and talk to people like Sri. Mani Subramaniam, Smt. Renuka, Mr. Ramana (former treasurer) and have found them to be not merely perceptive music lovers but also very fine human beings. My concert in 1994 was memorable because of the fine standard of the listeners. I remember seeing quite a few non-Indian faces too which is reflective of SRUTI's overall popularity as well as its success in spreading our culture in the real sense of the term. My accompanists, Delhi Sunderrajan and Vellore Ramabhadran also enjoyed the concert very much, I remember.

My regards and once again congratulations to SRUTI.

Chitraveena N. Ravikiran



My heartfelt congratulations to SRUTI for its tenth Anniversary. Though I have performed only once for SRUTI, my memory of the concert, the committee members and the organization as a whole is very pleasant. What I found very unique was the 'family atmosphere' among SRUTI members, wherein the whole group functions as ONE family. Notwithstanding the fact that they strike instant rapport with the artists, so much so that I vividly remember every single person I met during my visit to Philadelphia and SRUTI. Here's wishing you great luck for your future endeavors, for your uncompromising attitude towards quality and your unique Oneness. Congrats again, with regards to all of you.

Jayanthi R Kiran

It was in the summer of 1994 that I performed for SRUTI in Philadelphia. I can still remember various aspects of my trip and concert. First of all, the wonderful hospitality extended by Meena Seth. Next was the tasty lunch at Prabha's place enlivened by Sumathi Sarangan's company. As I got requests for certain ragas and for the inclusion of the Ragam Tanam Pallavi in my concert, I realized that the members of SRUTI were a knowledgeable crowd. A slight adventure preceded my concert. The janitor of the hall disappeared with the key and there was a delay of an hour or so. But, luckily the enthusiasm of the audience put me back in the mood for a good concert which included an RTP as well.

Charumathi Ramachandran

Congratulations to SRUTI on its tenth anniversary and to all who contributed to this achievement.

I am very happy to have been associated with SRUTI since my performance in May 1995 under its auspices.

I wish SRUTI and its members many many more years of service to Indian Classical Music and Dance.

With warm regards

Bombay S. Jayashri

I recall with fond memories your untiring efforts, dedication and sincere devotion in keeping our great cultural traditions of classical music and dance alive in your country. The success of SRUTI as a premier organization, promoting well-known artists owes a lot to the artistic vision and organizational capacity of Mrs. Prabha, Mr. Subramanian and other members of SRUTI.

May you grow from strength to strength in the years to come and receive world wide acclaim for all your endeavors.

On this occasion of your tenth anniversary celebrations, my prayers and good wishes to one and all at SRUTI.

With warm regards

Raji George

I have been associating with 'SRUTI' people for the past five years. I have performed under the auspices of SRUTI during almost all my concert tours in the US and Canada. The organizers were very cooperative and friendly with me. I very much appreciate the members of SRUTI who take all possible efforts for the development of Indian Music and Dance. I am aware that SRUTI has been making tremendous progress in the last few years in providing the society with quality program. I hope SRUTI will take suitable steps to bring inherent talents of the youth and also provide them with an opportunity to serve the music world. I am glad that SRUTI is bringing out the magazine *Sruti Ranjani*. I wish all success in its endeavors and many more achievements in the coming years.

V.V. Ravi

Violinist

It has been a great pleasure to work with Sruti. Sruti, by maintaining its deep commitment to the purest classical art-forms of India, is doing our entire community an invaluable service. As a dance teacher, I find myself continually turning to Sruti for the high-quality performances which light the sparks of my students' enthusiasm. As an artist and as a member, I am delighted by each of the committee members' commitment to excellence. I extend my warmest congratulations and best wishes to Sruti for its continued growth and success.

Shoba Sharma

This is with reference to my pleasant association with SRUTI as a Bharathanatyam artist living in the Philadelphia area for the last five years. During this period, I have had the wonderful opportunities of performing for SRUTI on two occasions. The first one was a very special one for me since it gave me a great exposure to Philly's art loving audience on the day of your general body meeting 1992. The entire committee was extremely uplifting and the other members were a tremendous source of encouragement. It was an honor for me to share my second performance with veena maestro 'Padmasri' Chittibabu on the same evening, in 1994. My heartfelt appreciation for giving me that rare opportunity, which arose due to clashes in dates. The committee members headed by Ms. Renuka Adiraju were extremely hospitable to myself and all my musicians who had come from India.

SRUTI as an organization has always honored its word to any artist and has kept its promises without fail. This quality made it very easy for me to work with the committee members while coordinating my Guru, 'Padmasri' Chitra Visweswaran's Bharathanatyam performance.

Two names that cannot be missed while talking about SRUTI are Mani and Praba Subramaniam who continue to serve the organization in abundance. My special gratitude goes out to this wonderful couple. Lastly, Ramesh and I see a new wave of enthusiasm in SRUTI this year owing to the unique presidency of Dinakar Subramanian, who has taken additional care in organizing quality concerts in quality auditoriums and has excellent plans for SRUTI's future.

Ramaa Ramesh

Director, Nardhana Academy of Arts

I consider it a privilege to have association with a reputed organization like SRUTI. I thank SRUTI for having given me an opportunity to perform in Philadelphia. I fondly remember the time I spent at Philadelphia and I like to express my gratitude to SRUTI organizers for the excellent arrangements made for the dance performance, as well as our stay in Philadelphia. The sound system for the dance recital deserves a special mention; it was one of the best on the entire tour.

I appreciate your efforts and help in making the recital a success and I was pleased by the large turn out of enthusiastic audience for the performance.

Congratulations to SRUTI for the upcoming tenth anniversary celebrations. Here is wishing SRUTI continued success in promoting Indian Classical Music and Dance in the greater Philadelphia area.

I look forward to performing for SRUTI in future.

Pavathra Prasad

I had the privilege of performing in U.S.A. and Canada accompanying Smt. M.S. Sheela on the ghatam during March to June 96. Our tour was a great success and a memorable one. Each concert was for more than four hours and this was possible because of the encouragement we received from the enlightened audience. An artist feels honored when they receive good encouragement from knowledgeable audience. This we received in plenty in Philadelphia. Unlike audience in India, people sat through the complete program, enjoyed the *tani avarthanam* and encouraged us to do our best. We were overwhelmed by the standing ovation we received in Philadelphia after Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi and Tani. Another important aspect is the warm hospitality we received from SRUTI. Though we were out of our country for a long period, we never felt the same due to the homely atmosphere and warm treatment extended by SRUTI. We received such an encouragement that some of the audience from Philadelphia came to New Jersey also to attend our concert. We are highly indebted to SRUTI for having given us such an opportunity and are eagerly looking forward for more association with SRUTI.

With regards

Sukanya Ramgopal

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Pandit Ravi Shankar - Master of Tones

By
Raji Venkatesan

In the annals of music history, we come across certain names that conjure up instant magic and charm even in the minds of those uninitiated. One such name is Pandit Ravi Shankar. In the words of his colleague Yehudi Menuhin "Ravi Shankar has brought me a precious gift and through him I have added a new dimension to my experience of music. To me, his genius and his humanity can only be compared to that of Mozart's."

Ravi Shankar was born on April 7, 1920, in one of the oldest cities of the world, Varanasi (or Benares, as it is more widely known). His father was a Sanskrit and philosophy scholar who served as a minister to the king of Jhalawar for some years. He had also studied the Vedas and learned to sing the dhrupad. Even when Ravi Shankar was a small child, father and oldest brother Uday left for London. He was brought up in some poverty by his mother. The young Shankar grew up listening to his mother sing beautiful old melodies to him. He woke up much before sunrise to the sounds of musical chants from the priests at the neighboring Shiva temple as they bathed the deity. He was surrounded by Vedic hymns and bhajans, all part of the intense devotion and faith that formed the fabric of life in Benaras. He sat entranced on the banks of the river Ganges watching the sunset. All this contributed to the initial propulsion that gave Shankar a life-direction.

Meanwhile, Shankar's father and brother Uday were doing some experiments on the stage in London with Indian ballet. It was during one of their presentations that Uday was noticed by the famed Russian ballerina, Anna Pavlova. Under her influence, Uday got deeply interested in dance and returned to India in 1929 in order to form a whole troupe of Indian musicians and dancers to take with him to the West. The troupe also included his mother to take care of the household and the nine year old Ravi who was to continue his schooling in Paris. Ravi's childhood now continued for the next eight years in Paris. This time that he spent with his brother Uday was a great influence in his life. Ravi Shankar has said of him: "Since the age of ten, Dada (Uday) has been my father, friend and teacher. I learnt everything from him, how to sit, walk, see, talk and hear. It was he who taught me how to enjoy life to its fullest. My appreciation for the worlds color, romance and music, was inspired totally by my brother. He was like my God."

He went to a French school for two years and then started having private lessons as he started going on tours with the troupe. He was initially given small roles in the dance ballets and as he improved he was given more important

roles. At the age of sixteen, Ravi Shankar performed his first solo dance, which he choreographed himself! This performance came for wonderful notices from critics. As the dance tours took him to several European countries, Ravi Shankar was also exposed to other forms of music including flamenco and Spanish music, Russian balalaikas and Hungarian music. During this period, he was exposed to several famous Western musicians, some of whom would come to meet Uday. It upset him to listen to these musicians talk to Uday about the "monotonous" nature of Indian music. This lack of understanding that he witnessed in these formative years formed a deep impression on him and he harbored a desire to rectify this situation.



Pandit Ravi Shankar

It was around 1934 that destiny began to take control. Uday Shankar invited Baba Allaudin Khan to join their troupe. Baba was an extra-ordinary virtuoso musician, commonly recognized as the founder of modern Hindustani classical music for his assimilation and mastering of many styles of India's varied musical traditions. He spent about a year with the dance troupe in Paris and during this time he began teaching the teenage Ravi Shankar the basics of sitar and voice. Baba seemed to disapprove of Ravi's distraction with dance. Ravi Shankar went through a period of turmoil after Baba returned to India. He felt torn between dance and music.

Finally in 1938, Ravi Shankar made the critical decision to pursue music and returned to India to the village of Maihar where Baba lived. Here began the music lessons

under the guru-shishya-parampara (the continuity of tradition from master to disciple), characterized by disciplined study in an isolated environment. Life in this little village under the tutelage of this great guru who was also famous for his temper was indeed very different from the razzle-dazzle of his life with the dance troupe in Europe. Baba used a combination of voice and the sarod to teach music. He did not play the sitar himself. Ravi Shankar devised a way of adjusting his tuning so that he could work with Baba's sarod. This technique has inspired jugalbandhis that he later performed with the great sarod player Ustad Ali Akbar Khan who was also Baba's son. During this period with Baba, he gradually gained a name as a performer. He had his first concert in 1939 and he also began recitals on All India Radio. After seven years of full-time training with Baba, Ravi Shankar moved to Bombay in 1944, a married man and a father. He was married to Baba's daughter Annapurna and they had a son Shubhendra.

Ravi Shankar now went through the period of trials and tribulations of an upcoming artiste. He was so frustrated that at one point, he even contemplated suicide. But the situation gradually improved with several spiritual experiences. He got a job as Director of Music at the All India Radio in 1948. There, he organized a large ensemble that was known as Vadya Vrinda where he incorporated Western instruments to portray Indian music most beautifully. He also created a sequence of innovative musicals and ballets. He orchestrated some well-known poems of Tagore and composed mood music for drama. A couple of his outstanding works during this time are the music for a ballet based on Nehru's book "Discovery of India" and music for Satyajit Ray's films (Apu Trilogy and Pather Panchali).

Increasingly, Ravi Shankar was looking to take his music abroad. He desired to rectify the Western characterization of Indian music as ethnic music rather than music of classical nature. In 1952, Yehudi Menuhin visited India and Ravi Shankar played for him. This awakened in the violin maestro an overwhelming passion of Indian music (and an appreciation of Shankar himself - Menuhin describes him as one of the three finest musicians he has known in his life, along with Enesco and Bartok) and started a deep friendship between these two giants of musical world. In Menuhin, Shankar saw for the first time a Western classical musician who truly appreciated the beauty of Indian music. In late 1956, he first toured Europe and America as a solo sitarist, making a considerable impact through his concerts and early LP records. In 1958, he visited Japan as leader of a cultural delegation and played at the UNESCO Music Festival in Paris. Ever since, he has been a regular globe-trotting performer.

In 1966, he played his first sitar-violin duet with Menuhin at the Bath festival, and the following year, he famously repeated the collaboration at the United Nations as a centerpiece of the Human Rights Day celebrations. He and Menuhin together issued three volumes of West Meets East recordings, the first of which won the Grammy Award for

1967's Best Chamber Music Performance. West Meets East -Album 3 also featured French flutist, Jean-Pierre Rampal, in two Shankar-composed pieces.

Ravi Shankar explored the similarities between Indian music and Jazz in the album Improvisations (1962), which featured Bud Shank. He gave Indian music lessons to John Coltrane and Don Ellis and composed the piece, Rich a la Rakha, for Buddy Rich and Alla Rakha.

It was his meeting with George Harrison of the Beatles fame in 1966 that proved the most earth-shaking of all. He had a very fructifying collaboration with Harrison which continues to this day. Indian music and culture were suddenly given a lot of exposure in the West. Shankar became a household name outside of India too. The use of Indian music in popular music of the West caught on like wild fire. This however proved to be a double edged sword. People began to associate Indian music with rock and hippie culture. Ravi Shankar now had to explain to his audiences that Indian music is classical in nature and is a centuries old tradition. It had to be listened to with the same amount of seriousness that one brings to a Bach concert or a Mozart program. Clarification of his culture and message was a consistent theme for Shankar in the late sixties and early seventies. He did go through a period of fear that Indian music was being harmed by this exposure to the West. But he now believes that this fear was unfounded.

Harrison and Shankar inspired the 1971 concerts for Bangladesh, the first major music charity event. The soundtrack won Shankar his second Grammy, for Best Album of 1972. He appeared at the Monterrey Pop Festival in 1967 and in 1969 at the Woodstock Festival in New York. He served as Visiting Professor at the Music Department of the City College of New York in the Fall semester of 1967.

In 1970, Shankar was commissioned by the London Philharmonic to compose a Concerto for Sitar and Orchestra. He composed pieces in the four ragas - Khamaj, Sindhu Bhairavi, Adana and Manj Khamaj, to be linked together for this Concerto. It was performed in 1971, conducted by Andre Previn and featuring a solo performance by Shankar himself. He performed his Sitar Concerto #1 on tour in Europe and India with Zubin Mehta and the European Youth Orchestra. Shankar was commissioned by the Birmingham Touring Opera Company (1989) to compose the dance drama Ghanashyam with an anti-drug theme. He collaborated on this with the famous Bharatanatyam dance duo Shanta and V.P. Dhananjayan.

Shankar's international reputation also extends to the Far East and Russia. He created the album East greets East (1978) with the shakuhachi player Hozan Yamamoto and koko virtuoso Susumii Miyashita. He explored the use of new synthesizer and emulator technology and merged it with Indian instruments, vocals, rhythms and artists, as well as dancers from the Bolshoi, in a stunning live performance in

the Kremlin. The recording became one of his most popular albums, Ravi Shankar inside the Kremlin (1989).

It was Shankar's vocation to be a human link between apparently disparate styles of music. He could be the link because he was familiar with both shores and therefore he was not intimidated by the allegations from some of his Indian colleagues that he was succumbing to western influences; nor was he threatened by the foreign nature of the western shore. This lack of fear of the "other" could have only come out by a deep sense of personal and cultural security. Shankar was criticized by many of his colleagues in India. Pop and rock were not exactly the manner in which these dedicated exponents envisioned Indian music arriving in the west. However, in the process, the Western ear has begun to accept these alien principles of sound. Films, television and radio programs now use Indian music without a hairs turn. Gradually, it contributed to opening doors for other Indian musicians overseas. Nowadays, Indian musicians spend three or four months teaching in and touring America. It is not unusual to hear of a demonstration of Indian music in a university in the U.S.

Ravi Shankar's contributions in India are very notable as well. In 1956, he founded the Jhankar circle of music which continues today as Bharatiya Kala Kendra. In 1962 he founded the Kinnara Music School in Bombay to help continue the tradition of Indian music. Since then, a chapter of the school has been opened at Los Angeles also. In 1977 he organized at Varanasi, the Research Institute for Music and Performing Arts. In spite of all his innovative work with various musical styles, he remained a classical soloist, famed for his interpretation of the traditional raaga forms from both North India and (unusually for a Hindustani) South India. For the first time in the North, he popularized the ragas Keeravani, Charukesi, Vachaspati, Malaya Marutham, Hemavati, etc. which are all Carnatic ragas. He also composed several new ragas such as Nat Bhairav, Janasanmodini, Purvi Kalyan, Gangeshwari, Parmeshwari, Rangeshwari and Shailangi. He was also

cited to be a classical purist at heart and yet was open to innovations. Pandit Ravi Shankar was the first musician in the North to put his instrument down and give a chance to the tabla player to play a solo piece a la the thani-avarthanam in the South.

