

CMANA



a thriving institution and a continuing journey



Estd. in 1976 to preserve, promote and promulgate Carnatic Music and related fine arts

CMANA



a thriving institution and a continuing journey



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The Current Trustees of CMANA have made best efforts to trace the history of CMANA . While every care has been taken to present a complete perspective, it is possible that we may have by oversight missed some of the events that may not have been brought to our attention. The Board would like to inform that it is not intentional and will make efforts to be more inclusive in the next edition if brought to our attention. Please send an email to president@cmana.org .

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CMANA

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State of New Jersey



THE SENATE AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

STATE HOUSE, TRENTON, N. J.

JOINT LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION

By Senator SMITH and Assemblymen CHIVUKULA and EGAN

WHEREAS, The Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey are pleased to commend and salute the Carnatic Music Association of North America Inc., an esteemed nonprofit organization located in South River, Middlesex County; and,

WHEREAS, Throughout almost three decades, the Carnatic Music Association of North America has amply fulfilled its mission to enrich lives by providing opportunities for children and youth ages five to nineteen to develop creative talents and encourage a greater appreciation of their cultural heritage; and,

WHEREAS, Highlighting the Carnatic Music Association of North America's efforts benefiting young people is its Annual Great Composers Day celebration, which is a praiseworthy program organized and conducted by the children, featuring Essay and Music Competitions; and,

WHEREAS, The strength, quality, and success of the arts in the State of New Jersey depend, in great measure, upon outstanding arts organizations, as exemplified by the Carnatic Music Association of North America; and,

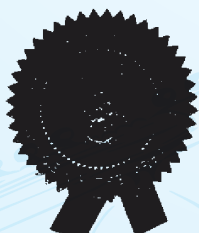
WHEREAS, It is altogether proper and fitting for this Legislature to acknowledge and to salute the Carnatic Music Association of North America as a most important organization in the Garden State; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

That this Legislature hereby honors and salutes the Carnatic Music Association of North America, pays tribute to its meritorious record of service and leadership, and extends sincere best wishes for continued success and vigor; and,

Be It Further Resolved, That a duly authenticated copy of this resolution, signed by the Senate Presidents and the Assembly Speaker and attested by the Senate Secretary and the Assembly Clerk, be transmitted to the Carnatic Music Association of North America Inc.

Attest:



Donna M. Phelps
Secretary of the Senate



Christine Riebe
Clerk of the General Assembly

John P. Bennett

President of the Senate

Richard J. Cooney

President of the Senate

James A. Harris

Speaker of the General Assembly

State of New Jersey



BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES CITATION

Whereas, the Carnatic Music Association of North America, Inc. (CMANA), an esteemed New Jersey organization, has fulfilled its mission of enriching lives by providing opportunities for children and youth to develop creative talents while developing a greater appreciation of their cultural heritage; and

Whereas, CMANA continues to highlight its efforts benefitting young people at its Annual Great Composer's Day celebration, a praiseworthy program providing a platform for budding young musicians to showcase their many talents and theoretical knowledge in Carnatic Music, featuring Essay and Music Competitions; and

Whereas, encouragement of local music teachers and musicians in the tri-state area through Local Talent Series and its collaboration with organizations abroad to promote US-based musicians in India; and

Whereas, CMANA raises awareness of this ancient form and rich cultural heritage through collaboration with grassroots organizations and institutions of higher learning for cross-transfer of knowledge; and

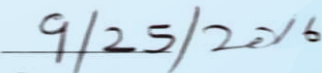
Whereas, the strength, quality and success of the arts in the State of New Jersey, in great measure depend, upon outstanding arts organizations, as exemplified by CMANA;

Be it resolved, that CMANA, is hereby commended for its contributions to New Jersey throughout the last four decades.



By the Commissioner of the Board of Public Utilities


Commissioner


Date

Letter from the President



Som Sowmyan

CMANA turned 40 in 2016. When this was first set up in the year 1976 as a community organization serving the purpose and cause of promoting and propagating Carnatic Music, it is difficult to have imagined that we could have come so far and yet be democratic with true adherence to the Constitution and the principles of good governance.

The idea of bringing this coffee table book – one that showcases CMANA, its progress and achievements to the world - was engaged barely six months ago and I thank Sri Sankar Narayanan, our Past President, who was the architect, along with the committee members, in putting together a collection of articles contributed by our members and supporters from over the last 4 decades. This book is a reflection of their strength and we have merely given a color and a shape to your vision.

It is a very exciting time to be in a leadership role with CMANA. Ideas imagined years ago have gained momentum, and there has been growth in every area of the organization: educational programs, outreach programs and most importantly, the benefits to members, as we expand our support of the sector by promoting the voices of locally groomed musicians who are now showing inclinations to take the role of professionals be it here or in India. Ensuring the value of member benefits, enhancing member satisfaction and increasing diversity in our membership base will always be the underlying goals of our daily operations.

CMANA has seen through rapid changing times in the two century lines we have seen – technologically, logistically or otherwise. We have invested in a fully interactive website in which members can electronically transact and a responsive mobile version that makes doing business easy, which helps members to be active and stay in touch irrespective of where they are. We encourage most of our members set up their account online to be able to receive communications regularly. We hope to make this digital transformation complete with a self-service portal and a fully functional box office. We continue to focus on quality concerts and content and have always on an average provided 10-15 programs a year.

Membership continues to grow steadily every year and is currently at 1800. Junior Membership as always opens the gate for the younger generation to fully participate and enjoy concerts at no cost. We will soon work on seamlessly converting Junior Members to full Life Members as laid out in our Constitution. To those that have graduated, we will appeal to get them back to our fold. It is this relationship that matters in running an organization that caters to the inner aspects of our divinity and soul.

Our flagship program, The Great Composers' Day, continues to grow stronger with greater focus and emphasis on the overall improvements to the Junior Members. The Indo-American Festival planned in

January 2017 in joint association with Narada Gana Sabha, Chennai is being planned to be one that will take the aspirations of these Junior Members higher and will be held annually around the same time.

I wish to record my appreciation to several institutions and sister organizations based in New York, New Jersey and throughout the U.S. as well as in Chennai, including the Hindu Temple Society of North America, Flushing NY; the Hindu Temple and Cultural Society, Bridgewater, NJ and Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Saylorsburg, PA, with whom we have partnered in sponsoring concerts/concert tours of various artists during our four decades of existence. Our pillar of strength has been the continual support received from The Narada Gana Sabha, Chennai with whom our relationship has reached new heights with this new initiative. Our thanks also to members of the press, including The Hindu and SRUTI for helping us with our outreach objectives and to Kalakendra for assisting us with video and webstreaming services.

The office of the President allows one the unique privilege of observing Fellow Board Members and Committee Members on a continual basis. My deepest appreciation to Mrs. Rhama Narayanan, Secretary, who pulled through the 40th anniversary celebrations last September and also to Mr. Rajesh Nathan and Dr. Jana Narasimhan for their great support.

My last parting sentence is a Big Thank You to all YOU Members and the community at large and I urge that you be continually engaged with us for a mutually beneficial future.

Musically Yours,

Som Sowmyan

President

Email: president@cmna.org



Board of Trustees

President



Som Sowmyan

Som Sowmyan has served on the Board of Trustees since 2006 and as CMANA's Treasurer since 2007. His work as Treasurer has led to significant process improvements including the automation of financial records and the introduction of a web strategy and e commerce platforms for CMANA. He has been elected to the Post of President of CMANA and will continue through June 2018. New forays are planned in CMANA during this period including a new footprint into the Chennai Music Season with an Indo-American Festival planned in Jan 2017 in partnership with Narada Gana Sabha and into mainstream performing centers including state and private educational institutions. Som has spent 10 years working in various financial and IT capacities for a mid-sized private company in the Information Technology Industry. During his tenure, Som spent 4 years as CFO for the US technology division and three years as a business manager reporting to the CEO where his management experience ranged from small implementations of tailored IT applications to Enterprise-wide rollouts of platforms

Vice President



Rajesh Nathan

Rajesh Nathan's ties with the organization can be traced back almost 25 years, to when he enrolled as one of CMANA's first Junior Members, who eventually graduated to a Life Member and later, began serving as a trustee in 2010, and now as Vice President of the Board. Well before becoming a trustee, Rajesh had contributed many years of voluntary service for CMANA and in various capacities. He was recognized for the same both in 1994 on the occasion of his vocal mini-concert under the CMANA banner and in 1999, when chosen as a recipient of CMANA's "D.N. Visweswariah Prize", which is awarded on occasion to honor Junior Members who have demonstrated exemplary service to the association. Rajesh provides all-round support in the execution of CMANA's programs. He presently works as a Project Lead Consultant for a medical device company.

Secretary



Mrs. Rhama Narayanan

Mrs. Rhama Narayanan has over a decade of involvement with various cultural, religious, and community organizations in New Jersey. For CMANA, Rhama has been an active volunteer and member since 1997. She has actively helped with the planning and execution of GCD for 7+ years, seeing the GCD grow from 30 participants to over 135 participants. Rhama has also been the architect of 3 widely acclaimed CMANA youth program productions on the Tri-Moorthys involving over 70 CMANA Junior Members.

Rhama has many years of professional experience as an accountant, a school teacher, and as a banking associate.

Treasurer



Dr. Jana Narasimhan

Jana Narasimhan has been involved in CMANA in various volunteer and official capacities for the last 10 years. In future generations, she hopes to see CMANA make Carnatic music accessible to a more mainstream American audience. Jana holds a PhD in Biophysics and is currently the Director of Biology Research at a biotech company.

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Dr. Dorai Raghu

From the Editor's Desk:



Sankar Narayanan

Recently CMANA celebrated its 40th year anniversary and the pride that comes with, standing as a unique giant among organizations promoting Carnatic Music and related arts outside of India. CMANA was started in 1976 by a select group of enthusiastic visionaries led by Dr. P. Rajagopalan (founder) out of a passion, a vision, and a necessity. The passion was for listening to Carnatic Music concerts in the US, since travel to India was limited & expensive, and the technology available for recording music was not what it is today. The vision was for ensuring that this great art is nurtured in a foreign environment and is passed on to our future generations who will be natives in this environment. The necessity was that, at the time, there were no formal organizations to bring musicians to the US and give them a platform, opportunity, visibility, and the ensuing financial support.

CMANA was, and continues to be, uniquely structured as a truly democratic and fully transparent not-for-profit organization. CMANA, while governed via a meticulously detailed Constitution and By-Laws, is ultimately member-driven. It is by these critical aspects that CMANA differentiates itself from others in a complex ecosystem comprising of established organizations as well as fledgling mom-and-pop setups. Given the multitude of organizations with competing and conflicting interests, it would not be far-fetched to say that today's US-based music organizational landscape reminds one of the bygone 'Wild Wild West' era, and makes CMANA's success and longevity – especially this significant milestone - all the more meaningful.

This is a time for nostalgic reminiscing as well as strategic visioning. CMANA is proud to bring you this coffee-table book as a kaleidoscopic collage of CMANA's growth and journey: through its various anniversaries, its longstanding tradition of providing concert platforms for both upcoming and up-and-coming musicians, its reverence to and recognition of senior vidwans/vidushis and their achievements through coveted awards, its unparalleled focus in promoting youth talent, the challenges & tribulations CMANA has faced and will face along the way, and its appetite for continuous reinvention in the upcoming years.

This coffee-table book is a maiden attempt in capturing and show-casing the essence of everything CMANA does and stands for. The editorial committee is deeply indebted to many of you for authoring new articles and for opening up your archives to share memorable photos and published materials. We are additionally grateful to many of you who clarified and confirmed when we reached out for fact-checking. My sincere thanks to Sri Som Sowmyan the President, for planting the seed and initiating the request as well as for providing me and my fellow members of the editorial committee this great opportunity and honor. We are hopeful this book will be useful and cherished and will be worth new editions in the years to come. In keeping the spirit and style of a coffee-table book, we have intentionally organized the content with less focus on chronology and more focus on interspersed variety. The first few pages introduce the reader to CMANA and what it is all about; the subsequent pages offer a collage of scholarly articles authored by veterans and younger generations, nostalgic articles reproduced from CMANA's flagship Sangeetham magazine back volumes, and infographic articles/visuals showcasing CMANA's milestones and honor rolls. We request and welcome your feedback and suggestions – please send your emails to outreach@cmna.org or to president@cmna.org.

Musically Yours,

Sankar Narayanan

Editor-in- Chief



Vision and Mission

CMANA's vision is to serve as a center that promotes and propagates the education, performance, and appreciation of the Carnatic style of Indian Classical Music and related fine arts in North America.

CMANA's mission is :

- (1) To provide educational opportunities for children and youth to develop creative talents and encourage a greater appreciation of their cultural heritage and by staging concerts and lecture-demonstrations and sponsoring concert tours of acclaimed musicians and experts in the field.
- (2) To work as a center of excellence to offer elective credits to participating public and higher education institutions through high quality coalition with Carnatic music educators of North America.
- (3) To host Annual Great Composers Day Celebrations, Annual Concerts, and many praise worthy programs that provide a venue to mainstream music connoisseurs to appreciate the performances of talented performers and enjoy the company of intellectuals.
- (4) To create an endowment to support Carnatic Musicians of North America to work towards continued promotion and propagation of this art for posterity.
- (5) To collaborate with grass roots arts organizations and music tutelages for cross transfer of knowledge and to raise awareness of this ancient art form and rich cultural heritage.

About us

CMANA, Carnatic Music Association of North America, established in 1976, is a Tax-Exempt, Non-profit Organization (TAX ID 11-2654179) registered in New York and New Jersey. CMANA is managed by a democratically elected Board comprising of President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. These office-bearers serve the Association in these roles as volunteers and are highly accomplished professionals in their own busy spheres of life. A Financial Oversight Committee maintains oversight on the finances of the CMANA. As a matter of transparency, all Financial Statements and budget plans are presented and available to all members of record.

CMANA has a wide reach to, and participation from, a multi-cultural and generational cross-section of music lovers from the Indian and American diaspora. The Honor Roll of CMANA Patrons includes eminent musicians, scholars, ethnomusicologists, faculties, and connoisseurs such as Sri. T. N. Bala, Mr. Robert Browning of World Music Institute (WMI), Vidwan Guruvayoor Durai, Dr. Harold Powers of Princeton University, Dr. David Reck of Amherst University, Vidwan Ramnad Raghavan and Prof T. Viswanathan (both from Chennai and Wesleyan Universities) to name a few.

Endowments & Fellowships

The Association has helped to raise funds for many worthy Carnatic music related causes.

The Association has established Endowment Prizes for promoting young talent at three prestigious venues

- The Music Academy, Narada Gana Sabha, and the Bangalore Percussive Arts Center.

The CMANA Endowment Prize at Music Academy, Chennai, India - is a yearly prize given to a Carnatic vocalist under 25 years and was set up to encourage young talent. Most winners of this prize have gone on to become leading professional musicians.

Dr. ML Vasanthakumari Fellowship – a CMANA Endowment established in Narada Gana Sabha, Chennai, India in Dec 2000 in memory of the great musician Dr. ML Vasanthakumari. Given annually, the award carries a cash prize which will help the young winner acquire advanced training in Carnatic music.

Best Percussionist Award - A CMANA Endowment Prize established in 2002 at The Percussive Arts Center, Bangalore. Given annually, this award identifies and encourages young and upcoming percussion talent.



Awards

SangeethaSaagara (Ocean of Music)

This life-time achievement award, established in 1993, is hailed as one of the highest honors a performer, composer or scholar of Carnatic music and related art forms can aspire to. The list of awardees is a highly selective and elite group of eminent stars of Carnatic music and related arts, who have been recognized at the highest levels in their fields with awards and titles such as Sangita Kalanidhi, Padma Sri, Padma Bhushan, Padma Vibhushan, and Bharata Rathna.

Honorary Patron

CMANA recognizes persons for notable service to the Association and to Carnatic Music by inviting them as Honorary Patrons of CMANA. The list of Honorary Patrons includes many well-known musicians, academic scholars, music educators, and community leaders.

Award for Veteran Musicians and Artistes

CMANA recognizes persons who are leaders in their field and felicitates them with one of these titles - "Gaana Jyoti", "Vaadhya Jyoti", "Life-Time Achievement"

CMANA Music Awards for Youth

The coveted MS Subbulakshmi Award and the Founder Dr. Rajagopalan Award presented to winners in Senior and Advanced competitions motivate our Junior Members to learn, practice, and present their talents competitively and pave a way for them to perform in concerts.

The Visweswariah Award for community service

Awarded to junior members under age 18 who have spent a significant amount of their time for community service through CMANA and learning organizational and leadership skills that would enable them to grow into responsible citizens.



**Lakshman Ragde**

An elite group of composers in karnatak music

In the great ocean of karnatak music there are thousands of compositions in hundreds of ragas and encompassing many languages. While there are many composers whose songs are popular, there is one select group of vaggeyakaras who occupy a special place in the world of karnatak music. They have composed and tuned songs in all the 72 parent scales (melakartas). Here is a brief description about each one of them.

**Muttusvami Dikshitar (1775 to 1835)**

Muttusvami Dikshitar is the elder statesman within this group. He lived from 1775 to 1835. He was a prolific composer with about 500 kritis to his credit, most of them in samskrt. His 72 melakarta songs are all in asampurna mela system which was prevalent during his time. He was essentially a veena maestro and his songs are noted for their contemplative nature and are sung at a slower pace. A special feature in many of his songs is the madhyamakala aspect. His songs are mostly devotional in nature and are in praise of various

deities and temples that he visited. His mudra was guruguha.

Mangalampalli Balamuralikrishna hails from Andhra Pradesh and was born in a family steeped in music. He is a child prodigy and started learning music from Parupalli Ramakrishna Pantulu. By the age of 15 he had mastered enough knowledge to compose songs in all the melakartas. The book, Janaka Raga Kriti Manjari, was published in 1952. The writer regrets his passing away at the time of writing this article. His concerts are in the hundreds. He is also adept in playing the kanjira, viola and mrdangam. Apart from his melakarta compositions, he has published a second book titled Suryakanti. His compositions include varnas, kritis and tillanas and javalis in tamil, telugu and samskrt. Besides this he has recorded songs in malayalam, hindi, bengali, kannada and punjabi. He has devised some new ragas like mahati and lavangi. He uses the mudra murali.

Kotishvara Iyer (1870-1936) also belonged to a musical family from Tamil Nadu. His grandfather was the famous Kavi Kunjara Bharati who composed a large number of songs. He was a disciple of Ramanathapuram Srinivasa Iyengar. The first one to compose the 72 melakarta songs in Tamil, all these songs are in praise of Subrahmanya. The songs were published in the book titled Kanda Ganamudam. He used the mudra kunjaradasan as a tribute to his grandfather. His grandson is Yazhpanam



Kotishvara Iyer (1870-1936)

Viramani Iyer, who passed away a few years ago, has also composed hundreds of songs including a set of melakarta songs.

D.Pattammal (1933-2004) had a long career as a radio artist in Tamil Nadu and has written several books on music and has translated Jayadeva's Gita Govinda in Tamil and converted it into a dance drama. With her brother, she has published a compendium of raga scales titled Ragapravaham. She is another author whose melakarta songs are all in Tamil. Beside this, she has composed over 800 songs, some in very rare ragas. She received several awards during her illustrious career, the most notable of which is the Kalaimamani award given by the state of Tamil Nadu. Her mudra is arul.

R.K.Suryanarayana was one of the several and well known members of the Rudrapatnam family and was a child prodigy. Rudrapatnam (in Karnataka) has produced a long list of renowned artists that include R.K.Srikanthan, Rudrapatnam Brothers, R.S.Kesavamurthy, R.K.Padmanabha, among others. Suryanarayana was an expert veena artist and has performed on the concert stage in several countries. During his relatively short life of 66 years, he composed songs in all the melakartas, most of them in samskrt. He passed away in 2003.

Ashok R.Madhav is a contemporary composer living in Pittsburgh, USA. His 72 melakarta

compositions include songs in Samskrt, Kannada, Telugu and Tamil and published in the book Melakarta Ganamalika. He has also composed other kritis, tillanas and varnas. Some of his songs have been rendered by prominent musicians. He has devised two new ragas called hamsakalyani and hamsangi. His mudra is bharani.

C. Rangiah (1901-1984) of Mysore was a disciple of Veena Shivaramiah, Mysore Venkatagiriappa and Mysore Vasudevachar. His musical compositions consisting of svarajatis, varnams, kritis etc. exceed 500. He has also composed 72 melakarta kritis besides some operas. Some of his compositions are set in rare ragas like chandrarekha, shankarasarupya, sukumari, shankaramohana, jayashanmukhi, kanakangada, bilvadala, gaulishvari, navasutika, dvimadhyamagaula, madhuralapa and sayujyasadhini. Many of these are his own creations.

Dokka Sriramamurti is from Andhra Pradesh. All of his 72 melakarta songs are varnas which is unique. The book is titled Ashtottara Shata Ragangadi Varnamala published in 1982. Little is known about this composer. He is in the field of education and is a professor in an educational institution in Andhra Pradesh.

Nallan Chakravarthy Murthy is also from Andhra Pradesh and is a composer of classical, devotional and light music. He too has composed in all 72 melakartas and all of them are varNas as well. They have been published in the book titled Janaka Raga Varna Manjari. He has studied under vidvans M.Balamuralikrishna, Nooka Chinna Satyanarayana, Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan and vidushi Parveen Sultana. Beside the melakarta book he has also composed varnas in the ghanaragas of nata, gaula, arabhi, varali and shri. He resides in Hyderabad.

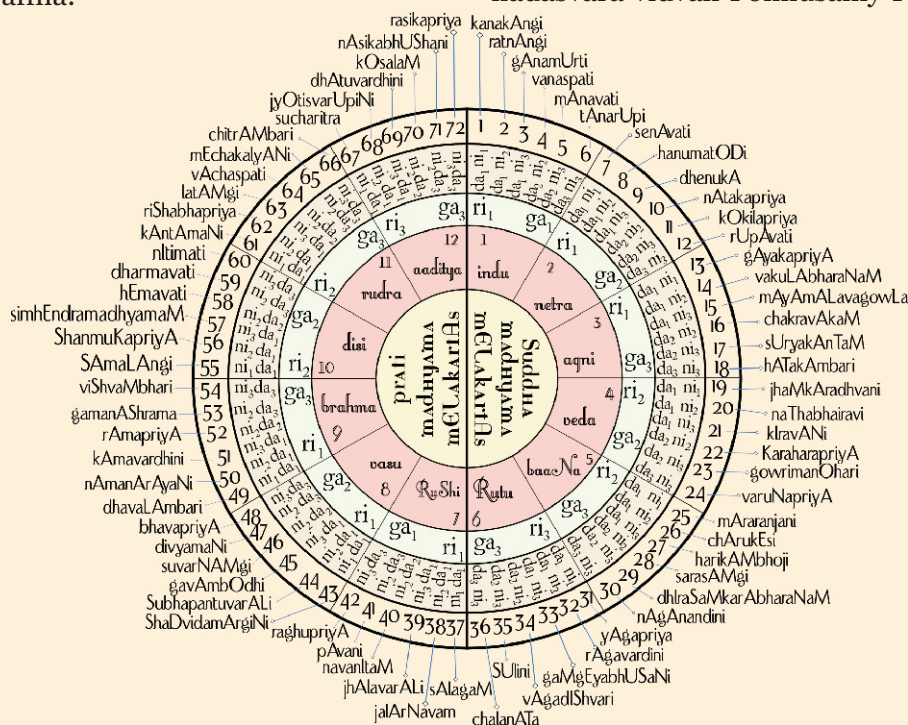
Bangalore S.Mukund is from the state of Karnataka. He holds the distinction of having

composed two complete sets of 72 melakarta songs among his torrent of 4,500 compositions. Some of his songs are listed in his book Sangita Lalitya Lahari. Many have been used in dance performances. He passed away a few years ago. His melakarta songs have not yet been published. Also not much is known if his other compositions are still with the family or have been passed on to some institution. He has devised new ragas like mukundabhairava, mukundamanirangu, mukundanantini, mukundashri, mukundavasanta and mukundavasantini.

Yazhpanam Viramani Iyer. He was the grandson of another 72 melakarta composer Kotishvara Iyer. He spent much of his life in Jaffna, Sri Lanka where he taught music and he has composed over 850 songs. His melakarta songs are in tamil. The book is titled 72 Melakarta Raga Tirumayilai Karpakambal Kirtanaigal published in 2000. All of the songs are in praise of the Goddess Karpakambal. His songs have been popularized by vidvan Maharajapuram Santhanam who also taught music in Jaffna.

Veena Shivaramaiah (1886-1946) initially learnt music from his father Padmanabhaiah, who was also a veena vidvan, and later from Mysore Karigiri Rao and Mysore Vasudevachar. His musical output is around 100 songs that include tillanas, jatisvaras, varnas and kritis. Shivarama was not his only mudra. In some songs he used Nalvadi and in others krishnarajendra. His varna in the raga lalitasimharava is a rare one. The 72 melakarta kritis were composed as per the wishes of Maharaja Nalvadi Krishnaraja Odeyar.

Belakavadi Srinivasa Iyengar (1888-1936) is the composer who tuned Purandaradasa's very popular jagadoddharana in kapi. His advanced studies in music were under Veena Bakshi Subbanna. He is said to have learnt gottuvadyam in a very short time in order to take part in a competition arranged by Muttiah Bhagavatar and won the contest. Besides being a composer he acted in many dramas in his home town and in Mysore. His 72 melakarta kritis were composed in response to a challenge by the then popular nadasvara vidvan Ponnusamy Pillai who claimed



72 Melakarta Chart

that most of the melakarta ragas were redundant. This comment annoyed the king Krishnaraja Odeyar who then asked Srinivas Iyengar to prove the Nadasvara vidvan wrong by composing songs in all the melas.

Kadalur Subramaniam (1920-1997) is a modern day composer and a longtime AIR artist who has published, apart from the 72 melakarta kritis book, a second book of kritis and tillanas titled Isai Tenral. Other published books are Varnams in Rare Ragas and Kritis in Rare Ragas. He composed in tamil and samskrt. His name became better known to the rasikas after vidushi Nityashri Mahadevan popularized his ragamalika song ragattil siranda ragamedu. Some of his songs include janani janani in revati and the tillana in dvijavanti.

Venuganam K.Hariharan is also a contemporary composer. He comes from a musical family. His father, an advocate, was also a flautist. His grandfather was a bhagavatar. He took to fulltime music after his retirement from a career unrelated to music. His melakarta book is titled 72 Mela Ragas-Sampoorna Sampoonam. All these songs are in tamil. He has also published a second book of 20 Tamil kritis titled Spectrum Ragas. His mudra is Sivadasan. He has given lec-dems in rare ragas at various centers in India.

Shuddhananda Bharati (1897-1990) was an author who wrote several books on philosophy besides composing songs. He spent over 25 years at Arabindo ashram in Pondicherry. His 72 melakarta book is titled Shuddhananda Melarnavam. Dr.Balamuralikrishna has recorded these songs on CDs. His songs were popularized by N.C.Vasantakokilam and the music trio of M.S.Subbulakshmi, D.K.Pattammal and M.L.Vasantakumari.

Lavani Venkata Rao of the Tanjavur court is said to have composed songs in 72 melakartas eulogizing

the Marattha rulers of the time. The manuscript is not available for verification.



