



Vaidyanathan Ramaswami (RAM)



Vaidyanathan Ramaswami (RAM)

CMANA has given me much by way of hundreds of hours of listening to many fine musicians and having the privilege of interacting with many of them closely, so much so that it has transformed me from a total ignoramus in Carnatic music to one who has now ventured even into composing. (An album of ten of my compositions by Sikkil Gurucharan, V.Sanjeev, and J. Vaidyanathan is to be released in early 2017.)

My association with CMANA goes back almost to its founding. I served as Secretary for eight years, President for two, and just a trustee for another four years. But CMANA has been intertwined with the lives of our family since about 1977 when we met Dr. P. Rajagopalan, the founder. Among some of the small ways I have tried to give back to CMANA that I remember are: (i) Working as Secretary with several Presidents, particularly Dr. Rajagopalan and Dr. Uma Roy and putting in sound systems and a management in place that helped to bring the organization to sound financial health from near bankruptcy. (ii) With a select few trustees – Dr. Rajagopalan, Dr. H.K. Chandrasekhar and Mr. Sury Subban – covering the losses in many programs for a period of five years until the association could have a positive cash flow. (iii) Helping in the preparation of many publications of Sangeetham, CMANA's magazine and many fliers, and a variety of promotional material. (iv) Designing all the publications associated with CMANA's 25th anniversary. (v) Handling single handedly the audio system in concerts from Stonybrook, NY to Wilmington, DE for well over eight years. (vi) Proposing and designing all aspects of the Sangeethasaagara award. (vii) Being a key player in the organization of the two Sangeethasaagara programs in Chennai, the first honoring Sri Semmangudi Srinivasaier and Prof. T.N. Krishnan, and the second honoring the female music trinity Bharat Ratna M.S. Subbulakshmi, Dr. D.K. Pattammal, and Dr. M.L. Vasanthakumari. (viii) Helping in the formal details of the MLV award at Narada Gana Sabha and the CMANA Award at Music Academy, Chennai (ix) Being the first to organize a Tamil Isai concert in the USA. As noted in the first sentence, I feel like I have received a lot more than I have been able to give, and that is indeed a humbling thought. Sometimes, I feel that the most important thing I did for CMANA was to pressure Uma to run for President and then helping her succeed not only in the election but during her entire tenure.