Ravi Shankar has continuously provided well-received film soundtracks in both the East and the West, including Kabuliwalla in 1956 (for which he was named best film music director at the 1957 Berlin Film Festival), A Chairy Tale (1957), Anuradha (1960), Godan (1963), Conrad Rooks Chappacquo (1965), and Ralph Nelsons Oscar-winning Charly (1968), Richard Attenborough's Gandhi (1982, for which he received an Academy Award nomination for the music) and the American children's story, The Tiger and the Brahmin(1991).

Numerous honors and awards have been bestowed upon India's unofficial cultural ambassador, foremost among which have been Padma Vibhushan (India's highest civilian award, 1981), Frances Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (1985), the Grand Prize at the Fukuoka Asian Cultural Prizes (1991), the Philippine Ramon Magsaysay Award (1992) and eleven honorary doctorates.

It was a sad moment in Shankar's life in 1992 when his son by his first marriage died. Shankar now lives in California with his wife Sukanya and their fifteen year old daughter Anoushka. Anoushka has been receiving training on the sitar from her father and had her first concert debut on the occasion of the celebration of his 75th birthday. She has since accompanied him on his concerts. It would be fitting if Anoushka would one day carry the torch of her great father. His life of ceaseless creation is indeed a tribute to the great art of music itself. We can only stand in awe of this artiste's personal altar at which he receives his inspiration.

[Raji Venkatesan is a graduate student in Computer Science at Drexel University and is very interested in Indian art.]

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Guru (the teacher) is Brahma, Vishnu, Lord Maheswara. He is indeed the Supreme Brahman (formless and attributeless). To that illustrious Guru, prostrations!

On this, the happy occasion of **SRUTI'S** Tenth anniversary, we offer our respectful salutations and wish to express our gratitude and thankfulness to our revered

Natyaacharya Shoba Sharma to whom we owe what we are.

Shantala Surya
Ameetha Palanivel
Rohini Khillan
Anita Seth
Vani Siva
Shilpa Narayan
Priya Bala

Usha Nair
Akhila Vasthare
Mallika Khandelwal
Anusha Bala
Gayathri Gulendran
Vandana Rao
Krithika Viswanathan

Sowmya Menon
Lekha Pillai
Janani Prabhakar
Subha Bhat
Priya Kuppuswamy
Tanja Sarkar
Medha Khandelwal

Priya Thomas
Neetha Joseph
Ranjani Prabhakar
Samhita Udupa
Swathi Bala
Silpa Reddy
Geetha Gulendran

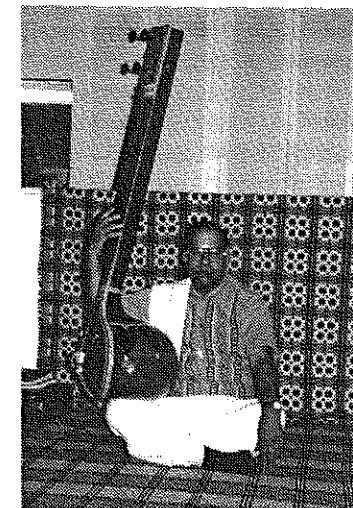
We join our Guru Shoba Sharma in wishing **SRUTI** continued success in all its endeavors.

A Tribute to T.N. Bala(subramaniam)

By
M. Lakshmanan & Vathsala Holla

[On the occasion of its tenth anniversary, Sruti is happy to honor Sri. T.N. Bala for his contributions to the propagation and nurturing of Indian classical music in the Delaware Valley. His musical talent, technical expertise and knowledge of Carnatic music is well known, respected and acknowledged by music lovers in this area. He is recognized as a fine teacher by his students, both young and old, ranging from beginners to advanced disciples. Dr. Vathsala Holla, a student of his and Mr. M. Lakshmanan, an admirer who interviewed Sri Bala at length, pay tribute to him, giving glimpses of his life and career, achievements and his philosophy of music. Tributes from many of his students and admirers follow this article.]

"Music" and "teacher" are words having different connotations, depending on concept and context. As this write-up seeks to be not only concise but clear, it is necessary to indicate the sense in which we use these profound words. We have in mind the multifaceted meaning of Music including its study and attainment, performance and composition, and its potential to heal oneself and fellow creatures. The role of Music is not a showcase activity for talented performers, or learned critics, or nimble social functions. Music is, on the one hand, an intimate relationship with the Goddess of Music and, on the other, a great blessing to be maintained with an equally great responsibility. It is not a mechanism for accomplishing all our human ambition (as, for instance, the gold of Olympic Games); it is, rather, a golden means for giving our all to the ever present cause of the Great River. We have just attempted to characterize Music; We did not mean to explain it (for, it is beyond explanation). And this characterization certainly applies to Sri T.N. Bala's concept of Music.



The qualification of an authentic music teacher are unmistakably laid down in the traditions of India. For a vocalist, they are (as summarized by Professor Sambamoorthy, in his masterly writings) the following, essentially.

- * A gifted voice (which lends itself to perfect *sruti* and *laya* and, besides, lends melody, grace and effortlessness to the singing).
- * Accessibility and empathy (by virtue of which an ideal atmosphere endures between teacher and pupil).
- * A sound *srutijnanam*, *talajnanam*, and *bhavajnanam*.
- * *Manodharma* or creative faculty (in imparting which the students should be encouraged to go even beyond the teacher's own vision).
- * *Sahityajnanam* (which includes the ability not only to compose songs but also to set to appropriate music any given piece of *sahitya*.)
- * Knowledgeability of music notation.
- * Proficiency to teach (in addition to vocal Music) at least one instrument of music.
- * A faculty to intensify in students, devotion to the art and perseverance in practice (*sadhana*).
- * Discipline (organization of classwork and assignments, musical pedagogy, unrushed and yet progressive pace, uncompromising goals, etc.)
- * Ready possession of a varied and extensive repertoire.
- * Familiarity with the history of Carnatic Music and its judicious use in making classes more informative and lively.
- * Natural willingness to give one's all without reservation.
- * An emotional commitment to emulate great teachers who, more than teaching with sustained interest and patience, inspired their students to push the frontiers of the known.
- * A model of personal purity in thought and deed.
- * Humility (which alone can lend quality to qualifications).

The above requirements are quite demanding; they make not just a teacher, but a rare teacher. Sri Bala, we are happy to say, is one such.

Sri Bala hails from blessed Tiruvayyaru (saint Tyagaraja's village) and is one of the earliest disciples of the famous Madurai Mani Iyer. During the late 1950's when he (Bala) served All India Radio as artiste and executive, he produced musical features at Madras and Delhi stations; and he gave concerts. He is also a percussionist and has played

on Mridangam, Kanjira, and Ghatam as accompanist to renowned musicians.

About 35 years ago he migrated to USA and worked for ABC TV network as broadcaster and film/TV producer for about 27 years. In the tri-state area of NY-NJ-DE, he is known through his radio program *Magazine India*, which he aired for over 15 years, and his TV program *Image India*, a bi-monthly broadcast. Now retired (but not tired!) he is enthusiastically involved in his true calling of life, namely, Carnatic music. He has composed more than 250 songs including popular classic "*Vilayada Ithu Nerama*" in the raga Shanmukhapriya. Besides performing, he has trained several music groups who have presented programs of sacred music such as Dikshitar's *Navavarna Kritis*, *Abhayambal Navavarnams*, *Navagraha Kritis*, *Tirrupavai*, *Tiruppalli Yezhuchi* and *Tiruppugazh*. His students in the tri-state area, ranging from adults to children, number over 80. The fact that he travels long distances on a weekly basis to get to his students, signifies his special attachment to his service. No doubt all this goes with a strain on him. But he is so dedicated to teaching music that he delights in it. We guess he gets his stamina and energy from the healing and energizing power of music. There is yet another source

We have been learning Carnatic Music from Shri T.N. Bala for the past five years and feel that this has been a unique and memorable experience. Shri Bala approaches teaching with an innovative, inspired, and original style and improvises methods that are almost custom made to suit the individual student's abilities and talents. If he is always successful in making his students attain their maximum potential in interpreting the great composers' krithis almost perfectly everytime, this is no surprise in light of his uncompromising insistence in being faithful to sruthi and laya. The honor being bestowed on him by SRUTI is timely and well deserved.

-Bhanu and Ranganathan

Bala mama is a person you feel blessed to encounter once in a lifetime. As a human, he is inimitable in his versatility and yet is still ever eager to learn. As an artist, he wields phenomenal knowledge, and is untiring in his appreciation for music. As a teacher, he exhibits unwavering kindness and understanding, supreme patience and boundless energy. However, more than anything, it is his courage to confront any adversity that endears him to many of his students, and makes them feel that maybe they too could overcome their limitations.

-Vivek and Vinaya Ramakrishnan

We heard Sri. T.N. Bala's beautiful music for the first time in the 70's, at an "India Day" celebration, and realized what a talented musician we had in our midst. Since then we have developed a great regard for Bala, our adopted brother. During those days, Bala organized concerts of well known Indian musicians. In his radio program 'Magazine India', he featured musicians from Carnatic and

of his energy, his well being (*yogakshema*), and his achievement: that is Smt. Sushila, his beloved wife and life partner, who renders vocal support and Tambura accompaniment and, what is inestimably more, sustains the comfort and peace of their lovely home in a quiet spot of Philadelphia; as she lights the lamp in their shrine daily in her worship and invokes the blessing of all-Mother on her husband, the flame of inner strength in him grows over a robust fullness. Mother of three sons, Smt. Sushila hails from Mayuram in the district of Tanjore. Needless to say she has her musical training under Bala. The energies of Sushila and Bala enhance each other and, together, they form an illustrative instance of synergy that makes one plus one greater than two in the togetherness.

Sri Bala is an engaged and dedicated musician -- dedicated ever since his childhood when, by his *Samskara* (predisposition), he seized music and music seized him. That he is a born musician is borne out by many features of his singing, most notably, the flow of *sukhaswaras* and *dhyanaswaras* in his renderings. We said he is an engaged musician; by this we mean music is not only his inner life but also his life's mission.

Hindustani styles and compared similar ragas of the two styles, as well as classical and light music. His singing reflects the Madurai-Mani Iyer's style as well as his own "Bala" style.

Bala is multi-talented. Besides singing and teaching music, he experiments with videos, computers, gardening, etc. We pray to Muruga, his favorite deity, to fulfill all his desires, giving the best of health.

-P. Jayalakshmi and Sampathachar

...performer and teacher par excellence. Soaring heights of musicianship - vocal, mridangam, composition. A novel teacher, ability to impart complicated scores to students at all levels, patiently repeating verses, extending the finer points, bit by bit. An excellent photographer also. We are lucky students. Many thanks to Bala and Sushila. With devotion,

-Marakatha Krishnan

When we signed up to join Sri. T.N. Bala's Thiruppugazh practice group, we were not aware of the great good fortune that was in store for us. Though I had great love for karnataka sangeetham and had listened to many a concert in Madras before we came and settled in Philadelphia, I had no rigorous training in singing. The small group of devotees soon had a repertoire of over a hundred Thiruppugazh songs and performed in various places including the Maha Ganapathi Temple in Flushing, NY which was just then started. The next stage was when we learnt, in a group, Kirthanas of the great trinity and Sivan. Bala is an excellent teacher and by patient repetitions made even the poorest students get the hang of

the Kirthanas. Here also we learnt over a hundred Kirthanas. When we left Philadelphia, Bala kindly sent tapes made at his class sessions for us to use and practice learning on our own. Without a doubt my Musical Guru is Bala; he and Suseela are the closest friends we have in the Philadelphia area.

-Prof. V.S. Krishnan

Sri. T.N. Bala's music elevates a listener's mind to a meditative state. No living Sangeethakalanidhis can sing alapanas the way he does, bringing out the ragaswaroopa using indescribably beautiful sangatis. If Narada came down to earth and sang Trimurthis' and Purandaradasa's compositions, he would probably sound like Sri. T.N. Bala. His music is divine, heavenly and sublime.

-Yeshwantha M. Prabhu

I am proud to learn from a wonderful teacher like Sri Bala. Bala uncle has been my teacher for a few years now. He makes singing very enjoyable and interesting for everyone. In the beginning, I wasn't really interested in music until I came to one of his classes. After staying through the whole class I just got hooked. Now I am singing and enjoying every minute of it.

Bala uncle has introduced me to all kinds of music, not just vocal. In class, he plays many instruments to keep us on sruti as well as sing. I thought maybe I could play an instrument too and soon started playing the saxophone. Bala uncle is a great teacher, composer, and musician.

-Sumanth Swaminathan

I was in search of a spiritual guide in Carnatic Music when I heard about the talent and reputation of Mr. T.N. Bala. I was afraid to approach him as a teacher, since my training in music was not exactly professional. However, he invited me with open hands. I have since mastered over 50 rare and difficult songs to his high standards. He is not only an excellent teacher, he is also a composer and a great admirer of his students. If it were not for him and his wife Susila, I would not have learnt a strong basic and advanced Carnatic music. I owe my music life to both of them.

-Shantha Govind Rao Mirmira

We are very happy that SRUTI is honoring Sri T.N. Bala during its 10th Anniversary Celebration. Sri Bala has been serving the cause of Karnatak music in the Delaware Valley for a long time and has served it well. He is a man of multi-faceted talents, a fine broadcaster, concert performer and a great teacher. we have always admired his leisurely approach in developing a raga and rendering a kriti, the like of which is becoming somewhat rare in Karnatak music these days. His knowledge of music and his enthusiasm for talking about music make him a fine teacher. It is fortunate that we have such a knowledgeable person as Sri Bala available here for those who want to pursue Karnatak music. we wish him and his dear wife Smt Susheela, who always evokes the image of a 'saddhvi' in our minds, and their children many years of togetherness, health, happiness and fulfillment.

-Vimala and H.Y. Rajagopal

... a dedicated teacher, music is his mission in life. Learning music from him has made a significant difference in our lives. His enthusiasm is infectious, his encouragement gives a sense of accomplishment, his spiritual approach to music provides a respite from our everyday hectic life... With deep regards to Sri Bala and Smt Susheela.

-Viji & Swaminathan

We are proud to say that we learn Carnatic Music from Sri. T.N. Bala. To make learning fun, 'Bala Mama' teaches us bhajans and other easy-to-learn songs in between. Mama plays harmonium to keep us in line with sruti. Sometimes he accompanies us on percussion with kanjira and mridangam. We are amazed at how many instruments he can play. Sometimes we are reluctant to go to the class. But once we reach there, the atmosphere in his house (with the tambura playing) puts us in learning mood.

Mama is a wonderful teacher. He gives us clear scripts, introduces one note at a time and has devised many note exercises. He describes the meaning of songs. We are really thankful that we can learn from a great musician and composer.

Shilpa & Nikhil Narayan

எங்கள் பாலா

பாலா அவர் எங்கள் பாலா.

பாலா என்றும் அவர் எங்கள் பாலா.

(பாலா)

பாலரையும் பாடவைப்பார்.

ஆன் பெண் பாலரையும் பாடவைப்பார்.

தேடிவரும் நண்பர்களைத் தோடியிலும் பாடவைப்பார்.

(பாலா)

கீர்த்தனைகள் இயற்றிடுவார்.

கீர்த்தியுள்ள இசையினையும் அமைத்திடுவார்.

செவியினிக்குப் பாடிடுவார்.

சுந்தரியாம் சுசீலாவின் சுருதியினிலே செவியினிக்குப் பாடிடுவார்.

(பாலா)

அன்பன் - ஏ. ஆர். ஸ்ரீனிவாசன்.

Engal Bala

Bala avar engal Bala.

Bala endrum avar engal Bala.

(Bala)

Balaraiyum padavaippar.

Aan pennalaraiyum padavaippar.

Thedivarum nanbarkalaith thodiyilum padavaippar.

(Bala)

Keerthanaigal iyartriduvavar.

Keerthyulla isaiyinaiyum amaitthiduvavar.

Seviinikkap paadiduvavar.

Sundariyaam Suseelavin srutiyinilee seviinikkap

paadiduvavar.