Shuddhananda Bharati (1897-1990)

Madokaram Prashanth Iyengar is a vainika from Bangalore and his mELa raga kritis are in Kannada and Samskrt. His book is Titled Varna Lakshna Ranjani.

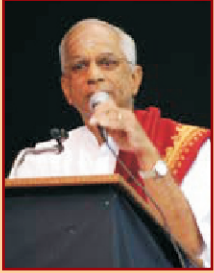
Rukmini Sivakumar lives in Chennai and is a veena artiste. She has not only composed varnas in 72 melakarta ragas but also in the 35 talas. All these varnas are in Tamil. The books are titled Isai Tamizh Varnangal.

Subbarama Dikshitar has composed a rAgamAlIkA that uses all the 72 mELakartA rAgAs of the asampUrNa system.

Lastly we must not forget the single song utilizing the 72 melakarta ragas by Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer (1844-93). His work was unique because he composed, in addition to the sahitya, a cittasvara for each of the 72 ragas. The cittasvara at the end of each raga seamlessly blends onto the next one. The entire song takes about 45 minutes to an hour to render. Bharat Ratna M.S.Subbulakshmi has recorded this magnum opus for posterity.

(This article is based on information gleaned from several sources: The Internet, music books and personal contacts.

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**Dr. V. Swaminathan**

Madurai Shanmukhavadiyu Subbulakshmi The Quintessential Bharatiya

Time and again, in every society, are born individuals who become extraordinary exemplars of the culture of the country and for its citizens to emulate. Among them, even rare are those who leave behind such an indelible mark that even after the cessation of their bodily existence they continue to be a beacon of inspiration for many subsequent generations. The word one may use to denote such people has also to be rare! In the Bhagavad Gītā Lord Kṛṣṇa uses the word, कश्चित् (*kaścit*), to describe the rare person who makes effort among thousands of people for *mokṣa*, liberation. He continues to say further that even among those seekers making effort, only a rare person comes to Him in reality.¹ The word *kaścit* ² is used twice in the same verse. In the Vedantic literature, the one other place where the word *kaścit* is used is in Kaṭhōpaniṣad,³ wherein also it denotes a rare discriminative person. In the year of the birth centenary celebration of Madurai Shanmukhavadiyu Subbulakshmi (Smt. MS Amma), an iconic figure, reflecting on her life and her persona, it occurs to me that she can easily be referred by the word *kaścit*. She was a rare person, indeed.

Smt. MS Amma is a quintessential *Bhāratīya* in every sense of the term.⁴ A *Bhāratīya* is one who embodies all that is a significant representation of the culture of India. One may ask what exactly the culture of India is as it has been evolving over many millennia. While it has not been stagnant, a non-changing principle, inspired by the Vedic wisdom, has been its sheet anchor as though for eternity. This principle, which threads through the entire ensemble of a remarkably heterogeneous society, is that all that is here is *Īśvara*, that the entire universe is nothing but the manifestation of God. Everything, therefore, is sacred. That this knowledge was imbibed and assimilated by Smt. MS Amma is profusely evident by the manner she lived her life. She did not

¹ manuṣyāṇaṃ sahasreṣu kaścidyatati siddhaye |
yatatāmapī siddhānāṃ kaścīnām vetti tattvataḥ || (Chap.7, V3)

² The word *kaścit* would literally mean “someone.”

³ The 1st mantra beginning as “*parāñci khāni*” in 2nd *adhyāya*, 1st *valli*

⁴ One of the important secondary derivational suffixes (तद्धित प्रत्यय - *taddhita pratyaya*) in Sanskrit is the इयि *iyā* suffix. It gives the meaning of ‘belonging to.’ Thus, *śāla* means a hall and *śālīya* means belonging to a hall. Therefore, *Bhāratīya* means belonging to *Bhārata deśa*.



look at music as a mere profession or a livelihood but as the very manifestation of *Īśvara*. Thus, when she sang, whether it is a composition of a great vāggeyakāra, a Mīrā Bāi or a Kabir Das bhajan, a verse from the Gītānjali, a hymn in a regional language or something which is deśīya, she not only submersed herself in the unifying vision but also reminded the listeners to cherish the umbilical connection to *Īśvara*, at least for the moment. The musical endowment she was born with became the very *nimitta*, an instrument, of her expression of alignment with *Īśvara*. She elevated herself from the empirical to the absolute reality and stayed connected with it on as well off stage. There was serenity when she sang and the listener too could get a glimpse of his/her own inner composure. The word *nāadopāsanā* found its abode in Smt. MS Amma.

The Vedic wisdom, which is the backbone of the Indian ethos, is rightfully defined as a way of life and culture rather than a mere religious dogma. It prescribes certain *sāmanya dharmas*, commonly sensed values, to be cultivated by all for one's emotional growth and maturity. The Kalpasūtras mention eight *ātma-guṇas*, personal values, to be acquired by individuals. These are *dayā* (दया, compassion towards all creatures), *kṣānti* (क्षान्ति, accommodation), *anasūyā* (अनसूया, free from jealousy), *śauca* (शौच, both external & internal cleanliness), *anāyāsa* (अनायास, feeling of lightheartedness such as doing things effortlessly), *maṅgala* (मङ्गल, a self-composure marked by dignity), *akārpaṇya* (अकार्पण्य, generosity) and *asprha* (अस्पृह, free from a grasping nature, free from desire).⁵ All these values are abundantly evinced in Smt. MS Amma's life. There was not an iota of vanity in her despite the countless honors that came to her. She was truly the *padmapatrmivāmbhasā* ⁶, like a lotus leaf that is not wetted by water even when immersed in it, she was untouched by the fame and money. The riches she was rewarded with for her music was happily given away. In addition, she gave numerous benefit concerts for raising money for worthy causes.⁷ In any setting, her presence was one of *maṅgala*. Jealousy was not an ingredient in her personality.

⁵ Hindu Dharma – The Universal Way of Life. Voice of the Guru, Pūjyaśrī Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī Svāmī, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, India (1995) p.514.

⁶ Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā, Chapter 5, verse 10.

⁷ The causes benefitted by Smt. MS Amma's concerts are too numerous to mention and include many national institutions, charitable institutions, orphanages, cultural bodies and educational centers. Mahatma Gandhiji in a letter to Smt. MS Amma appreciated her efforts to raise the Kasturba memorial Fund in 1944. (Cited in A life of

While Sarojini Naidu was only happy to pass on her own title The Nightingale of India to Smt. MS Amma for her musical prowess, a fitting title, however, would be *ātmaguṇavatī*. For her there could be no glass ceiling, imaginary or real. She was a crown jewel of Indian womanhood. While she embraced diligently her role in the family as a devoted wife, mother and a *gṛhiṇī*, she transcended the role in her communion with the higher reality through music. She was a role model for young and old, aspiring and contended, struggling and accomplished, irrespective of gender. Smt. MS Amma's life partner, Śrī T. Sadasivam, played a pivotal role in her life. She was a dazzling diamond, he discovered, polished and presented to humanity. As Kālidāsa said in the invocatory verse of Raghuvamśa⁸, *vāgarthāviva sampraktau*, they were perpetually united like a word and its meaning. Śrī K.S. Mahadevan called their relation an unparalleled partnership and described them as a husband and wife who lived their lives for others.⁹

Smt. MS Amma had an unswerving and earnest devotion to Kanchi Paramacharya, Śrī Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī. Both the husband and wife never failed to be in the presence of Maha Periyava on Śivarātri day. After Periyava's *pūjā* to Lord Candramaulīśvara, Smt. MS Amma will be worshipping through her mellifluous music both Lord Śaṅkara and His incarnation, Paramacharya. Maha Periyava paid the highest tribute to Smt. MS Amma's music at the time of the release of her recording of the 72 *melarāgamālikā* of Śrī Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan. When the recording was played for Maha Periyava, he remarked that her service to music would stay as long as long as the Sun and the Moon are there - “சூர்ய சந்திராள் இருக்கும் வரை உன்னுடைய இந்தப் பணி நிலைக்கும்.”¹⁰ For her historical performance before the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1966, Paramacharya composed a benedictory song for the welfare of all living beings and Smt. MS Amma made it a concluding piece in all her concerts since then. True to Maha Periyava's words, her Vishnu Sahasranamam, Venkatesa Suprabhatam, Madhura Ashtakam,

fulfilment, a festschrift on Śrī T. Sadasivam, the husband of Smt. MS Amma, brought out on her 81st birthday in 1996.)

⁸ *vāgarthāviva sampraktau vāgarthapratipattaye jagataḥ pitarau vande pārvatīparameśvarau*

⁹ A life of fulfilment, a festschrift on Śrī T. Sadasivam, published on Smt. Amma's 81st birthday in 1996, p.55.

¹⁰ Ibid, K. Rajendran, p.33.

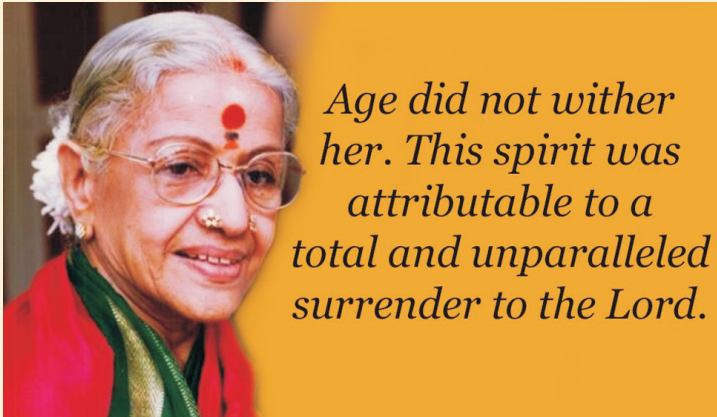
Suprabhatam of Rameswaram and Kashi shrines, Bhaja Govindam, Vinayakar Agaval and scores of devotional recordings are heard daily in millions of homes all over the world.

The Taittirīyopaniṣad says *yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha*¹¹ meaning that the words together with the mind return failed in their mission of describing Brahman. Although the context is different, the same sentiments can be repeated to express the insufficiency of words to describe Smt. MS Amma. She is indeed a *yuga puruṣa*¹². She is a self-realized person and borrowing the words of Śrī Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan¹³ her ‘self-realization is through self-giving.’ Her life story exemplifies the values of the Indian culture to not only Indian but outsiders as well. One of the Bhagavad Gītā verses¹⁴ captures this idea beautifully:

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः। स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते॥

yadyadācarati śreṣṭhastattadevetaro janaḥ | sa yatpramāṇaṁ kurute lokastadanuvartate ||

According to it, “Whatsoever an important person does, that alone the other people do. Whatever that person sets as proper, the world of people follows that.” Smt. MS Amma set the standards and values of human behavior for current and future generations of all people and in particular, of Indians, from all walks of life to be inspired by and emulate. In every sense of the word, she is a true *Bhāratīya* worthy of our veneration. She is a *prātaḥ smaraṇīya* someone to think of as one wakes up in the morning. We can remember her and seek her blessings.



¹¹ Taittirīyopaniṣad brahmānanda vallī 9th anuvāka

¹² puruṣa is a puṁliṅga (masculine) śabda which means a person.

¹³ Dr. S. Radhakrishnan’s foreword to The Spiritual Heritage of Tyagaraja, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1958.

¹⁴ Chapter 3, v.21

**The Author is a CMANA Honorary Patron
author and long-time supporter**



CMANA'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY FESTIVAL, 2016

September 24th and 25th, 2016

Carnatic Music Association of North America (CMANA) was established four decades ago to propagate the rich values, intellectuality, and creativity in Carnatic music to cross-cultural rasikas.

To mark this occasion, there were grand concerts and events held on September 24th and 25th at Scotch Plains, NJ 07076. The festival celebrated CMANA which has functioned as an institution that has fostered the intricate details of Carnatic music in its purest form rendered with artistic improvisation of the musicians to mainstream audiences.

After a brief welcome by President Som Sowmyan who traced the history of the organization citing many milestones sponsoring several tours of stalwarts and up-and-coming artistes from India and being the only music organization to organize a concert Smt. MS Subbulakshmi in the US, the first day event on the 24th started with a fitting tribute to Bharat Ratna, Sangeethasaagara M.S. Subbulakshmi on the occasion of her birth centenary. Junior and senior students from various tutelages performed a few admired numbers of MS Amma, such as Mudhakaratha Modhakam, Matey daru varnam, Bhavayami Raghuramam, Rangapuravihara, Jagadodarana, Mere Giridhara Gopal, Enathu Ullamae, Entha Mathramo, and Maithrim Bhajatha. It is notable that nearly 70 children enthusiastically participated in this signature event, with some even dressed as MS Amma! It is also noteworthy that at least one of MS's favorites was included in the concerts by the main artistes.

On the afternoon of the 24th, the halls was filled with a mesmerizing vocal performance by Ramakrishnan Murthy, accompanied by Rajeev Mukundan on the violin and Sangeetha Kalanidhi Trichy Sankaran on the mridangam. Ramakrishnan has performed in quite a few centers across North America, including CMANA in 2015, and at all major sabhas in India. For this afternoon, he performed the main piece in Kalyani – *Bhajare re chiita Balambikam* – with great elaboration. His penultimate piece was *Vaishnava Janato*. Later that evening, sisters Ranjani and Gayathri voices reverberated with classicism, which filled the hearts of devoted Carnatic music lovers. They exhibited perfection in sruti, powerful voice control, rich imagination, and impeccable aesthetics that reflect the timeless values of their classicism. As a tribute to MS, they started their concert with the daru *Matey Malayadhwaja Pandya Sanjatey* in Khamas. And they did not disappoint their devoted abhang fans as well! They were accompanied by Charumathi Raghuraman on the violin and Delhi Sairam on the mridangam.

While the 24th ended with a high note, the morning concert on the 25th started with the magical voice talent of Sandip Narayan. H.N Baskar accompanied him on the violin and Patri Satish Kumar played the mridangam. *Nannuvidachi* and *Maragatavalli* were rendered beautifully as was the ragam-tanam-pallavi in Chandrakauns. Audience could match Sandip's voice to his guru vocalist, Sri Sanjay Subrahmanyam. Sandeep concluded his concert with *Maithrim Bhajata* as a

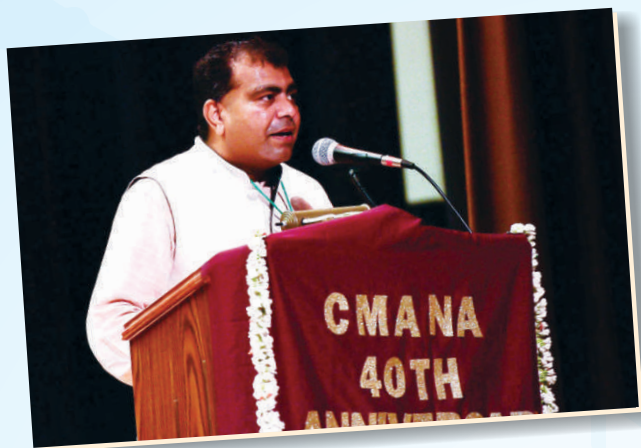
tribute to MS. This was followed by an instrumental program show-casing the deep talents of CMANA Junior Members on the violin. Once again it is noteworthy that over 30 junior musicians presented their impeccable skills. Another highlight was the vocal program on Muthiah Baghavathar kritis by adult students (some of whom are music teachers themselves) of Late Ms. Padma Srinivasan, a teacher's teacher, and a CMANA Honorary Patron.

CMANA's prestigious awards ceremony began in the afternoon with inducting as Honorary Patrons two musical stalwarts and long-time CMANA supporters – Dr. V. Swaminathan and Ms. Gowri Ramakrishnan. This was followed by recognizing the life-time achievement of Padmashri A Kanyakumari and presenting her with CMANA's most esteemed Sangeethasaagara award. Teacher, mentor, role model, and innovator, Kanyakumari has been associated with CMANA since 1976 with the organization's inaugural tour with her guru M.L. Vasanthakumari. In her remarks, past CMANA President Dr. Soundaram Ramaswami described the violinist as an "ocean of music" and commended the CMANA Board for the

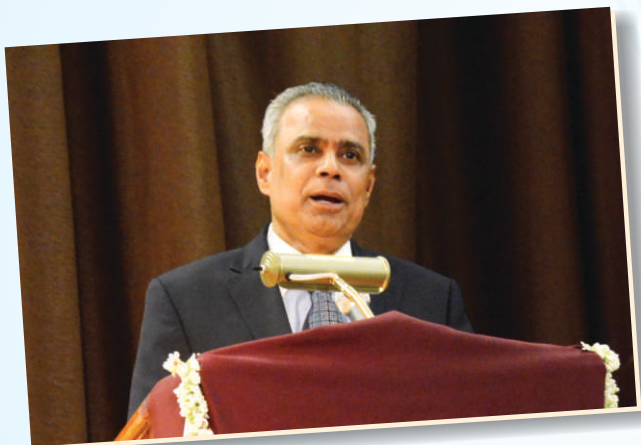
appropriate choice. NJ Commissioner for public utilities and former assemblyman, Mr. Upendra Chivukula was the event's guest of honor along with Robert Browning, former director of World Music Institute New York. Mr. Hari Eppanapally and Mr. Srinivas Ganagoni presented a citation to Padmashri A Kanyakumari from the Lead India 2020 Foundation that supports former President Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam's vision. Mr. Chivukula also presented CMANA with a commendation from the State of NJ recognizing and honoring CMANA's accomplishments and services to mainstream music in the last forty years.

The highlight of the event was the much-awaited concert by Padmashri, A Kanyakumari (Carnatic Violin Solo) accompanied by Rajeev Mukundan also on the violin and Patri Satish Kumar on the mridangam. Annamacharya's kriti, *Meru Veru* in raga Narayanadri (a raga of her creation), a classic example of her manodharma, stole the show. Following a soul stirring rendition of *Maye* and *Janani*, Kanyakumari played a tillana she has composed. Some favorite tukkadas followed which included *Kurai Onrum Illai*. The concert was truly a fitting conclusion to CMANA's 40th anniversary celebrations



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Dr. M.G. Prasad

Sound and Sanaatana Dharma

Sanaatana Dharma and the Vedas

Sanaatana Dharma is the vision and way of life shown to us by the Vedic rishis or sages. A rishi is one who has realized the Supreme Being through intense spiritual austerities and meditation. Vedas are very large collection of mantras heard by the rishis in their transcendental stages. Vedas are also called as Shruti (heard). The Vedas contain knowledge and practices that deals with physical, psychological and spiritual aspects of life. The Vedas also contain knowledge that deals with cosmos. The Vedas in their original form as mantras (as chants) were handed down from generation to generation to us through oral tradition of guru and disciples. It is interesting to note that in 2003, the UNESCO proclaimed that this oral tradition of Vedic chanting as an intangible cultural heritage of the world. Also this proclamation noted that *"....To ensure that the sound of each word remains unaltered, practitioners are taught from childhood, complex recitation techniques that are based on tonal accents, a unique manner of pronouncing each letter and specific speech combinations."* Thus the Vedas and the enormous literature that came out based on the Vedas form the foundation of Sanaatana Dharma.

Sound, Speech and Vedas

Sound (in the form of speech sounds) is not only the vehicle for the Veda mantras but also is a fundamental subject matter in the Vedas and Vedic

literature. The terms Shabda, Naada, Dhvani and Vaak are used to refer to the whole process of unmanifest and manifest sound. Vedas describe that speech that humans speak and hear is only the last quarter in the four-fold development of what is known as Vaak. The four-fold development of Vaak is paraa, pashyantee, madhyamaa and vaikharee. Among these the first three stages are internal and it is the last one i.e. vaikharee which is manifest as speech sounds. This four-fold process involves both physiological as well as psychological aspects. The terms Shabda and Naada also refer to the manifestation of Brahman (Supreme Being). Amrita Bindu Upanishat says that, *"There are two Brahman to be realized, Shabda and Para-Brahman; the one who has realized and is well versed in Shabda-Brahman will realize Param-Brahman."* In the words of yogi-seer, Sriranga Sadguru, *"...just as from seed comes naturally sprout, branch, leaf, flower, unripe fruit and full fruit like wise starting from spiritual light as seed, the Naada, the Svaras (vowels) and the Aksharas (alphabets) have developed into various aspects of knowledge."*

Thus sound and meaning together bring out the knowledge of the Vedas.

Sound, Philosophy, Religion and Spirituality

Sound through the study of linguistics has received major importance in both philosophy and spirituality of Sanataana Dharma. It is well known

that the sound and meaning together as one entity brings out the experience both in speakers and listeners. The philosophy of sound and language in the literature of Sanaatana Dharma is a very important subject. The role of Sphota (actualization through flash of meaning) and Shabda-Brahman in the communication process through the sound and meaning is an important contribution of Sanskrit grammarians. Also the subtlety of space element and its relationship with sound is dealt in philosophy.

Interestingly the importance of sound can be seen through the various musical and other instruments held by the Goddesses and Gods. For example, the Veena played by Sri Saraswati and the flute played by Sri Krishna. The use of Veda mantras during the worship of the deities along with instruments such as conch-shell, bells, gongs etc demonstrate the important role that sound plays in the temples and homes in the religious practice of Sanaatana Dharma.

The spiritual aspects of sound can be seen through Naada Yoga that is based on Naada of which sound is a manifest aspect as Vaikharee. Saranga Deva in his musical treatise says *“we worship Naada Brahman, that incomparable Bliss, which is intrinsic in all creatures as consciousness and is manifest in the phenomenon of this universe.”* It is

well known that all-pervading OM is name (sound) and form (light) of Brahman.

Sound, Music and Literature

Sound in the form of music is directly related to the Vedas of Sanaatana Dharma. The Svaras (basic sound unit) relate to Vedas as intonations, Music as notes and Sanskrit language as vowels. Music in addition to its independent influence plays a major role in dance and dramas. The significant role and major impact of music is well known. In the words of yogi-seer Sriranga Sadguru, *“Music should become the bridge that takes the listeners from the sensual level to the spiritual level of Atman.”*

Concluding remarks

In the words of a well-known Sanskrit poet Dandin, *“if sound is removed from the world, then world becomes dark.”* Sound carries information and knowledge. The rishis of Sanaatana Dharma not only realized and experienced the world of both manifest and unmanifest sound but also developed several approaches to help the seekers to realize and experience. (A video presentation on *“Vedic Perspectives on Acoustics”* is available at: <https://vimeo.com/32063009>)

The Author is a CMANA member and long-time supporter

List of Sri Visweswariah Award recipients

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Cāmuṇḍā Aṣṭōttaraśata Kīrtanam-s of Harikēśanallūr Muthayyā Bhāgavatar

Goddess Cāmuṇḍēśvari

The Cāmuṇḍi hill, also known by the *purāṇic* name, *Mahābalagiri*, lies on the outskirts of the city of Mysore, in the present day Karṇāṭaka state. The majestic Temple, dedicated to Goddess Cāmuṇḍēśvari is located on the hilltop. The Goddess, who vanquished the buffalo-headed demon *Mahiṣāsura*, and relieved the people of his atrocities, is worshiped here. The city itself derives its present name, Mysore (*Mahiṣūru*) honoring the conquest of the legendary demon by the Goddess. The presiding deity is always held in great reverence for centuries by the *Mahārājā*-s of the Mysore palace, the *Oḍeyār* Kings, who lavished rich gifts on this temple. Devotees offer their benediction to Goddess Cāmuṇḍi by reciting her 108 sacred names. It is to this Goddess, the great composer of the post-trinity era, **Harikēśanallūr Muthayyā Bhāgavatar** composed a soul-stirring collection of 108 *kīrtanam*-s, popularly known as the *Cāmuṇḍā Aṣṭōttaraśata Kīrtanam*-s.

The Composer

Gāyaka Śikhāmaṇi Dr. Harikēśanallūr Muthayyā Bhāgavatar (1877– 1945) occupies a prominent position among the post-trinity composers of *Karṇāṭik* music. He was a prolific and versatile *vāggēyakāra*, and has to his credit more than 400 solid compositions in Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada. He was also adept in performing *Harikathā Kālakṣēpam*-s. His compositions includes 10 *tāna varṇam*-s, 1 *pada varṇam*, 4 *daru*-s, 3 *rāgamālikā*-s, 11 *tillānā*-s, the famous English “note” (western melody, popularized by Madhurai Mani Iyer), and a host of 355 *kīti*-s. Besides many *kīti*-s on various deities, the long list includes the following noteworthy group compositions. (i) *Cāmuṇḍā Aṣṭōttaraśata Kīrtanam*-s (115 compositions), (ii) *Śivāṣṭōttaraśata kīrtanam*-s (116 compositions), (iii) *Vāra kīti*-s (on seven days of the week), and (iv) songs on *Māvūr Mahā Kālī* (7 compositions). In addition, he authored the encyclopedic treatise, “*Saṅgīta Kalpadrumam*” that earned him a D. Litt degree from the Travancore University. A Sanskrit *Kāvya*m (poetical work), “*Tyāgarāja Vijayam*” comprising of 487 *Ślōka*-s is also attributed to him.



Muthayyā Bhāgavatar has invented several new *rāga*-s, and has given life to a few *rāga*-s whose mere names remained in ancient texts, by composing beautiful compositions in them. The title of “*Saṅgīta Kalānidhi*” was conferred upon him by the Music Academy of Madras in the year 1930.

Mysore connection

When Muthayyā Bhāgavatar was at the peak of his musical career, his fame spread far and wide, and the ruler of Mysore, Nālvāḍi Kṛṣṇarājēndra Oḍeyār expressed his immense appreciation of his talents. Having been informed of this, Bhāgavatar traveled to Mysore with a desire to sing before the King during the *Dasara* season of 1927. Unfortunately, some of the *Vidvān*-s of the court were a bit hostile to him and tried to block his entry. It took some efforts for him to reach the court and perform before the Mahārājā. But, strained by these insults and hampered by cold and cough, his performance made a poor impression on the King on that particular occasion. He was given a routine standard honorarium usual for ordinary *Vidvān*-s who sing there. Disappointed at the result, he decided to leave for Madras. Being an ardent devotee of Goddess, the next morning, he went to the *Cāmuṇḍēśvari* temple to offer prayers, attributing his failure to the neglect of the worship of *Dēvi*. He visited the temple in the early morning before any crowd had collected there, and began to sing “*tappulanni tālukommā nāḍu*” in *rāgam bauḷi*, “*man-amukavalunu*” in *rāgam sahānā*, and a few other pieces on Goddess *Cāmuṇḍēśvari* that he has composed. By a strange coincidence, the Mahārājā, who was also on the morning visit to the same temple, heard Muthayyā Bhāgavatar’s renditions unseen, and was so impressed that he offered him another chance to sing in the Royal court. At this second recital, Muthayyā Bhāgavatar got into excellent form and his performance was superb. This was followed by a series of brilliant recitals and ultimately the Mahārājā was very pleased, and appointed him as one of the principal *Samsthāna Vidvān*-s of the palace for a monthly salary of 200 rupees, a position he held to the last. In 1928, at the request of Nālvāḍi Kṛṣṇarāja Mahārājā, Muthayyā Bhāgavatar undertook the task of composing a unique group of 108 songs in praise of Goddess *Cāmuṇḍēśvari*, in Kannaḍa language, known as “*Cāmuṇḍā Aṣṭōttaraśata Kīrtanam*-s”. While he was engaged in this mammoth project, the King placed a Daimler Car at his disposal. As Muthayyā Bhāgavatar was not very proficient in Kannaḍa, he was ably assisted by the Kannaḍa scholar Dēvōttama Śāstri in the lyric part for these songs. He used to get up very early, and go in the Royal car to *Cāmuṇḍi* Hills and sing his compositions before the Goddess till he achieved the required perfection, and when satisfied, he would come back to sing them for the Mahārājā.



