



## My tryst with CMANA...



Aravind Narasimhan

CMANA's 25<sup>th</sup> year anniversary could not have been better timed. The celebration was my first opportunity to share my passion for Carnatic music with an elite group of volunteers. It also marked the end of my search as a new immigrant for a chance to contribute my efforts towards a cause dear to me, the promotion of Indian classical music. This introduction and the years of involvement that have followed have led to a close association and understanding of the inner workings of CMANA. What is heartening is that even after 40 years, it remains a stellar organization with unique attributes.

CMANA's elected Board consists of volunteers tasked with forging the objectives and mission of the organization sans personal subjective interests. With no true hierarchy, decision-making is a collective process, arrived at after healthy and thorough deliberation and discussion. Strict financial checks and balances are in place. Above all, CMANA has been an inclusive organization, welcoming all and nurturing a sense of community while achieving common goals. Each member brings their unique skills and knowledge to the table.

Has any of this been easy? No! The challenges have been multiple. Several organizations sprung and spun off chipping away with competing not aligning interests. Our audiences and volunteer base have shrunk and interest appears to have dimmed.

Did we despair? No! We have been striving harder to stay relevant, sacrificing more time and energy. We started leveraging technology to streamline and help us reach much larger audiences. Changes to programs and already popular events were made to keep the momentum going. Recently, CMANA's constitution was modified to make operations nimble and adapt to the times. And we stood up to these challenges by organizing a grand 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration that continued our vision.

With resilience and reinvention CMANA is now more relevant than ever. Carnatic music has spread to the far corners of this country, thanks to many former members relocating and running their own organizations, modeling our events and mirroring the constitution and path forged by CMANA.

We turned 40 this year. And to whom do we credit the preeminence of this premier organization? As I write this during the month we celebrate the great American tradition of Thanksgiving, it is appropriate to thank the founding members and the board of trustees who over the many years have tirelessly worked to nurture this great Sabha. Further, we would never have achieved these milestones without the support of the community, teachers, young volunteers and generous donors.



CMANA



a thriving institution and a continuing journey

Above all, artists are the soul of this organization. I am extremely grateful for their support and encouragement.

This is the CMANA that I have known, that I would like you to know about and the one I will always be proud of. I am confident that in the years to come, the torch will burn brighter and be carried forward and that this democratic and altruistic movement will persist and serve the community for many generations to come because the foundation is based on an ageless body of volunteers and the timeless soul of music.

Cheers,

**Aravind Narasimhan**