(Bala)

(A.R. Srinivasan)

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HARISH & LAKSHMI

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KIRAN & NATHAN

Violin Maestro Sangeetha Kalanidhi Mysore T. Chowdiah

By
Sangeeta Kalanidhi
V. Doraiswamy Iyengar

Chowdiah was a most unforgettable, dynamic and popular violinist of his times. He was almost a daily performer and a daily traveler, providing his accompaniment in at least 20 concerts a month all over South India without any signs of fatigue or indifference. He, along with Palghat Mani Iyer was a big draw in any concert. There would never be a dull moment in any of the concerts in which he participated. He had an ingenious knack of inspiring the main musician to come out with his best. He had the distinction of having provided accompaniment to three generations of musicians. In those days of male chauvinism he had the grace to accompany Srimathi M.S. Subbulakshmi even though some of the male musicians took objection to this. Among those whom he accompanied most were Ariakkudi, Chembai, Maharajapuram, Musuri, Semmangudi, G.N.B., Madurai Mani Iyer and Alathur Brothers. It was a sight to see them on a dais along with Chowdiah and to hear the inspired music which is still green in my memory.

Chowdiah very often used to remember with gratitude that it was his Guru, Bidaram Krishnappa who made him what he was. Krishnappa was bent upon making Chowdiah a violinist to reckon with. Chowdiah's popularity mostly rested on his invention of the seven-stringed violin which soon became a rage in those days and at the same time controversial also. The motivation and story behind this invention is very interesting.

Those were mikeless days. The violinists were put at a disadvantage when they had to accompany vocalists with powerful voices. Hence Chowdiah kept thinking of finding a device to increase the sound of the violin. Besides he had a peculiar urge to do something which other violinists had not done. Then came the idea of adding three more strings to the violin. He had to struggle very hard and had to invent new bowing and fingering techniques to tame the new violin and bring it under his control. The next problem was that of bringing it to light which he dared not do without the knowledge and approval of his Guru. Chowdiah knew that Guruji, being a purist, would throw cold water on his experiment. He was waiting for a suitable opportunity to bring his experiment to his Guru's notice.

One evening Krishnappa was to sing in the house of Veena Seshanna and Chowdiah was to accompany him on the violin. To start with he played the four stringed violin. Towards the end of the concert he desperately took out the seven-stringed violin and started tuning it. This invited a

fierce look from his Guru who asked him why he changed the violin which was sounding all right till then. Chowdiah nervously told him that he wanted to try the seven-stringed violin which he had newly invented. Krishnappa said "Four strings are not enough for you to spoil the violin. You want three more strings." This dialogue attracted the attention of Seshanna who became curious to know how the new Violin sounded. He therefore asked Krishnappa to give the boy a chance to show his experiment. Krishnappa had to obey Seshanna. The concert concluded with a tremendous success for Chowdiah. Seshanna also seemed to be pleased with the novelty of the seven-stringed Violin. He told Krishnappa to allow Chowdiah to play the new violin thereafter which would bring him fame and money. How true was Seshanna's prophecy!

It was my privilege to give a number of concerts in combination with him. Though he was much senior to me in every respect he offered very gladly to play with me. Needless to say, this combination gave me a big boost. I think this was the first veena-violin combination which started in the early fifties and went on till the end of his life. I can never afford to forget his affection.

Chowdiah was very sensitive to artistic excellence and spontaneously responded to it. In one of the concerts of Ariakkudi Ramanuja Iyengar in Madras he was the accompanist. After a memorable rendering of the krithi "Evarikai" in the raga Devamanohari, Chowdiah bowed his head to Ariakkudi and said "It looks as if Tyagaraja has composed this song only for you to sing. Today's rendering of this song by you is fit only for Gods. I pray Him that you shall keep singing like this for hundred years." Ariakkudi also spontaneously said "Yes, I shall do this, provided you also accompany me for so many years." On another occasion he was playing with Flute Mahalingam in Bidaram Krishnappa's Rama Mandiram in Mysore. Mali was playing an ecstatic Bhairavi. Chowdiah was so moved that he kept down his Violin and asked Mali to play alone. "I don't want to disturb the divine atmosphere you have created." - he said. Once Sri Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer was singing in the Bangalore Gayana Samajam, accompanied by T.N.Krishnan on the Violin. Chowdiah was also present among the audience. After Semmangudi's beautiful rendering of Shankarabharanam it was Krishnan's turn. Chowdiah said to Krishnan "Don't be in a hurry. I expect a good Shankarabharanam from you also. Give us a leisurely Alapana." Krishnan felt encouraged and of course

rose up to his expectation. A large-hearted man that he was, he used to say that the Violinists of the younger generation were not only doing very well but also were developing the art of Violin playing even further.

His obsession with his car was proverbial. He thought no end of his Baby Austin Car which often landed him in trouble. He made most of his journeys by this self-driven car. The then Maharaja of Mysore, who had observed his adventurous journeys, once sent for him and asked why he could not go in for a better car. It was an indirect hint to Chowdiah to ask the Maharaja for a good car. But it was too subtle for Chowdiah. He boasted of his own car and the good service it was giving him. A few days after this meeting, a close official of the Maharaja told him how he had missed a grand opportunity of getting a nice car from the Maharaja. It was only then that he realized how his pride had let him down at the right moment.

It is surprising, how in the midst of a busy schedule of professional engagements, he found some time for his disciples among whom may be mentioned the name of R.

K. Venkatarama Sastry, V. Sethuramiah, C. R. Mani, Aligiri Swamy, V. Ramarathnam, K. J. Venkatachar, H. S. Anasuya, Nanjunda Swamy and others.

Chowdiah composed a number of *krithis* and *tillanas* during the last few years of his life. He used to say that his ultimate desire was to die in harness, without being a nuisance to anybody. God granted his desire. He passed away on the 19th of January 1967 without any suffering whatsoever. He had performed the previous day and had accepted advances for a few performances ahead. It is only rarely that we come across a charismatic personality like him. The monumental, violin-shaped Chowdiah Memorial Hall, the only one of its kind, is there to keep his memory evergreen, thanks to Sri K. K. Murthy, the President of the Bangalore Academy of Music.

[Sri. V. Doraiswamy Iyengar from Bangalore, India, is a veena exponent of high repute. He was awarded the Sangeetha Kalanidhi award in January 1996 by the Music Academy.]



The Carnatic Music Association of North America, Inc.

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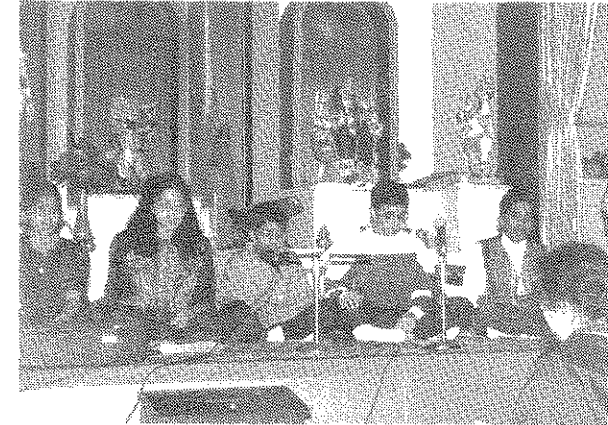
SRUTI

on the occasion of its tenth anniversary celebrations.

CMANA is proud to have been associated with SRUTI in these 10 years in the propagation of Indian classical music in North America.

DOWN MEMORY LANE..... A PHOTO GALLERY

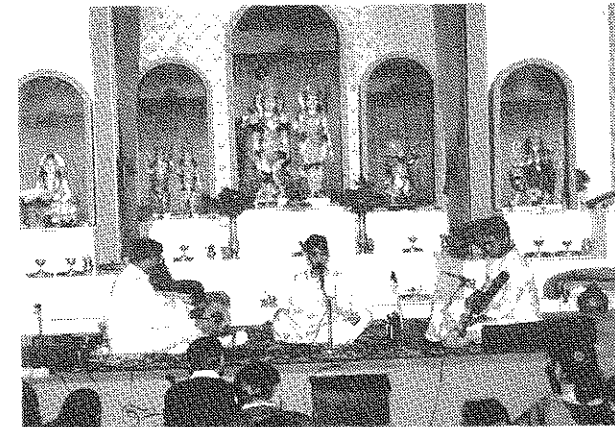
The annual *Thyagaraja Aradhana*, traditionally held at the Hindu Temple in Berlin, NJ, is an all day celebration when music lovers of all ages gather in an informal setting to participate, perform and pay homage to the great saint-composer.



The day starts with young students of music rendering the *Uthsava Sampradaya* Krithis.



Vocalists and instrumentalists present the Pancharatna Krithis.



Junior artist Santosh Adipudi in a delightful mini concert at the 1995 Aradhana.



Audience relax and enjoy the day's festivities.



Individual participation follows a sumptuous lunch prepared by volunteers.



Sri T.N. Bala absorbed in his music in the main concert of the 1994 Aradhana.



Bombay Sisters in a concert on April 17, 1989.



The late Maharajapuram Santhanam performed for Sruti on Nov. 16, 1989.



N. Ramani performed for SRUTI in 1989 and 1992.



Dr. Padma Subrahmaniam, center row, third from left, relaxes in a host's residence after her 1988 performance.



Odissi artist par excellence, Sanjukta Panigrahi. Performed in 1990 and again in 1992.



Smt. Sanjukta Panigrahi with admiring fans.



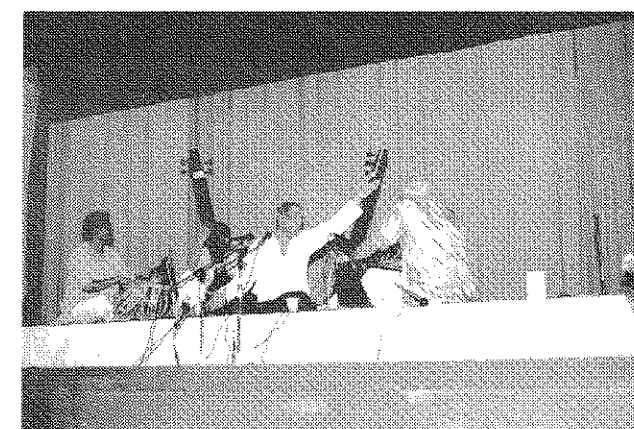
The inimitable Mandolin Srinivas in a 1990 concert with his father, Palghat Raghu (Mridangam) and Sikkil Bhaskaran (violin).



Mandolin Srinivas with his accompanists and fans in a post-concert photo session.



Dr. M. Balamuralikrishna on stage for a Sruti concert on Nov 16, 1989. His jugalbandis with Pandit Bhimsen Joshi (1990) & Hariprasad Chaurasia (1991) were great hits.



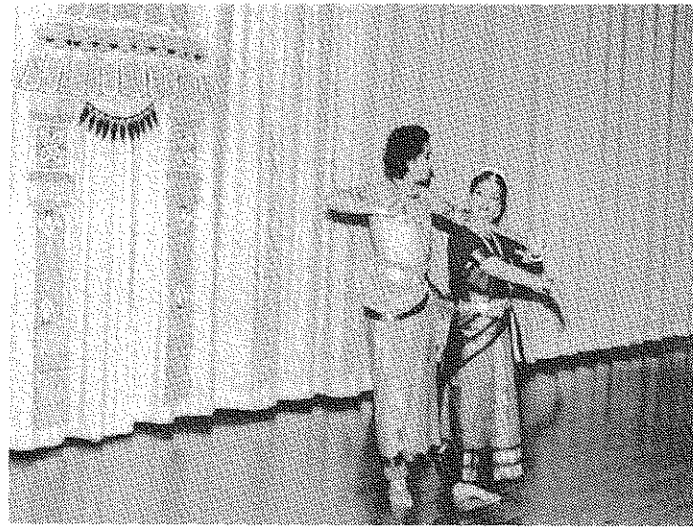
Pandit Bhimsen Joshi performs solo before a memorable face-off in a Jugalbandi with Dr. Balamuralikrishna in 1990.



Dr. M. Balamuralikrishna and Pandit Bhimsen Joshi with some SRUTI organizers.



Dr. M. Balamuralikrishna happily obliges yet another admirer with his autograph.



The couple Vasanthalakshmi & Narasimhachari in a memorable performance in 1991.



Vasanthalakshmi, Narasimhachari and their daughters - a delightful performance, a family with style - with fans.



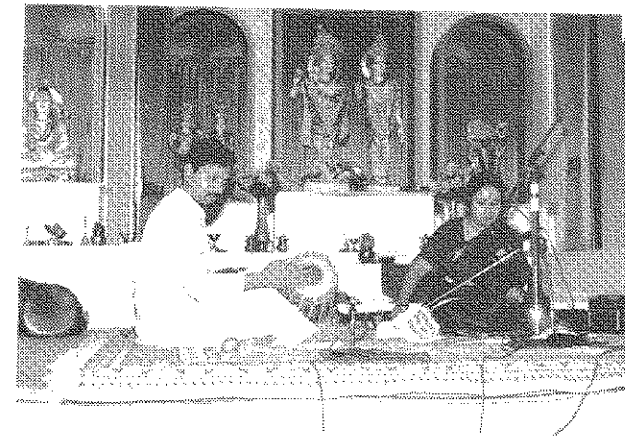
The SRUTI banner, presented to SRUTI by Dr. P. Swaminathan in 1990, was designed and made in his hometown Lalgudi.



Chitra Visweswaran in a scintillating performance in 1992.



Chitra Visweswaran, surrounded by organizers and fans; also seen here is her student and local artist Ramaa Ramesh (seated, fourth from left).



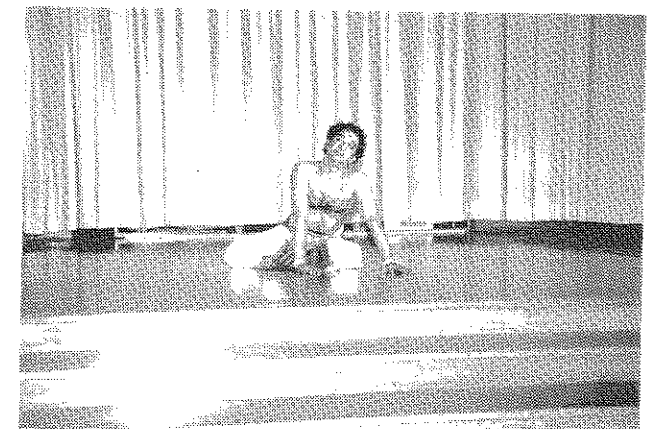
Lalgudi Shrimathi Brahmanandam's violin concert of 1990 with Prakash Rao on the Mridangam.



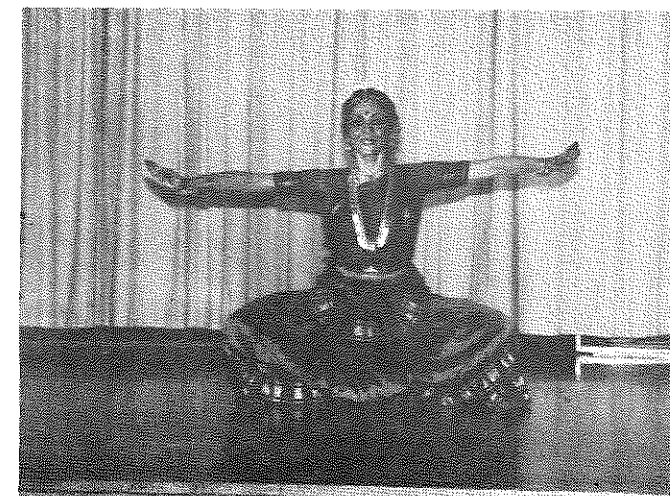
Dance artist Lata Pada of Canada after her performance for Sruti in 1990.



Dr. M. Balamuralikrishna (left) caught in a bear hug by Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia after their Jugalbandi in 1991.



V.P. Dhanajayan in a 1991 performance.



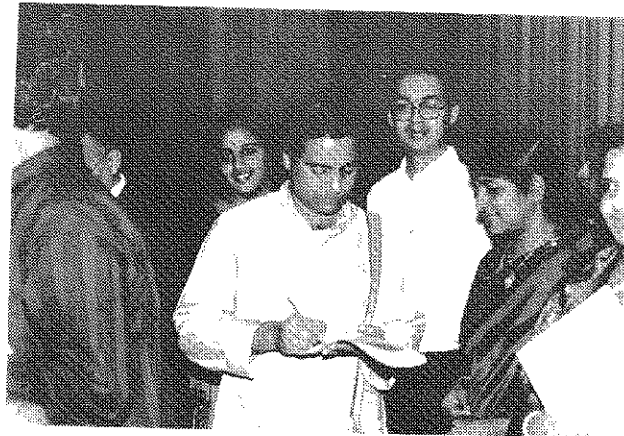
Shoba Sharma, a local artist and a disciple of Dhananjayan performed with the troupe.



The Dhananjayans with their student and local artist Shoba Sharma, pausing for yet another snapshot.



Dancers from *Krishnam Vande Jagadgurum* (1992) relaxing after a scintillating performance. Note Krishna busy fixing camera.