Extremely happy and fully impressed with this masterly creation, Kṛṣṇarāja Oḍeyār bestowed upon him the prestigious title “*Gāyaka Śikhāmaṇi*”. He also rewarded him Rupees 10,000 along with numerous presents, which included a gold bracelet, and a pearl necklace with *Cāmuṇḍēśvari* idol carved in the pendant.

The *Cāmuṇḍā Aṣṭōttaraśata Kīrtanam-s*

The series, consisting of 115 songs, begins with a song in *rāga malahari* on Lord *Gaṇēśa*. This is followed by prayers to Goddess *Sarasvati*, *Śiva* (of Mahābalagiri shrine adjacent to *Cāmuṇḍēśvari* temple on the same hill), then a prayer to Lord *Viṣṇu*, one to *Guru* and finally the sixth one to Lord *Āñjanēya*. In each of them, he seeks their blessings for the success of the project he has undertaken. Then the main work, the 108 songs on Goddess *Cāmuṇḍēśvari* follows, and here, he was naturally guided by the classical *Cāmuṇḍā Aṣṭōttaraśatanāma Stōtram*. Each song he composed uses one of these 108 names of Goddess, and invariably, the name appears in the *pallavi* itself. The series ends with a *maṅgaḷam* song, appropriately composed in the *rāgam vasanta*. It has no *anupallavi*. In the *pallavi*, the composer offers his salutations to the Goddess and in the *caraṇam* lines, to *Gaṇēśa*, *Sarasvati*, *Guru*, *Śiva*, the devotees of *Śiva*, and finally to his patron King, Nālvāḍi Kṛṣṇarāja.

The group includes some very familiar and often heard songs such as *bhuvanēśvariya* (*mōhana kalyāṇi*), *sahasrakaramaṇḍitē* (*vācaspati*), *ratnakañcukadhāriṇi* (*kāmbhōji*), *durgā-dēvī* (*navarasakannaḍa*), *vijayāmbikē* (*vijayanāgari*), *jālandhara supīṭhasthe* (*valaji*), *sudhāmayī sudhānidhi* (*amītavarṣiṇi*). However, some other popular *Dēvī* songs composed by him, such as *himagiri tanayē* (*śuddha dhanyāśi*), *vāñcatōnunā* (*kaṇṇarañjani*), *amba vāṇi* (*kīravāni*), etc., do not belong to this particular group.

The songs are all simple in structure with a short *pallavi* consisting of a line (and rarely two), comprising of two to three chosen phrases, sometimes even one phrase. The *anupallavi-s* are again short, spreading over a line or two, but slightly longer than the corresponding *pallavi* lines. The *caraṇam-s* usually consist of four short and proportionate lines. However, every 10th song (10, 20, . . . , 90, 100), and the last one (108th song) have two *caraṇam-s* of equal length, each of a special uniform structure. In all these eleven cases, the two *caraṇam-s* are long and look almost identical. The first one describes various attributes of the Goddess, and is a sincere prayer to Goddess. The second one also is addressed to Goddess, but the attributes are either as prayers to Goddess to protect the King, or it refers to Goddess as the one who is worshipped by the King Nālvāḍi Kṛṣṇarāja. Each song is decorated with beautiful *ciṭṭa svaram-s* at the very end. In most cases, the *pallavi* line is decorated with *Ādyākṣara prāsam* (rhyme on the first syllable), and sometimes, the *antyākṣara prāsam* (rhyme at the last syllable of the word).



All these 115 songs are in Kannaḍa language. But, one needs only a handful of Kannaḍa phrases to understand their meaning, since we find only a word or two in Kannaḍa sprinkled amidst a host of Sanskrit names describing various attributes of the Goddess. Simplicity of expression is the vital point in all these compositions. We do not find intricate details, lengthy word constructs in Sanskrit, or lofty philosophical ideas that are often found in Muttusvāmi Dīkṣitar compositions. Nor do we find elaborate *saṅgati*-s, or *bhakti*-laden outpours to the Almighty, usually found in Tyāgarāja *kṛti*-s.

Since the work itself was greatly motivated by its predecessor, the famous *Lalitā Sahasranāmam*, this influence is clearly visible in Muthayyā Bhāgavatar's creations. Some of his *pallavi* lines are the exact lines borrowed from this ancient *Stōtram*. As an author who has penned the scholarly musical treatise, “*Saṅgīta Kalpadrumam*”, (his doctoral dissertation), it is no wonder, Muthayyā Bhāgavatar has utilized every opportunity to describe Goddess as an embodiment of *Saṅgītam*. In several songs, Goddess is described as the enjoyer of good quality music and the sweet melody of the musical instrument, *Vīṇa*. The entire *caraṇam* of the song “*Vijayāmbikē*” is devoted to describing Goddess as the symbol of Music divine: “*śruti svara grāma mūrccanālaṅkāra nāda janita rāga rasa bharita saṅgīta rūpiṇī*”.

In the entire collection, Muthayyā Bhāgavatar has used 115 different *rāga*-s spread over 23 *Mēḷam*-s, and remarkably, no *rāgam* is repeated. We have 20 compositions entirely in *Mēḷa rāga*-s, and 95 songs in *janya rāga*-s. The featured *janya rāga*-s include some popular ones, some rare ones, and above all, a few that he invented himself. The new *rāga*-s are remarkable for their high musical quality. Here is a list of the new *rāga*-s (15 in number), invented by him (or popularized by him) that are featured in this group: *Māyāpradīpam*, *Vīnādhari*, *Mōhanakalyāṇi*, *Harinārāyaṇi*, *Śuddhalalita*, *Nāgabhūṣaṇi*, *Gauḍamalhār*, *Hamsānandi*, *Cakrapradīpā*, *Vijayanāgari*, *Ūrmikā*, *Valaji*, *Guharaṇjani*, *Budhamanōhari*, *Paśupati priyā*. In addition to the above, the following *rāga*-s (not featured in this group) are also the creations of Muthayyā Bhāgavatar, *Hamsagamani*, *Karṇaraṇjani*, *Sumanapriya*, *Hamsadīpakam*, *Kōkilabhāṣiṇi*, *Alaṅkāri*, *Sāraṅgamalhār*, *Nirōṣṭā*, *Gurupriya*.

Muthayyā Bhāgavatar has utilized a wide variety of *tāḷam*-s in these 115 songs. In addition to the usual ones like *ādi*, *rūpakam*, and *miśra/khaṇḍa cāpu*, he has also employed *khaṇḍa tripuṭa*, *caturaśra jhampa*, and *khaṇḍa jhampa*. There is a judicious mix and match of these *tāḷam*-s in the series, thereby avoiding the monotony of the same *tāḷam* repeated sequentially. All songs without exception contain the *vāggēyakāra mudra* (author's signature), “**harikēśa**” which appears in the very last segment of the *caraṇam*. This phrase refers to Lord Śiva in the temple in his village, Harikēśanallūr. Unlike Muttusvāmi Dīkṣitar, incorporating a *rāga mudra* was not his *forte*, but he has sparingly used *rāga mudra* in a few of the songs.

Vidvān M. Vaidyalingam, the adopted son of Muthayyā Bhāgavatar has published all songs of the composer in Tamil, with notations in several volumes, and Volume 5 is entirely devoted to *Cāmuṇḍā Aṣṭōttaraśata Kīrtanam*-s. Famous *Karṇāṭik* singer, Viduṣi M. S. Sheela has soulfully sung all these 108 songs in a recent MP3 two CD set entitled “*Naada Roopini Sri Chamundeswari*”.

**The Author is the CMANA member,
author, and long-time supporter**



The Great Composers Day and Junior Members of CMANA

CMANA has thrived throughout its 40-year history, all while being a membership-based, non-profit organization that has been managed primarily by the hard work and efforts done year-round by a core group of volunteers who are professionals from all walks of life.

Among CMANA's objectives as a non-profit organization is promoting, preserving and propagating the fine art of Carnatic music across North America. To a large extent, these have been accomplished by the great focus CMANA has placed and the activities CMANA has directed towards our local younger community of music students and enthusiasts, the Junior Members of CMANA. CMANA truly stands out among organizations of its kind that in being the only one that has had for the past 20 years, its own class of membership reserved exclusively for Indian-Americans in our community under 18 years of age. A prime example of how CMANA has fostered an appreciation and celebration of Carnatic music in its Junior Members is via its annual Great Composers' Day (GCD) function, a tradition dating back to its inception year, that is run both by and for our Junior Members. It provides a platform for them to:

showcase their talents in vocal, instrumental and percussion music competitions and in the format of mini-concerts in front of local music teachers and accomplished musicians from North America and abroad, providing them with a unique learning experience and the opportunity to compete

participate in one of various competitions to demonstrate their theoretical knowledge in Carnatic music (examples from the past include essay writing, crossword puzzle, Carnatic music quiz and painting competitions) volunteer in capacities such as emceeing, managing participant registrations, etc. and assume leadership with the planning and execution of the entire function, thereby giving them a chance to volunteer and accrue hours of community service

GCD has continuously evolved and become more popular over CMANA's 40-year history with the number of participant registrations now at its highest ever. For the first time ever, GCD was expanded to a 2-day format with the inclusion of many new categories of competition in 2011. Among the additional plans to expand GCD further over the next couple years are the plans to move this to a festival format to include Concerts by Musicians and Junior Members.

CMANA has the following endowments that have been made available by patrons to be awarded to winners at the Great Composers Day competitions.

- 1) The Founder Prize for the Junior Musician (winner of the Advanced Competition) named in honor of its Founder President Dr.P.Rajagopalan
- 2) The M S Subbulakshmi Prize to be awarded to the Overall winner of the Senior Kriti, Swaram and Alapana winners as determined by the Board of Trustees ,CMANA
- 3) The Padma Srinivasan Prize Endowment in honor of our Honorary Patron Late Ms.PadmaSrinivasan . This has been instituted by her students from 2016.
- 4) The TA Krishnaswami award given to the runner-up in the Advanced Category of the competition

CMANA is in the process of enhancing these endowments to fit in a limited number of Prizes to be awarded to winners of various categories of the Great Composers Day Competitions.

CMANA's Junior Members have been recognized for their talents and invaluable services to the organization both internally through awards and felicitations and externally by top-ranking and Ivy League colleges and universities around the U.S. CMANA continues to invest much of its time and efforts on activities directed to our Junior Members, not only to further encourage their pursuit of this divine art but also to groom them in developing to their full leadership potential, which will allow the Board of Trustees and senior members of the association to leave this organization someday in the great hands of these future torch bearers.



GREAT COMPOSERS DAY CELEBRATIONS - GLIMPSES





GREAT COMPOSERS DAY CELEBRATIONS - GLIMPSES





GREAT COMPOSERS DAY CELEBRATIONS - GLIMPSES





GREAT COMPOSERS DAY
CELEBRATIONS - GLIMPSES



CMANA in the Press

The man and his music

The award came to Semmangudi all the way from the U.S. And it did enhance the prestige of the North American Association

The atmosphere in Sarajevo during the war was not one of the usual "war with joy" and "thereminists." The crimes of the city were not celebrated, and the atmosphere was one of despair. The city was not a "war with joy" and "thereminists." The crimes of the city were not celebrated, and the atmosphere was one of despair. The city was not a "war with joy" and "thereminists." The crimes of the city were not celebrated, and the atmosphere was one of despair.

[illegible]

Srinivasulu Srinivas Iyer receiving the Sangeethasangana Award. T. N. Krishnan the administrator is to his left.


depending how much on the time value system provided by the Germanium and Palat. Some scholars, Semanovskii Stravinsky, say that in such a way as in practice that age might say in hand, on him, he could not take into account the influence of the words.

[illegible]

MUSIC

prey and a Kribia, during the late afternoon, which was a surprise. The Kribia was a small, slender fish, yellowish-brown above and silvery below. It was about 10 cm long and 2 cm high. It was a very common fish in the mangrove, and it was very easy to catch. It was a very common fish in the mangrove, and it was very easy to catch. It was a very common fish in the mangrove, and it was very easy to catch.

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Friday, August 26, 1994

**Frontline**

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MUSIC

A lifetime for Carnatic music

Interview with D.K. Pattammal.

She is a traditionalist but not one who has been bound by it. Not in her life nor in her music. **Damal Krishnaswamy Pattammal** took Carnatic music to new heights by blending traditionalism and trailblazing novelism, and defied tradition to become the first Brahmin woman to give public concerts. She challenged traditional attitudes, not by argument, but by talent. Thus, DKP, as she is popularly known, was the first woman to sing in concerts *rugam-tanam-pallavis*, the rhythmic complexities of which call for great skill and demand a high degree of concentration.

And all this with no formal grounding in basics. Circumstances prevented her from learning in the *gurukul* system under one guru. But she trained under many *vidvans* to acquire a rich and varied repertoire of not merely the compositions of the Trinity – Tyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Syama Sastri – but also the Tamil *krithis* of Annamalai, Arunachala Kavi, Gopalakrishna Bharati, Subrahmanya Bharati, and hundreds from such Tamil devotional anthologies as Tiruppugazh, Thevaram and d Arutpala. Again, in a break with tradition, DKP was among the first woman playback singers in films where she is best remembered for her rendering of patriotic songs in *Naam Iruvar* and *Thaakkai Thaakkai*. Her special talent and musical sensibi ty were evident even when she was three.

Not very surprising because if her father, Krishnaswamy Dikshitar, was deeply interested in music, her mother, Rajammal, was a singer whose talent remained suppressed by the orthodox ways of those days. DKP managed to break those shackles, nurture her talent and rise to become a major figure in the world of Carnatic music. And since 1933, when as a 14-year old she began her career in music, she has not looked back.

DKP's 65-year-old career has seen her winning innumerable awards and titles, including the coveted Sangita Kalanidhi conferred by the Madras Music Academy (1970), the Padma Bhushan (1971), the Kalidas Samman (1989-99) and the Padma Vibushan (1999) conferred by the President of India. For Pattammal, however, the most significant accolade is the one from one of the giants of Carnatic music, "Tiger" Varadachari, who described her as Gana Saraswati.

Meeting Pattammal, one realises that her capacity for feeling is immense. She recalls: "At 50, I turned from the heady *laya* to *bhava*, singing with feeling, singing so as to let

2 **TIMES CITY**

KUTCHERI IN THE CLOUDS

With Webcasting Being More Economical And Convenient, Rasikas Soak In Concerts At Home

[illegible]

Times City

With webcasting being n
rasikas soak in concerts

100

Times City

With webcasting being more economical and convenient
rasikas soak in concerts at home



PP Narayanaswami

“ōmanattiṅkaḷ kiṭāvō” — a royal lullaby

There is hardly any home in Kerala, where the newborn baby is not put to sleep by the soothing melody of the ever-popular lullaby, “ōmanattiṅkaḷ kiṭāvō nalla kōmaḷattāmarappūvō”. This is the famous *tārāṭṭu pāṭṭu* (cradle song) hummed by mothers in Kerala for generations. This song was composed by the court poet and musician, **Irayimman Tampi**, for the sake of the ruling Queen Rāṇi Gaurī Lakṣmī Bāi, to put to sleep none other than her newborn baby, **Svāti Tirunāl Mahārājā**. Well, that is indeed a fitting introduction to music for the new born king, who was destined to become a prolific composer of *karṇāṭik* music. Originally set in *kurañci rāgam*, *ādi tāḷam*, this song has been sung by people in *rāgam navarōj*, *nīlāmbari*, or even as a *rāgamālikā*, and using *rūpaka tāḷam*, or even in *tiśra gati*. Whatever be the choice of *rāgam/tāḷam*, it certainly has a mesmerizing effect on every listener. The lyric of this song is so beautiful that it is a lullaby not only for the king, but for the entire human generation. In this song, using appropriate phrases in sweet and chaste Malayāḷam, the baby (king) is compared to the most beautiful things in the world that one can describe. It is to be noted that there is no mention of the word “sleep” anywhere in this lullaby.

The western musicologist, A. H. Fox Strangways, in his work “*The Music of Hindoostan*” (Oxford, The Clarendon Press 1914, pages 62-63) gives the first two lines of this lullaby in western staff notation, and renders a free style meaning of the complete song. He mentions that he got the song from “an enlightened woman” in Trivandrum, with which His Highness the (present) Mahārājā of Travancore is said to have been put to sleep, as a child. He further adds a footnote, stating that the singer wanted to accompany herself on the inevitable harmonium, but he pointed out that this additional sound might prevent the baby from going to sleep.

The intense anxiety associated with the birth of Svāti Tirunāl against the political conditions of the time, and the immediate relief it was to provide are truly reflected in this song. The British had already decided to take administrative control of those kingdoms, where there was no male ruler. The arrival of this new baby — “*iśvaran tanna nidhiyō*” (the treasure gifted by God) or “*bhāgya drumattin phalamō*” (the fruits of the tree of fortune) — as Irayimman Tampi aptly puts it in this lullaby — was a welcome relief to the queen, as well as for everyone. The feeling of joy that prevailed in the kingdom is beautifully portrayed in this song.



Meaning of the Lullaby

The phrases in each line of this beautiful lullaby, in deceptively simple Malayāḷam, compare the newborn (royal) baby with the best things in the world that one can imagine. Each phrase is an exclamation (in the form of a query) — Is this (baby) . . . like this one?? Since some of these vernacular words do not admit precise translation into English, we have provided only an approximation to the actual meaning. The exact meaning can be fully enjoyed only with some experience in Malayāḷam language.

IS THIS (baby) ? –

The bright crescent moon? Or the charming lotus flower? The honey filled in a flower? Or the luster of the full moon? The fresh coral gem (could mean the fresh creeper of the *pavizha malli* flower)? Or the pleasant chatter of the baby parrots? A joyously dancing peacock? Or a bird singing the soft *pañcamam*? A bouncing young deer? Or a bright shining swan? A treasure gifted by God? Or the parrot in the hands of *īsvari* (goddess)? The tender leaf of the *pārijāta* tree? Or the fruits of my tree of fortune? A golden casket to enclose the jewel of my affectionate love? Nectar in my sight? Or a light to dispel darkness? The seed for the creeper of my climbing fame? Or a never-fading bright pearl? The brilliance of the sun — to dispel the shields of misery? The essence of knowledge in the *vēdas*? or the very minute sounds of the *vīṇa*? The lovely blossom put forth by the stout branch of my tree of enjoyment? A cluster of *piccaka* flower buds? Or sugar candy that sweetens the tongue? The fragrance of musk? Or the quality of all good deeds? A breeze laden with the fresh scent of flowers? Or the essence of purest gold? A bowl of fresh boiled milk? Or the sweet smelling rose water? The field that grows all virtues? Or the abode of all *dhrama*? A bowl of thirst-quenching water? Or the shade that provides shelter for the weary? A ever-fresh *mallika* flower? Or the wealth stored by me? The auspicious objects of my gaze? Or my most precious jewel? A stream of virtuous beauty? Or playfulness of the youthful *Kṛṣṇa*? The bright forehead mark of goddess *Lakṣmī*? Is it an incarnation of *Kṛṣṇa* himself in this beautiful form in this world? Or is it the mercy of Lord *Padmanābha*? Or is it the source of all future happiness?

Singer, Bombay Jayashri has rendered this song in a “Charsur” thematic CD/cassette on traditional lullabies, appropriately entitled “*Vātsalyam*”.



ōmanattinḱalkkiṭāvō (tārāṭṭ) - Lyrics

rāgaṁ: kuṛāñci (tārāṭṭ)

ōmanattinḱalkkiṭāvō ? nalla
kōmaḷattāmarappūvō ?
pūvil nirañña madhuvō ? pari -
pūrṇendu tanre nilāvō ?
puttan pavilzhakkōṭiyō ? ceru -
tattakaḷ koñcuṁ mōzhiyō ?
cāñcāṭiyāṭuṁ mayilō ? mṛdu -
pañcamāṁ pāṭuṁ kuyilō ?
tulluṁilāmān kiṭāvō ? śobha -
kollunnorannakkōṭiyō ?
īśvaran tanna nidhiyō ? para -
meśvariyeṇṭuṁ kiḷiyō ?
pārijātattin taḷirō ? enrē
bhāgyadrumattin phalamō ?
vātsalyaratnattē vayppān mama
vāccoru kāñcanaccepō ?
dṛṣṭikku vēccoramṛtō ? kūri -
ruṭṭattu vecca viḷakkō ?
kīrttilataykkulla vittō ? ennuṁ
keṭu varātulla muttō ?
ārtti timiraṁ kaḷavān uḷḷa
mārttāṇḁa deva prabhayō ?
sūktiyl kaṇṭa pōruḷō ? ati -
sūkṣmamāṁ viṇāravamō ?

vampicca santoṣavalli tanre
kompattu pūṭṭa pūvalli ?
piccakattin malar cēṇṭō ? nāvi -
nniccha nalkunna kalkkaṇṭō ?
kastūri tanre maṇamō ? perttuṁ
sattukaḷkkulla guṇamō ?
pūmaṇamerṛoru kāṛṛō ? erṛaṁ
ponnil kalarnnoru māṛṛō ?
kāccikkuṛukkiya pālō ? nalla
gandhamelūṁ paninīrō ?
nanma viḷayūṁ nilamō ? bahu -
dharmmañṇaḷ vāzhuṁ gṛhamō ?
dāham kaḷayūṁ jalamō ? mārgga -
kheḁaṁ kaḷayūṁ taṇalō ?
vāṭāṭṭa mallikappūvō ? ṇānuṁ
teṭivēcculla dhanamō ?
kaṇṇinnu nalla kaṇiyō ? mama
kaivanna cintāmaṇiyō ?
lāvaṇyapuṇya nadiyō ? uṇṇi
kkārvarṇṇan tanre kaḷiyō ?
lakṣmī bhagavati tanre tiru -
nēṛri meliṭṭa kuṛiyō ?
ennuṇṇikṛṣṇan janiccō pāri -
linṇane veṣaṁ dhariccō ?
padmanābhan tan kṛpayō ? muṛṛuṁ
bhāgyaṁ varunna vazhiyō ?

**The Author is a CMANA member,
author, and long-time supporter**

**Sury R. Subban**

Coffee Table Talks

Our CMANA President Shri. Sowmyan requested me to write a few words about my experiences with my long association with CMANA (phonetically and affectionately known as “Seemana” - like the great one “Seeman” of India). One of the greatest experiences I had is the solace which CMANA provided me in my early days of 1970. Arriving in USA in 1970 all appeared to be exiting! With Vietnam war in full swing and the US economy feeling the loss of significant skilled labor, I had no problem in landing a job of my satisfaction. Coupled with a significant and sudden upgrade of your standard of living (from House, Auto, TV etc) life in USA appeared to be all the glamour and glitz that you had all dreamed about. However, within

two years of my arrival I felt suddenly a vacuum in my mental health and happiness of not hearing any Indian Music (be it Carnatic or North) so that I could truly enjoy and relax. In fact that vacuum haunted me for another two years with such an intensity that I even decided to pack up and leave USA for good. However, with the start of CMANA by likeminded music lovers in 1976 my whole direction and life changed overnight. With a series of concerts held without fail in Spring & Fall by CMANA in the subsequent years I had the joy of relaxing myself away from the rat race life of USA. CMANA was (and still is) truly instrumental in convincing me that I can live in USA with a blend of both Western and Eastern values.





Talk about other experiences? Many are there, but one stands out. A painfully joyous task of mailing notices to our large members at a time when Internet & Cell Phone were not easily available as it is now. Folding, stapling and delivering in bulk to the Post Office (who were not much enthused in welcoming us as it is a lot of work for them – however it is just opposite now as they are yearning for clients) was a painful task for many of us but was joyous as it will be very shortly listening to a wonderful and relaxing performance.

Many of our past Presidents were Scientists, Corporate Executives, IT wizards Molecular Biologist - to name a few. One of our Past Presidents stands out as unique – a practicing Doctor and that too a Surgeon. ! How that Past President-Surgeon managed to snatch time amidst the heavy surgery schedule? Whenever I meet with many of our Indian youngsters born in USA I point

our Past President Surgeon as an example to emulate. I stress to them that apart from striving for excellence in your profession do not forget to include Indian Music (Carnatic or North) in one of many hobbies you develop and allocate time for it.

CMANA will shortly reach another milestone in opening up a venue in Chennai for American born Indian Boys & Girls to demonstrate their mastery of Carnatic Music around first week of Yr 2017. It is very relevant now to point out to them some of the accomplishments of our Past Presidents particularly our Doctor-Surgeon who managed to snatch time to nurture CMANA to its present status. My appeal to our American born Indian Boys & Girls is not to forget our Indian Musical Heritage and strive for preserving it.

The Author is a CMANA Honorary Patron and long-time supporter





D.B. Ashvin

A Musician's Musician

Tandalam Krishnamachari Rangachari ('TKR' as was popularly known) was one of the foremost exponents of carnatic music. He was known for bringing a fresh and exciting tinge to his performances. Though very few recordings of his music remain today they are revered as one of the finest performances and still enjoyed by the music community young and old alike. A grand centenary celebration planned by the TKR family was held at the Music Academy Chennai in Dec 2012.



T.K. Rangachari

Early Days

TKR was born in the Varahaneri a suburb of Trichirapally on June 3 1912. His mother Rajalakshmi Ammal was a music teacher herself, and imparted the first lessons to him. He was fondly called 'Tavil Rangan' for his propensity to drum rhythmic sequences on the household pots and pans. His mother passed away when Rangachari was in his 10th year and most of his upbringing was by his grandmother in Srirangam.

His first guru was Kodaganallur Subbaiyah Bhagavathar a musical giant and himself a disciple of Konerirajapuram Vadhyanatha Iyer. Here young Rangachari underwent rigorous training under the traditional gurukula system imbibing his guru's unique aspects namely control over brigas, neraval in three speeds and laya vinyasam. TKR's first concert was at the tender age of 10 at the Pattamadai high school near Tirunelveli where he enthralled the audience with a fascinating rendition of Dwaitamu Sukhama a masterpiece of Tyagaraja in the ragam Reethi Goulai.

Annamalai University & His Musical Journey

In 1929 when the Annamalai University in Chidambaram was instituted by Annamalai Chettiar, Rangachari was eager to join the Sangeetha Bhushanam course. This was a golden opportunity to train under musical giants such as Sabesa Iyer, Ponnaiyah Pillai and Deshamangalam Subramaniya Iyer. When he went to apply armed with a letter of recommendation by his guru he met with disappointment as it was announced that the selections were already made and there were no seats left. However realizing his eagerness he was still allowed to undergo the entrance exam test the next day. During the test he was asked to demonstrate the subtle differences between the ragas Durbar and Nayaki. TKR's response impressed the examiners so much that not only did they give him admission, they automatically

promoted him to the second year!.

TKR completed the Sangeetha Bhushanam course and joined the university as a lecturer where he served from 1933 to 1942 under the leadership of Tiger Varadachariyar. In 1942 TKR left the Annamalai University and lived in Tanjore for a short period of time before joining the Central College of Carnatic music in Madras. This was headed by Musiri Subramaniya Iyer and included teachers such as T Brinda, T.M. Swaminatha Pillai, Devakottai Narayana Iyengar and M.A.Kalyanakrishna bhagavathar.