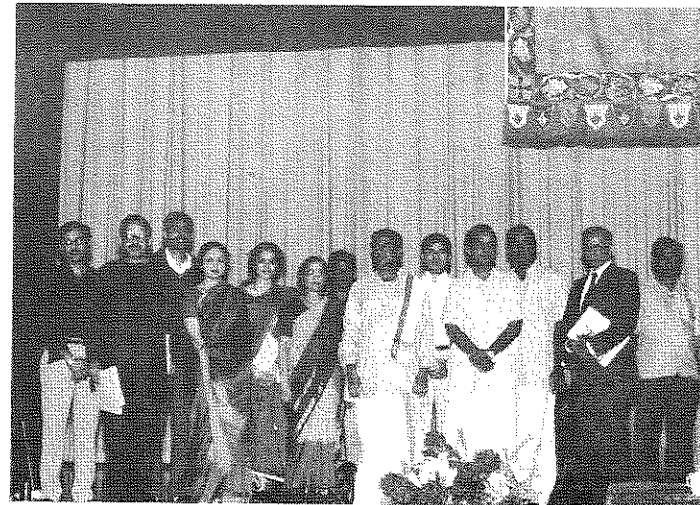
T.N. Seshagopalan obliges one grateful fan while others quickly capture the moment for their albums.



Sudha Raghunathan with fans after her concert in 1992.



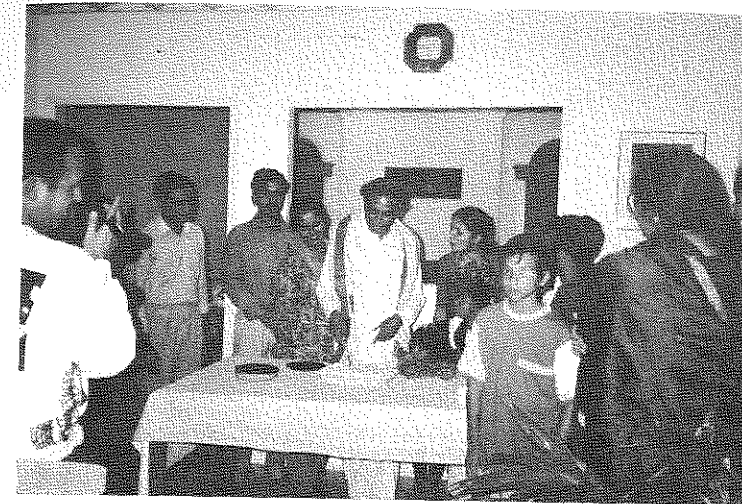
The *Krishnam Vande Jagadgurum* troupe - some of the Dancers with the accompanying artists, Sruti committee members and fans pose for a group photo at a host's residence.



T.N. Seshagopalan and his accompanying artists pose with Sruti committee members and other local fans.

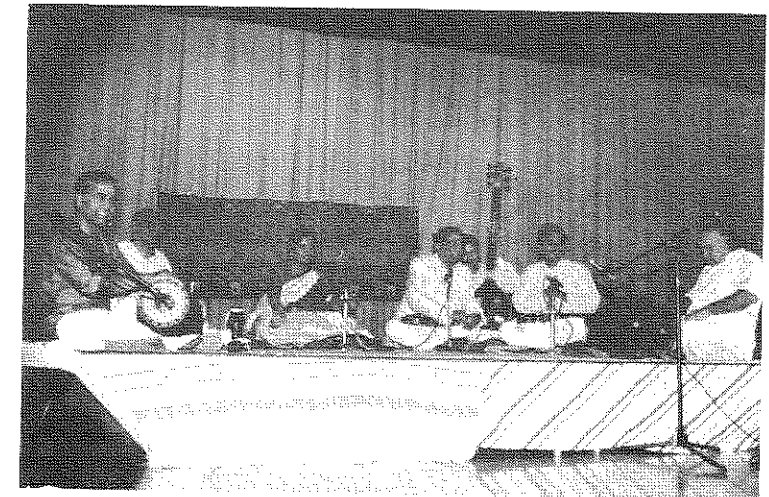


Child Prodigy Shashank gave a delightful flute concert in 1992.

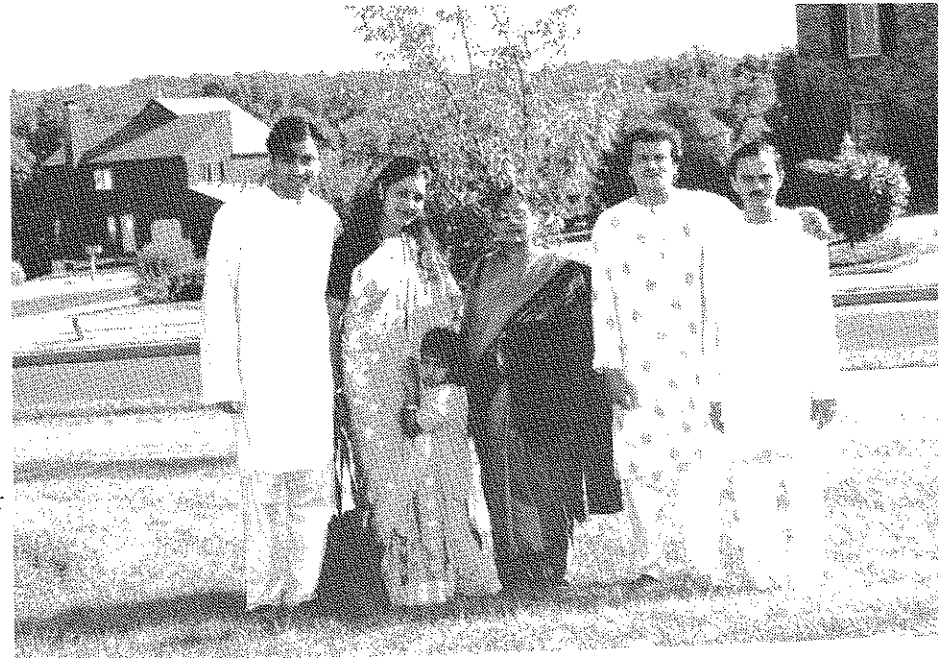


Before his performance, Lalgudi Jayaraman celebrated his birthday amidst Sruti members.

Lalgudi Jayaraman with his daughter Vijayalakshmi and son Krishnan with Trichy Sankaran (Mridangam), Vinayakaram (Ghatam) and V. Nagarajan (Kanjira)



After the performance, Lalgudi and co, and Vikku Vinayakaram enjoy the hospitality of a Sruti organizer.



Smt. Malini Rajurkar, center, and accompanying artists, Arvind Thatte & Subhash Kamat (third and second from right) with some organizers after an unforgettable concert in 1995.



Seshachari & Raghavachari, the Hyderabad Brothers, with veteran Mridangist Vellore Ramabhadran and some managing committee members and fans in June 1995.



Vidya Shridhar, a graceful performer, delighted the audience in 1995.



Vocalist M.S. Sheela (seated, third from right) with her troupe and Sruti organizers after her 1996 concert.

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South Indian Music - Its Name

By
T.R. Subramanyam

Music is art of universal prevalence. It exists, more often as folk music, in all parts of the world. Every country or region can boast of folk music of its own. But most nations on earth cannot claim of a classical music system, exclusively theirs. For the entire western hemisphere there is only one system of classical music called western, and there is no prevalent world like Eastern music. Indian music is the only other counterpart and India is the only country with not one but two great systems of classical music - Hindustani and Karnatic. Oceans of ink has been consumed in writing about the commonalities and differences between these two systems of music that are in practice usually in the northern and southern parts of India. Let us briefly discuss here the etymology of their names only.

It is rather surprising (and unfortunate) that in most parts of the outside world, 'Indian Music' is understood to mean Hindustani Music. There are many reasons for this misrepresented propagation. Hindustan is a Hindi word and the music of Hindi songs was easily taken as the music of Hindustan which is also the word indicating the Indian country in general. Hindi is the language spoken by a vast majority in India and in effect it is the official language too. For the majority the word music means only Hindustani music, unless otherwise stated as Karnatic music or Western music. Among people who matter in politics, administration or public life, the north Indians outnumber the southerners and thus even within India, Hindustani music is taken as the country's music. The Indian government functions only from Delhi, north India, and Hindustani music is its natural and first choice. It needs to be reminded now and then about the existence of Karnatic music of the far south India to get a minor share in most government or other public programs. Hindustani musicians have always had wider chances to visit foreign countries and they faithfully declare what they sing or play as Indian music. They have neither the necessity nor the inclination to inform that there is one more great system of music in India. Karnatic musicians had opportunities to visit foreign countries long after the notion that Indian music means Hindustani music had got imprinted in the minds of foreigners. No wonder the southerners had to face queries like "Are you singing Indian music or some other system?". The situation is better today with a large number of Karnatic musicians touring East and West but still there is a point to be noted. Karnatic musicians are usually being sponsored by and they sing to only South Indians living abroad while Hindustani musicians have cosmopolitan audiences and their impact on foreigners is wider and deeper.

The situation would have been better if Karnatic music had also been given a name like Dakshina Hindustani music but it was not to be. Why and how the name Karnatic or even the spelling of it came to be is itself an

interesting study. According to late Professor P. Sambamoorthi, there is a sloka (Sanskrit verse) in a 12th/13th AD book called Sangeetha Sudhakara authored by King Haripala Deva of Central India which refers to the word 'Karnataka' for the first time. The sloka reads like this:

तदपि ध्वनिं ज्ञेयं दक्षिणोत्तर भेदतः
कर्नाटकं दक्षिणे स्मात् हिन्दुस्थानि तदोत्तरे

It means "It (music) is known to be of two kinds - divided by south and north - Karnatic in the south and Hindustani in the north". This sloka would give an idea that the bifurcation as Karnataka and Hindustani music has already come by about the time of the Muslim invasion into India. But scholars like R. Satyanarayana aver that this sloka is of a much later period - hardly a century or two ago. That Karnatic music has been the music of South India has never been disputed. But the words South India and Karnatic are not free from ambiguities. The entire South India was in the empire of Krishna Deva Raya (15th/16th century AD) and poets of his time have called the area Karnatak. This word had no linguistic or political implications at that time. The area consisted of the present Karnatak, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Telugu was the royal language while the King's mother tongue was Tulu and the kingdom was spread over the entire Tamil and Kannada area. The word Karnataka Sangeetham should therefore not be taken to mean the music of the present Karnataka state. Bharat is a name of India and Bharatha Natyam alone is not the dance of India. After the subsequent reorganization of territories and states, the former areas around the Mysore state acquired (by coincidence) the name of the music that existed long back and not vice versa. It is another coincidence that Purandara Dasa who wrote thousands of songs in Kannada lived in Karnataka area came to be called as 'Karnataka Sangeetha Pitamaha'. Inmeasurable contribution to Karnatic music has been made by the immortal Trinity - Thyagaraja, Dikshitar and Shyama Sastry - also and they all lived in Tamil Nadu.

In colloquial Tamil the word Karnatakam means 'one that is old, orthodox, and conservative'. South Indian music is definitely old (older than Hindustani music) and tradition bound, qualifying for the name Karnataka Sangeetham.

There is a section of scholars that says that the words Karna and Ataka which suggest 'ear-attracting' form the word Karnataka Sangeetham. This explanation is subject to further scrutiny. It may also raise the issue - 'Are

not other systems of music ear-attracting?' It is thus still unsettled how South Indian music acquired the name Karnataka Sangeetham. It has been spelt in the following manners:

1. 'Karnatak' in North India,
2. 'Karnataka' in Tamil and by Kannadigas,
3. 'Karnatic' in books by foreigners
4. 'Karnatic' in recent times.

The first one is the usual and casual spelling adopted in North India in the formula of spelling Rama as Ram. The second one gives room to the (incorrect) thought that it belongs to the Karnataka state of current times. The third one can happen to be read as 'Charnatic music' by those who strictly follow the rules of transliteration where 'ca' stands for 'Cha'. The last one seems to avoid all these

confusion and is therefore recommended as worthy of wider following.

All along the Tamil Isai had also been flourishing with a grammar and grandeur all its own, right from the pre-Christian era. A parallel study of it along with the so called Karnatic music is an intriguing subject. The former has been rightly called Tamil music as it belonged to the Tamil culture. With all its uncertainties in the very caption and origin, Karnatic music has come to stay. It is universally accepted as the richest system of music in the world by all open-minded scholars everywhere and it will remain so forever.

[T.R. Subramanyam, a disciple of late Musiri Subramania Iyer, is a musician and a musicologist of repute. He recently retired after thirty years of distinguished service on the faculty of music, Delhi University.]

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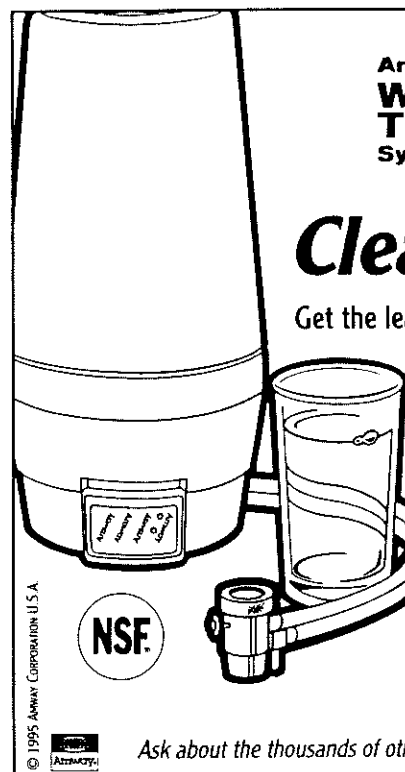
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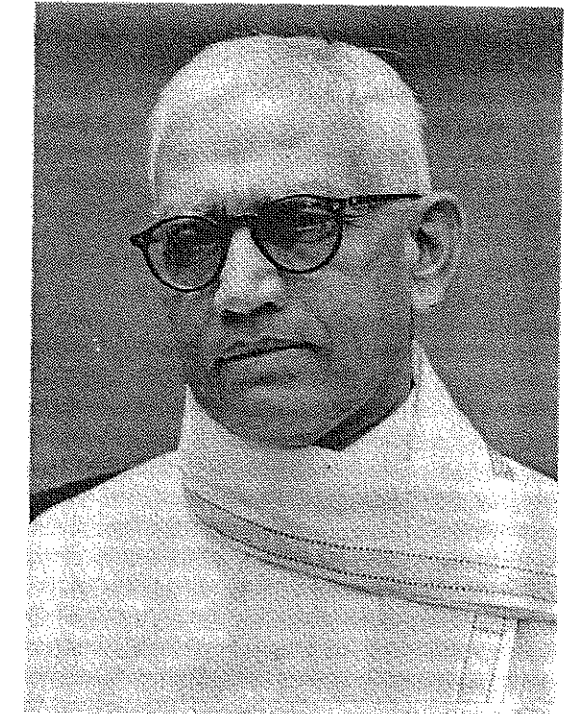
H. Y. Rajagopal

"When you think about him," observed my brother H. Y. Sharada Prasad once in reference to our father, H. Yoganarasimham, "it is difficult to say whether it is emotion recollected in tranquillity or tranquillity recollected with emotion." That about sums up my father. A scholar who was an artist at heart, he pursued music all his life not for any monetary gain or fame, but for inner light and peace, and to channel all his creative energies. Both tranquillity and emotion underline his compositions even as scholarship and a refined poetic sensibility lend substance and grace to his lyrics.

Born in 1897, the youngest of three brothers and a sister, he grew up in Mysore. His forefathers came from Holenarasipur, a place of pilgrimage on the banks of the graceful Hemavathi, about forty miles from Mysore. Family lore tells of how my grandfather, Naranappa, driven by ambition to give himself an English education, stole four annas from the family kitty and a couple of rotis and walked the forty miles to Mysore. After matriculating from the high school, however, he did not continue his studies, but took a job instead to support himself and his family. When the old Mysore palace was destroyed in a fire and a new one was being built, he served as an accountant under the Chief Engineer. He had attained a great reputation for his integrity and scrupulousness in work. My mother always remembered him as a gentle, kindly soul, a true sattvika. However, music was not one of his talents, nor an art that he easily approved of, as were the mores of the times. Music came into the family through my grandmother who was a very talented woman and a forceful personality. She literally knew hundreds of songs. With her prodigious memory she could recall songs running into dozens of stanzas. She had seen the composer Mysore Sadasiva Rao and attended Narasimha Jayanti that he performed annually, and had even learned some of his compositions. Her brother was a much decorated Harikatha vidwan and his descendants are still distinguished in that art.