In 1953 he was invited back to the Annamalai University where he rejoined as a senior lecturer. During this time he along with the famed Dandapani Desikar embarked on the “Pann” (original melodic modes or ragas used by the Tamil speaking people in ancient times) research. He along with Desikar gave several performances focusing on Thevarams and Pasurams that were set to tune by them. In 1964 he was invited by the Ceylon Art Academy in Srilanka for a series of concerts and teaching assignments. He resigned his post at the Annamalai University and went to Sri Lanka for the assignment before returning and settling in Karaikkudi with his eldest son.

Concert Experiences

All these years TKR was quite busy in the concert circuit, but his ascent to the top rung of performers was slow. This was mostly driven by the fact that there was a galaxy of superstars during his time and his deep involvement in teaching assignments. However during the latter parts of his life it was as if the rasikas had woken up to realize his merits. During the period from 1966 - 1976 he gave several memorable concerts and was recognized as one of the top performers during that time. Some of his memorable concerts include one at the Krishna Gana Sabha Gokulashtami series in 1966 where he

was accompanied by Palghat Mani Iyer (for the first time) and Lalgudi Jayaraman. This concert was extremely successful in all aspects, included soulful renditions of Sri Subramanyaya Namaste in Kambhoji and Sangeetha Shastra Gnyanam in Mukhari and two spectacular thani's by Mani Iyer. Another memorable concert was at the Music Academy in the same year accompanied by M.S.Gopalakrishnan on the violin, Tanjore Upendran on the Mridangam and Mysore Manjunath on the ghatam. The renditions of Tatwa Meruga Tarama in Garudadhwani and Paramathmudu in Vagadheeswari send the audience into raptures. He also performed several memorable concerts with the legendary Pazhani Subramaniya Pillai on the Mridangam.



The Professor on the Dais

Most of TKR's concerts were unplanned and he would shape it appropriately depending on the mood and reaction of the audience. His presentations always had a fresh outlook to them, his concerts were deemed “fashionable” even in those times. His voice was his asset that he had developed over the years. It was the perfect mix of azhuttham and melody, and would obey his every command. His vocal range encompassed the full 2 octaves and he used it to his advantage to take raga exploration to new heights uniquely delineating the unexplored areas in the thara sthayi and ati mandara sthayis.

He was quite vocal on stage and kept the atmosphere lively. He would sing a unique



sangathi in Kalyani stop and remark that this sangathi was being lost in the carnatic scene and imbibed in cinema music instead!. He would shower generous praise and encouragement on upcoming accompanists, many of whom are stalwarts of today and reminiscence his generous words of encouragement. He was often referred to as the “Professor on the dais” where he would encourage his disciples to sing along and gave them significant opportunities to perform alone. He was quite disapproving of the audience walking out during the thani avarthanam rendition and wouldn’t hesitate to chide them in the act!.

His Views on Music

“Always respect the audience especially the knowledgeable sections” said TKR in his 1966 interview with BVK Sastry. His views were that a good musician needs to first cultivate a good “shariram” (voice) and use this as an effective medium to communicate the subtleties of carnatic music to the audience. He said that artistes should have an open mind to listen and imbibe the good aspects of any music be it Carnatic or Hindustani, innovate instead of resorting to the beaten path, at the same time remain within the boundaries of tradition. He recognized at that time that Carnatic music was evolving with the changing mood of the modern audience and that artistes should try to harmoniously blend the old with the new to keep up with the times. He was a great admirer of Shri Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar and considered him as his manaseeka guru.

His Teaching Style – Reflections of a Shishya

“It was a, golden period of my life to be the student of my great guru Shri Rangachariar for it was he who opened my eyes to good music, erasing my ignorance.” reflects eminent vocalist Vidushi Neela Ramgopal a disciple of TKR. It was serendipity that TKR after returning to Chennai following his retirement from the Annamalai University accepted her invitation to come to

Bangalore every month to teach a few students including her, who aspired to learn from him.

“His voice was sharp and clear with perfect alignment to shruti and was capable of delineating even the toughest ragas with ease” says Smt. Ramgopal. She remembers that during one of the lessons she was moved to tears after a string of deeply soulful sancharams by him. Raga Alapana and Neraval was his forte. The words or sahithya in the Neraval would magically fall in the correct place during the melodic improvisations, enhancing the musical value and at the same time retaining the meaning of the Sahitya. In Swaraprasthara he would teach various combinations and permutations of the swaras and emphasize that the students absorb the raga nuances as well. Smt. Ramgopal vividly remembers a concert TKR performed in front of Andavan Swamiji in Bangalore where his Mohana Ragaalapana and the En Palli Kondeerayya kriti took the audience into a trance. She however regrets that by the time due recognitions came to him he was no more.

TKR Legacy

Shri TKR moved to Chennai in 1977 and spent the last few years of his life before passing away on Feb 19th 1979. TKR has trained a plethora of musicians such as Kalaimamani Late Shri Vairamangalam Lakshminarayanan who accompanied him in several of concerts spanning across three decades. His other disciples included Smt. Neela Ramgopal, Shri Neyyanthinkara Mohana Chandran, Malini Kasturirangan, Jaya Krishnan, P.N. Parasuraman (retired A I R. Programme executive.), Vaigal Gnanaskandan, Sadagopan amongst others. One of Vairamangalam Lakshminarayanan’s disciples Jaishankar has focused his Phd dissertation on TKR.

He is survived by his five daughters and three sons and his disciples and family carry forward his legacy.

**The Author is a CMANA member,
Musician and Long-time supporter**

**Ashok Madhav**

Megharanjani- an Untold Story



Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar

Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar and Mysore Vasudevacharya (Mys.V) were contemporaries, Mys.V was junior by 5 years. They were the disciples of Patnam Subramania Iyer of Tiruvaiyaru at different times.

They both turned out to be good composers. When they started composing, each one made a composition in Megharanjani (a janya of Mayamalavagoula) not aware of other's creativity.

When they both met after several years, Poochi sang his kriti in the above ragam. Later, Mys.V also sang his kriti in the same ragam. Surprisingly both were identical in structure and tune. Mys.V being junior said apologizing to Poochi, "I am sorry the kritis sound very much alike and I being junior to you, I will delete my kriti". Then Poochi objected to Mys.V saying there is no need to delete his kriti. He further stated "Akshaya linga vibho" of Dikshitar in Shankarabharanam and "Manasu swadinamai" of Tyagaraja have similar structure and both set in

mishra chapu talam. So Poochi advised Mys.V to let the kriti be in his book and to not delete it. Such was the camaraderie between them and mutual respect for each other.

These two distinguished composers belong to the sishya parampara of Tyagaraja through Manambuchavadi Venkatasubbayya, who was the guru of Patnam Subramania Iyer. Let us see their contributions to music.

Poochi (1860-1919) was a senior disciple of Patnam around 1895 and Mys.V joined the group later in 1900. Mys.V has documented his experiences while he was undergoing gurukulavasam with Patnam in his book, which makes an interesting read. Poochi has composed most of his kritis in Telugu and only one or two in Sanskrit, whereas Mys.V has composed both in Telugu and Sanskrit. They both have composed different genres like varnams, kritis, javalis, tillanas, ragamalikas, etc.

Poochi was born in Ramanathapuram in 1860. Having had the musical training from Patnam, he became a well known musician and attracted a number of disciples (such as Kandanur Srinivasa Iyengar, Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Salem Doraiswamy Iyengar, Karaikudi Rajamani Iyengar, Kuttalam Srinivasa Iyer) and prominent among them was Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar. Poochi was an asthana vidwan of Ramanathapuram court. Besides using common ragams, he employed ragams like Megharanjani,

Nathabhairavi, Paras and a newly created ragam “Suraranjani”. He handled common talams for his kritis. However, he has composed a tillana in ‘Lakshmisha’talam with 108 aksharams and another tillana in ‘Ragavardhini’ talam with 72 aksharams.

Poochi made close to 100 compositions. A few of them have nice chittaswarams too. For example, both ‘Saraguna palimpa’ (Kedaragoula) and ‘Anudinamunu gavumaiyya’ (Begada) have been embellished with beautiful chittaswarams.

Some of his popular kritis include:

Parama pavana Rama – Purvikalyani

Saraguna palimpa- Kedaragoula

Anudinamunu gavumaiyya- Begada

Neekelana edanichalamu- Devamanohari

Samaja varada neeku- Suddasaveri

Poochi composed a kriti – ‘Sadguru Swamiki’ in Reetigoula’ in praise of Tyagaraja.

He published his kritis with the assistance of Salem Doraiswamy Iyengar. People have always wondered how the prefix ‘Poochi’ was attached to his name. Poochi was a short man and he used to walk fast and so he was nicknamed ‘Poochi’ which means an insect in Tamil (the little man moved around so fast like an insect).

Mys.V was born in Mysore in 1865. Among Mys.V compositions (which number about 200), the more popular ones are

Brochevarevarura- Khamas

Ra ra rajeevalochana – Mohanam

Sri Chamundeshwari- Bilahari

Marimari vachuna- Kamboji

Bhajare manasa- Karnataka Devagandhari (Abheri)

Na chai vida vakura- Natakuranji

Mys.V has used many common ragams plus uncommon ragams like Sunadavinodini (new ragam), Megharanjani, Pushpalatika, Shuddasalavi etc. He has composed captivating

chittaswarams for some of his compositions. Two examples will suffice here. ‘Ra ra rajeevalochana’ in Mohanam and ‘Sri Chamundeshwari’ in Bilahari. It is noteworthy that Mys.V elevated the stature of minor ragams like Abheri (Bhajare re manasa), Behag (Bhaveyham Raghu-veeram), and Khamas (Brochevarevarura) by composing major kritis in them. Note these kritis were composed at the turn of the 20th century, even before these ragams were popularly rendered. (Poochi has used both Behag and Khamas for composing javalis only). Another interesting aspect is that Mys.V introduced kakali nishadam for his Khamas instead of the conventional kaishiki nishadam as in Tyagaraja’s Khamas. The Khamas of Mys.V is equally appealing too. Mys.V has also composed a kriti “Srimadadi Tyagaraja guruvaram” in Kalyani in praise of Tyagaraja.



Mysore Vasudevacharya

Mys. V trained a number of disciples (Yoga Narasimham, V.Ramarathnam, N. Chennakeshavaiah, C.Rangaiah, B.K.Padmanabha Rao, C.R.Mani, D.Pashupathi) both in Mysore and Kalakshetra, Madras. He was honored by the Music Academy with a title of Sangeetha Kalanidhi.

Both these illustrious composers, Poochi and Mys.V have used their own names as mudras for their compositions.

The Author is a CMANA member, author and long-time supporter

**Ananth Rao**

True Musical Fusion An ABCD Perspective

- Ananth Rao

The prevailing opinion voiced by older generations and even some of my peers is the perpetual cultural confusion of the second generation American Indian. Many younger Indians identify as such, and revel in the collective nickname 'ABCDs', or "American-Born Confused Desis", a distinction which I can definitely appreciate. As an Indian born and brought up in the United States, but with a traditional Hindu upbringing and obeisance to traditional values, I could very easily espouse such a viewpoint as well - given the warring cultural musical identities within myself. Carnatic music and Western classical music are two musical styles in which I have long been trained, and the two differ far and wide both in mechanics and in audience.

Throughout most of my schooling, I outwardly professed love of Western classical music, a musical style that already didn't resonate with

most of my classmates - who grew up listening to the much more contemporary pop hits of the 90s. Consequently, I developed the belief that professing love of a now even more esoteric musical tradition would only alienate me from my classmates further, and as such I hid my involvement in Carnatic music almost entirely throughout the rest of my elementary and middle school years. This was a mistake. Carnatic music and Western classical music are such integral parts of my life that the very idea of sequestering one away just to connect more with other people is appalling to me now.

My background in Carnatic music began at age 3 when my mother Dr. Bhavani Prakash started teaching me vocal informally, and I had been listening to Carnatic music even before then. From the very beginning of my musical journey, the main musical sabha I interacted with was CMANA. The





first Great Composer's Day I competed in was when I was 5 years old. I sang the Bilahari song Paridhaanamichite in Khandachaapu, a sweet little composition of Sri PatnamSubramaniaIyer which, the small child I was, I sang in the impossibly high shruthi of B (or 7 as it is also known).

Sabhas like CMANA have been mainstays throughout my growth as a person and as a musician, both as venues for concerts, workshops, and other events and as a hub for me to meet more likeminded people, musical peers who shared my drive and passion for pursuing the Carnatic musical tradition. To this day, I regularly attend CMANA events and concerts and occasionally get the opportunity to give one of my own, and I invariably run into old music friends in the New Jersey area who I would rarely see otherwise. I will always be extremely grateful to the musical sabhas in the states for enabling me to meet all of my talented Carnatic music friends, many of whom, like myself, had experiences both with Carnatic and Western classical music as children.

For me, my experience with Western classical music is a story of playing catch-up. I had been listening to Western classical music since I was a child, elegant and controlled Mozarts, sweeping Beethovens, powerful Tchaikovskies, with appreciation for the beauty but very little for the technique and ages of practice necessary to attempt such things. I picked up the violin when I was in second grade, attended lessons regularly but not passionately, and then stopped taking lessons altogether when I was in ninth grade. Losing those lessons and losing all semblance of technique may have been the kick I needed to appreciate the virtuosity and expertise of the orchestras I so often listened to. Since then, I have been regularly reaching for my violin and attempting to recapture the peak of my violin

technique, with far better appreciation for the incalculable value of the lessons that I had waded through so halfheartedly for so many years.

Along with my constant attempts to recapture and surpass the violin technique of my youth, I am also attempting nowadays to add more instruments to my musical arsenal: guitar, which I always imagined was similar to violin and had never learned as a child, and more recently, piano. Perhaps I am indeed an ABCD, for it is true I am warring with two cultural sides of myself. As someone who still dreams of and fully intends to accomplish absolutely everything I can, I find the most important thing these sides of me are warring for is *time*. How on earth can I learn all of these musical instruments, all these musical styles, in a finite life?

One solution, it would seem, is not to attempt to separately improve the two, but indeed to combine them! And this happens many times unconsciously as it is. One day while I am casually strumming my guitar, an idea will strike me, and soon I will be playing an alapanai in kaapi. Another day I will be practicing a thaniyavarthanam on the mridangam, and a melody for a classical piece will strike me naturally just based on the rhythms I am beating. I cannot count the number of random phrases I have taken from Western classical pieces and formed into sangathis for manodharmam in many different ragas. And this is the true beauty of music to me, that all music can be produced with all instruments, and that different instruments engender different emotions and different ideas in us. Why not combine Carnatic and Western classical music even more? What fascinating things could occur if we do?

There's nothing more beautiful in a violin duet concert than when, during a song, one violinist strikes up a position one octave below or above the other, or even better, when one takes the vadi and

the other the samvadi of the raga while following the same relative tune. This is something known in Western classical music as parallel harmony, something which violin duet artists have been doing either knowingly or even without, for decades now. What more could we combine in a fluid and unforced manner if we just explored both musical styles with knowledge of the other?

There is an aggressive push in modern Western pop music to combine existing ideas with new and exotic instruments, but often without truly using the spirit or the concepts of the music from which these instruments hail. A prime example of this is the Beatles' extensive use of sitars and tablas in their music, or in Hans Zimmer's extensive use of tablas and even yogic chanting in soundtracks like *Interstellar* and *The Dark Knight Rises*. The instrument is there, but not the music. Many fusions attempted the other direction are more successful at capturing the essence of both, but many also appear forced or have only surface Carnatic depth.

Maybe there is another way. Perhaps unbridled Carnatic music that directly inspires Western classical pieces, and vice versa - perhaps this kind of fusion, a fusion of ideas, rather than a fusion of instruments or of just sound, would be more true to the spirit of both. I am still waiting to hear a Western classical version of a raga thanam pallavi, replete with trikalam and manodharmam at a single refrain, but without compromising the depth of Western classical form, harmony, and counterpoint! The struggle of the ABCD is in trying to blend the two cultural identities at a deeper level and more seamlessly, rather than forcing an artificial combination that cannot capture the true beauty of either. The only way to accomplish such a blend is to understand each culture at the deepest level. Such is the struggle for musical fusion as well, and a truly successful fusion is an art that requires knowledge of all the musical styles one is attempting to fuse.

**The Author is a CMANA Member
Vocalist and Mridangist and
long-time supporter**





Naveen Basavanhally

CMANA's Influential Role in My Musical Journey

As CMANA completed its 40th anniversary, it is my privilege to be a part of this celebration by sharing experiences of my musical journey and the role CMANA has played in it.

According to my parents, my interest in percussion was apparent from an early age, as evidenced by my proclivity to knock and hit on any available surface. My earliest memory of music is attending Chinmaya Mission Balavihar and being enthralled by the tabla accompanying the bhajans. After clamoring for the opportunity to learn tabla for years, I went to my first (and last) tabla class at the age of seven. I was promptly told that I was too small and did not have the strength to play tabla, but I would perhaps be ready in a few years. Two years after that, I happily had the tremendous fortune of meeting, and being accepted by, my first guru Sri Ramachandran Suresh. Thus, I was initiated into the exquisite art of mridangam.

CMANA, in particular, had an enormous impact on my music development in two ways: competitions and concerts. My first competition in 2004 was CMANA's junior percussion category during the annual Great Composer's Day. In preparation for that I remember practicing, for countless hours, a seven-minute thaniavarthanam in misrachapu. Competitions help to motivate and expedite development because they offer students a tangible goal. Many years later, I was even asked to judge a competition alongside my guru! CMANA also provided me with my initial experiences of attending live concerts. Listening to live concerts is key to developing sangitagnyanam; CMANA

abundantly provided these opportunities, which I savored immensely.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the Nandalala Youth Music Group, led by Smt. AnandhiVenkat. It provided me with my first opportunities to perform on stage. These forums allowed me to transition from the classroom to the stage in a low-pressure environment. In this nurturing and forgiving environment any mistakes made onstage graciously turned into insightful learning experiences, more so than a successful concert would have (although it certainly didn't seem to at the time!).

I had the opportunity to learn from Kalaimamani, CMANA Honorary Patron Sri Guruvayur Dorai, which has been the opportunity of a lifetime. I owe all my accomplishments to the grace of my dear gurus Suresh Uncle and Dorai mama.

Music has given me a sense of community and continues to impact me in ways that I never thought were possible. As a graduate student at the University of California, San Diego, I have been able to connect with faculty members through music, which have lead to collaborations in research. I am eager to see where music will take me in the coming years. I, along with many music students in New Jersey, am deeply indebted to CMANA. I wish CMANA continued and growing success in New Jersey and around the world during the next forty years.

**Author is a Past Junior Member,
Mridangist and CMANA long-time supporter**

CMANA

A Fact Sheet of Major Accomplishments

- ▶ Was founded in 1976 and is in continuous operation for over 4 decades
- ▶ Has earned an international presence and reputation
- ▶ Sponsored over 50 North American tours of famous musicians from India
- ▶ Conducted over 600 concerts in New York and New Jersey
- ▶ Introduced many India-based artists to North America for the first time

- ▶ Established the coveted lifetime achievement award SANGEETHASAAGARA
- ▶ Established the CMANA Endowment Prize at The Music Academy, Chennai to encourage young talent
- ▶ Endowed the M.L.Vasantakumari Fellowship at NaradaGana Sabha, Chennai for supporting Advanced Carnatic Music Training for young professional musicians
- ▶ Established the CMANA Endowment Prize at Percussive Arts Center, Bangalore to encourage young percussion talent

- ▶ Honors the Great Composers of Carnatic Music through annual celebration of the Great Composers Day
- ▶ Helped to raise funds for several memorials for the Trinity of Carnatic Music. First in the world to celebrate the 500th Birthday Anniversary of Saint Purandaradasa

- ▶ Conducts competitions and gives out many prizes and awards to encourage the learning of Carnatic Music by children in North America
- ▶ Conducts many lecture demonstrations for enlightened understanding of Carnatic Music
- ▶ Promotes creative writing and scholarship via publishing the newsletter Sangeetham with many informative articles
- ▶ Empowers many cultural organizations and universities in North America by providing artists and scholars for performances and lecture demonstrations
- ▶ Run by an elected volunteering Board of Trustees with limited terms, and spends 100% of contributions for music related activities

The Letter that Formed the Genesis of CMANA

53 Grove Street

Garden City, NY 11530

January 23, 1976

Subject: Establishment of Carnatic Music Academy of North America, Inc.



Dr. P. Rajagopalan

Dear Friend:

One look at the subject mentioned above is bound to elicit a mighty groan from you. “Oh, my God! Not another cultural organization! Don't we have 25 in New York alone? We need another one just now as Sahara needs sand ” will be your explosive reaction.

Relax, my friend, and prepare yourself for quite a pleasant surprise. First of all, let me assure you that the proposed academy will not be just another one of those organizations which admirably cater to and, more often than not, successfully satiate the diverse cultural needs of the Indians in this continent. Secondly, it will not even be a broad-based cultural society but, as the name implies, an exclusive academy devoted entirely to the promotion and propagation of carnatic music in the States and Canada. Thirdly, it has been conceived not to compete with the existing cultural organizations but to complement and assist them in their fine activities. Finally, it will be distinctly different from other organizations in that it will have a corporate structure where the decision making will rest with a Board of Directors drawn from a number of cities in the States and Canada.

So you see, my friend, how uniquely different this academy will be when you compare it with the other cultural societies! The need for such an august and discriminating body devoted exclusively to carnatic music cannot be overemphasized. The interest in this glorious, highly satisfying, and immensely intricate art which lay dormant in us (being so far away from home as we are) has gradually been kindled to a blaze by the sporadic visits of a few leading carnatic musicians in the past five years. While we are indebted to the small groups of individuals who made these concert tours possible, we have to recognize the fact that they had to go through much hardship and financial risk in their ventures.

In contemplating on ways to develop a suitable atmosphere for the enjoyment of carnatic music and also to nourish and sustain it with the least bit of hardship and financial risk, I have come to the conclusion that an exclusive, incorporated, and non-profit academy composed of at least 100 carnatic music lovers investing about \$100 each would be an ideal solution. Such an academy should be able to:

1. Provide the money base for underwriting concert tours of the States and Canada by leading carnatic musicians at least twice a year.
2. Assist the local cultural societies in organizing concerts by visiting artists.
3. Encourage talented musicians amongst us here by providing them a forum to perform.
4. Promote periodical panel discussions and lecture demonstrations on the finer aspects of carnatic music.
5. Initiate music appreciation groups for enhanced understanding and enjoyment of the beauty of carnatic music.
6. Observe the birthdays of the more important composers of carnatic music in a fitting manner.

With warm regards,

Sincerely,

P. Rajagopalan

CMANA LIST OF PAST PRESIDENTS

This is an abridged bullet list of each past CMANA president's association with the organization - during their presidency as well as before and after. Their individual and detailed write-ups are available on the CMANA website

- ▶ Founded CMANA in 1976 with the help of fifty five friends sending in their cheques each for \$100 in response to proposal for the need for an organization for perpetuation and propagation of Carnatic Music in North America.
- ▶ Inauguration of CMANA by Mr. C.V. Narasimhan, Under Secretary General, United Nations, New York, in April 1976. A momentous occasion indeed! A dream realized!!
- ▶ Organized the first nation-wide concert tour of Dr. M.L. Vasanthakumari and party with the co-sponsorship of Bharathi Society of Montreal. The tour was a phenomenal success which provided the proper exposure for CMANA in becoming a household name in a short period of time.
- ▶ Persuaded Sri. T.R. Mahalingam (Mali) to present his only concert in the Western Hemisphere in 1988 with T. Rukmini (Violin), Trichy Sankaran (Mrudangam) and Srimushnam Raja Rao (Kanjira).
- ▶ Elected for a second tenure as President in 1983.
- ▶ First ever concert tour of the States and Canada by Sri. Lalgudi J. Jayaraman, G.J.R. Krishnan and Trichy Sankaran.
- ▶ Organizing the 500th birth anniversary of Saint Purandara Dasa to be celebrated on a grand scale with the unique concert of his compositions by Dr. M.L. Vasanthakumari and party.



Dr. P. Rajagopalan
1976 - 1978 & 1983 - 1989

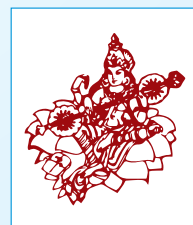
- ▶ One of the founding members of the CMANA, became the second President of CMANA in 1978 succeeding the founding President Dr. R. Rajagopalan.
- ▶ Brought several famous Carnatic musicians to tour across North America.
- ▶ Arranged recitals and concerts by distinguished artists including M.S. Subbalakshmi, Veena S. Balachandrar, Sikkil Sisters, Mani Krishnaswamy, Bombay Sisters and D. K. Pattammal.
- ▶ Always keen to bring the spectacle of live performances to many people who would otherwise not have the opportunity to experience such events.
- ▶ Ardent lover of the Carnatic Music art from youth days in India, relishing the opportunity to be able share this art form with others in the USA.



Mr. L. Ramachandran**
1978 - 1979

**** - CMANA regrets to note that Mr. L. Ramachandran passed away a few years ago.**

- ▶ Succeeded Mr. L. Ramachandran as the President of CMANA, serving out one year of Mr. Ramachandran's tenure.
- ▶ Subsequently elected and served as President for a two-year period.
- ▶ Arranged multiple concert tours including that of Veena Balachandrar.



Mr. Parthasarathy
1979 - 1982

- ▶ Drafted as trustee in response to a somewhat critical letter to Dr. P. Rajagopalan, the founder and President of CMANA, for not publicizing its activities sufficiently!
- ▶ Wrote something chatty on Music in a CMANA souvenir in 1987 which led to getting drafted, once again – this time to edit “SANGEETHAM”. Followed rudimentary method of cutting and pasting pictures, articles banged away on a typewriter with no erase function even (using a white tape roll to correct a spelling error!). Many years later, self-funded and bought a \$400 Brother combo typewriter/computer with some word-processing capability. This technology could type a whole page, store it, erase, edit, etc. and print it at will. To me, that was modernity only next to sliced bread!
- ▶ Later, in 1993, participation by children was high, hence a JUNIOR SANGEETHAM was created as a part of the main issue under the editorship of (Late) Vinay Venkatesh. Kids played a main part for its eight pages and published their interviews of artists with their frank questions.
- ▶ Considers being president for 4 years, organizing two very successful annual tours, and bringing out 3-4 issues of SANGEETHAM a full time endeavour for entire family.



Dr. Uma Roy
1989 - 1993

- ▶ Associated with CMANA almost from the days of its founding. Served as Secretary for eight years, President for two, and a trustee for four years.
- ▶ Helped in the preparation of many publications of Sangeetham, fliers, and a variety of promotional material. Designed the publications associated with CMANA's 25th anniversary.
- ▶ Handled the audio system in concerts in NJ and neighbouring states for over eight years.
- ▶ Proposed and designed all aspects of the Sangeethasaagara award. And was 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.
- ▶ Helped in formalizing the MLV award at Narada Gana Sabha and the CMANA Award at Music Academy, Chennai.
- ▶ Organized the first Tamil Isai concert in the USA.