My father was an outstanding student and attained distinction at every level. After his matriculation, thanks to the unstinted support and encouragement of a very loving elder brother, he joined the Maharaja's College in Mysore, as one among the first batch of students entering the newly founded Mysore University. This was a period of intense intellectual development for him as he came under the influence of such eminent teachers as M. Hiriyanna, and S. Radhakrishnan. He studied Sanskrit and Philosophy, and attained a Master's degree in Sanskrit. He later joined the Mysore Educational Service, serving as Principal of Maharaja's Sanskrit College, Music Examiner, High School Headmaster, and finally as District Educational

Officer. Subsequently, he served the All India Radio, as Consultant and Producer of Educational Programs and also as Producer of Sanskrit Programs.



Sri Yoganarasimham

Throughout all this busy vocational activity, which he took quite seriously, his pursuit of the Muses never ceased. He had made a conscious decision not to make music a means of livelihood. Music was his first love and that is what brought him the greatest fulfillment in life. Mysore of the olden days had much to offer for someone like him to absorb and cultivate. The royal court had such luminaries as Veena Seshanna, Bidaram Krishnappa, and Vasudevacharya. The famed Dasara Festival brought musicians from all over India to perform at the court. His sensitive mind was exposed to a great deal of good music. His scholarship of Sanskrit helped him gain a first hand knowledge of the basic texts which proved to be a great advantage. He does not appear to have gone to any particular Guru for his early training. With his innate talent he was able to teach himself music to a remarkable extent. Through constant listening, contemplation, practice, and association with musicians and scholars, he acquired a highly refined as well as an individualistic sense of music. In this respect, his training as a musician was not traditional, but he had absorbed the best of the musical tradition, as his kritis amply testify. He admired Bidaram

Krishnappa greatly. "A voice like his could only be heard once in a century," he used to say. His personality was awe-inspiring, and his music "reminded him of an ocean." My father filled his notebooks with kritis notated after Bidaram's rendering. However, Vasudevacharya had a special appeal for him, probably because of similar temperaments, love of Sanskrit literature, and creativity. He went to him for advanced learning, but his discipleship with him was also not of the usual kind. I believe their relationship was more like a shared experience and exploration of music at a very advanced level; so much so that while my father revered him as his Guru, Vasudevacharya himself regarded my father not simply as a sishya but as a 'good friend' ('sanmitra'), as vouched by the inscription in his book Sri Vasudeva Keertanamanjari given by him to my father with "love and gratitude."

When it comes to music and Sanskrit, I am the proverbial "pandita putra." I never learned music systematically from him, but I am ever so grateful that due to him my mind was opened up to good music early in life. I would enjoy hours and hours of fine music while around him. He and some of his friends, like Rallapalli Anantakrishna Sarma and N. Chennakesavayya, used to hold 'bhajanas' by turns in their homes when a lot of discerning listeners used to congregate. These were extraordinary occasions when music in its purest form was offered in a spirit of dedication and enlightenment. Years later, when my father went to consult with Dr. B. K. Ramakrishna Rao, the noted Cardiologist of Mysore, on a health problem, the latter recalled how he used to enjoy listening to my father's music during those bhajanas, standing near a window in the courtyard. P. T. Narasimhachar, the great Kannada poet and creator of several fine operas, once told me of an occasion when he heard my father expound Todi at Rallapalli's house. He said it was "an adventure in Todi."

My father would take us with him to private musical gatherings where some of the most eminent musicians would be present. I remember an occasion when he took us to Vasudevacharya's house to listen to T. Chowdiah's violin. Vasudevacharya was a wonderful conversationalist, and would regale his listeners with many a humorous anecdote. His book Na Kanda Kalavidaru, in which he offers brilliant portraits of the musicians of his time, their whimsicality and frailties (including his own), is testimony to that colorful side of his personality. He was an honored visitor at our house on many an occasion, the last one being my older sister's wedding. He was very fond of my mother's cooking and would enjoy a good meal thoroughly before a late afternoon's music session.

Another longstanding friend of my father was B. K. Padmanabha Rao, who was a lawyer by profession but who appeared to us to spend more time on music than on his profession. Once my father took us to listen to Tiger Varadachar at his law chambers. That is when I first saw M. D. Ramanathan, an artist I came to admire greatly in

later years. Tiger was a musician's musician. I remember how the musicians gathered there that day enjoyed themselves.

Veena Venkatagiriappa was another great friend whom he would often visit. I remember going with him on a couple of occasions and listening to V. Doreswami Iyengar play to his Guru. S. Parthasarathy (formerly of the 'Hindu') records an incident narrated by his wife Ranganayakamma who was also a student of Venkatagiriappa. She was once present at her Guru's house when my father gave a short music recital. Parthasarathy writes: "It appears he sang Amritavarshini raga followed by a kriti with such sruti suddha that tears welled up in the eyes of the listeners. Legend has it that Shri Muthuswami Dikshitar rendered this raga and heavy rains poured on the parched countryside of Tirunelveli District..." Whether rains really came or not is perhaps immaterial. The feeling is real. I would never doubt that Dikshitar's music would have drenched the parched souls of the land in a downpour of pure joy. On several occasions V. Doreswami Iyengar has recalled how his Guru used to be overwhelmed with joy at my father's music.

We would have musical sessions at home when some of my father's friends would visit him. I can never forget the visits of Parthasarathy and Ranganayakamma. They were much younger than my father but music bound them together. They would come once a year or so and stay for a week, and it would be a week long music festival at home. They had been closely associated with Dr. Srinivasa Raghavan of Madras, a medical doctor who was a great Tyagaraja devotee. For twelve years the Parthasarathis had joined him in his worship and had acquired a very large repertoire of Tyagaraja kritis. It was through them that I heard some of the rare kritis of Tyagaraja like 'sompaina,' which have since become popular. My sister Neeraja had the privilege of learning many kritis from them.

After the hustle and bustle of Government service, my father devoted himself completely to Sanskrit studies and music. A musical mind ripened by long years of contemplation was now becoming impatient to express itself creatively. He began composing and became totally absorbed in it. He composed in Sanskrit, Kannada, and Telugu, using many diverse genres. He used not only the great ragas of Karnatak music like Begada and Shankarabharanam, but also some very rare ragas like Latantapriya, Kuntalakusumavali, and Bhanudhanyasi. Critics have hailed the kritis in these latter ragas as definitive works that have established the form of these ragas. Both musicians and critics have been struck by the structure and beauty of his compositions as well as their emotional appeal. M. S. Subbulakshmi has brought out a cassette of some of his kritis. When that was in preparation, Sadasivam sent a letter to my brother telling him how much they and Semmangudi and Veezhinathan (Professor of Sanskrit at Madras University) had enjoyed the poetry of the Ranjani kriti 'Sadasaranganayane.' During the same period, I had the privilege of visiting the Sadasivams. It has been an unforgettable experience for me. I came out

of the visit feeling that Subbulakshmi was the most beautiful person I had met in my life. She seemed like art come to life.

My father's compositions were published in book form in 1980 under the title 'Gita-kusumanjali,' with a fine introduction by V. Sitharamayya, one of the most highly respected teachers and writers, a connoisseur of music and fine arts, and a friend of my father from college days. Also contained in it are reminiscences and tributes by some of his friends and admirers. One notable tribute comes from U. R. Anantha Murthy, the Jnana Pith Laureate and President of Sahitya Akademy, who was my father's student at the Tirthahalli High School. He says that as his teacher, my father exerted a very profound influence on him, and that it was he who opened the gates of literature and introduced him to the world of Shakespeare and the Bhagavadgita.

At home with Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti, Shakespeare and Milton, Tyagaraja, Jayadeva, and Purandara, my father had imbibed the best of literary and musical traditions. He always emphasized purity of content and form, simplicity and restraint in expression. Sruti suddhi, laya suddhi, bhava suddhi, and vak suddhi - all were very important. Sometimes he would spend an hour tuning his tambura and we youngsters would get impatient and wonder whether he was ever going to sing. How important sruti was for him became manifest in another illuminating way. He was composing music to Kalidasa's Sakuntala Natakam which he produced for All India Radio and in which he played the role of Kanva himself. This was something closest to his heart and he wanted to bestow on it all the love and care he could. In the serenity of the night, with lights turned off, he would go on plucking his finely tuned tambura until the sound filled the whole house and his being. Sometimes he would even lay the tambura on his chest as if to let the sound travel through every particle of his body and let every nerve resonate with the sound. After a long while, a raga would emerge, one that was most appropriate for the literary content and the mood of the sloka. I do not remember all the slokas he set to music or all the ragas he had used, but I recall he sang one sloka in Kharaharapriya and another in Suddhadhanyasi. Unfortunately, in those days radio programs were not recorded and we will never hear his rendering of those slokas again. V. Sitharamayya notes in one of his books that in the old Mysore State he had not heard any other musician render Sanskrit slokas as well as Vasudevacharya and my father.

In addition to his own compositions, his contributions to Karnatak music include the two volumes of music he and his colleagues at Sangita Kalabhivardhini Sabha in Mysore edited. The first volume was a collection of the kritis of Mysore Sadasiva Rao, and the second a collection of Veena Seshanna's kritis. This Sabha, of which he was a founding member and later President, was dedicated to encouraging and developing local musical talent. He also served on the Central Advisory Board for Music and in various advisory capacities for All India Radio.

He was a quiet, unassuming man. He never pushed himself into limelight. Music to him was a liberator, a gentle force that refined one's soul and elevated it to a higher plane. Personally, he was greatly influenced by Tyagaraja's philosophy of music, although he was a great admirer of Muthuswami Dikshitar and had a very deep understanding of his work, especially the Navavarana kritis. His lectures on Tyagaraja were engrossing, which he used to illustrate by singing carefully selected parts of the kritis. To the listeners, it would be like a rediscovery of Tyagaraja. He was a soft spoken man but insisted on high standards not only of himself but of others also. His fastidiousness and insistence on quality would even cause occasional unpleasantness among his associates. B. V. K. Sastry of Bangalore, the reputed music critic, has noted that when my father was present in the audience, the musicians used to be a little extra careful with their performance.

My father would have liked to live in the quiet of Mysore till his end. Mysore had given him so much that had become part of him, its dignity and serenity, its scholarship and artistry. But unfortunately that was not to be. The family had to move to Bangalore in order to be able to give him the care that he needed. There he passed away in May 1971. A life dedicated to the adoration of the Muses ended peacefully, surrounded by his family, friends and admirers. I can never forget the serenity, grace and goodness that emanated from him in those days.

From his death bed, he composed a song, 'Arbhakagitam,' a salutation to the new generation, his own grandchildren and children everywhere. Opening with the words 'Namo arbhakebhyah' and set in a ragamalika, the song expresses his hope for posterity, and wishes everyone a life of great deeds, contemplation, music and poetry.

[H.Y Rajagopal, an engineer by profession, lives in media, PA and is one of the founding members of SRUTI]

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M.S. Subbulakshmi An Insider's Portrait

By
Anandhi Ramachandran

It is not easy to write about this great artist whose public persona is so well known. Let me begin with some memorable quotes ...

Mahatma Gandhi said he would prefer to hear the Meera Bhajan, *Hari Tum Haro*, spoken by Subbulakshmi, rather than sung by others.

T.T. Krishnamachariar once told her "Stand for Election now; you are so popular and famous, you will surely win."

Sarojini Naidu said while introducing MSS to the people of North India in the prelude to Hindi Meera, "How one great woman artiste in India has been able to move the hearts of millions of men and women by her songs..."

The Maharaja of Mysore, Jayachamaraja Wodeyar, an eminent musician and composer himself, said "M.S.Subbulakshmi has earned our eternal gratitude by conveying to our people the charms of our music by the magic of her voice and by her superb mastery over the technique of our classical music. Her music is unique in that it has universal appeal; it appeals to connoisseur, the vidwan who revels in intricate technique and it appeals equally to the masses of people by its melody and sweetness."

Yes, she has become a legendary artist in her lifetime. How does she respond to all this adulation and admiration?

Kunjakka, (little sister) as we call her is a very simple person. Her most amazing quality is her absolute humility. She sincerely cares for the opinion of every single listener - whether it be a great vidwan like Semmangudi mama or her numerous friends and admirers who call to give their impression after a concert or one of her young grandchildren to whom she is demonstrating a simple varnam.

I feel that it is this respect for the individual in the audience, the desire to always give her best is the secret of her success. She puts her heart and soul not only in the music but contents of the song itself, to every word she pronounces.

How is this possible! How is she able to sing with so much bhava? It must be because she has learnt BharataNatyam for a little while.

Radha and I were learning BharataNatyam from Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai in the forties. Kunjakka, wearing a red pajama and sari, would also dance with us. I remember learning 'Kandadundo Kannan Pol' with her. Her abhinaya sequence to this song has been photographed and published in the very first Deepavali Malar of Kalki, the tamil magazine. In BharataNatyam, the expression for every word should be shown to the rasika. This training of thinking about the meaning of every word, perhaps enhanced the bhava in her songs.

It was a rare privilege that Radha and I had, to have the greatest musician of our times sing at our Bharatanatyam recital. I think that our audience came more to listen to Kunjakka's rendition of padams than to see us dance. After the first half of the dance recital, Kunjakka would come on stage and fold her hands facing the audience, and Radha and I waiting in the wings would hear them applaud. The second half of the recital was far more enjoyable even for us, the young girls of eleven and twelve, who danced to her music. As a result of her flawless diction, the bhava of her singing, the meaning of the word *abhinaya* was fulfilled in our dancing.

Whether it was 'Padari Varuhudu' the heavy soulful padam in Kambodhi raga or 'Ethhanai Sonnalum' with its humorous nuances in Saveri or 'Aduvome Pallu Paduvome' the national song by Bharathiyaar in the raga Mand, she gave it a richness of artha bhava. She had histrionic talent as well as musical talent.

Ramiah Pillai taught us the hastas for the padams. After that he would say, "Ask Amma to show you the bhava". Once when was I doing the abhinaya for the words, "Oh Friend! Come! Please bring my Vadi Velar to me", I was not sure how to address the friend because I could not visualize her. Kunjakka was singing the padam. She showed me five different ways to say beseechingly, "My friend, Come!" with different bhava using the same gesture.

What is the source of her charisma? She is a beautiful woman at eighty. Her long slender fingers strum the tambura and she closes her eyes and becomes one with sruti. I have always enjoyed being present when she tunes her two tamburas Lakshmi and Saraswathi; for her, her tamburas are Devis. She will gently put the tambura on her lap, start strumming and breathe the gandharam and become immersed in the nadam. Slowly she will start singing in akaram the sapta swaras of Sankarabaranam (or any other raga that is going to be the main raga of the concert that day), gently sliding from one note to another. The speed will start increasing from first, second, third ... to unbelievable levels. Then an avalanche of svaras will follow. Her brigas are unmatched even today for their clarity and speed of lighting.

She is a perfectionist. Before recording the *Vishnu Sahasranamam*, MSS and Radha chanted the entire verses every morning for one whole year. Kalki Gardens (where she lived at that time) reverberated with the 1000 names of Lord Vishnu for one hour every morning for a whole year. The splitting of the words, the conjunct consonants and correct pronunciation was painstakingly practiced. Only then did she record the album.

Kunjakka is also a perfectionist in all her daily activities. She will carefully choose the flowers that she uses to make a garland to decorate her puja room. She will not go to bed, however late it may be, without writing her entries in her diary for that day. A very devout person, she does puja with painstaking care every single day. Each of the numerous Hindu festivals from Vinayaka Chaturthi, Rama Navami, Krishna Jayanthi, Navarathri etc. will be celebrated meticulously and she will sing the songs on the appropriate deity after the puja has been completed. It was indeed a privilege to celebrate these occasions with her.

For a person who is so well traveled, plane travel always made her uneasy and she would not relax even for a second. Her husband used to tease her and say "Kunjamma stays awake to make sure the pilot is driving properly!"

Even at eighty, she continues to release new music albums and practice arduously for them. Music is her life.

[The Author :

Anandhi Ramachandran, daughter of Kalki R. Krishnamurthy is a retired Professor of Dance at Kalakshetra, Madras. She is married to M.S.Subbulakshmi's nephew.]

Pattammal - Queen of Music

By
Nithyasree

When I realize that God has bestowed on me with such a great heritage in the form of my grandmother the legendary, Gana Saraswathi Smt. D.K. Pattammal. I look at it with awe and wonder. I am elated with pride and exhilaration and excited at this greatest happening of my life.

Pattanima(as all of us address her) is a personification of simplicity and grandeur, modesty and confidence, innocence and intelligence, politeness and courage. Though she is a traditional lotus flower, she generously acknowledges modern fragrances in music as well as in personal life.

Sincerity and dedication to Sangeetha, strict adherence is classicism and tradition, utmost perfection in Sahithya Enunciation, soul-stirring Bhava, the 200 percent accuracy and precision in Laya, astonishing Kalpana, infinite unadulterated variety to repertoire of Padanthara- a perfect combination of all these with a majestic gifted golden voice is my grandmother D.K.P.

Be it a RTP or a Dikshithar Krithi or a lilting Tamil melody or a patriotic song or a Kili Kanni, she renders it with rich to varied glamour in her matchless style.

In a male-dominated scenario of carnatic music, I proudly point out that she is a trendsetter and trail blazer in bringing dignity to lady performers.

As her granddaughter I deem it a great responsibility to have to uphold the tradition set by her.

To all of us she is not ordinary "Pattu" but "Kanchi Pattu."

[Smt. Nithyasree is the granddaughter of Smt. D.K. Pattammal (on the father's side) and Sri. Palaghat Mani Iyer (on the mother's side). A distinguished singer in her own right, she performed for SRUTI during her recent tour of the US]

M.L. Vasanthakumari

By
Bama Visveswaran

When Sruti approached me to write a few lines about the music legend Smt. M.L. Vasanthakumari, I immediately availed the opportunity to be a great honor for me to share my wonderful experience as one of her blessed disciples. I feel that I am not doing justice to the Great Guru if I could write only a few lines about her greatness. Since childhood I have been an ardent fan of Dr. M.L.V. who had been the queen of "Brugas" which is undoubtedly known as "GNB Pani" (style) in music circles. Two of her many great qualities were "simple" and "charitable". My very personal experience with the legend would testify to the above mentioned qualities. The "Guru-Disciple" relationship between us was more like a "friendship" that she always consulted her innovative ideas with me and willing to concur with mine. She exhibited magnanimity by humbly turning down the tuition fee and inspired the students to donate their fees to charitable organizations. It is very unfortunate for us that the legend is no more, but her legacy still lives on.



Mayamalava Gowla Raga

Mayamalava Gowla is an ancient raga. In 15th century, it was generally called *Malavagowla*, but Venkatamagi tagged the two syllable prefix of *Maya* to it so that the raga could be assigned to the 15th place in 72 Melakartha scheme in accordance with what is known as the *Katapayadi* formula. Generally music is practised by the beginners as well as the learned and the practioners in the early morning hours to acquire the required practical experience, voice strength and voice culture. Each and every learner of Carnatic music starts to practice the swaras only in the raga Mayamalavagowla. The peculiarity of this raga is that parallel synchronization is equal in respect of Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma and Pa, Da, Ni, Sa. As such the originator of Carnatic Music, Sri Purandaradasa has set the time of practice of this raga.

Maya - means music is divine and abstract. It cannot be seen but only be heard, giving different kinds of variations to listeners as well as singers.

Malava - means the time before sunrise.

Gowla - means Practise or Sing.

So the divine nature of music should be practised before the time of sunrise in the morning.

This *sampoorna* raga gives sympathy to humanity and it strengthens the heart and makes the practioners brisk throughout the day, it is reported.

Compositions in Mayamalavagowla are rather few.

Composer

Thyagaraja

Muthuswami Dikshitar

first composition)

Ponnaiya Pillai

Gopalakrishna Bharathi

vanaga karangal

Jamaraja Wodeyar

Swathithirunal

Mysore Sadashiva Rao

kantha

Papanasam Sivan

Muthu Thandavar

Kodeedwara Iyer

Krithi

Vidhulagu brokeda

Meru samana

Tulasidala

Devisri Thulasamma

Sri Nadhathi (his very

Matatheetha swaopini

Sivaloka nadanai kandu

Manidajanmam alithat

Ksheera sagara shayana

Deva deva kalatamide

Sarasijanabha (varnam)

Inda paraaka

Devadi deva kamala

Inda paramuham

Padamalare

Adikondar

Naan en seivan swami

Compiled by K.S. Ramachandran

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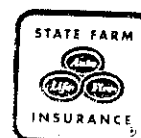
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Rukmini Devi, As I Know Her

By
Vasantha Vedam

'Athai,' that is how we called her with fond reverence. My association with her (Rukmini Devi) started from my very early childhood, when I was enrolled as a student of Bharatanatya in Kalakshetra. I had the great good fortune of having been directly under her tutelage. I now look back upon those days with great thrill. As a teacher, she was very demanding. Though I was only ten years old, utmost discipline and unswerving attention to the lessons taught in the class, were expected of me. Needless to say that it created tremendous impact on the young mind. More than merely imparting the lessons, it inculcated devotion and dedication to the art. My *arangetram* was a great day for me. For this debut, she had picked a rare *varnam* of Sri Muthuswami Dikshitar, "Roopam Joochi," in Todi raga. Having in mind youngsters of my age group, she based the choreography predominantly on *Bhaktibhava*, which was a clear departure from the usual *Sringara rasa*. It was an innovative and a revolutionary step taken by her. Likewise, infazed by problems with Nattuvans, she trained her own group of ladies to sing and do nattuvangam, which was the domain of male Nattuvans in those days. This, again, was a bold and necessary step taken by her. My interaction with her was much more after I was inducted into the faculty of Kalakshetra. I learned to appreciate and admire her even more then. Her far-sightedness and stress on good education impressed me greatly. She was keen on promoting all forms of art and education especially for young children. Often times, through her short talks to the students, workers of the institution and theosophists, she emphasized the need for the right type of education, to inculcate good values in life, instill discipline, to take pride in Indian-ness and not be carried away by western culture. She insisted that good Indian tradition and cultural values in life reflect everything in the institution. With an impeccable eye for perfection, she will pull us up even if a picture on the wall was hung slightly crookedly!

Having founded the institution, she felt the need for like-minded people to work with her. Because of her charismatic personality and sylvia locale of the Institution, great

stalwarts like Tiger Varadachari, Veena Krishnamachari, later Karaikudi Sambasiva Iyer and Mysore Vasudevacharya, were all only too willing to work with her. That was a great golden period for Kalakshetra. It was a majestic sight to see her seated with great vidwans and pandits surrounding her, like in a royal court of bygone days, but only it was in a small thatched hut!

Rukmini Devi could tap these eminent scholars and composers for material to choreograph. The first ever dance drama "Kutrala Kuravanji," turned out to be an instant success, showpiecing her creative ability and genius. With extremely simple but tasteful stage decor, lighting and very elegant costumes, the ballet became tremendously popular. I had the privilege of participating in this ballet many a time with Rukmini Devi herself playing the lead role. It was an awe inspiring experience. I still cherish those days in my memory.

She was an ardent lover of things of beauty like sculptures. I have heard her say quite often that beauty, art, religion, and spirituality are all intertwined and inseparable and should be infused into the atmosphere for the well being of humanity. She was always elegantly draped in colorful silks and spread beauty and grace around her. She even established the weaving department in the institution in order to revive the age old traditional designs which were almost disappearing.

Kind hearted and compassionate, she was deeply involved in animal welfare work and as a corollary, vegetarianism. As a member of the Rajya Sabha, she even proposed a bill to ban animal slaughter!

She was a rare personality, hard to come by. My association with her has been in many activities of Kalakshetra and will remain ever green in my memory. [Vasantha Vedam, herself a dance teacher, is a disciple of Rukmini Devi Arundel. She lives in Bangalore, India]

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Evolution of The Kalakshetra style

By
Vasanth Vadam

The history of dance known as 'Sadir' in the good old days which was renamed 'Bharata Natya' in later years, is well known. Smt. Rukmini Devi was one of the pioneers who made the bold venture to learn this art directly from the Nattuvanan clan. The spiritualness of this divine art was a great source of inspiration to her. She was able to perceive the greatness and richness of this art form and strove hard to pull it up from the quagmire into which it was sinking, and in the process had to face a lot of stiff opposition from then prevailing social communities. It was under such a scenario that an institution called 'Kalakshetra' was founded by her in the year 1936.

Though she had learnt the art directly from her Guru Sri. Pandanallur Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai, as was the normal practice in those days, after having established the school, she felt the need for a format for training the students who sought admission in the school. This study has slowly led to the evolution of a technique or a methodology in teaching which has now come to be known as the 'Kalakshetra Style.'

The ideology on which the teaching pattern is based, can be summarized as follows:-

(1) Basic Philosophy:- Kalakshetra has established a basic philosophy, the spiritualness of the art form, be it dance, music, etc., that Natyas akin to 'Yoga', that it should be given the excited status of the Vedas. This philosophy was inculcated into the young minds of the students. This stress on the spiritualness of the art is perhaps, a necessity, considering the degradation into which the art was drowned in those days, and also to make it more acceptable to the society which was greatly prejudiced towards this art. Hence, the entire training of the student was built on this philosophy.

(2) Nritya:- The student is first introduced to the basic exercises, i.e. the *adavus* which is the usual practice everywhere. While training had to be imparted to the students, it became necessary for the teachers to have a clear idea of the working or execution of each basic step or an *adavu*. Hence, with an expert eye for beauty and grace, Smt. Rukmini Devi constructed, so to say, a well defined structure and gave the basic steps a beautiful shape. Each student was made to understand mentally each *adavu* from the starting position of the feet and hand gestures, to the finishing position and the stages through which the feet and the hands move during the process. So much so, each basic unit (*adavu*) became a well defined, finished product, like a geometrical construction with a touch of grace. The student was expected to execute this bodily, of course in three

speeds, with grace and elegance. This systematic approach has helped as a guide line for the teachers and the taught and has also helped in maintaining discipline and a high standard. Besides, it has also brought about a uniformity amongst the students. Stress was also made on foot postures like *Ayata*, *Alida*, *Prenkana*, *Swashkaek*. Other aspects on which stress is made are (One is at a loss to find the exact equivalents in English for these Tamil expressions):

1. *Kullukku Nadai* (gait with a graceful jerk)
2. *Azutham* (firmness)
3. *Valaivu* (bend)
4. *Saivu* (slant)

If assiduously practiced, this rigorous training enables the student to execute these movements in various combinations with facility and ease. These details, though apparently minor, add a tremendous lot of beauty and grace to the total presentation, be it an *adavu*, or an item. In essence, the *nritta* aspect is treated with special care with an emphasis on *angasuddham*.

(3). *Nritya*:- The *abhinaya* part comes much later in the training period of a student. The usual theme of 'Shringara' is dealt with subtly and suggestively. The *Nayaki*- *Nayak* bhava is given a philosophical interpretation, "The Jeevatma yearning to attain unison with the Paramatma." The pieces chosen for *abhinaya*s are always deities of well known Kshetras and the *Nayika* of the *Uttama* type is the preferred choice. Emphasis on *Bhakti Bhava* is made. This is more so while teaching the young teenagers who were able to gain mastery over *Nritya*, but were not mature enough to understand the nuances of the *Nayak*-*Nayaki* theme. Themes for *abhinaya*, body movements, and other ideas not considered to be refined were carefully avoided. Care was taken not to expose the children, especially, to any vulgarity of ideas. This attitude was perhaps a great necessity in those days so that the art would gain acceptance amongst the people and an essentially conservative society.

(4). Choreography:- Smt. Rukmini Devi's Choreographic works are matchless. Her dance drama productions stand testimony to this fact. She was the one who opened the eyes of the students to learn and appreciate the beauty of the sculptures, painting, etc., and its close link with the art of dance. In spite of this fact, she had reservations in incorporating those "Sculpturesque poses" in her choreography in the dime-a-dozen style. The various postures of Lord Nataraja, for instance, were taught to be dealt with care, awe and reverence. Perhaps, Brahma the

sculptor of the human form fared badly as against man, the sculptor on stone. While the made to measurement madanikas, apsaras, Gods and goddesses that are found in all the temples of our country are stunningly beautiful, sheer joy and treat for the eyes, the same when translated on to the human form, was not always all that appealing (but for some exceptions)!

Because of the great effort and pioneering work done by Smt. Rukmini Devi, the art or Bharatanatyam has gained tremendous popularity and wide acceptance in the present day society. Perhaps some rigid views which were a necessity for the acceptability of art in those days, are

irrelevant in the present day atmosphere. Perhaps an overstress on aspects like *angasuddha* deterred the growth of abhinaya; perhaps the choosiness of themes strangled the growth of the repertoire. These aspects could be reconsidered and modified in the present day context. However, the institution she struggled to build over 50 and odd years, has evolved a style of its own, a methodology of teaching which is worthy of merit, and should continue from one student generation to the next. Could this be called the Kalakshetra Bani?

[Vasantham Vedam, a dance teacher from Bangalore, was trained at Kalakshetra and a disciple of Rukmini Devi Arundel.]

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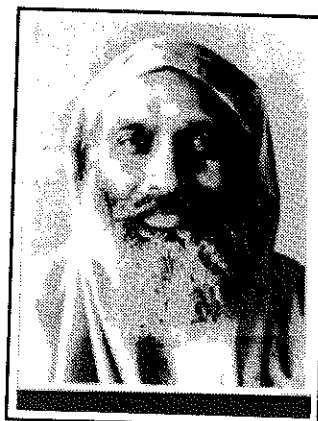
- 1986: Bharathanatyam - Jothi Raghavan
Vocal - M.L.Vasanthakumari
- 1987: Mohini Attam - Chandrika & Lakshmi Kurup
Vocal - Veramangalam Lakshminarayanan
Saxophone - Kadri Gopalnath
Vocal - M.S.Sheela
Vocal - Lalgudi Shrimathi Brahmanandam
- 1988: Nadaswaram - Alagusundaram
Vocal - Simanthini Kautha
Vocal - Vijaya Reddi
Vocal - T.R.Subramanyam
Bharathanatyam - Padma Subramaniam
- 1989: Vocal/Bharathanatyam - M.Balamuralikrishna & Saraswathi
Kathak - Rohini Bhatte
Vocal - Sitalakshmi Madhavan
Vocal - Kurudi Venkannachar & Kurudi Nandakumar
Flute - N.Ramani
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- 1990: Vocal - M.Balamuralikrishna & Bhimsen Joshi
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Bharathanatyam - Lata Pada
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Vocal - T.K.Govinda Rao
Vocal - Lalgudi Shrimati
Mandolin - U.Srinivas
Vocal - Shakuntala Srinivasan
- 1991: Vocal & Flute Jugalbandi - M.Balamuralikrishna & Hariprasad Chaurasia
Bharathanatyam - Shanta & V.P.Dhananjayan
Vocal - Nedunuri Krishnamurthy
Vocal - Rudrapatnam Brothers
Bharathanatyam - Vasanthalakshmi & Narasimhachari
- 1992: Bharathanatyam - IDA's Krishnam Vande Jagatgurum
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Flute - N.Ramani
Flute - S.Shashank
Vocal - T.N.Seshagopalan
Bharathanatyam - Chitra Vishveshwaran
Vocal - Indu Vasudevan
- 1993: Bharathanatyam - Ramya Harishankar
Violin - Lalgudi G. Jayaraman, G.J.R.
Krishnan & J. Vijayalakshmi
Violin - K.S. Mani
Vocal - K.V.Narayanaswami
Bharathanatyam - Dhananjayan's Sanghamitra
Mandolin - U.Srinivas
- 1994: Vocal - T.N.Bala
Veena - C.Chitti Babu
Bharathanatyam - C.C.A's Jaya Jaya Devi
Veena - Ravi Kiran
Vocal - Charumati Ramachandran
Bharathanatyam - Ramaa Ramesh
Kuchipudi - Vempati Chinnsatya's Ramayanam
Vocal - T.V.Sankarnarayanan
Vocal - Neyveli Santhanagopalan
Bharathanatyam - Vidya Sridhar
- 1995: Bombay Jayashree
Hyderabad brothers
Vocal - Bhavani Prakash
Bharathanatyam - Shobha Natarajan
Hindustani Vocal - Malini Rajurkar
Vocal - Sowmya Sridhar
Vocal - Sanjay Subramanian
Vocal - Unnikrishnan
- 1996: Vocal - Nityashree
Bharathanatyam - Pavitra Prasad
Vocal - Savitri Ramanand
Veena - Jayanti Ravikiran & Padmavati Rajagopalan
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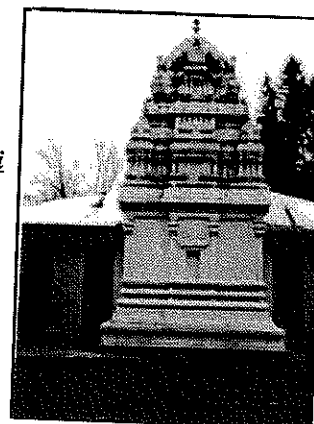
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Music And The Brain

By
P. Shripathi Holla, M.D.

Music and speech have certain aspects in common. Both involve sequential motor activity for their production. Both could be represented in a writing system. Music entertains, tantalizes and produces emotional response in us. In the words of Heinrich Heine:

"Music is a strange thing. I would almost say that I is a miracle. For it stands halfway between thought and phenomenon, between spirit and matter, a sort of nebulous mediator, like and unlike each of the things it mediates... spirit that requires manifestation of time and matter that can do without space....we do not know what music is."