Dr. V. Ramaswami
1993 - 1995

- ▶ Involved with CMANA for almost two decades, becoming a Trustee in 1992, Secretary of CMANA in 1994 and the President for 4 years, and Trustee again!
- ▶ Keen on bringing Carnatic music to all corners of USA where there is an Indian diaspora and a service to Carnatic music by giving opportunities for young talented musicians.
- ▶ Instituted the Sangeethasagara award with the first recipient being Shri Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer in an award function held in Chennai in 1994. A high point in his time with CMANA.
- ▶ Took responsibility for audio recordings for many years for many concerts under multiple Boards.



Mr. G. Subbiah
1995 - 1999

- ▶ President during Y2K, a period of flux for CMANA, where many new Organizations were also presenting Artistes, which hitherto had been CMANA's sole domain. Cultural activities on many fronts such as Dance, Temple activities, Dramas, and other forms of entertainment/ social obligations ate into CMANA's attendance at its featured concerts.
- ▶ Oversaw the SangeethaSaagara Award function felicitating three eminent women stalwarts MS, DK Pattamal, and late MLV. Owes a deep sense of gratitude to Narada Gaana Sabha for hosting this event under their banner and infrastructure, and owes a big thanks to Soundaram and Ramaswamy who were the prime movers of this idea, and facilitators with NGS to give CMANA a great platform.
- ▶ Planned and conducted CMANA's major milestone of its 25th Year Celebrations in NJ - a 3-day event featuring 10 major artistes with equally prominent accompanists. While the event itself was free to the Rasikas, used that forum to increase membership. During those 3 days alone, membership almost doubled.



Mr. T. V. Krishna
1999 - 2001

- ▶ Started as a trustee in 1993 arranging annual Great composers' day music competitions, arranging Music-Marathon, which was an all-day program to promote and encourage local teachers and their talented students, and representing CMANA at the Thyagaraja Aradhana in collaboration with NJML.
- ▶ Became Vice President in 1999 and took multiple responsibilities during the Silver Jubilee of CMANA May 2001.
- ▶ As President from Fall 2001, arranged many concerts including one by (late) Smt. Suguna Purushothaman, and a marathon concert by Smt. Sudha Raghunathan who set a record by singing for six and half hours. Arranged successful tours by T. M. Krishna and by Smt. Rama Ravi.
- ▶ Steered the organization and handled the sensitivities during the tragic events of World Trade Center disaster and later the tragic demise of Mr. Thanabalasingham, Vice President of CMANA.
- ▶ Instituted the CMANA 'best percussionist award', which is given annually by The Percussive Arts Center, Bangalore



Mrs. Asha Janardhan
2001 - 2003

- ▶ Started with helping Mrs. Vasantha Rajagopalan with cooking for all concert and program attendees (yes, CMANA used to serve free food then to attract an audience) and serving as host to many visiting artists. Organized a Great Composers Day program in the 1980's at The Hindu Temple, NY featuring mainly children. Formalized many aspects of the GCD.
- ▶ Later inducted as a trustee and subsequently as President for two years.
- ▶ As President, conducted a successful fundraiser program, which featured many memorable events - a dance program by the Dhananjayans and a concert of Smt. Lakshmi Shankar, in addition to a soulful program of Smt. (Bombay) Jayashree Ramnath.
- ▶ During the Silver Jubilee, resurrected the history of CMANA including the list of former trustees from boxes of paper correspondence and files. Later undertook a major responsibility of streamlining the CMANA accounts with Treasurer Mrs. Mangalam Chidambaram.
- ▶ Being from the founding family of Narada Gana Sabha, Chennai, got considerable help for CMANA and helped build a strong alliance with that organization.



**Dr. Soundaram
Ramaswami**
2003 - 2005

- ▶ Founder member joining CMANA in 1976 at its formation.
- ▶ Fondly recalls helping with the December 1976 concert of Smt. DK Pattammal and the 1977 concert of M.S. Subbalakshmi.
- ▶ Become a Trustee in 2001, later served as Secretary, and had two stints as President working with a cohesive team and providing a forum to local artists.
- ▶ Proudly notes that two 2nd generation trustees have served on the Board – Nithya Nagarajan and Rajesh Nathan.
- ▶ Lead the organization during the 35th anniversary celebration in 2011 featuring among other artistes Sri. K.J. Yesudas.
- ▶ Sangeetha Saagara for Dr. M. Balamurali Krishna and Sri. R.K. Srikantan awarded and planning for Sri. T.N. Seshagopalan under her tenure.



Dr. P. N. Aruna
2005 - 2007
2010 - 2013

- ▶ Had 12+ years of active and direct responsibilities as a CMANA Board member in various roles, teaming and working with 4 Presidents - Mr. T.V. Krishna, Ms. Asha Janardhan, Dr. Soundaram Ramaswami, and Dr. P.N. Aruna.
- ▶ Became President in 2007 with a 3-year term under the newly revised Constitution.
- ▶ Oversaw the successful first tours of up-and-coming artistes – Sikkil Gurucharan in 2008 and Ms Nisha Rajagopalan in 2009.
- ▶ Chaired an awards-committee to felicitate SangitaKalanidhi Madurai T. N. Sheshagopalan with the coveted Sangeetha Saagara title in October 2007.
- ▶ Took CMANA 'green' by shifting to electronic mailing of flyers and going paperless - a daunting task that required collecting members' emails and updating database.



Mr. Sankar Narayanan
2007 - 2010

- ▶ Considers CMANA's 25th year anniversary as his first opportunity to share Carnatic music passion with an elite group of volunteers.
- ▶ Proudly recollects that CMANA's elected Board consists of volunteers with no true hierarchy, a collective process of decision-making, and strict financial checks and balances. And that CMANA is an inclusive organization, welcoming all and nurturing a sense of community while achieving common goals.
- ▶ Oversaw the modifying of CMANA's constitution to make operations nimble and adapt to the times.
- ▶ Part of the team that organized CMANA's grand 35th anniversary celebrations.



Mr. Aravind Narasimhan
2013 - 2016



CMANA thanks it's Trustees who have served the board from 1976 through 2016
(List is Sorted Alphabetically by Last Name)

Mr J Ambrose	Mrs Chitra Kumar
Mr M K Anantha	Dr P C Kumar
Dr Ananthanarayanan	Mr ArjunMallik*
Mr M K Anantharaman	Mr AnandMohan
Dr P N Aruna *	Dr A Nagarajan
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Mr Srinath Krishnamurthy	Mrs ShanthiRaghu
Mrs Chithra Krishnan *	Dr A V Raghunath

CMANA thanks it's Trustees who have served the board from 1976 through 2016
(List is Sorted Alphabetically by Last Name)

Dr K Raghunathan

Dr P Rajagopalan *

Mr L Ram Chandran *

Mr Hari Ramachandran

Mrs Padma Ramachandran

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Mr H Venkateswaran

Mr P S Venkatraman *

Mr Dama Venkiah

Mr M K Venugopal *

Dr K V Viswanatha *

Mr K S Viswanathan

** Office Bearer*

CMANA List of Honorary Patrons in alphabetical order of last name


Dr. P. N. Aruna



Mr. Robert Browning



Vidwan Guruvayur Dorai



Ms. Simanthini Kauta



Dr. P. Rajagopalan



Ms. Gowri Ramakrishnan



Dr. V. Ramaswami



Prof. Dr. David Reck



Dr. Uma Roy



Mr. Sury Subban



Mr. G. S. Subbiah



Dr. V. Swaminathan



Ms. Chayamma Visweswariah

In Memoriam:

CMANA regrets that the following Honorary Patrons have left us. May they rest in peace and continue to guide us musically.

Mr. T.N. Bala
Mr. R. Krishnaswami
Mr. Narayanakutty Menon
Ms. Balambal Natarajan
Prof. Dr. Harold Powers

Vidwan Ramnad Raghavan
Ms. Padma Srinivasan
Mr. R. Suriyanarayanan
Sangeetha Kalanidhi Prof. T. Viswanathan

CMANA'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS MAY 2001





CMANA



a thriving institution and a continuing journey

CMANA'S 25TH/35TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS



CMANA'S
35TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS
APRIL 2011





CMANA'S
35TH ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATIONS
APRIL 2011



“These nostalgic photos include the Founding Members of CMANA - Dr. P. Rajagopalan, Mr. R. Parthasarathy, Dr. K. Nagarajan, Mr. L. Ramachandran, Dr. A. Jayaraman on the dias.

The chief guest is Mr. C.V. Narasimhan (Chef de Cabinet, United Nations) and dignitaries include Mr. Srivatsan.

The photos also include the inaugural concert by Mr. T. V. Sankaranarayanan with Mr. Rama Rao on the violin, and Mr. Ramnad Raghavan on mrudangam. Tambura support provided by Mrs. Gomathi Sundaram and by Mrs. Vasantha Rajagopalan. The artistes were introduced by Dr. A. Jayaraman.

The rest of the Founding Members can be seen seated in the audience.

It is notable that on this day the late Mr. L. Ramachandran proposed Dr. P. Rajagopalan to be the first President of CMANA and the proposal was accepted by everyone.



**CMANA
INAUGURAL DAY
APRIL 1976**

CMANA INAUGURAL DAY APRIL 1976



CMANA & NARADA GANA SABHA - A Natural Partnership

Board of Trustees, CMANA*

The Narada Gana Sabha (NGS) and CMANA have had a relationship going back almost to the founding of CMANA. The founder Dr. Rajagopalan's brother Sri Totadri Iyengar was a close friend of Mr. R. Surianarayanan and through him also knew Mr. R. Krishnaswami, the two brothers who played a major role in NGS and its growth all the way from the beginning of NGS. That relationship with the Sabha got even more strongly cemented when the Ramaswamis got involved with CMANA in 1978, Dr. Soundaram Ramaswami being the daughter of Mr. R. Surianarayanan. Besides personal friendships and relationships, the real bond is due more to shared commitments to Carnatic music with a true not-for-profit structure and high levels of integrity in how the two organizations are run.

For many years, NGS helped CMANA by acting as our spokesmen with artists ironing out differences and helping with various aspects of our interactions with them and issues related to visas



Sri R. Surianarayanan

etc. To cite an example, the maiden visit of Mandolin Srinivas, then only thirteen years of age and highly protected by Sri Emberumanar Chettiyar who was too apprehensive of sending him to the US, became possible mainly due to our connections with NGS and even more due to the high regard for Mr. R. Surianarayanan by Sri Emberumanar. Similarly, there are several other major artists of today who were brought to our attention by NGS based on which they had their tours of the USA under CMANA. Along the way, we also enjoyed the services, gratis of course, of Mr. R. Krishnaswami, a leading attorney, in sorting out some legal issues.

The partnership with NGS helped CMANA organize two major events in Chennai – the Sangeethasaagara award ceremony for Sri Semmangudi Srinivasaier and Professor T.N. Krishnan in 1994, and a similar one for Smt. M.S. Subbulakshmi and Smt. D.K. Pattammal in 1999. Both those ceremonies were conducted in a highly dignified and efficient manner and with noticeable level of style and panache, thanks to the two



Sri R. Krishnaswami



Sri Harishankar

brothers who managed most of the details of local logistics and stage arrangements. It would be no exaggeration to say that the first of these put CMANA really on the map of Chennai as the program was covered extensively by most major newspapers like The Hindu, Deccan Herald and magazines like Sruti.

The function awarding Sangeethasaagara to MSS and DKP also was used by CMANA to honor Dr. M.L. Vasanthakumari, a great friend of CMANA and one of the famous trinity who was not alive to

share the same award along with her two peers, with an Endowment Prize bearing her name. It was natural for CMANA to endow that prize at Narada Gana Sabha as a token of appreciation for its sustained help over a long period.

With the passing away of the two major stalwarts Mr. R.Krishnaswami (Secretary) and Mr. R. Surianarayanan (Treasurer) of NGS, the torch has now been passed on to a new team. We are indeed fortunate that our partnership continues under the new leadership headed by Sri. Harishankar Krishnaswami. The Indo-American Festival, a joint event by CMANA and NGS to help publicize upcoming talent in both America and India, is also an assertion of that bond which operates under a dictum, "We may change with time, but not in the ways of friendship." CMANA is proud and considers itself fortunate to have such a valuable friend in NGS.

The Board thanks some senior members of CMANA, and particularly the Ramaswamis, for providing some of the historical information.



Narada Gana Sabha Trust

314, TTK Road, Chennai 600 018. Ph: 24993201



**Murthi Bhavaraju**

CMANA Collaboration with Telugu Fine Arts Society and Hindu Temple & Cultural Society



CMANA, TFAS (Telugu Fine Arts Society), and HTCS (Hindu Temple & Cultural Society, Bridgewater, New Jersey) share common vision and goals, and also enjoy a great relationship spanning many decades. We continue to collaborate on varied programs of common interest.

TFAS was founded in New Jersey in 1984 with ambitious goals and objectives to promote Telugu literature and encourage fine arts, music and dance. TFAS started conducting the Trimurthy Day celebrations since 1984 honoring the three 18th century composers of Carnatic music, 'Thyagaraja', 'Muthuswamy Dikshitar', and 'Syama Sastry'. TFAS Members, many of whom were active as CMANA members as well, like

Prabha and Raghunath Kidambi, Seemanthini Kautha, Polepalle Sankara Rao and others took the responsibility to organize this annual function in the initial years. Trimurthy Day provided an opportunity for TFAS to motivate our children to learn or just appreciate Carnatic music. Trimurthy Day became a very prestigious event organized by TFAS that involved the members of all south Indian states. Artists from neighboring cities like Boston, Philadelphia, and Washington were invited to give mini-concerts on the Trimurthy Day. This event continues today with 400-450 in the audience and more than 100 participants.

Several members of CMANA participated in Trimurthy Day function since beginning. In 2004,



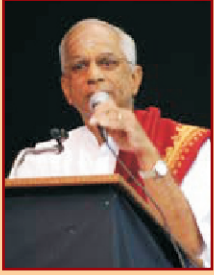
CMANA joined TFAS and HTCS to conduct the Trimurthy Day program at the Temple auditorium. Volunteers from the Temple coordinated the food arrangements for this all day event. CMANA continued the joint sponsorship of Trimurthy Day until 2012.

Several joint Carnatic music programs were held under CMANA and TFAS sponsorship: Mandolin Srinivas, Kanyakumari, Nedunuri Krishna Murthy, Hyderabad brothers, Malladi brothers.

In the 1990's, TFAS created a Carnatic music poster exhibit which was presented at the TFAS and CMANA music events with the help of Uma Roy and Bharati Bhavaraju. The exhibit depicted the lives of Thyagaraja, Dikshitar, and Syama Sastry in the 18th century.

CMANA and HTCS have successfully collaborated in conducting CMANA's annual flagship event for Junior Members – the Great Composers Day (GCD) as a joint program of competitions and concerts at the Temple auditorium (Temple sponsorship) for over a decade, from 1998 to 2012. As the GCD grew in popularity and participation, in 2012 the GCD moved to other locations but the CMANA-HTCS collaboration continues via concerts and other events at the Temple auditorium.

The Author is a CMANA member and long-time supporter



Dr. V. Swaminathan

Pūjya Swami Dayananda Saraswati's Vision Of Music

Swami Dayananda Saraswati (15 August 1930 - 23 September 2015) was an internationally known Hindu saint, a great visionary, an eminent and traditional teacher of Vedanta, a brilliant thinker, writer and an exemplary contributor to the enrichment of humanity. Swami Dayananda's contributions span many spheres including Vedantic teaching, service to humanity, global spiritual harmony, rural education, preservation of indigenous social and religious cultures and national and religious unification in India. These are unparalleled in terms of the benefits and positive impacts they have made to the spiritual and social lives of millions of people around the world. He was an indefatigable exponent and exemplifier of the Hindu dharma as a view and way of life. He taught that the view of the Hindu dharma, which otherwise is called *sanātana* dharma, is simply that all that is here is *Īśvara*, the Lord. As a result, this view or vision permeated every aspect of the way of life in India. Naturally, all art forms, including music, that are indigenous to Bhārat reflected this vision. For Swamiji this vision was non-negotiable and thus he used to counter the silly cliché, 'Hindus worship many Gods' by retorting that Hindus worship not many Gods but ONLY God.



With his vision in resonance with the the Vedic vision that all that is here is nothing but the manifestation of *Īśvara*, Swamiji looked at the world as consisting of various orders - physical, biological, physiological, psychological and so forth. To him the order that is in the world of sound, like any other order, is *Īśvara*. In Swamiji's words, "when one is exposed to music, one is in harmony with *Īśvara*. There is joy; there is love. The contentious ego resolves into the experience of *Īśvara* whether one recognizes it as such or not." He saw music as a blessing of *Īśvara* for the self-conscious, self-judgmental human being to survive and experience, for the time being, the reality of oneness with the total, the Lord, without having any qualification for it. This view of Swamiji was amply exemplified in his own compositions and in the way he looked at the compositions of the great *vāggeyakāras* of the Carnatic music tradition.

Swamiji did not have a formal training in music. His knowledge of music is purely through hearing, **கேள்வி ஞானம்**. In his early years in the Manjakudi village where he grew up, there were two musician brothers as his neighbor. Listening to their practice day after day, Swamiji picked up quite a bit of music. Swamiji was also blessed with a nice baritone voice with which he could sing with great felicity. He had a tremendous grasp of the important phrases of many popular Carnatic *rāgas* such as Mohanam, Kalyani, Arabhi,



Hindolam, Kānaḍā and Revathi as well as North Indian¹ *rāgas* such as Yaman Kalyani, Hamir Kalyani, Sindhu Bhairavi, Siva Ranjani and Bagesri. He also used to sing rare *rāgas* like Kannada Gowla and Narayana Gowla with remarkable clarity. Many seasoned Carnatic musicians used to be surprised by Swamiji's sheer ability to sing complicated sangathis. That he could do so was not by chance, as he will reproduce the same sangathis repeatedly. Pandit Mukesh Desai, a senior disciple of Pandit Jasraj and a resident musician at the Arsha Vidya Gurukulam (AVG), Saylorsburg, Pennsylvania, used to be wonderstruck by Swamiji's delivery of Sindhu Bhairavi and Malkauns. In his Kalyani composition, "Kalyāṇasubrahmaṇya namo'stute," Swamiji used to sing the phrase 'ga ri ga sa' for 'namo'stute' in a captivating manner which was so difficult to reproduce even by musicians.

Satsangas with Swamiji would invariably include his singing one or more bhajans towards the end. At AVG, Pandit Mukeshji would be singing before the *satsang*. Sometimes Swamiji would come in early, sit and enjoy Panditji's cascading swaras and his effortless traversing of the octaves. Whenever Panditji touches the upper *dha* and sometimes even *ni*, Swamiji would exclaim that there is *Īśvara* in those notes. Inspired by the *raga* that Panditji was singing, Swamiji will sing a bhajan in the same *raga* much to the delight of the students. Swamiji will sing with total energy and enthusiasm mesmerizing the audience. The bhajan repertoire of Swamiji included Tulasi Das' *Gāiye Ganapati* in Mohanam, Meera Bai's *Mohe Lāgi Lagan Guru* in Bageshri, *ājā bansi bajānewāla* in Abheri, *Rādhe Śyāma* in Hindolam, Jaya Jaya Śaṅkara, Jaya abhayaṅkara in *raga* Śaṅkara, Sadāśiva Brahmendra's *kelati mama hṛdaye* in Mohanam and the refrain from Kali Santaraṇa Upaniṣad, *Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare* in Desh. On Śivarātri day, he used to lead *Oṃ namaśśivāya* chanting as part of the akhaṇḍa nāma pāṛāyaṇa in various *ragas* carrying the audience along with him in the *nāma japa*. Besides the bhajans, Swamiji used to sing also Saint Tyāgarāja's kritis, *orachupu jūcedi nyāyamā* in Kannaḍa Gowla and *kadalevāḍu gāḍe rāmuḍu* in Nārāyaṇa Gowla with aplomb. The latter kriti, which is part of the Wālājapeṭ school, is not in vogue today but apparently was sung in the concert platforms in the 50s and 60s.

Swamiji's interpretations of the meaning of the compositions of the great *vāggeyakāras* were truly astounding. He looked beyond the direct meaning of the words and derived the profundity of the kritis that was aligned with the Vedantic vision of the reality of oneness in spite of the perceived diversity in the creation. He was particularly fond of Muthuswami Dikshita's kritis. He used to say that he could teach the entire Vedanta śāstra through the compositions of Dikshita. Swamiji gave insightful interpretations to the word, *guruguha*, the *mudrā* in Dikshita's kritis, depending on the overall purport of the kriti rather than the commonly assumed meaning of Lord Subrahmanya for the word. Swamiji's reverence for Dikshita was indisputable. I have seen him on one occasion questioning the use of a particular Sanskrit word in a composition but then quickly submitting to the wisdom of the great composer by saying, "If Dikshita used the word, it must be correct." Swamiji arranged a weeklong retreat on Carnatic Music, with special emphasis on Muthuswami Dikshita's kritis, during Aug 19-23, 2003 at AVG. The camp was conducted by Sangeetha Kalanidhi and Padma Bhushan Sri. B.Rajam Iyer who had learnt the great composer's kritis from none other than Justice T.L. Venkatarama Iyer, a well known authority on Dikshita's compositions. Swamiji personally selected the kritis to be taught at the workshop and enthusiastically attended all the music sessions. The epitome of each day was the satsang when Swamiji explained the meaning of the kriti, phrase by phrase, unfolding the beautiful Sanskrit compounds, the underlying Vedantic meaning of the kriti and the sheer brilliance of Dikshitar's musical formations. Swamiji was also adept in formulating nuanced

¹ Swamiji always referred to Hindustani music as North Indian music as he insisted that Carnatic music is also part of Hindustan!

sangathis to fit the bhāva of the lyrical phrase. For example, in the Karṇāṭaka Devagāndhāri kriti, Kāyārohaneśam, for the lyrical phrase in the anupallavi, *guruguhopacāram*, Swamiji suggested the musical phrase, sa ri ga ma-pa-ma pa-sa-ni da pa, to indicate the *vinaya* of worship of the Lord by Guruguha.

Swamiji had composed 18 kritis including the anthem for All India Movement for Seva, all of them in Sanskrit. They were composed on various occasions and each displayed a rich spiritual content. Maharajapuram Sri. V. Santhanam originally sang most of these compositions.² The Bho Sambho kriti in Revathi became an immediate hit in the Carnatic music concerts. Due to its rhythmic structure, the kriti was also a favorite in Bharatanatyam recitals. Swamiji's compositions followed the kriti format consisting of pallavi, anupallavi and charanam with some having more than one charanam. The kritis reflected the Vedantic vision, extolling the aspects of *saguṇa sākāra* Brahman, *saguṇa* Brahman and *nirguṇa nirākāra* Brahman. For example, in the Bho Sambho kriti, which is in sambodhana vibhakti (vocative), phrases such as 'gaṅgādhara, śaṅkara, sabheśa, mataṅga munivara vandita īśa,' suggest *saguṇa sākāra*; 'karuṇākara, sarvadigambara veṣṭitaveśa, gamāgamabhūta prapañca rahita,' suggest *saguṇa* Brahman; and 'nirguṇa parabrahma svarūpa, nijaguhā nihita nitānta Ananta,' reveal the *nirguṇa nirākāra* Brahman. Just as what Swamiji said about Dikshita's kritis, the Vedantic vision can be unfolded through his compositions as well. Swamiji also had composed a few Tamil poems during 1964-65 when he was living in Rishikesh. These are also rich in Vedantic content.³

A great contribution of Swamiji to தமிழ் இசை was his launching the Oduvar Support Program in 2005 to revive the ancient tradition of singing the Thevarams and other Thirumurais in the Siva temples during worship. Through the program, oduvars were appointed in several of the Siva temples in Tamil Nadu. Annual festivals known as Thirumurai Thiruvizha were held wherein senior oduvars who have dedicated their lives to preserve the ancient tradition were honored. Swamiji organized a Thiruppugazh conference in 2008 in Chennai and honored senior and accomplished Thiruppugazh singers like Guruji Sri. A.S.Raghavan, Sri. S.Natarajan and Valaiyappettai Sri. R. Krishnan. He established the Arsha Kala Rangam to promote classical Carnatic music and instituted the 'Arsha Kala Bhushanam' award. He recognized several senior musicians (both vocal and instrumental) with this award.



The Carnatic Music Association of North America had a special admiration and respect for Pujya Swamiji. Its office bearers, led by the president, Dr. P.N. Aruna, met with Swamiji at AVG Sept 2, 2011 and sought his guidance for establishing a partnership with AVG to nurture, sustain and promote Carnatic music. Subsequently, CMANA recorded the status of an Institutional Honorary Patron to AVG and honored Swamiji during a special concert program on Oct 8, 2011 when he came to attend the twin concerts of Abhishek Raghuram and Sikkil Gurucharan. Also on that



occasion the new composition of Swamiji, Mahāliṅga vibho in Siva Ranjani, was premiered with Sri. D.B. Ashwin singing it to the surprise of Swamiji. He

² Maharajapuram Sri. S. Ramachandran (MSR) sang some of the compositions such as Kalyāṇasubrahmaṇya (Kalyāni), Someśvaram bhajema (Hindolam) and Mahāliṅga vibho (Siva Ranjani). Swamiji was very fond of MSR's rendition of his compositions.

³ One such song, "நாடுவேன் இப்பொழுது நடனமிடும் ராசனை," tuned by me in Tilang, was sung by D.B. Ashwin in a concert at AVG on Oct 16, 2011 in the presence of Swamiji much to his delight.

was so pleased and asked Ashwin for an encore. Swamiji composed this song on the occasion of the running of the newly renovated chariot for Lord Mahāliṅga Swami of the famous temple town Thiruvidaimarudhur. The chariot was run after a gap of nearly 75 years through a project undertaken by Swamiji. Seeing thousands of devotees pulling the chariot with great religious fervor and chanting the name of Mahāliṅga in chorus, Swamiji was inspired and the song Mahāliṅga vibho was born in Siva Ranjani⁴.



Swamiji had a unique vision of our music. In his words, “If a song in praise of the Lord is just repeated, that is, the words of the song are just read as a prose, without any music, it will no doubt bring out in a person the devotee. Suppose one chants, ‘Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma; Rāma Rāma Hare Hare; Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna; Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare,’ and if one knows the meaning of the names Rāma and Krishna, they will certainly invoke the devotion in that person. If the same names are, however, cast in music and sung by someone who knows music, the difference will be obvious. In this case, there is an elevation of the devotee who is free from all problems. A father has a problem; a mother has a problem; a friend has a problem; a neighbor has a problem. What problem the devotee has? None. He/she is an elevated person in whom the ‘devotee person’ is invoked by a song with music in praise of the Lord and he/she gains an absorption.” For Swamiji music in praise of the Lord is just another expression of the glory of *Īśvara*. Gaining absorption in such music is indeed the *nāḍopāsanā* extolled by Saint Tyāgarāja in his Begaḍa kriti.



⁴ When Swamiji was asked why he chose Siva Ranjani, he explained that the melody of this *raga* was etched in his memory from his childhood days as All India Radio used to play the tune of Siva Ranjani just before the beginning of the day’s program.