In every culture music is used to communicate, entertain, express and elicit emotion. There are several questions which remain unanswered. Why do certain tunes bring happiness and yet others produce melancholy? Why do some melodies produce chills up and down the spine? Why some tunes evoke calm, peace and state of ecstasy? What makes a combination of sounds produce such diverse physical and mental reactions?

A person listening to music or any other periodic sound will mark time in beats per second. The nervous system is the final mediator of all rhythmic activity, and each person perceives music to his or her own sense of time.

The study of how the brain perceives music is of recent vintage. There are four methods: study of dichotic listening, hemispheric anesthesia, study of patients with brain lesions and damage, and positron emission tomography (PET Scanner).

The results of dichotic listening consistently shows right hemisphere dominance in discriminating melodies, chords, environmental sounds, tone contours, and complex tones. Hemispheric anesthesia study reveals loss of speech comprehension, expression as well as ability to sing. Study of patients with brain lesions (disease) and damage showed that the right hemisphere is crucial in processing melodies, whereas the left hemisphere processes harmonics. The study also revealed that the left hemisphere controls the local features of a melody and overall contour of the piece, whereas the right hemisphere processes the global melodies and doesn't discriminate for contour. The results from positron emission tomography supports the theory that the brain has an auditory (hearing) cortex that specializes in processing music.

Like speech, music is governed by culturally dependent grammar. Therefore, impairment of speech and musical abilities is a frequent outcome of damage to the left hemisphere in musicians. A musical phrase, however, doesn't convey the same sort of information that a verbal sentence does. Its grammar is organized in terms of harmony and counterpoint rather than patterns of grammatical categories such as noun, adjectives, etc. Consistent with these distinctions, inability to speak is not always associated with impaired musical abilities in musicians.

Studies of hemispheric dominance in the processing of musical tasks have produced mixed findings. It is now accepted that a single hemisphere is not dominant for music but most studies suggest preferential involvement of the right hemisphere. The playing of musical instruments requires highly developed fine movement (motor) skills, often of both hands. Fine hand movements are primarily under the control of the opposite hemisphere. A few studies found that musicians, like females and left handers, exhibit less functional hemispheric asymmetry. The incidence of left handedness among musicians is the same as the general population.

Once the signal is received through the hearing nerve, the brain analyzes six components of music: pitch, intensity, time, timbre, tonal memory and rhythm. The brain can only distinguish the sounds of instruments played in the narrow range of pitches. The coherence of musical experience depend on the relation between the underlying frequencies rather than the actual pitch. Time and rhythm are among the most important and most subjective elements of music. Mood, illness, fatigue, alcohol and drug use can affect the perception of time and therefore, the quality of music.

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[Shripathi Holla, a neurosurgeon, is from Clark Summit, PA]

Music and Astrology

by
"Sridhar"

Music is an art which has its own beauty and appeals directly to one of the five senses, i.e., the sense of hearing. By changing the rhythm, a musician observes the audience is enchanted and the variations of the pitch is enjoyed by those who listen and who can follow. Blending of notes in harmony, is an art.

In instrumental music, rhythm is very essential, especially in stringed instruments. In wind instruments, like Flute, Nadaswaram, etc., the pitch adds beauty and offers the power of melody. One can develop harmony nicely on stringed instruments.

Music had its origin even in the Vedic age. "Sama Veda" is rendered in such a melodious tune that it is said that Lord Siva, the "Destroyer," was pleased by the recital of Sama Veda, by the "Notorious Ravana."

The Manduka Upanishad refers to Jyotisha as one of the Six Vedangas, the others being Vyakarana, Shiksha, Kalpa, Nirukta, and Chhandah. Each in itself is a vast, well-marked area of scientific study and discipline.

Jyotisha or Astrology depends on the position of the planets ascertained astronomically. It explains the celestial phenomenon and the corresponding terrestrial events.

In the natal horoscope of an individual, the fifth house (Bhava) indicates music. The second house is for vocal music, and the third house for instrumental music. For instrumental music, the third and twelfth house indicate such instruments, where both the legs and hands have to perform.

Planet Neptune indicates stringed instruments. Sukra gives the taste for music, and adds melody. Chandra and Sukra give imagination and alapana. Budha denotes rhythm and thalam. Kuja gives courage and confidence, so one will be free from stage-fear. Sani and Sukra give taste in Tapla, Mridangam, etc., where the dead-skin is used.

Airy Signs of short ascension denote Flute. Airy Signs of long ascension denote Nadaswaram. Earthy Signs connected with Budha indicate Mridangam. Neptune and Sukra connected with Airy or Earthy Signs OR Planets in Airy or Earthy Signs and in Long ascension indicate Veena. Short ascension indicates Violin. Voice Signs or Signs ruled by Sukra, being the second house, or Sukra in second house makes one a vocalist.

The fifth house indicates whether one can learn music, one can appreciate music, one can become a musician, or one hates music or one is reluctant.

According to the late Prof. Krishnamurthi, who spent five decades in research and developed "Advanced Stellar Astrology":

- If the sub-lord of the fifth Cusp is in the star of a planet, situated in Simha or Kumbha, one will be a popular musician. Sukra will contribute for a grand success in the field of music.
- If the lord of the Star in which the sub-lord of the fifth cusp is deposited, is connected with Sukra and Chandra, one will have a taste for improving musical talent; if the same is connected with Sukra and Budha, one will be highly intelligent to compose songs for musicians. If the significator of the fifth house is conjoined with Neptune, then the musician will render the music with great harmony. For thalam and rhythm, Budha has to be predominant.
- If the significator of the fifth house occupies Mithuna or Dhanus, one can render the music to appeal to the senses of the audience.
- If the same were to occupy Kataka or Makara, one can simply enjoy music by hearing, and Sani will be predominant.
- If the above significator is in Mesha or Thula, changes in rhythm is well accomplished.
- Strong Sani being the significator of the fifth house connected with Budha will help the individual, create dignified and scholarly songs. If Kuja and Sukra are also connected, they can compose for dramas. If Guru is connected, prayers will be composed. If Budha is connected, dance music will be composed. Most of the composers could be skillful artists who could play, but all musicians can not compose. It is hoped that this brief introduction will evoke keen interest in the readers in the science of astrology.

P. S. - This article is dedicated to Jyotish Marthand, late Prof. Krishna Murthy, who spent five decades in research and developed the "Advanced Stellar Astrology."

["Sridhar" is a connoisseur of music and an Astrology enthusiast]

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MY VIJAYAWADA DAYS

Vimala Rajagopal

It was the day after I reported for duty at All India Radio that I met all these phenomenal artists of the time. The radio station itself was a beautiful piece of land right on the outskirts of Vijayawada. Surrounded by the menacingly dark, bald boulders of hard granite hills, Vijayawada was called Blazewada by the British. The twinkling lights of Kannaka Durga Temple could be seen straight down Bandar Road, a big highway that lay adjacent to the radio station. Kannaka Durga was the patron deity of this fantastic city of highly talented artists and musicians.

Punnamma Thota, where I lived, was right across from All India Radio. It was a charming community consisting mostly of artists, poets, producers and the staff of All India Radio. Srirangam Gopalathnam, Vinjamuri Lakshmi, Voleti Venkateswaralu, B. Rajanikant Rao, and Prayaga Narasimha Shastri were all right there in my neighborhood. Rathnam, as we affectionately called her, was a very dignified and reserved young woman, a young lady of few words. She spoke tersely but to the point. Rathnam did not speak English. Lakshmi, who had a college degree from Madras, was my mouthpiece until I picked up Telugu.

It was a hot, hot day in the summer of 1959. The movie theater was in the harsh, thoroughly unmusical surroundings of downtown Bejawada. Love in Hong Kong was the movie playing. Rathnam, Lakshmi, and I sat in the coveted balcony seats in the back, paying the highest price. Right in the middle of the movie, during Asha Bhonsle's song, a huge shadow fell on the movie screen as a man with a wrestler's physique sauntered into the cheap front seats with the whistling crowd of rikshawallas. The three of us were shocked when we recognized Voleti making a hurried exit just a few minutes later.

Next morning, when I was on duty, Lakshmi and Rathnam were there to record a Bhaktiranjani session with Balamurali Krishna, who was the producer. Voleti came in,

smiling broadly, showing all his paan stained teeth, exclaiming "What a damn good singer! (expletives deleted)". I could not believe my ears when he said that he went to see the movie fifty times just to listen to that particular song! He had worked with O.P. Nayyar, the well known music director. This explains a special style that Voleti had developed in rendering Telegu devotional songs in Hindi Bhajan style.

Rathnam's guru was Veena Joga Rao. Dr. Pinnaka Pani, a medical doctor by profession, and a serious musician by hobby, was her mentor. He was one of those who revived the leisurely pace (Vilamba Kala) of singing padams. "Muvala Gopala" was a prime example of this.

T. Shankaran, the grandson of legendary Veena Dhanammal, was the assistant station director of All India Radio at that time. He was responsible for bringing great artists like T. Vishwanathan and Balasaraswati, the great dancer, with her Natuvangam troupe. That was the birth of Dance music that Rathnam and Lakshmi learned and presented at the Madras Music Academy. Watching these learning sessions at the studios was a tremendous treat I could never forget. It was the same when the Kuchipudi troupe of greats like Chinta Krishnamurthi, Vedantam Satyanarayana came and taught Bhamakalapam songs and other Yakshagana songs to Balamurali, Voleti, Lakshmi and Ratnam. I felt like I was in a musical paradise. It was like attending a music festival every day except that you walked home with the great artists of the day.

These friendships have continued to this day. I saw Rathnam for the last time two years ago. Her parting gift to me was a sari she said she bought especially for me. She was planning to come here to visit me, not for any concerts, but just to spend time with me she said. She passed away suddenly before we could meet again. I still miss her. I will always remember my Vijayawada Days for its divine music.

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"Tyagaraja - Life and Lyrics" by W. Jackson More than One-More-Biography

By
Prabhakar Chitrapu

One of the books that I recently read with great interest is William J. Jackson's "Tyagaraja - Life and Lyrics" [1]. There were several reasons for my sustained interest and enthusiasm. In this review, I hope to elaborate on these reasons and hope to also provide the reader a comprehensive review of the book - a book that I highly recommend for all those interested in Tyagaraja and his times.

It is interesting and accurate that the sub-title of the book should read 'Life and Lyrics' and not include 'Music' in it. For, there is but a limited analysis of the musical innovations of Tyagaraja. However, there is the fascinating presentation of the life of Tyagaraja as well as a fine English translation of several of his songs.

Frankly, when I started to read the book of Jackson, I was expecting yet-another biography of Tyagaraja, but what I found was a biography and much more! I found a scholarly analysis of several existing definitive biographies, starting with the very first written by two of Tyagaraja's students. The author then goes on to study how the biographical material inflated over time and ends up conjecturing a parallel between this evolutionary process and popular social images of lives of saints in India. I found this to be a very refreshing and novel approach to writing about Tyagaraja's life.

Another unique aspect of Jackson's way of presenting Tyagaraja's life was its historical contextualization. Jackson presents a detailed picture of the society of South India, including political makeup, currents of change and general structure of social life. In the background of such a presentation of the times, Jackson tries to understand Tyagaraja's life through his compositions. Indeed, aren't Tyagaraja's very own songs the most reliable autobiographical accounts of his life? Yet Jackson's task is not simple, as Tyagaraja includes but little social detail in his compositions. It would therefore require much careful research into the meaning of the text of the songs. Perhaps, such a concentrated effort into the understanding of Tyagaraja's compositions' sahityam is what led the author into attempting English translations of several of them.

And I must admit that Jackson's translation attempts have been very successful! They are among the finest English versions of Tyagaraja's kritis/kirtanas that I have read. They capture the essence of the kriti and flow easily. Indeed, there is a particular difficulty in translating Indian devotional songs into English. For example, much used and tender expressions such as 'Kamala Lochana' etc, would become awkward English expressions if one attempts a word-by-word translation. This is often a reason behind the poor readability/enjoyability of many existing translations of

Tyagaraja's compositions (and other such works too). Jackson instead seems to attempt to capture the overall sentiment of the kriti and, in so doing, is often able to preserve the original beauty and fluency in the translations. You can get a feel for what I am saying from the following rather difficult (in meaning) kriti "Nadatanum+Anisam Sankaram" [1, pp. 127].

To Him whose body is sound - Lord Sankara-
I bow again and again, mentally and physically.
To the essence of the *Sama Veda*, the greatest
Veda, which gives exaltation (To Him)
To Him who protects the pure-hearted Tyagaraja
Who conquered death and revels in musical wisdom
Of the seven sacred tones: *sa ri ga ma pa dha ni*
Which are born from his five heads
To Him whose body is sound

SUMMARY

William Jackson's book is organized in 2 roughly equal-sized parts. Part 1 deals with the life of Tyagaraja and Part 2 consists of English translations of several of Tyagaraja's compositions. The original texts are not given, but the Title, Raga and Tala are mentioned.

Part 1 is split into 4 chapters: 1) The Making of a Legend: Tyagaraja as an Exemplar; 2) Tyagaraja's roots in Regional History and Cultural Continuum; 3) Tyagaraja's Thanjavur in a Global Perspective; 4) The Musician as a Mystic: Tyagaraja's Vision of Sacred Song and the Features of the Kriti.

At the end of each chapter as well as at the end of the book, there are detailed notes and references, some of which provide very interesting insights themselves. The book also includes a map of South India with clear marking of places relevant to Tyagaraja's life. Furthermore, the book has several interesting (black and white) photos as well. A reproduction of an oil painting by H.V. Ramgopal depicts a Tyagaraja seeming as an ordinary common man. There is also a picture of the Rama idol that Tyagaraja worshipped - seeing which plunges the reader into a mental exercise of imagining how Tyagaraja must have gazed for many years into this picture, - imagining and creating over it, weeping and deriving strength from it. There is also a picture of Tyagaraja's handwritten notebook with kritis written in round, beautiful Telugu letters, as well as a copy of his horoscope.

All the above mentioned aspects of Jackson's book give it a feel of a well researched piece of work - which is a welcome change from the many existing biographical accounts that either gloss over many details or write about Tyagaraja in a

very mystical, almost super-human terms and symbolisms. Jackson's book attempts to bring out Tyagaraja as a man, living in a world filled with turmoil, confusion, tranquillity and peace - just as we live our lives in a world that is still composed as a contrasting and contradicting mosaic of peace and violence, clarity & confusion, nobility & reckless selfishness.

Of the omissions that I have noted in this highly recommendable book of Jackson, the foremost is the visible omission of Muthuswami Dikshitar and Shyama Sastri. Given that the author is attempting to present a 'historical' perspective/mirror out of which Tyagaraja's life is understood, missing two contemporary stalwarts who probably had some (positive or negative) influence is rather surprising and disappointing.

Secondly, the book does not address in due detail the musical creative output of Tyagaraja. After all, all things considered, Tyagaraja is most remembered for his musical genius, creativity, innovation and output. Although Jackson discusses these in Chapter 4, I felt that the discussion was rather general and brief. I would have liked to learn more about the state of the music before Tyagaraja appeared on the scene, how he innovated, and so on.

Finally, the translations of Tyagaraja's kritis are very readable and enjoyable. However, unfortunately, there are still some inaccurate bits here and there. For example, on Page 255, *Samarthyamu* is translated as *cleverness*. I feel that *ability* would have been a better word. On Page 188, *Dayarani Dayarani* is translated as *Show pity & shower your mercy on me, Rama, son of Dasaratha! Better would have been O Rama, O Merciless One! O Son of Dasaratha!* Next, the word *manasa* is often replaced by *mind*. Somehow, *heart* appears to come closer.....

On the whole, I have thoroughly enjoyed reading Jackson's book. He is presently a Professor at the Religious Studies Department at Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis. His work on Tyagaraja was part of his Ph.D. work at Harvard University. If you wish to contact him, his address is Prof. W. Jackson, Room No: CA 335B, Department of Religious Studies, Indiana University - Purdue University, Indianapolis, IN.

SOME EXCERPTS

I would now like to narrate a few interesting pieces, most of them almost directly from the book. Hopefully, these bits would make the review more specific & informative and give a glimpse of Jackson's book in his own words!

Note-1) *Tyagaraja's Biographies & their Evolution*
Jackson analyzes the evolution of Tyagaraja's biographies into 3 phases:

Phase 1: Earliest records of major events in Tyagaraja's life by two of his students, namely Venkataramana Bhagavathar and his son Krishnaswamy Bhagavathar [2,3].