**The Author is a Honorary Patron,
author, and long-time supporter**



OUR HUMBLE RESPECTS TO
PUJYA SWAMIJI
DAYANANDA SARASWATHI





Akshay Anantapadmanabhan

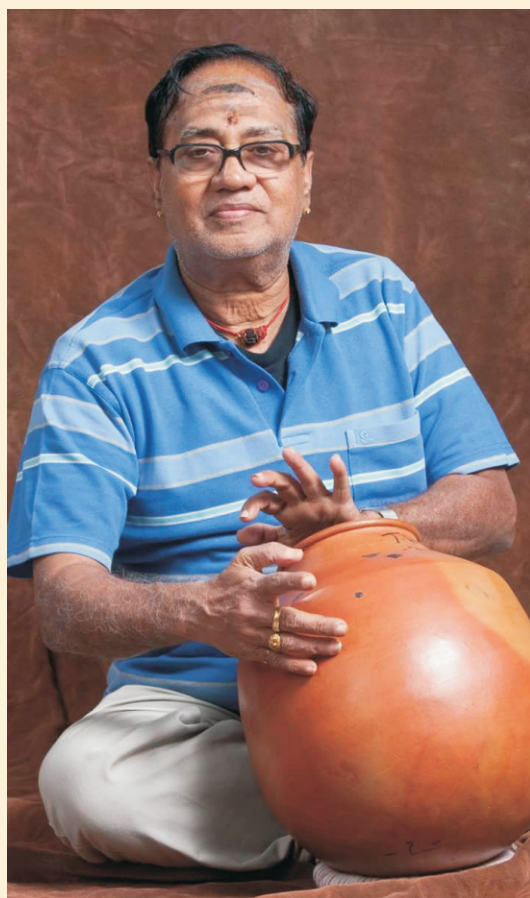
Putting Carnatic music on the World Map

After doing my Master's in electrical engineering in the United States, I moved to Chennai to pursue a full-time career in music a few years ago. Since then, I have been asked numerous times about the value of my education from the prestigious Cooper Union, if I commit to music. Interestingly, I have never been asked about the reason for pursuing a degree in engineering even though my education in mridangam started at the age of five. I see music as a pursuit of my very first learnings in life. That

being said, I believe engineering is a philosophy that teaches efficient problem solving, so it can really be useful for any field. I learned a lot from my irreplaceable university degrees and apply that knowledge to enhance my life as a musician — methods of organization, project management, technology application, efficiency management — these are fundamental skills that have enabled me to progress as a musician.

One of my latest projects is to spread the art of konnakol through a collaboration with my guru and pioneer of performative Indian vocal percussion, professor T.H. Subash Chandran. There is an overload of information across the internet and in many cases, this has made true, focused learning, counter-productive and difficult. Specifically for our project on “Indian Scat Singing”, we address this issue via a teaching project as a course on konnakol led by the world's foremost exponent of this language — Guru T.H. Subash Chandran.

Konnakol is the art of vocal percussion in context of Carnatic or South Indian classical music. Overtime, the art of konnakol has evolved from an oral tradition in the percussion pedagogy to a stand-alone performative form. During teaching and learning, konnakol consists of sollukattu, which are primarily derived from sounds of the mridangam — the lead percussion instrument in a classical setting. The four basic syllables: “Tha,” “Thi,” “Thom,” and “Num” model the sounds made





by the mridangam. However there is also the claim that these sounds are influences from the vedic scriptures. While the four basic sounds are consistent across the majority of schools of percussion, each school has its own form of communication beyond this. It is fascinating to me to think about how different schools of percussion/mridangam have uniquely derived this form. Even as a professional mridangam artist, I may not understand another professional conveying mridangam sollukattu to me verbally. However, once it is played on the instrument, I can not only mimic the content on the instrument, but also recite the sollukattu in the manner that is conveyed in my percussion lineage. Essentially konnakol is analogous to language, whereas each lineage of percussion is a derived dialect.

Konnakol is an art and a language — one that can be performed and also used to communicate rhythmic ideas. The “Indian Scat Singing” project is a course that highlights both these novel facets of the konnakol art. The complete details can be found at www.IndianScatSinging.com. The goal of

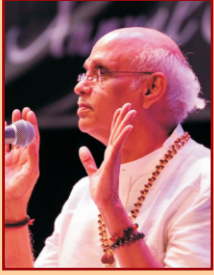
the course is also to remove the barriers of learning this art form and make it accessible to the world. Hence the course caters to all artists and students, independent of any music genre as well as anyone who simply wants to appreciate and understand rhythmic ideas.

This is one of the several projects I have led since my pursuit as a full-time mridangam artist. The music world not only calls for practice and live performance but also a digital media presence, musical discourse, entrepreneurship, marketing and much more that I am still to discover. My journey began in Mumbai, continued throughout the United States with the help of organizations like CMANA, and now has brought me to the hub of Carnatic music in the city of Chennai. Reaching into my foundational experiences and building upon them, I see a world of possibilities ahead. I remain eager to discover what’s in store for me as a professional musician.

**The Author is a Past Junior Member,
Mridangist and CMANA long-time supporter**

VINAY VENKATESH TRIBUTE

CMANA was shocked like many other members of the community and saddened many years ago to hear of the tragic and sudden passing of former CMANA Junior Member, Vinay Venkatesh (son of Dr. Raj Venkatesh and former Vice-President, Mrs. Vijaya Venkatesh). Though he was engaged in the activities of the association in many ways such as with assistance of audio setup and breakdown for concerts, Vinay’s most noteworthy assignment was as editor of Juniors’ Sangeetham, a section of CMANA’s quarterly periodical that was developed primarily by and for the Junior Members of CMANA. He was recognized for his contributions when awarded the D.N. Visweswariah Prize for exemplary service as a Junior Member in 1998. In addition to his role as a volunteer, Vinay was also a student of Carnatic music on the saxophone and had taken part in annual Great Composers’ Day (GCD) competitions for several years. Vinay remains one of the first generations of young volunteers to whom CMANA remains grateful in having contributed to the operational aspects and growing youth involvement of the organization.



Dr. Pappu Venugopala Rao

PADAM and its connotation

Today, we employ a lot of variety of compositions in dance, Padam, Javali, Varnam, Tillana, etc. It is necessary to understand the form and format, the text and context of each of these to be a real good dancer. Following is an over view of, Padam, one of the most important components of South Indian Classical music and dance.

Padam is commonly used to denote any song. From the point of view of its poetic, musical and dance content, it occupies a unique place in the compositions used in dance. No other composition is as complete as Padam in its format viewed from these three angles. Padam seems to be in vogue since ancient times. Bharata defines Padam in his Natya Sastra as:

*Gaandharvam yan mayaa proktam swara taala padaatmakam
padam tasya bhavedvastu swara taalaanubhaavakam
yatkincidakshara kritam tat sarvam swara sanjitam
nibaddham ca anibaddham ca tat padam dwividham smritam*
(N.S. 32 Ch.26-27)

This is a very broad definition of Padam, according to which a Padam is one which is set to a scale with a rhythmic element to it, with a theme of its own and is fit for singing. Padam is of two types, nibaddha-padam and anibaddha-padam. Nibaddha-padam is a composition of prosodic frame composed following the rules of prosody with a definite number of letters; whereas the anibaddha-padam has no prosodic restrictions. Padam basically has been a composition in the desi tradition. Palakuruki Somanatha(13 c), in his work Panditaaradhya Caritra mentions various kinds of Padams; *Tummeda padamulu, Prabhaata*

padamulu, Aananda padamulu, Sankara padamulu, Sanja varnana and Gana varnana padamulu. Apart from these variety of Padams, there are many other which come under the Padam literature.

The twelfth century composer Jayadeava seems to be the earliest composer whose compositions known as Ashtapadis reflect a structure similar to those which we call padams today. It is in the Ashtapadis, we find a structure similar to pallavi, anupallavi (optional) and charanams. His compositions are called Ashtapadis because each of them contains 8 charanams (ashta = 8). Here the word padam denotes a charanam, thereby suggesting that this word padam has various meanings initially. In course of time, however, padam has attained a restrictive meaning to denote an erotic composition.

The first ever composer who classified his compositions as Pallavi and Caranams is Taallapaka Annamaacarya (1408-1503). He is said to have composed 32, 000 Padams, but what are available to us today are 14, 238 only. I am inclined to believe that he was greatly influenced by Jayadeva so far as the structure of his compositions is concerned. He is said to have composed a hymnody in Sanskrit, *Sankeertana Lakshanam* which is not available to us. But its translation in Telugu by his grandson Cina Tirumalaacarya, entitled *Sankeertana Lakshanamu* is available. We find a detailed description, classification and definition of Padams in this work.

Majority of Padams are composed in Telugu. There are several non Telugu composers who also composed in Telugu, probably because of the suitability of the language for the purpose. There are many in Tamil, some in Kannada and Malayalam, though some of these may not conform strictly to the definition of a Padam.

Padam has been defined by different people differently. Sri Rallapalli Anantha Krishna Sarma defined Padam thus: It is basically an erotic composition often sung in slow speed and at times in medium speed. It consists of Pallavi, Anupallavi and not less than three caranams and is composed in any of the ancient rakti raagas*.



Prof. P. Sambamurthy

Prof. P. Sambamurthy defines Padam as follows: "Pada is a scholarly composition. The term pada is sometimes used to signify any devotional composition..... most pada compositions admit of a dual meaning; the outward srinagara meaning and the inward philosophical meaning. The pada has divisions - Pallavi, anupallavi and charana. There may be three or more charanas. The music is slow and flows in a natural manner. The diction is simple"***

Pallavi is the first line or sometimes the first two lines of a Padam. Whatever is expressed in Pallavi is expanded further in the anupallavi and the caranams but nothing away from what is said in the pallavi is ever said in the caranams. That is what Cina Tirumalaacharya says in his Sankeetana Lakshanamu, verse 30:

*Padamula yarthamu pallavi
vadalaka yannitiki neka vaakyata jeyan
gudi gruccionatlu tagulai
padamu tudin mariyu mariyu pallavi yalarun*

A Pallavi stand linked up with the caranams and is repeated again and again to bring in a thematic oneness in the various caranams of the composition. That is why pallavi is sung at the end of each caranam and at the end of the padam. The role played by anupallavi is supportive in nature to the pallavi. Some scholars feel that by the time of Taalapaaaka poets Pallavi had established itself and anupallavi was in the process of stabilizing. We find consistent use of anupallavi in the compositions of later composers.

Another aspect of Padam is mudra, the insignia of the composer. In Annamayya's compositions, we find the name of the Lord Venkateswara as the mudra, in Kshetrappa's compositions, the mudra is Muvvagopaala, in Saarnagapaani's Padams it is Venugopala and so on. Some composers use their own name as mudra, as in the compositions of Tyagaraja. Mudra is normally set in the last caranam of the composition, but there are cases where it is found in the anupallavi, as is seen in some compositions of Kshetrappa. There are many varieties of mudras, some composers employed the name of a deity to whom they dedicated their compositions, some used their own name to indicate their authorship, as mentioned earlier, and some included even the name of the raaga in which the composition is set to. There are some compositions in which the name of the patron of the composer is used as mudra.

It is not always possible to know the language of all the compositions one performs to, but an over view will definitely enable them to understand and appreciate the compositions better.

*Essay on Kshetrappa Padamulu in Andhra Patrika 1942-43 p 15.

** History of South Indian Music, Prof. P.Sambamurthy 1-4 p.45.

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SANGEETHAM



**SRI CHANDRASEKHARENDRA SARASWATI AND CARNATIC MUSIC****Dr. V. Sadagopan**

The sixty eighth pontiff of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam is Sri Chandrashekharendra Saraswati. He is affectionately known as the Paramacharya or Kanchi Periyaval. He was born on the eighth day of Vaikasi month in the Jaya year (May 20, 1894). He ascended the Kamakoti Peetam on Feb. 13, 1907 at the tender age of thirteen. The Peetam (throne) that he ascended is known as Kamakoti Sarvagna Peetam. The name Sarvagna Peetam stands for the throne occupied by a great Guru, who is an expert in all arts and Sciences.

I will focus here on Kanchi Paramacharya's Scholarship in Carnatic Music and his unceasing encouragement of artists over the past eight decades. I will illustrate his deep attachment to Carnatic Music and his profound interest in encouraging its practitioners through his blessings by recalling the experiences of Sangeetha Kalanidhis T.L Venkatarama Sastry, Smt. M.S. Subbulakshmi, Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer, Maharajapuram Santhanam, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyar and "Ariyakudi". Before describing the blessings (Anugrahas) that they received, one can safely say that the Paramacharya believes deeply in Saint Thyagaraja's statement (in his kriti in Mukhari) "Sangita Sastra Jnanamu Sarupya Saukhyadhame Manasa (the knowledge of Science of Music leads us to bliss divine)." In this context, Kanchi Periyaval has said that one does not have to perform debilitating penance to commune with Paramatma. One just needs to take Veena in hand and play it in unison with devotion, svaram and layam. That alone will take one in front of Ambal. He has emphasized over the years about the importance of singing the Sahitya with Bhakti and in consonance with Lakshana (grammar)

of the Raga. He has stated in this context that Sahitya without Bhakti and Lakshana is like a flower without fragrance; Sangita without Bhava (feeling) is merely empty sound. He has stressed the importance of Vidwans and students' understanding the correct import of the kritis and pronunciations before rendering them. Music to him is the discreet form (Sookshma Roopam) of Ambal (Kamakshi). In this context, he has commented on the inner meaning of religion and hinted at the importance of Music in advancing one's spiritual advancement as follows: "Ambika, the Mother Divine is all important to me. I consider religion to be nothing but meditation upon her lotus feet. Meditation upon the Divine Mother quells all evil propensities. It purifies us to perfection. let us dedicate every one of our thoughts, words and actions to Her."

Kanchi Periyaval's attitude to the benevolent effect of Music can be understood from the two following statements by Sir C.V. Raman Dr. C.V. Narasimhan on the mysteries of Music:

"Of all the great mysteries, which we are confronted with, the influence of Music is one of the most remarkable." Sir C.V. Raman

"What is greatness and glory of our Music? To me, the answer is simple. It is spirit of Bhakti, that permeates all of our greatest Music. Our Music is great, because it is designed not just to please the ear, not to titillate the intellect of the Rasiks, but it is capable of touching our hearts and lifting our souls on the wings of the song to establish communion with the Supreme Being itself". - **Dr. C.V. Narasimhan.**

This is the experience which borders on Nirvikalpa Samadhi that the Paramacharyas experiences, when he listens to “command performances” of musicians, who come to receive his blessings. He will ask the artists to sing kritis more than once and at the end he will be able to sing with them, correct the text of the sahitya, if it was rendered incorrectly and describe to them the inner meaning of each of the words used by the great composers such as Dikshitar. Prof Lakshmi Mani’s translation of Ra Ganapathi’s article on Sri Ariyakudi’s singing of “Sri Subramanyaya Namasthe” in Kambhoji before the Paramacharya and the subsequent events illustrate these points. I will share with you few events in the lives of musicians during the occasion of presenting their art before the sage of Kanchi.



Sangeetha Kalanidhi M.S. Subbulakshmi and the Paramacharya: Sri Sadasivan, her husband describes the experience as follows: “Subbulakshmi has no doubt sung before many memorable and mammoth gatherings all over the mundane earth. But, she considers that her music reached its consummation on the three or four Maha Sivarathri nights, when she sang for hours on end before His

Holiness during his Puja. It is Subbulakshmi’s greatest good fortune that his Holiness heard her on many occasions and conferred his boundless Anugraha on her. He even composed at her request a composition for her to sing before the United nations delegates from 120 countries and invited guests on Oct. 23, 1966 on U.N. Day.” I will comment briefly on this song ‘Maithrim Bhajatha’ later.

Sangeetha Kalanidhi T.L. Venkatarama Sastri (TLV) and His Holiness: TLV is one, whose life was intricately intertwined with the History of the Madras Music Academy. He was a High court judge and an authority on the kritis of Sri Dikshitar. He had learnt them from the descendant of the Dikshitar family and taught it to ‘DKP’ and other musicians. Let me describe one of his meetings with the Paramacharya in his own words: “ It was the 1944, when I had the good fortune of making his personal acquaintance. I received a Srimukham (letter) from the Mutt (seat of the Pontiff) at Kumbakonam that I should participate in Sri Muthuswamy Dikshitar day celebrations at kumbakonam, sometime in November. I immediately repounded. When I went to the Mutt, His Holiness was performing puja. I was asked to sing some kirtanas of Dikshitar. I did so. One of those songs was Kamalambike in Thodi. After the puja was over, His Holiness told me that this piece was sublime and asked me to sing that again. I was very glad and that was my first experience. He also asked me to give a musical discourse on the life of Sri Dikshitar in the Mutt itself next day. The Mutt was packed to the full and His Holiness himself was present. When I was singing the piece Kanjadalayathakshi, he said that instead of the words Sri Kanchana Vasane, in the Charanam, the words Sri Kanchi Vasane will be more appropriate and to the delight of all present, he gave it in the very musical phrase of Dikshitar. This was the first occasion when I met His Holiness and thereafter my association with him has been very fruitful and



intimate. He blessed me on my elevation to the Bench.”

Sangeetha Kalanidhi Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer and His Holiness: It was those days, when His Holiness was staying at the Kumbakonam Mutt. Great Musicians of that time such as Semmangudi, Ariyakudi, Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyar, Violin Vidwan Rajamanickam Pillai were residing within a radius of one or two miles from the Mutt. There were also many top class artists in neighbouring villages and cities. All of them had many chances to sing before His Holiness and receive his blessings.

On one such occasion Srimathi M.S. Subbulakshi and Semmangudi were in the audience. The interesting point was that His Holiness asked Semmangudi to sing again Dikshitar's Madhava Manohari kriti known as Mahalakshmi and at the end sang the entire kriti with the artist and explained the meaning of the words of this Sahityam to the audience. Semmangudi had “the thrilling and enriching experience” to witness the astonishing amalgam of the Bhakti and Bhava aspects of Music as experienced by His Holiness.

Sangeetha Kalanidhis from Maharajapuram and His Holiness :

Following is a translation of Maharajapuram Santhanam's own words relating to his audience with His Holiness: “After giving a performance in Bombay Shanmugananda hall, I was on my way to a concert in Mysore via Meeraj. On the way, I heard that the Kanchi sage was camping at Sadara. I alighted therefore at Sadara Station and arrived at the place, where His Holiness was staying.

When he heard about my arrival, he came out of his room and asked me to sing. As I was singing, he had closed his eyes and was stroking the beads of his rudraksha necklace. When I finished singing, he removed that necklace from his neck.

For a moment, I was intrigued. I had that fleeting greedy thought as to whether he will give that to me as a reward for my singing. His Holiness put that malai away and hung it on a nail near the door. It is true that I was disappointed somewhat. I continued to sing for another hour in the standing posture. When time came to take leave, he asked me to go inside, have dinner and rest the night there. I sent back the taxi and obeyed his order. I slept outside the room, where he was resting.

Next morning around 4 a.m., I woke up from the sound of one sweeping with a broom ! It was His Holiness, who had risen already and he was cleaning his room with his own hands. I rose with alacrity and astonishment. When he saw us getting up, he asked me to sing Mohanam. I was flabbergasted. Next moment, I started the Alapana for Mohanam. During that dawn time, I must have sung for 2 or 3 hours. I do not even remember how I sang. Afterwards, I took my bath and prostrated before him. He rewarded me with a Kashmir salwai. I was thrilled and took leave of him reluctantly. I must have moved ten feet, he called for me again. I was happy on hand and on the other, I was worried about missing my train. He commanded me to sing. I was struck by the thought that this sage, who had renounced everything had such attachment to my music. I was overcome by His kindness and began to sing with great peace of mind. His Holiness was deeply lost in meditation and resembled Lord Dekshinamurthy in his seated posture. I cannot forget that sight. At the conclusion of my singing, I took leave once again and he asked me to wait for minute.. He went in and brought his Rudraksha necklace and put it around my neck. I was thrilled beyond words by this unique act of kindness. I asked later those who were there as to why His Holiness took such deep interest in me and honored me with the multiple command performance request. His secretary told me that the day before I come, he had discussed the

delectable music of my father, Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer and particularly his talent in singing Mohana Ragam. I had arrived the next day.

I came home and described my good fortune to my mother. What she told me afterwards made me appreciate the greatness of His Holiness even more. His Holiness asked your father to sing at the Kumbakonam Mutt. On that occasion, your father sang Mohanam with great imagination. His Holiness closed his eyes and stroked the beads of his Rudraksha Malai and His countenance was filled with Bliss. When the singing was over, he blessed your father and presented him with a gold-lace angavasthra and dhoti. Your father was hoping that His Holiness might present his rudrakshara malai that he was stroking. It did not happen. After all these years, His Holiness presented you with the malai, your father longed to get. Your father's mind will now rest in peace. He has also blessed you so that you can shine like your father. My mother's eyes were full of tears. I thought that I must have done penance in previous life to receive such high honors at the hand of His Holiness and gave deep thanks. Sri Santhanam went on with his distinguished career and composed a tillana and kriti (reproduced in the inside front cover) on Kanchi sage as a part of his homage.

Thiruppavai - Thiruvembavai singing in the South during margazhi month.

When we hear the singing of Tiruppavai-Thiruvembavai songs during the dawn in Margazhi month from the tops of the Gopurams of the temples of India, we owe that to His Holiness. It was his instruction in 1950 to inculcate a sense of reverence for the works of saints Andal and Manikavachakar through the medium of music that we have this tradition.

The Jagad Guru's Universal Vision

People from all nations have flocked at his Holy feet during different times. He has blessed them all. The greatest blessings that he gave was during the occasion of Sangeetha Kalanidhi M.S. Subbulakshmi's New York City concert at the U.N. General assembly of Delegates from all nations on October 23, 1966. She sang the special piece that he composed for her for the unique occasion. The messages treasured in that composition are matchless and eternal in scope and vision. They typify the spirit of this sage. Here are some: Abandon wars (YuddhamTyajatha); avoid intoxicating wine and spirituous material (Parkan Tyajatha); see and treat others as you would treat yourself; Mother earth yields all you wish; The Lord who created this Earth and planets is most merciful; may his blessings shower on all the people of this universe.

May we pray that the spiritual light that shines at Kanchipuram continue to light our way the next century of His illustrious life and bless the practitioners of Carnatic Music.



HARIKESANALLUR MUTHIAH BHAGAVATHAR**By Ms. Padma Srinivasan**

Most of us are familiar with the kritis ‘Himagiritanaye’ in Suddhadhanyasi popularized by GNB and ‘Vijayambike’ as well as ‘Jalandara’ in Valaji rendered by Madurai Mani Iyer in the early fifties. These and other compositions, all bearing the well known ‘HARIKESA” mudhra or signature are the works of the famous Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavathar on whom the title ‘Gayakasikhamani’ was conferred by Maharaja Krishna Rajendra Wadaiyar of Mysore in 1927.

Muthiah Bhagavathar was born on Nov. 15, 1877 at Punalveli near Srivilliputhur (close to Tirunelveli) to Lingam Iyer and Anandam Ammal. Bhagavathar’s niece and nephew who were named after his parents



in the old tradition were my neighbors in Kovilpatti during my childhood.

I specially feel privileged to write this article because of the friendship with members of his family. Vaidyalingam, who was adopted by Bhagavathar learnt many of the latter’s compositions. In fact, Vaidyalingam taught me the kriti ‘Ashtadasa’ in Simmendramadyamam with all its many beautiful sangathis.

Muthiah Bhagavathar composed in simple language and was equally felicitous in Tamil, Telugu and Sanskrit. He used words sparingly but with much meaning. Most of his songs are in praise of Devi. Besides many kirtanas, Bhagavathar has also composed a few Tana Varnams in adi and ata Tala as well as Tillanas and Ragamalikas. As a Samsthana Vidwan of Mysore, several compositions in praise of Chamundeswari have been authored by him. In addition to the Maharaja of Mysore, the rulers of Ramnad, Ettayapuram, Andipatti as well as the Maharaja of Travancore were also his patrons. The latter conferred a doctorate on Muthiah Bhagavathar in recognition of his book ‘Sangeetha Kalpa Dhrumam’. The composer showed his regard for Balaramavarma of Travancore through the words ‘Padmahabha Vanchibhoopala Balaramavarma Bhagyanrupala’ in a Hamsanandi Tillana. (Vanchi denotes Kerala in Malayalam.)

Bhagavathar was also well known for his Harikatha performances. So popular were some of his Harikatha songs that they were included in concerts. ‘Mavoor Valar maharani’ in Jonpuri is a good example of this genre. He is also credited as the composer of Kirtanas

in rare ragas with the elaboration of numerous sangathis. He was in Benares for a while and appears to have been impressed by classical North Indian music. This influence can be appreciated in the songs 'Needumahima' in Hamsanandi and 'Sarasamukhi' in Gowdamalhar. He also created works in new ragas. Examples of these would be 'Vanchtonu' in Karnaranjani, 'Saravanabhava' in Pasupathipriya and 'Vijayambike' in Vijayanagari. There are also noteworthy compositions in Kathanakuthuhalam, Bowli and Mohanakalyani.

Muthiah Bhagavthar modelled himself after the musical style of Thyagaraja whom he ardently worshipped. In later life, the influence of Dikshithar can also be perceived in mellow compositions rich in gamakas. The sahithya of his woks can be compared to that of modern composers such as Patnam

Subramanya Iyer and Ramanthapuram Srinivasa Iyengar. Bhagavathar's style appears to have inspired GNB's compositions with their many sangathis, though there is a difference in emphasis. GNB dwelt on the musical qualities of the words while Bhagavathar stressed literary excellence in his kritis. One can find examples for this quality in 'Thamasamika' in Abhogi, 'Parmukhamela' in Kanada and Unnadiye' in Bahudari.

Bhagavathar was one of the founders of the Music Academy in Madras. He was honored with the title of Sangeethakalanidhi in 1930 when he was elected the President of the Conference. He spent his last years in Mysore, where he died on June 30, 1945 at the age of sixty eight.

Reference : Carnatic Music Composer - T.L. Venkatarama Iyer - The Hindu.



AN EXERCISE IN ETYMOLOGY

Dr. P. Rajagopal

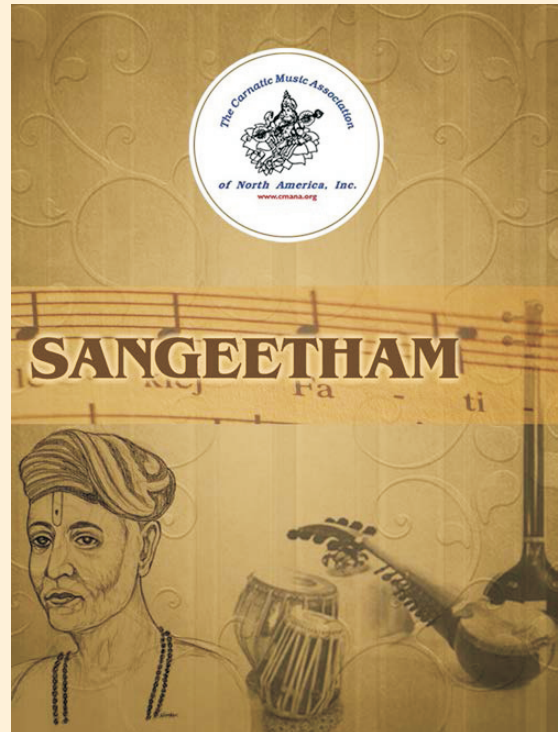
I would like to take issue (a friendly one, of course) with Dr. C.M. Ramakrishna, regarding his comments on the etymology of the word “Sangeetham” (or is it “Sangeetha” as he declares it to be the correct Sanskrit version?).

Before I get to the point of contention, I should mention that Dr. Ramakrishna is way off base when he says that Kannada is the only South Indian language which follows Sanskrit endings closely. This is puzzling because none of the S. Indian languages can covet that distinction. In fact, pure Tamil, being uniquely Dravidian, does not even have anything common with Sanskrit. Indeed, the Tamil word for “Sangeetham” is “Isai”. The only language that comes close to Sanskrit is, of course, Hindi both in terms of its script as well as the roots of its words.

Now, as far as “Sangeetham” is concerned, it is a Sanskrit word adopted as such by the Tamilians as so many other Sanskrit words have been and not by “Tamilizing” the Sanskrit word “Sangeetha” as Dr. Ramakrishna would have us believe. He states and I quote, “in Tamil and Telugu, the Anuswara (M) is added to the Sanskrit words ending in “a”. If it were so, many sanskrit words incorporated into Tamil and ending in “am” should according to him, be actually ending in “a” to be gramatically correct in Sanskrit. A quick foray into “Amarakosam”, the Sanskrit book of synonyms, would convince him otherwise. Let me take, for example, the Sanskrit word for “I”. It is “aham” and not “aha” as he would have it! The dual and the plural forms of “aham” are “aavam” and “vayam”, respectively, and not “aava” and “vaya”. Other Sanskrit words ending in “am” and commonly used as such (without any modification) by Tamilians

are “mukham” (face), “sareeram” (body), “theertham” (water), “vruksham” (tree), “pushpam” (flower) etc. Why, the very Sanskrit word for “Sanskrit” is “Samskrutham” and not “Samskrutha” which is the Kannada version.

The point of it all is that “Sangeetham” is as Sanskrit as can be and it is derived from the combination of “Sum” and “Geetham” meaning good music. The origin of “geetham” (music) itself is “gayathe ithi geetham”. I hope that, after reading this letter to the find Editor of our illustrious Newsletter, members and non-members alike, would realize that considerable thought and analysis was devoted to the choice of this most appropriate Sanskrit word for it which is consistent with the objectives of our Association and which would avoid controversy among all the linguistic groups representing our association.





ENORMOUS TALENT IN SMALL BODIES

Sumathi Subbiah

Extraordinary talent of any kind certainly amazes the human mind and tweaks the curiosity of the imagination. Yet, witnessing it from a child, someone who cannot perhaps even tie his shoelaces or who cannot even spell the word prodigious, although their ability adequately gives the definition, inspires awe.

For many of these individuals, their childhood wonders only heralds further greatness; history remembers many of these individuals whose extraordinary abilities have allowed them to achieve and to contribute to their fields. Often legends develop around these imminent figures: at age 9, Gauss, the great German mathematician of the 18th century, used keen insight to sum up the numbers up to 500 in a matter of 10 seconds during his mathematics class; Mozart composed his first concerto by age 5 and could accompany great symphonies on the clavichord by age 7. Certainly, the field of Carnatic music does not have its shortage of historical prodigies who have advanced the art and given pleasure to Carnatic music aficionados. Although there are no records, it is said that Saint Thyagaraja composed his first kriti at age 9(?) and absorbed all of his guru's knowledge within a year.

Coming to the 20th century time frame prodigies such as vocalist Balamurali Krishna and flautist T.R. Mahalingam have graced Carnatic music halls, and even more recent ones such as Ravi Kiran, 'Mandolin' U. Srinivas, 'Baby' Gayathri, Sankaran Namboodari, and Shashank are developing into top class musicians. All

ascended the stage at a very young age, exhibiting abilities that far exceeded their size and age.

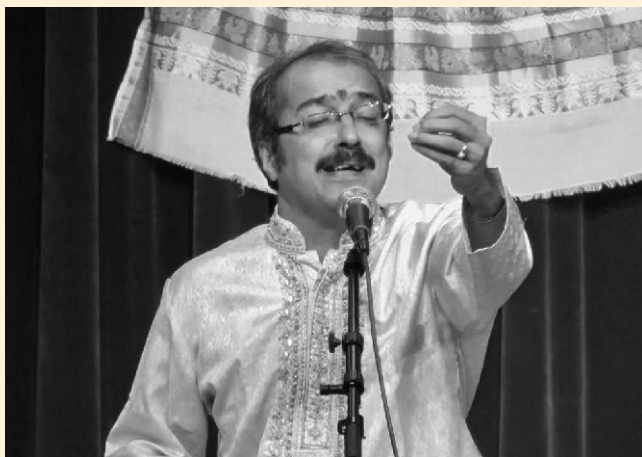
Yet, there does not seem to be a definite line at which one can declare amazing youngsters to be prodigies. It has become difficult to count in how many introductions one has heard that a Carnatic musician had been declared a child prodigy. Is there a way to qualify the title? Does a child have to be able to identify a certain number of ragas by a certain age? How proficient must the child be with tala? Or, rather, does he have to ascend the stage at a certain age or ability level? How can one be sure that a child is a prodigy if he is not exposed to Carnatic music? Are there differing levels among prodigies themselves? Or, in other words, are some prodigies more prodigious than others?

Probably the best question is, "Can there ever be an objective standard to judge prodigies?" Clearly, it is difficult to attribute any set characteristics for the definition. However, the wonder that these special children inspire is never in doubt, and the potential that they present for the art. Speaking as a young student of Carnatic music, it is easy to envy the ease with which they master elements that takes others weeks, months, even years to grasp. Yet, in the face of true geniuses, it is also useless to be jealous, for theirs is a gift that few can match at that age.

Although it is a gift, it does not come without its difficulties. Having talent only gives the potential to be great; hard work and discipline

must also accompany to realize the potential. For instance, Ravi Kiran, the chitraveena player, was put on a strict schedule from 5 in the morning to 10 at night. His father, who was also his main guru, insisted that was the only way that he was able to achieve a repertoire of 60 varnas, 35 alankaras and numerous kritis by the mere of age 5.

Just as prodigy status is a blessing, it has its price. Indeed, it is a mixed blessing. The environment is critical to the development of such young musician. Some prodigies come from musical families; thus, they are surrounded by music from the beginning. Others who do not hail from musical families discover musical talents by other means, often accidentally. There is also the perpetual feat that in trying to give exposure to the youngster, it could step over the line to become exploitation. Using music simply for money could lead to lack of concentration on artistic development and to burn-out, running their talent into the ground, states Sarojini Parameswaran of Sruti magazine. The nurturing of such a talent must be done with balance in mind, and the environment of their childhood contributes a great deal to their development. Each prodigy's story and circumstance is different.



For instance, T.R. Mahalingam, known as Mali, one of the most renowned flautist of the previous generation, was discovered to be a prodigy by chance. Mali's family was not well-off, with seven children in total. He also did not have the advantage of being from a musical family; had his father, Ramaswamy Iyer, not consented to allow music lessons for some of the children, who knows if Mali's great talent would have been unearthed? Because learning the flute was tabooed by his father because of his frailty, in secret, Mali intrigued by the bamboo flute, would find a flute and fiddle around with the fingering and the sound, eventually learning to play Viriboni, the Bhairavi Ata tala varna, when his vocal teacher heard him.

Even though Mali's father was at first tentative about letting his son play the flute, soon he began to promote and expose his son's talent by arranging performances and appearances. One of the fears about child prodigy development certainly is seen in the handling of Mali by his father. Sruti editor Dr. N. Pattabhi Raman contends that his father "exhibited his talent... much in the fashion of a travelling circus owner putting human oddities on show". Mali quit school by the second grade and by age 7 gave his debut in Madras. Soon, through his father's promotion, Mali's flute performances became the main means of supporting his large family. Although music lovers agree that Mali's sheer genius was never in doubt, early exposure that some might even call exploitation perhaps impacted the behavior and personality of the artist.

On the other hand, Ravi Kiran's background differs greatly from Mali's. His family was steeped in music. His grandfather was

Gottuvadyam Narayana Iyengar, the famed gottuvadyam exponent, and it was his grandfather's instrument that intrigued him and led him to make it one of his main instruments. Ravi Kiran's father Narasimhan, also a musician, surrounded him with music constantly and disciplined his training directly from his toddler years. His father originally decided not to dilute his musical training by enrolling him in school, but rather taught him at home. However, he changed his mind later on, deciding that he did not want to deprive his son of formal education, and enrolled him in school at age 9 while still concentrating on musical training. Another approach to nurturing young talent was also taken by Ravi Kiran's father. Instead of immediately exposing him to a full concert schedule, similar to Mali's route, he carefully monitored which engagements he accepted, making certain that Ravi Kiran could develop artistically away from the pressure of full-fledged concert touring. Now, Ravi Kiran is an amateur artist who is giving concert performances all over the world, including touring the United States in the past with CMANA, in 1988, and other groups.



Mandolin Srinivas was not only a child prodigy, but also a pioneering artist who was able to adopt a new instrument to the Carnatic music style. His growth as a prodigy and artist is similar to Mali in that the discovery of his talent was somewhat accidental. His family was not extremely musical, like Ravi Kiran's family. His father Uppalappu Sathyanarayan, was conducting a light music orchestra, which is how, 'Mandolin' discovered his destined instrument. He, like Mali, played his father's mandolin while his parents were out of the house. Soon his talent was realized and flourished under the training of S. Rajeswara Rao, a vocalist who taught Srinivas Carnatic music through vocal music from age 8.

Srinivas's talent allowed to grasp whatever was sung and transfer it to the mandolin. By the age of 12, he had made his Madras debut and was well on his way to establishing his reputation as pioneering wonder. There was concern that Srinivas's career was moving too fast for a boy his age. He had stopped general education by age 9 and was bearing a full concert load, including tours throughout India and abroad. Always the question of the line between exposure and exploitation is brought up in cases of child prodigies, and critics carefully watched his development as an artist. Now, Srinivas is a

highly coveted musician whose development, many believe, is in keeping with his prodigious beginnings. He first toured the U.S. in 1983 at age 13 under CMANA, and since then has toured the world over.



It is clear that just as such enormous talent in such small bodies is so rare, so too is each individual's development and style is unique. Similarities of circumstance may exist among some of these wonder children. Yet, since they are artists foremost, their music and 'manodharmam,' or creativity, is their own. In fact, it is for their innovation as well as their

talent that they are so admired. The interesting part of witnessing the growth of such prodigious geniuses is to observe the full results of their potential. For instance, Shashank, the current flute prodigy, plays with the brilliance of a maestro, yet the exciting part of following him in future years is to see the new phrases, alapanas, kalpana swaras and neravals that he will be spinning.

Who has the authority to confer such a prestigious, through informal, title? Certainly not any "Junior Sangeetham" writer, who just observes in awe. Without a doubt, such talent will never cease to strike audiences's imaginations to push the bounds of Carnatic music.

"Sumathi Subbiah is a past junior member and supporter of CMANA. She was the first Junior Member Coordinator and wrote this article as a Junior Member and high-school student. In the original article she acknowledges gratefully the use of articles on prodigies which have appeared in SRUTI, the premier Music magazine from Madras, India."



HOW DO YOU LISTEN TO MUSIC - WITH YOUR EARS ONLY?

May be not; it is possible that we listen or interpret music through our other senses too - eyes or mind - memory too. (The Science section of the New York Times of May 16, 1995 had an interest article on this aspect...Ed).

We were amazed to learn that the violin maestro Prof. T.N. Krishnan's father and Guru who is 99 years old and has lost awareness of things around him, however, never fails to correct anyone playing an 'apaswaram'!

Mr. K.K. Ramamurthy of Morganville, NJ has written the following experience titled Old man and the Violin: "I went to pick up something at a friend's place; there, I heard sound of violins coming from the basement. Obviously, someone was teaching violin to a student. Being a violin enthusiast myself, I was curious who it was and found out that it was my friend's uncle who was 75 years old and did nothing else but play violin. At that moment he was staying with them for a few months and had offered to teach violin to their youngster Rahul. My friend kept talking but I barely listened. My ear was tuned to the sound of violin coming from downstairs. I could hear the old man correctng the "Ga"s and the "Ma"s. "Ma" had to be little higher for Pratimadhyama note. It was only a microtonal difference, but the old man was not satisfied. He was obviously a perfectionist. After a while, the lesson stopped and the old man started playing. It was "Subhapantuvarali raga:". It sounded beautiful and full of feeling in spite of the constant talk of my friend on everything from baseball to



health care. I got up slowly and went downstairs. The old man had his back towards me and obviously was not aware of my presence. I stood there listening. it was a superb rendering of the raga. Each note was so clear bowing was so smooth, it reminded me of the great MSG. Amazingly for a man of his age, he had incredible speed. It was flawless rendering. I was deeply moved. My friend came down to fetch me for 'Iddlies'. I tried to hush him up. This friend said, "Don't worry, my uncle can't hear, he is stone deaf. "I was flabbergasted. This man who plays Subhapantuvarali with such elan? Obviously he hears the musit in his head - he plays through his fingers and hears in his head. How neat! he also looks at the placement of the fingers when his student plays and corrects when he is wrong. Old man finished the raga and was sitting still. I walked up to him. He saw me and got up. I could see his eyes were moist. There was a kind of serenity and peacefulness in his face. I didn't say a word. I just bent down and did my namaskarams to a truly great artist".

In Memoriam - Mr. D.N. Visweswariah (1916-1997)

Arjun Mallik

Mr. D.N. Visweswariah, CMANA Patron Member and father of past President and Sangeetham Editor Dr. Uma Roy, passed away on November 7, 1997. A great connoisseur of Carnatic music, Mr. Visweswariah has written many scholarly articles and music reviews in Sangeetham and has helped in its production for many years. He was dear to one and all who knew him.



We express our condolence to the bereaved: Mrs. Chayamma Visweswariah (CMANA Honorary Patron), daughter Dr. Uma Roy, and granddaughter Mrs. Madhuri Kannan.

In honor of Mr. Visweswariah, CMANA trustees have instituted a prize bearing his name, to be given each year to a CMANA Junior Member for exemplary service to the Association and to Carnatic Music.

Mr. Visweswariah was CMANA's distinguished Patron Member and a friend, philosopher and guide to most who knew him. He was born on May 10, 1916 with the moon in the star "Makha" in a village called

Dummena Halli in Arasikere District of the former Mysore State. His parents Sri Nanjappa Bhagavathar and Smt. Parvathi Devi were highly educated and came from a very cultured family of the Western Ghat Districts of the old Mysore State. Like his illustrious parents and forefathers, Sri Visweswariah worked hard and educated himself to hold many distinguished positions. Some of these are: (a) Administrative Assistant to Dr. Gilbert Fowler, Head of the Biochemistry Department in the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore and later in Madras; (b) Assistant to Sir M. Visweswariah, Former Diwan of Mysore, in the golden era of the Mysore State; (c) Political Assistant to the American Consulate in Madras. Subsequently, Mr. Visweswariah migrated to the United States to be closer to his only daughter, our distinguish former President, Dr. Uma Roy. During this phase of his life, he and his devoted wife Smt Chayamma Visweswariah both contributed very generously to the progress of CMANA and to the propagation of Carnatic music in North America. Sri Visweswariah also had an in-depth knowledge of Hindu Astrology; and like a true great soul, he knew approximately when his soul will depart his mortal body.

Sri Visweswariah breathed his last very peacefully after a brief illness around 6.30 p.m. on Friday, November 7, 1997 in Pramus, New Jersey. He leaves behind his noble wife and Dharmapathini Smt. Chayamma Visweswariah, his daughter Dr. Uma Roy, his grand daughter Sow. Madhuri Kannan and a host of friends and relatives to mourn his loss. May his soul rest in Peace!

Om Shanthih, Shanthih, Shanthih !

CMANA past Board member, and long-time supporter

THE DIKSHITHAR DISTINCTIVENESS

by D.N. Visweswariah

Ever since I heard my sister practice Sri Varalakshmi in Raga Sri some 65-68 years ago, the words “Raga pade, Rasa Pade, Sa Pade, Pade, Pade”, have haunted me. The tune was beautiful, the words were very pleasing, meaning unknown, although in Kannada ‘Pade pade’ meant ‘again and again’. Since then Dikshithar has had a special appeal to me making ponder often on the differences between his music and that of Saint Thyagaraja and Syama Sastrigal, the other two great men in the Trinity of Carnatic Music. Such pondering was accompanied not by any erudite musical scholarship, but by uninterrupted listening to music, all through life, and to lecture-demonstrations of great musicologists like T.V. Subba Rao, Prof.

Sambamurthy, Justice T.L. Venkatarama Iyer, Dr. S. Ramanathan and Mudikondam Venkatarama Iyer while in Madras.

Sri Muthuswamy Dikshithar (1775-1835) was, by comparison with his peers, a “globe-trotter” (for an 18th century Indian), he having traveled in the company of Yogi some 1200 miles to Benares from his native Tamil Nadu and staying there for five years. Even after return from Benares, he traveled widely inside Tamil Nadu and really established no permanent head quarters and no “school of music” to train disciples batch after batch like Thyagaraja did in Tiruvaiyar. Dikshithar’s Kritis apparently remained scattered all over Tamil Nadu and were not fully known to even leading musicians for many many years after his passing. Thanks to the searches and researches and publicizing of his great compositions undertaken fortunately by savants like his nephew, Subbarama Dikshitar, and later by Justice T.L. Venkatarama Iyer, some 400 compositions have by now seen the light of day. So today, even a half-hour performance, by a middle-level singer on the All India Radio can often include a rare Kritis of Dikshithar whereas typical five-hour concert by a Vidwan some sixty years ago, comprised one or two of Dikshithar Kritis as against some ten-twelve Thyagaraja Kritis. What a change! Mastery of his Kritis by the musicians, not always easy, has not been an over-night phenomenon either. I vividly recall the introductory remarks made by Justice Venkatarama Iyer in his characteristic childlike manner during a lecture-demonstration, (at a meeting of the Experts Committee of the Madras Music Academy in 1950’s). When I began to take an interest in the great Composer, I had known only two





of Dikshithar's Kritis! One of them was Sri Gananatham in Eeshamanohari and the second one was..." drowned out in laughter! After his researches he was in a position to teach hundreds to others!

The most obvious difference between Dikshithar and his peers was his use of Sanskrit in his compositions instead of Telugu (though he was learned in it too). Dikshithar, by all accounts, was a deep scholar in Sanskrit literature; his praise of some deities includes references to 'Kavya' (epics), 'Nataka' (drama), 'Alankara; (aesthetics) and 'Vyakarana' (grammar). He was also deeply rooted in the philosophy of the Upanishads (philosophic terms abound in his compositions). His deep scholarliness in Sanskrit perhaps made him think in Sanskrit, the language which has integrated philosophic scholarship throughout India for centuries. Sanskrit must have come to him as naturally as did Telugu to Thyagaraja.

The musical structure was also different; while Thyagaraja and Sastrigal used as few words as possible and made room for a large number of sangathis, Dikshithar was more prolific in the use of words; his scholarly mind needed more and not less words! Musicologists say that his Kritis give less scope for sangatis than Thyagaraja's Kritis. Also the slow tempo of the Dikshithar Kritis was largely because he was a veena player himself and fashioned both the tempo and the gamaka on the veena pattern. Let the more knowledgeable speak on such erudite matters.

The really crucial differences, to my mind, is Dikshithar's approach to God which conditions his music. Thyagaraja and Sastrigal were Bhakthas first and foremost and their music depended on their moods at any given time... now happiness at the immediate prospect of divine grace.. now anguish because the Lord is tarrying.. now anger... and now accusation of God (the famous 'Ninda

Sthuthi')...now repentance and so on. Dikshithar, reputedly a self-realized detached Yogi, apparently was immune to such moods since th he approached God through the path of Upanishadic knowledge and had attained 'Samatva' (mental poise); after all, does not the Gita define Yoga as Samatva... 'Samatvam Yogamuchyate'? Dikshithar could therefore carefully and elaborately construct his compositions very much like a modern architect plans and constructs a complex building. His unrivalled knowledge of the Puranas was supplemented by that of 'Sthala Purana' (local traditions built around the deity of a given temple), acquired by him through travel from one temple center to the next, the hard way (not the slightest mention is made of his travails, to the best of my knowledge, in any of his Kritis even indirectly).

To me his Kritis are a mixture of three elements: 1. Sthala Purana 2. the Puranas and 3. absolute philosophy. Each Krit has a larger or a smaller proportion of these three elements. Some contain practically nothing but the third. These elements, mix gracefully to make his compositions so beautiful; at any rate, the Hindu mind, long trained to accept both the personal and impersonal nature of God should find no difficulty in understanding Dikshithar's Kritis. His own Bhakthi was, paradoxically, a product of his Gnana (knowledge).

Probably no other composer has praised so many deities; diskhithar was clearly a spiritual democrat in the sense that no one deity was greater than another in the context of salvation. The following is a small listing (by no means exhaustive) of the variety of deities he addressed in various ragas.

Kumaraswami (Asaveri), Brihannayake (Andali), Anandeswara (Ananda Bhairavi), Sri lakshmi Varaham (Abhogi), Ratnachala Nayaka (Mukhari), Shiva Kameswari (Arabhi), Akhilandeswari (Dwijavanthi), Subrahmanya (Suddha Dhanysi),

Santhana Gopala Krishna (kamach), Abhayambhika (Sri), Kamakshi (Kalyani), Kailasa Natha (Kambhoji), Sri Mathrubhootham (Kanada), Varadaraja (Saranga), Venkatachalapathe (Kapi), Chandrasekhara (Marga Hindola), Ardha Nareeswara (Kumuda Kriya), Chidambara (Kedara), Swaminatha, Soundararaja (Brindavana Saranga) ... On Ganapathi alone there are numerous Kritis in various ragas. Then there are the famous “Kamalamba” and “Navagraha” Kirthanas.

In his Kritis Dikshithar would sing, “day and night I praise Lord/Devi ..” and if you heard a number of his songs in succession, you might well wonder how being devoted to one deity, he would be ready to be attached to another deity again day and night! All it implies simply is that if you are a follower of a given deity, be whole-hearted and concentrated in your devotion. This may explain Dikshithar’s own concentration on any one deity on whom he was composing at any given time. His “Mamava Pattabhi Rama” in Manirangu would have delighted Thyagaraja’s heart, and likewise the “Meenakshi Me Mudam” would have enraptured Sastrigal if they ever heard these songs. Devotees of Sri Venkatesha are thrilled when the Kirti “Sri Venkata Girisha” in Suruti is sung... So on and on. In his Navagraha Kirtanas he uses much the same phraseology as he does for deities: “”Bhudhamashrayami Satatam” or Mahasuram Kethumaham Bhajami”. Each of the Navagrahas can confer boons and is worthy of worship, in Dikshithar’s view. On how many different manifestations of the major Gods of the Hindu Pantheon has he sung with rapture and with glorious attributes. His ability to conceive ever new attributes seems inexhaustible! Seldom does he repeat. You can indeed compile an encyclopaedia of the Hindu deities from his Kritis.

Beginning with the raga, everything was carefully thought out. I remember Prof. Sambamurthy once got

excited with happiness when he recounted the artistic word-play in the Pallavi and Charana of Dikshithar’s “Thyagaraja Yoga-Vaibhavam” in Ananda Bhairavai. The Professor said in Tamil, “Inge Dikshitarval vilayadirkar, vilayadirkar, vilayadirkar” (here Dikshithar has played and played). First the pallavi and next the charana lines of that song are given below :

Pallavi

Thyagaraja Yoga VAibhavam

Agaraja Yoga Vaibhavam

Raja Yoga Vaibhavam

Yoga Vaibhavam

Vaibhavam

bhavam

Vam

Charana

Sam

Prakasam

Swaroopo Prakasam

Tattva Swarpoora Prakasam

Sakala Tattva Swaroopo Prakasam

Siva Saktyadi Tattva Swaroopo Prakasam

Either through astrology or divine revelation, Dikshithar knew before hand the moment of his death. His manner of passing away reminds us of two famous verses in the Hindu religious thought



1. “Bhaja-Govindham” the philosopher Sankara’s admonition to an old man cramming up rules of Grammar to quit that futile exercise and sing instead the Lord’s praise, 2. “Krishna, Twadeeya Pada Panjaka” of Kula Shekara Alwar, which warns the human mind against postponing remembrance of God until the last moment lest the pangs of death prevent such remembrance. Dikshithar was never for one moment forgetful of God. Nor was he sick at the time of death. For all we know he may have enjoyed the “Vichitra Soukhya” (strange well-being) in the body, of which he speaks so eloquently in his Kamalamba

Kriti in the Sahana raga. As the final moment neared, he got his disciples to sing his famous “Meenakshi Me Mudam” Kriti. They sang once but were asked to sing it again. When during the repetition the words “Meena Lochani, Pasha Mochani (liberator of bondage) appeared, Dikshithar expired with God’s name on his lips. What a life and what a death! “Na Bhootho na Bhavishyathi”. The great Yogi that he was, he could have easily chosen the traditional Yogic way - sitting still in a “samadhi” posture until the end came; but, he honored music.



LAYAM AND TALAM... NOT QUITE THE SAME

P. Ramabhadran

Certain misconceptions prevail on 'Layam & Thalam'. "Sruthi Matha, Tala Pitha" wrote someone in an earlier issue of Sangeetham. Though not wrong, it would be more appropriate to say 'Layam Pitha'. Distinct differences exist between these two, though they are closely related. One should not be confused with the other. Most Mridangists play Thalam, but only a few play Layam.

Thalam is a set of pattern of rhythm which Music, be it Carnatic, Hindusthani or Western follows. Music is set to a time measure and the drummers or the percussionists vary their beats confining to this time period. The modern electronic gadgetries like the electric Organ the Synthesizer, the Piano, etc. are all made to produce multitudes of time-bound rhythmic beats, in a predetermined pattern. Music or song has to be set to these beats. Since they are purely mechanical, they tend to become monotonous after a period of time due to their limited variation. In other words, the beats become 'soulless'.

Layam is an exclusive propriety of Carnatic Music, not present or experienced in any other form of music. Carnatic Music is based on 'Jeeva Swaras'. Each Sangathi is made up of different swara

notations and these by the ingenuity of the mridangam or ganjira artists, is converted into 'Jathis' or 'Sollukattus' to be easily adopted and played on their instruments. The artiste should have a sound knowledge of music and quick anticipation. A mridangist, however dexterous he is with his fingers is said to be 'Flat', if he/she fails to follow the music closely. Most of our senior mridangists are basically good musicians. Sangeeta kalanidhi late Sri Palghat Mani Iyer was considered to be a great Laya Vidwan.

Also, it is not right to say that we have hundreds of Thalams. But for the natyacharyas of Tanjore who utilized varieties of Thalams in their concerts, many of the Thalams would have vanished long ago; they were the ones who not only nurtured them but also adopted them in their recitals. None of the Thalams in the 'Kamalachakram' which depicts the 108 Thalams in a lotus motif, are in use today. Although theoretical permutations are feasible, it is not possible to put them into practice. Some Vidwans like Tiruchi Swaminatha Iyer, Late Mudikondan Venkatarma Iyer, Late Tiger Varadachariar, Late Ranga Ramanuja Ayyangar, Natyacharya Thiruvidadamarudur Late Kuppiiah Pillai (the innovator of Kamalachakram) have all demonstrated a few of these Thalams. These have only academic interest and might never see the lime light.

Apart from these 108 Thalams, Purandaradasa's Suladi Thalams like Dhruva, mathya, Roopaka, Jampa, Triputa, Ata, Eka and their Jathis Tisra, Chadusra, Khanda, Misra and Sankeerna, making it in all 35 Thalams are in use today, though even a few among them are not common.