Phase 2: Subsequent rendition by harikatha performers and subsequent biographies [4-9] that included events not found in the earliest texts. The new events added were:

- 1) Hiding Tyagaraja's worship-idols of Rama by his brother in a well [4] or in Kaveri river [5-9],
- 2) Revival of dead brahmin by the kriti *Naa Jivaadhara*
- 3) Opening of Tirupati temple curtains by the kriti *Teratiyagaraada*
- 4) Tyagaraja's rescue by Rama when attacked by thieves.

Phase 3: Comparison of Tyagaraja's hagiography with well known South Indian saints reveals that Tyagaraja's life stories took on an archetypal pattern of events associated with musician-saint lives. Specifically, Jackson describes the archetypal pattern to consist of some or all of the following events:

- 1) Miracle of origins (birth)
- 2) Initiation and aid from a sanyasin
- 3) Learning from an extraordinary guru
- 4) Trial and vision
- 5) Contempt of court
- 6) Endangered musician is rescued by the Lord
- 7) Loss of divine images
- 8) Miraculous recovery or auspicious discovery
- 9) Power of music manifest in prolific number or bringing down rain or opening of temple doors or raising the dead or kindling of flames.
- 10) Musician as an *amsa* of divine being
- 11) Foreknowledge of death.

Note 2) *Rise of Tyagaraja's Popularity*

Jackson suggests that during India's struggle for political independence, India sought a culturally, socially, morally strong identity and that Tyagaraja's music, with its simplicity, its creative elements and Tyagaraja's life with its steadfastness toward a single Hindu goal, provided such an identity. Implicitly, Jackson claims that this was a factor in the increased popularity of Tyagaraja's music in the first half of the 20th century.

In fact, a tradition commonly found in later biographies is that Tyagaraja predicted his work will begin to be better known 60 years after his death (i.e. 1847+60=1907).

Moreover, European writers in South India, who wrote during Tyagaraja's life time (such as Abbe J.A. Dubois, C.P. Brown) seldom mention Tyagaraja. The British Tanjore District Gazetteer of 1906 devoted only part of a sentence to Tyagaraja: "Tiruvadi is the home of a good many persons well known among the natives. Of these the song writers and singers Tyaga Aiyar and Patnam Subramanya Aiyar and the singer Maha Vaidyanatha Aiyar were known throughout the Tamil country".

Even among Indian writers, Tyagaraja's popularity seems to have grown only over the later years (in particular the 20th century). For example, Sourendra Mohan Tagore in his *Universal History of Music* published in 1896 mentions

Tyagaraja as one of the ten notables: "Among the renowned musicians of the present century in South India might be named Tigya Raj, who was a native of Tiruvadi".

Note-3) *Musical Activity in Thanjavur area*

Evidence suggests that Thanjavur had been a site of intense activity in music and dance from ancient times during the Chera, Chola and Pandya rules. Vijayanagar, Nayak and Maratha patrons continued this age-old system of supporting performers, Sanskrit scholars and music pundits. In 1565, the Andhra-based Vijayanagar empire broke into fragments. The Telugu speaking generals (Nayaks) who commanded Thanjavur and Madurai as viceroys became independent rulers. They engaged in cultural activities and expanded the patronage of Telugu and Kannada artists. In Thanjavur, where Tamil is the mother tongue of most, the Nayaks fostered Telugu learning. Thus Telugu became a popular lyrical medium as a growing number of musicians, pundits and poets migrated from Andhra. "During the next 3 centuries, Thanjavur would grow and gain recognition as the most musically rich region in South India... By Tyagaraja's time, Thanjavur court kept more than 300 music pundits busy performing, teaching and writing!"

Note 4) *Specialty of Thiruvaiyaru*

Thiruvaiyaru (the village where Tyagaraja spent most of his life) is located near the region where all the 5 branches of the Kaveri river (also known as Ponni - Lady of Gold) flow within 5 miles radius. The presence and nearness of Kaveri river made Thiruvaiyaru special both in physical and metaphysical senses.

Physically, the alluvial fertility of this well watered delta region made it one of the most important rice growing regions in India and accounts in part for its ability to support one of the largest populations of Tamil Nadu.

Metaphysically, Thiruvaiyaru is reputed for its sanctity and has seven shrines within 3 miles radius, the chief of which is the Panchanadiswara (Lord of Five Rivers) temple. There is a saying that Thiruvaiyaru is more sacred and auspicious than Banares by one sixteenth!

There is also a Kaveri river origin myth (similar to that of the Ganges myth). Sage Agastya, sent south by Siva, carried River Ponni in his pot. Ganesa, as a crow, caused it to spill out and it flowed and revived Indra's garden!!

Note 5) *History Of Thanjavur Area*

During the era of Vijayanagar empire (1500-1675), Thanjavur was governed by Telugu speaking Nayak viceroys. In the meantime, Maratha soldiers and administrators rose to power with Sahaji I (1636-61) emerging as the founder of Maratha dynasty. Sahaji's son, Sivaji, came to power in 1667 and Sivaji's brother, Ekoji, in 1673 seized the Nayak throne in Thanjavur. (The Maratha dynasty in Thanjavur would last for 150 years).

Ekoji's rule lasted till 1683, followed by Venkaji, who died in 1686 and Sahaji II became the Maharaja. He was

considered by most historians to be the ablest Maratha ruler of Thanjavur, who supported 46 scholars in Sanskrit, Tamil and Telugu. In 1688, Sahaji II submitted to Aurangzeb, but remained as a 'viceroy'. Sahaji's brothers Sarabhoji and then Tulajaji (1727-1735) succeeded him.

Tulajaji was succeeded by his weak son Saiyaji, who was dethroned by his illegitimate brother Pratap Singh in 1739. Pratap Singh's son was Tulajaji II, who ruled a weak reign for over 2 decades during which Hyder Ali invaded twice. (It was Tulajaji II who granted a house and a piece of land to Tyagaraja's father).

In 1773, the British occupied Thanjavur as allies of the Nawab of Arcot, when Tulajaji did not pay the entire tribute to the Nawab. The Nawab held the throne till 1776, when the British restored Tulajaji, who placed himself trustingly in their helping hands. During 1780-1800, British influence increased in Thanjavur state and by 1818, East India Company functioned as the unchallenged authority in India.

Added to such political turmoil were natural calamities. Before Tyagaraja was born, Thanjavur was a site of famine in 1730, with starvation leading to pestilence and destitution increasing the slave trade. After Tyagaraja's birth, there was another severe famine from 1780 to 1783 (..due to the devastation of the surrounding country by Hyder Ali's troops. The irrigation works were destroyed; the cultivators forsook their fields and fled to the towns.) The famine was so severe that according to the memoirs of a Christian missionary Frederick Schwartz (who lived in Thanjavur and also played an important role in the local politics between Tulajaji, Hyder Ali and the British) "A vigorous and strong man is scarcely to be met with; in outward appearance men are like wandering skeletons.The streets were lined with dead corpses every morning".

Note 6) *Tyagaraja's Times & His Response*

During 1749 to 1758, Thanjavur state was caught in power struggles among Maratha, Muslim and British forces. Into such a world of battles, in 1767, Tyagaraja was born in Thiruvaiyaru. When Tyagaraja was in his teens 13-16, Thanjavur suffered the severe famine.

As to how Tyagaraja saw and responded internally to these times is hard to gauge from his earliest biographies as well as his songs. Part of the difficulty is that 'none of Tyagaraja's songs have been conclusively linked to exact dates of composition times', except that songs such as "Namo Namo Raghavaya" which are said to be among his very first. Even in these (and later compositions as well), there is no acknowledgment of the British or any other political group, except in such expressions as "O Rama! Where are you? This is the time when you are needed" etc. It is hard to guess whether these sentiments were motivated by internal philosophical longings or external physical realities.

Perhaps the closest that Tyagaraja comes to specific social reference is an image in one song in which he mentions

Muslim presence: in the kriti Samayamu delisi, the line "turakavidhilo vipruniki paanapooja.." Ramanjachari translates this as "it is of no value if a Panaka puja for Brahmanas is done in Muhammadan quarters".

Although historical times are not to be found in the available kritis of Tyagaraja, several English band tunes did find their way into his music - e.g. *Varalila Ganalola* ('In the English garden' tune), *Sarasara Samaraikasura*, *Girirajasuta*, *Raminchuvarevarura* and *Kalinarulaku*.

Note 7) Divinity Of Sound

In Tyagaraja's songs, one often finds reference to a musical piece as a concrete manifestation of a divine sound, Nada. The basis perhaps comes from the following sloka from the legendary Svararnavam: "In the center of the body is the prana; in the center of the prana is dhvani; in the center of dhvani is the Nada; and in the center of the Nada is Sadasiva, the supreme lord".

Note 8) Kriti Form & Its Perfection By Tyagaraja

As we all know, Tyagaraja's kritis typically have the structure of a Pallavi (opening line and refrain), followed by an Anupallavi (sub-refrain and elaborating on the opening), finally ending with one or more Charanams (stanzas).

Pallavi literally means 'to sprout' and it carries a sense of a beginning, forming the embryonic original impulse. The Pallavi of a Tyagaraja song is especially important because it is the core pattern, the matrix of the rest of the song. All else must be integral with the Pallavi, whether in similarity or in contrast, since it initiates the principle of the whole song in a germinal form. The Anupallavi, literally meaning "following the Pallavi", is basically an extension of the theme of the Pallavi, both melodically and lyrically, a further elaboration of the initial idea. The third part Charanam literally means 'foot' or 'the part that moves about'. In the charanams, the theme is given concrete example or is elaborated into specific details or particular metaphors and completed (usually with Tyagaraja's mudra).

In many songs, the structure of a kriti's text is similar to patterns found in Sanskrit texts: the Pallavi is like a sutra - an aphorism giving the essential idea in a nutshell; the Anupallavi is like the Vritti - the explanation in which the initial idea is furthered; the Charanam is like the Bhashya - the commentary which elucidates and gives examples.

Although Tyagaraja perfected this kriti form in its most appealing expressions, the form itself existed even before Tyagaraja. For instance, it was used by Tallpaka composers beginning with Annamacharya in the 16th century. Some songs by Purandara Dasa also include Anupallavi, although he seems to have preferred the Pallavi-Charanam structure. Kshetrappa also employed similar patterns to those found in kritis in his padams.

While earlier works of the kriti form meandered in a leisurely and searching manner, Tyagaraja consistently found more focused expression in more tightly knit songs

with skillful climaxes. The sequences of the Pallavi and Charanams in the earlier works almost seems haphazard or disjointed in comparison with Tyagaraja's more sophisticated seamlessly unified lyrics.

Note 9) Sangatis

In spoken Telugu, Sangati means "message" or "news". It also means "novelty, variation, meeting, coming together as well as arrival" and hence "climax".

Although Tyagaraja was not the first composer to use sangatis in his compositions, he was the first, it would seem, to fully realize the potentials inherent in sangatis, to perfect the development and logical unfolding of all possible sangatis in a given musical piece and to build them to a climax and resolution within the compact kriti form.

Note 10) Some Personal Aspects of Tyagaraja

* Tyagaraja was not given to artistic snobbery, and composed a great many songs in both kriti as well as the kirtana forms. His Pancharatna kirtanas show that some of his songs are exquisitely and extensively complex yet adaptable to group singing.

* Tyagaraja is the one Indian saint who is probably more remembered for not having traveled much and for being rather unenthusiastic about pilgrimages (e.g. the sahityam of the kriti *Koti Nadulu* in Todi raga). Even Tyagaraja's journey to Tirupati when he was very old was done *reluctantly* (my italics) and at the specific behest of the aged religious leader, Upanishad Brahmam, who had been a schoolmate of Tyagaraja's father.

* A number of earlier composers in whose footsteps Tyagaraja followed were Telugu Smartha brahmins, who promoted the praise of holy name. They were Narayana Tirtha (author of *Krishna Tarangini*), Sadasiva Brahmendra, Bodhendra Sadguru Swami and Melattur Venkataramana Sastry.

* While most Telugu smarthas then wore three horizontal lines on their foreheads, Tyagaraja (also a smartha) is pictured as wearing vertical lines, characteristic more of the Haridasa (or bhajan or Bhagavathar) tradition.

Note 11) Summary Of Tyagaraja's Main Contributions

M.S. Ramaswami suggested that Tyagaraja contributed a five fold service to Carnatic music through the composition of his kritis.

Firstly, he comprehensively surveyed the products of musical science of previous eras, grasped previous composers' talents and resources, and focused on accomplishments of the their art in his new songs;

Second, as a necessary corollary, he introduced for the history of Indian music the system of developing Sangatis;

Third, he freed devotional songs from an overly strict metric form and verbal dominance, introducing more fluid melismatic passages;

Fourth, he demonstrated that colloquial poetic prose has a freedom which suits better than too-formal poetry;

Fifth, he explored many rare ragas in kritis, thereby discovering and giving them actual viability.

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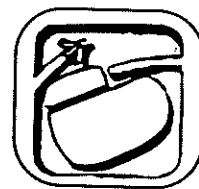
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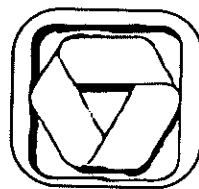
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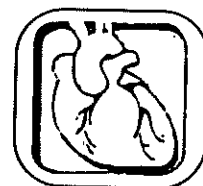
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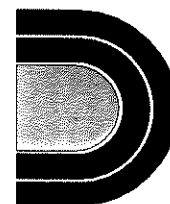
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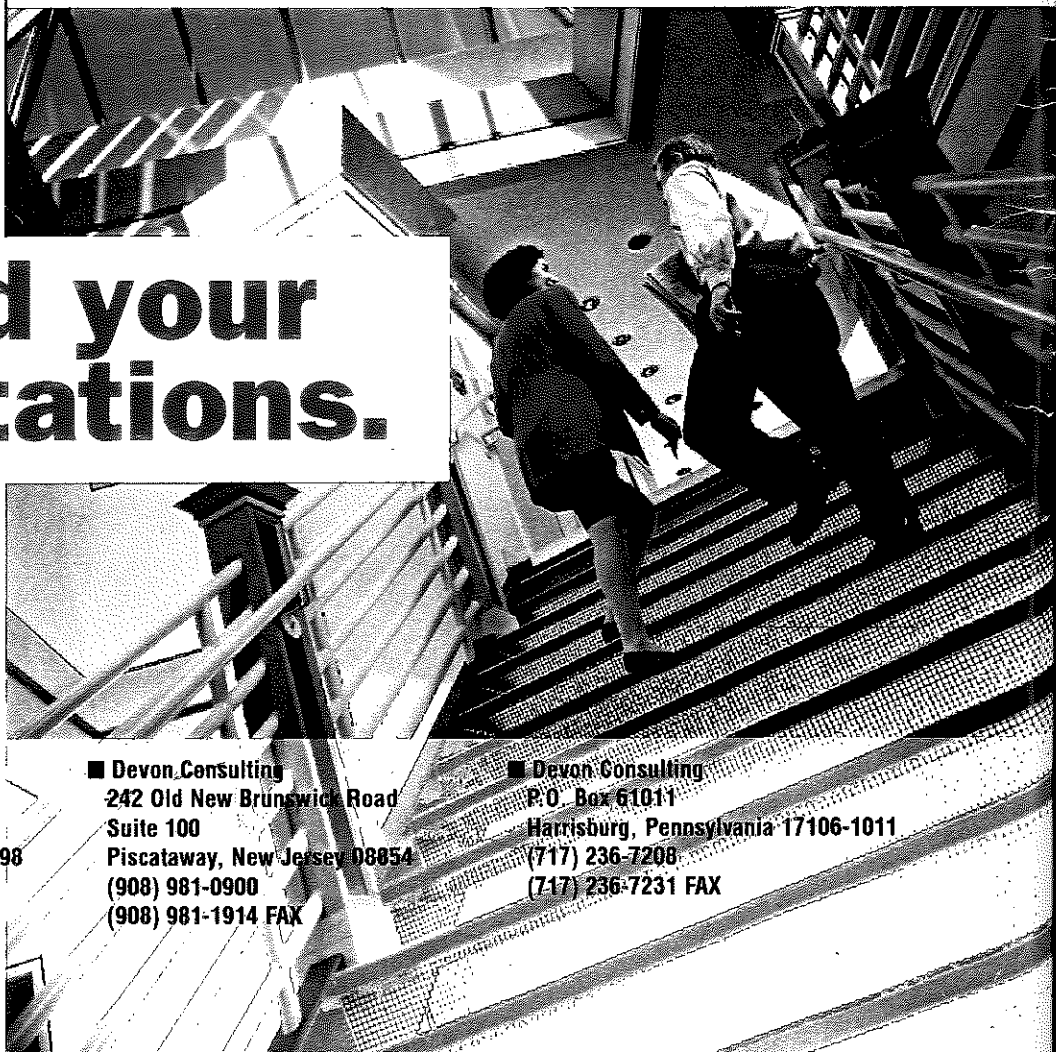
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