THE STORY OF THE POT

Prof. N. Govindarajan

The Pot - Known as 'Noot' in Kashmir, 'Mudki' in Rajasthan and 'Ghatam' in Carnatic Music - is no ordinary clay pot!

Origin : The Ghatam, like Mridanga and Veena is an ancient Carnatic Music instrument. In a sloka in the Yuddha kanda of Ramayan, Valmiki refers to the sound that emanates from the pot! There is an authoritative reference to it in 'Krishna Ganam;', a potential description of Lord Krishna's flute recital. The above two instances prove that Ghatam is an instrument of ancient times in the cultural history of India.

Ghatam and the ordinary mud pot used for domestic purposes are comparable only in that they are both made of clay and round in shape with the Ghatam having a narrower mouth. The similarity ends there. Ghatam is made up mainly of baked clay with brass or copper fillings. The clay used is not of the ordinary kind. It is a secret combination of some powders which is known only to the traditional makers of this instrument. The main bonding agent is egg which is used in enormous amount. This combination is shaped into a pot and then baked. Ghatam-s are baked in a number of places in South India, but the one produced in ManaMadurai, a place near Madurai in Tamil Nadu is stronger than the ones made at other places and is the one used mostly by artists. The ghatam may be described simply as a pot with a narrow mouth and size determines the pitch of the instrument, bigger the size of the lower the pitch.

Evolution : Known as 'Noot' in Kashmir and 'Mudiki' in Rajasthan, Ghatam was used more or less as a folk musical instrument. In South India, it was used as an instrument of fun, but now it has become a highly sophisticated instrument and has been raised to a concert status, as a regular and important

rhythmic accompaniment. In the past it was employed as accompaniment for veena.

Methods of Playing : In North India this instrument is played on a small round block with the mouth facing upwards and is played on its round surface by the right hand and on its mouth by the left hand. Also the performer wears brass rings in his fingers. In South India, the performer places the instrument on his lap with the mouth hugging his belly. The performer plays by using his fingers, wrists and even nails. During accompaniment he keeps the instrument very close to his belly and then forces the ghatam outward which creates a peculiar bass sound. Occasionally the performer keeps the instrument with the mouth facing the audience and plays on its neck. Sometimes to the delight of the audience, during the percussion exchange he would throw up the instrument and catch it to suit the rhythmic beats.

Fingering Techniques : Basically only three different sounds can be produced in Ghatam and these are produced by using both hands and fingers. Seven words are given to indicate these three sounds to enable easy fingering. The seven words are : Tha, The, Thom, Ta, Ku, Num and Ti. The combinations are chosen such that they are pleasing to the ear.

Special Features : Unlike other instruments this is the only instrument that is homogenous in structure, only one that can be moved into various positions while playing. Like flute, this is the only other instrument whose tune cannot be changed.

Wizards : Nalini Subba Iyer was the first artiste to bring up this instrument in South Indian Music. The subsequent artistes are Palani Krishna Iyer, Sundaram Iyer, Vilvadri Iyer, Alangudi Ramchandran and Kothanda Rama Iyer.

Ghatam vidwan and college professor

**COMPOSITIONS OF TYAGARAJA****Compiled and Edited by T.K. Govinda Rao****Book review by D.N. Visweswariah**

Mr. T.K. Govinda Rao has placed all lovers of Carnatic music - be they laymen like me or great practicing Vidwans - in his debt by bringing out a very important publication on Tyagaraja. The book's importance derives from many factors; I will here mention what to my mind is the greatest, viz. Mr. Govinda Rao's discipleship of Sri Musiri Subramanya Iyer for no less than 15 years! Survival under Musiri's very sensitive temperament (I used to know this great musician in his later days) - apart from anything else was not an easy proposition. Why was the association with Musiri so important? Because, in my opinion of all the musicians I have heard over nearly half a century or more - he seemed to have had the greatest ability to fathom the probable state of mind of Tyagaraja when he composed a particular kriti and Musiri reflected that mood in his singing of that kriti. I have attended many concerts when Govinda Rao sang with his Guru and in Musiri's later days, the disciple seemed to bring out the mood just as well as his Guru (sometimes even better) master and when Vidwans of his age were content to mug up elaborate "mohras" - the prerogative really of mridangist, Govinda Rao was a mature musician pondering like his guru the mood of Thyagaraja.

This is his most outstanding asset which he has put to good use in the present publication. But just how? Instead of following the time-honored literal translation of a kriti - Govinda Rao gives what was probably the most salient features of a given kriti, a sort of mirror to Thyagaraja's probable feeling when he composed the kriti. Such an understanding of the mood will make all the difference to the singing Vidwan and through him to the lay listeners.

The book is very important besides because it amounts to a Thyagaraja Encyclopedia which every Vidwan should possess. The book is almost 900 pages long, bound well in a rich color depicting the wealth it contains. There are 688 songs of Thyagaraja presented in both Devanagari script and Roman script and a

translation of each song in English. The organization of the book is also unique in that he has classified the songs based on the ragas and the melakartas they belong. Thus, for example, one can find very easily all Todi raga songs in one area of the book or Devagandhari songs in another. The book begins very appropriately with a song on Lord Ganesha in Kanakangi, Mela # 1! All the songs are indexed alphabetically in Devanagari and Roman script. The book is complete with a glossary of commonly referred terms in Telugu and even an Errata - a very thorough work indeed!

I cannot sufficiently praise also Govinda Rao's disciples, the Bombay Sisters for having gifted a sum of one hundred thousand rupees towards the cost of this publication. The gift is from a trust fund (Muktambaram Trust) that the sisters have established in the name of their parents Sri N. Chidambaram Iyer and Smt. Muktambal. The Sisters have really and honestly obeyed injunction of our Shastras, viz. 'Honor your mother and father and then your Guru'. The honor done to the Guru resulted in this masterly volume. My best wishes therefore both to the Guru and the disciples. The Guru Bhakti indeed is not formal. I also notice that the other sister, Mrs. Savithri Ramanad is a trustee in this family trust and also a disciple of Govinda Rao and deserves the same praise as her sisters.

The book at the outset gives a picture Govinda Rao. The latter's very handsome young face I can recall very vividly because he used to attend the frequent musical gatherings at Smt. Muthu Meenakshi's house in Gopalapuram in Madras where we lived too. It is amazing to find that this lad has developed into this mature and learned musicologist.

Govinda Rao's rendering into English Thyagaraja's kritis reminds me of what Prof. Sambamurthy used to say, viz, that Thyagaraja talked with God. Just what he talked with God is very clearly brought out in the book under review.

CMANA Patron member, author, and long-time supporter

KOTISWARA IYER

Padma Srinivasan



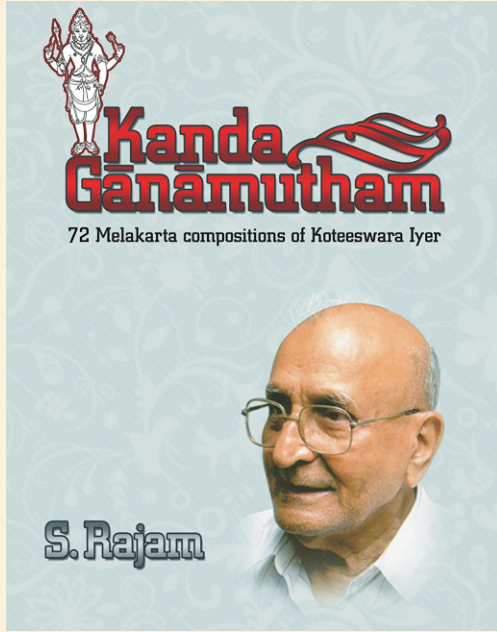
My earliest recollection of a Kotiswara Iyer composition goes back to the fifties when I heard the AIR orchestra playing one in the ragam Shadvidamargini. My curiosity about the composer was again aroused a foresight later when the song was repeated with an announcement detailing the ragam and the title “Antarangabhakthi”. About this time the musician Kalakkad Ramanarayana Iyer the title the title released a record with two songs of Kotiswara Iyer. One was Ganamudapanam in Jyothiswarupini and the other Nadanusanthana in Vagadeswari. All these compositions were in melakartha ragas in praise of Lord Subramanya in Tamil and bore the mudra Kavi Kunjara Dasa. I came across a book, in two parts titled Kandaganamudam, in my father’s collection of this composer. Part I (1932) contained 36 kirtanas of the purvamelas forming the Suddamadyama group from Kanakingi to Chalanata and Part II (1936) consisted of another 36 songs of the uttaramelas forming the Pratimadyama group from Salagam to

Rasikapriya. Each kriti as was characterised by the inclusion of the name of the deity, Skanda, the the name of the raga and the mudra*. One felt, after studying the volumes, that the main purpose of the author was to show the musical world the possibilities of composing kritis in such melakarta ragas which were not in vogue till that time. Such an attempt had not been made before, especially in the Tamil language.

* “Kavikunjaradasa”

Kotiswara Iyer’s musical gifts were not acquired, but were the product of a rich heritage. He was the grandson of the great Kavi Kunjara Bharathi who had sung the whole of Skandapuram. His father Naganatha Iyer of Nandanur village in Elayangudi in Ramanathapuram district was himself a composer both in Sanskrit and Tamil. Kotiswara Iyer was born in 1870 and died at the age of seventy. In the course of a very productive life, he had achieved a musical output of over 2000 pieces and secured for himself an enduring place in the galaxy of distinguished composers. His school years. were spent at Manamadurai and he graduated from college at Tiruchi and Madras. For a while, he worked in the Crime Investigation Division (C.I.D) before becoming a translator at the Madras High Court. His musical education was under the tutelage of Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar and later Patnam Subramanya Iyer. His talent for composition was evident at a very early age. The Venba and “Sundareswara Pathikam” in praise of Sri Somasundara of Madurai and “Kayarkanni Malai” in tribute to the goddess Meenakshi are examples of his initial efforts.

Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer had earlier given a priceless gem, the 72 Melakartha Ragamalika, which had



brought out the melodic beauty of even the unfamiliar mela. These have, in fact, been popularised by Srimathi M.S. Subbulakshmi in a recording with a pallavi in Sri ragam. After Kotiswara Iyer, Dr. M. Balamurali Krishna alone appears to have composed in all the melakarta ragas. Besides melakarthas, Iyer has composed in rakthi ragas appealing to the aesthetic sense in the listeners. Of these, special mention must be made of Sri Venugopala in Durbar, *Ayyane Aatkol Meyyane* in Kamboji and Ini Namakoru in Bilahari. He has composed three varnams in Saveri, Dhanyasi and Kedaragowla in Adi Tala. There are the kirtanas on Vinayaka, Saraswathi, Meenakshi, Lakshmi and Thyagarajaswami, besides the 36 Suddamadyama mela kritis, in the first part of Kandaganamudam. Other pieces on Kapaleeswara, Nataraja, Siva, Rama, Krishna, a beautiful composition in Devamanohari on Dikshitar and a mangalam are published along with the 36 Pratimadyama mela kritis in the second part. Among his unpublished works are a delightful Poornachandrika piece, Sangita, and an Asaveri song in praise of the Myslapore deity Karpagavalli.

Vidwan Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu once pointed out that Kotiswara Iyer's songs were composed in all

the current thalas and had different eduppus such as the sama, athitha and anayata. In several places, the swaras and the sahityas coincided with each other forming Swarakshara Sandhis. Professor Sambamurthy writes that "... Iyer has earned for himself the perennial thanks of the musicians and music lovers by placing his compositions in a permanent form before the public. His name will go down in posterity as the first composer to compose kritis in all melakartas in Tamil. It easy for a composer to attempt pieces in familiar ragas. But unfamiliar ragas is a difficult task. He has to fall upon his own musical resources. He has to think out the new raga, form a picture of it in the mind, determine its jiwa and nyasa swaras, find out its sanchara kramas and raga ranjaka prayogas and finally crystallize his thoughts in the composition. The musical world must therefore realise the amount of time and thought that the illustrious composer must have bestowed in the composition of these kritis".

Some of Iyer's songs in the melakarta ragas such as *Edayya Gati* in Chalanata, *Mohanakara* in Nitimati and *Kandabhaktha* in Dharmavathi have been made popular by musicians like M.L. Vasanthakumari, T.V. Sankaranarayanan and T.R. Subramanian. Several years back, S. Rajam, who is now on the staff of 'Sruthi', had sung all the 72 melakarta kritis of the composer on All India Radio.

I would like to conclude with the words of Justice T.L. Venkatarama Iyer, "Kotiswara Iyer's contribution will be regarded as invaluable. The author has musical heritage ... The language of the kirthanas is sweet and mellifluous and the intense bhakthi of the author to Lord Subramanya and his consorts is apparent to everyone in his compositions".

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**NANDANAR CHARITRAM OF GOPALA KRISHNA BHARATI****Father of Tamil Music Renaissance****AN APPRECIATION by N. RAJAGOPALAN, I.A.S. (Retd.) (Excerpts from his Book 'A GARLAND')**

Prahlada Bhakti Vijayam and Nauka Charitram of Tyagaraja in Telugu, *Krishna Lila Tharangini* in Sanskrit of Swami Narayana Tirtha and *Rama Natakam* of Arunachalakavirayar in Tamil have certainly enriched Carnatic Music and literature. Gopala Krishna Bharati's *NANDANAR CHARITRAM* is just not another in that tradition. It broke new ground. It is unique in its exalted concept, subtlety in presentation and projections, incisiveness in its presentation and the revolutionary impact of its social and spiritual message.

Barring a laconic account in *Periapuranam* on Nandanar, there was no story, drama, or legend earlier. It was the genius of Bharati that brought forth the magnificent opera, reflecting his deep study of the rural socio-economic scenery and its deep malaise, blended with spiritual fragrance, his enormous creative talents and musical acumen. As S.V. Parthasarathy says, '*Nandanar Charitram has an abiding place in the hearts of music-loving public and which alone in its lofty reaches of devotion and directness of appeal, in its purity and originality of the kirtan pattern, would have gained its author immortality.*' Nandanar is a Harijan farm-servant in the employ of a Brahmin landlord. He has an insatiable desire to have a darshan of Lord Nataraja, the Cosmic dancer of Chidambaram. His caste, vocation, planting season for paddy and other factors militate against the fulfillment of his ardent desire. The purity of his devotion is unequalled and the intensity of his longing to see the Lord unmatched and profound.

The Lord comes to his rescue and ensures that His humble and innocent devotee from Meladunur is allowed to go to Chidambaram and is received there

with all honors and paraphernalia by none else than the priests and temple authorities. That is the glory of Saint Nandanar.

Devotion is shown to transcend caste barriers, social inhibitions and religious constraints. The needed qualification is not education, nor status nor occupation but the purity of devotion and the totality of surrender to Him. And it was given to Bharati to portray the life of this devotee in the Tamil opera bringing out the ingredients of true spiritualism, the poignancy of the story he had himself woven, the enthralling pleas of Nandanar, the subtle techniques resorted to by the landlord and the maladies of the rural unorganized labor then. Bharati chose the fictitious landlord in a Brahmin to highlight the effects of his opera. Its natural style, rich imagery, profound insight and popular acclamation have made it the noblest Tamil work of modern times. The theme was profoundly sensitive; the characterization fresh and attractive.

A word about the character of 'Landlord'. The farm-servant very persuasively represents that he had grown up with the kind of favors of the master and prays to be sent to Chidambaram with his blessings. (He would not sneak out). Finding his importunity too difficult to ignore, the landlord invokes his right to get his land planted and tells him to complete the planting of his two hundred and seventy acres of land to go. The tender heart of the devout melts in anguish. The reaction is not in the landlord but is in the Lord Himself. His heart bleeds in sympathy with the lot of his devotee. The next moment the entire farm smiles with the richest crop which any Green Revolution would envy at. The landlord surrenders - not with his permission or blessings. He begs: "*Not realizing your*



eminence as a true devotee of Siva, I had said several things. Kindly forget my sins.” Does he stop ? No, Bharati does not allow him to. The scriptures say that the surrender to be effective should be complete and total. The landlord is aware of it. So he says: “ Please take me as a disciple and initiate me so that I could realize Celestial Bliss.”

Kandappa Chettiar (a rich merchant ... Ed) of Nagapattinam had encouraged him to write the opera and got it released in his place. His opera was an instant success. It was a blitz. The book printed strangely by a Frenchman went into reprint the next year itself. Dramas and musical discourses were seen everywhere. His songs were the delight of the young and old, the connoisseur and the lay, the theist and the atheist. It sowed the seeds of an unprecedented social revolution and in this Gopala Krishna Bharati is a trail blazer to Mahatma Gandhi and Subramania Bharati. He democratized the opera even as the other Bharati did a century later. He carried the message of untouchability, even as the Mahatma did a century later, to the nook and comers of the silent, innocent and rural areas. ‘Nandanar’ became a household word overnight.

The story carried the audience to such dizzy heights that it became the *tour de force* of every dramatist and musical discourse (Harikatha Kalakshepam) artiste. Nay, there have been two good feature films too with stalwarts like Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar and M.M. Dandapani Desikar taking the lead roles. The opera has in-built versatility, vitality, vibrancy to cater to any audience, place or occasion. Bharati was born poor but ‘was a great and abundantly enriched man-enriched by nature, learning, living and thinking - all taken in his stride.’

Anyone desiring to see Gopala Krishna Bharati in creation needs to just attend a Bharatanatyam recital by a competent artiste portraying Nandanar with his song ‘Varuhalamo’? (may I come). His grip on diction

dialogue and songs is brisk, waggish, dynamic, poignant, appealing and captivating as occasion demands pouring forth creative originality, clarity and incisiveness. The artiste in him understood ‘ life in its height and depths put his aesthetic reactions and impulses and the whole of himself into his creations’, to adopt the words of Neville Cardus. The number of songs in his operas is four hundred and twenty.

If Tyagaraja’s adoration was Rama, Bharati’s idol was Nataraja, the celestial origin of Bharatanatyam. Nataraja was the warp and woof of Nandanar’s precarious but noble existence. R. Thirumalai beautifully sums up thus: Bharati’s style adopted simple, spoken Tamil and where appropriate, the slang and idiom of the character whose sentiments the songs expressed. His command of Tamil was as facile as his musical form. His time-setting was moving. Here the form and content matched, merged and consummated.

Bharati’s versatility was multi-sided. Inspired after his meeting Tyagaraja at Tiruvaiyaru by his pancharathana kirtanas, the gentle colossus composed his own. The emotional and spiritual wealth of his songs ‘Tiruvadi Charanam’ (Kambhoji), ‘Natanamadinar (Vasanta), ‘Pirava Varam Tharum and other pieces have delighted millions through decades. ‘Eppa Varuvaro” (Khamas), ‘Nadanamadinar’ (Vasanta) etc. have been favorites with dancers. The felicity of composition like Tyagaraja’s can be seen in his songs.

Bharati was the son of Sivarama Bharati, grandson of Ramaswami Bharati and great grandson of Kothanda Bharati - all scholars in Sanskrit and veena players. Young Gopalakrishna, in different spells, learnt KAVYA, NATAKA, and ALANKARA under Dikshappayyanathan Ayyar of Mudicondan, Tamil under Chokka Pillai of the same village, Philosophy and Religion under Govinda Sivan of Mayuram and Hindusthani Music under Tiruvidaimarudur Ramdas.

He learnt some songs from Ghanam Krishna Ayyar. Probably he had learnt music from different sources. Born poor and having lost his parents while young, Bharati worked as a cook in a temple at Kothanur near Mudicondan. His (physical) deformities robbed him much of what was due to him while alive. He suffered ridicule and indignity. A local poet spread canards but the great man bore them all as “Patience sitting in monument smiling in grief”. His poor personality compromised his position and status. Thus when he met Tyagaraja, the latter aware of his merits but could not take him for Bharati and so asked him whether he knew Bharati. The saint was thrilled to know that the inelegant frame before him was none but the great man he had heard of. The disciples were then singing “Sri Rama Sita Alankara Swaroopa” in Abhogi raga. A casual query of the saint whether he (Bharati) composed any in that raga brought forth the song “SABHAPATHIKKU VERU DEIVAM” (story on

the inside front cover) on the next day fresh with the fragrance of its over-night composition and the elegance in the use of the raga.

Gopala Krishna Bharati loved goodness and good people. Bharati was a saint without being a sanyasi. He had few wants. His spartan living made him independent of others. He accumulated a sum of Rupees three thousand and left it for charities at the temples at Mayavaram and Chidambaram.

Born poor but rich in musical and poetical attainments, ungainly in personality but well accomplished intellectually, Bharati rose from dust against overwhelming odds by sheer devotion, dedication and self-control and has left a rich legacy that is unparalleled. Truly, he is the ‘Father of Tamil Music Renaissance and Modern Tamil Opera.’. Quite appropriately, he passed away on the day of Lord Siva - Sivarathri.



SANGEETHAM

Padma Srinivasan - An exemplary Guru

The Carnatic music scene in North America suffered a significant loss in the passing away of Padma Srinivasan - popularly known as Padma Teacher - on 31 December 2013, at Chennai, CMANA (Carnatic Music Association of North America) put out the sad announcement mourning her death, within minutes of receiving the tidings from Chennai where she passed away after moving back from the US.

Padma (born April 1935) obtained a Sangeeta Vidwan degree from the Central College of Karnata Music (CCKM, as it was then known) in 1956, during the time when Sangita Kalanidhi Musiri Subramania Iyer was the principal, and the teaching staff included stalwarts like T.Brinda and T.N. Swaminatha Pillai. She was prize winner at the all India Akashvani talent promotion competition in 1954 (the year AIR started these annual nationwide competitions)(and received the coveted award from President Rajendra Prasad in Delhi. She was broadcasting from AIR - Chennai before she moved to the US in 1983. There she taught scores of students for over 30 years in the New Jersey area. Here was a life dedicated to music in the true sense of the word.



Her father imported his love for classical music and his knowledge of it to Padma at a young age. She joined Queen Mary's College at Chennai and thereafter the music course at Madras University, where Prof. P. Sambamoorthy was head of the department. Joining CCKM in 1954 - where we both classmates and hosted makes - she quickly established herself as a serious and talented under Boodalur Krishnamurthy Sastri, taking up Guttuvadyam as her subsidiary subject.

Despite serious health complications caused by rheumatoid arthritis that left her handicapped just as she was poised to begin a career in music, she moved to the US where her brother-in-law Dr. Madhavan was medical practitioner. She quickly established herself as a competent and much sought-after teacher in the Edison area. The annual, day-long GeethaShrunkala music programme that she and her students put up, celebrated its 25th anniversary last year. She took her students to perform at various venues along the east coast, including New York (Flushing), Bridgewater (New Jersey) and Pennsylvania, winning encomiums everywhere. One review of her concert at a music festival co-sponsored by CMANA in 1993 says it was an "excellent concert by an exemplary teacher" and referred to her music as "blissful". Her style was indeed, reposeful (aarpaattam illatha paattu) emphasizing azhuttham (a la D.K. Pattammal) with strict adherence to tradition. While she was catering to an NRI audience, she did not hesitate to include rare compositions and raga-s in



her recitals a varnam in Ramapriya by Balamuralikrishna, a rare kriti in Sahana by papanasam Sivan, and a tillana in Revati by Lalgudi, for instance, in her 1993 concert).

Padma was constantly upgrading her repertoire, seeking new compositions from friends in India, or ordering books, which she then used to put up theme-based concerts on Krishna, at Glen Rock in 1992, Kottesara Iyer's rare melakarta Kriti's for CMANA in 1994, Arunagirinathar's songs at Flushing, NY, in 1996, and on Sringeri Saradamba at Stroudsburg in 2000. She was a regular and devoted subscriber to Sruti magazine, keeping up with news from the Carnatic music world in India till the end. Despite her physical handicap and mobility problems, she regularly attended all concerts, whether by senior visiting artists or up-and-coming youngsters, and extended wholehearted encouragement to young talent. Her NRI students competed for the honour of driving her round to these musical events, and such was her popularity that there used to be a waiting list to join her as a student, till a vacancy occurred. She was, as one write-up puts it, "a rare combination of a refined musician, excellent and committed teacher and remarkably humble and sensitive human being".

In 1998, CMANA honoured her on Teachers' Day and took her on board as a "Honorary Patron". The Indian Academy of Performing Arts (IAPA) of New Jersey honoured her in 2003 for her contributions to music. She also received honours from several other organisations. her last performance was in December 2011 for CMANA at the Bridgewater temple, before failing health necessitated her admission to hospital for intensive care, in the US. She moved back to Chennai in August 2013 to be closer to her brother C.S. Krishnaswami and his wife Padma.

Her indomitable spirit was such that whenever we chatted long distance, (I, in Mumbai or Bangalore, and she in New Jersey) I would moan about my setbacks, whereas she would invariably find something to chuckle over and lift my spirits. During my visit to her on 30 November (a month before she passed away) though she was bedridden, she spoke about forthcoming December season concerts and we reminisced about our student days of 50 years ago at the music college.

Hearing that she missed good coffee at the retirement home she was in, I decided I would take some for her when I went over again, from Bangalore in January. By then, sadly, she was gone. She was like an elder sister to me, although the oceans lay between us. Especially during my college days in Chennai, when I was teenager homesick and lonely in the hostel, it was Padma who cheered me up, as always, with a packet of badam halwa and a funny story about some musician or the other. Her cousin, flutist N.S. Srinivasan, a disciple of flute Mali, was part of a group of up-and-coming male artists - Tanjavur Upendra, S. Kalyaraman and others, all bachelors during the early 1950s - who brought us naughty tidbits about goings-on in the music world. Being with Padma was fun.

The North American music scene will miss you, Padma, as I do too. RIP.

**The Author Savitha Narasimhan is
A feminist scholar with doctorates in
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This article was originally published
in the SRUTI Magazine**



C = Sa?

By Ramolasri*

Well, is it? Let's see. The notes of Indian music are Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni and back to Sa. Western music has C, D, E, F, G, A, B and back to C. Looks like there is a one to one relationship here. Most books on Indian/Western music hint that Sa/C is the base note from which the others are stepped off. Perhaps, then, C = Sa, D = Ri etc. So, the answer to the title question could be yes, C = Sa. Well, I beg to disagree, and very strongly too. Let us (that is us as in you, the reader and me, the author) try to put our heads together and sort through some theoretical concepts to see if we can arrive at an informed opinion.

Indian music is generally melodic in concept. This is just another way of saying that there is only one note of interest at any given instant of time. In simpler terms, at any given instant, we are listening to only a single note, be it a Sa or a Ri whatever. In contrast, most Western music is essentially harmonic in nature. In this context, harmony can be defined as the combined affect of several notes of different frequencies sounded in unison. Visualize, for an instant, pressing two or three keys of a piano simultaneously (usually referred to as chords in Western music). This concept has to be modified in the case of instruments like the violin that are generally used to produce only one note at a time. At a second level, one can also interpret harmony as an affect that arises as each of the instruments of the performing ensemble is played its own tune and the music essentially becomes the combined effect of these individual tunes. Thus, when Midori is furiously bowing away at a Mozart piece, she is

playing only one note at a time on her violin, but the harmony arises from the notes played on the accompanying violins, piano, cello etc.

The reason we need to consider this difference between melodic and harmonic systems is that it has some implications with respect to fixing the frequencies of notes. In harmonic music, it is very important that the instruments (and the singers too) be all set to the same 'base' note so that the harmony envisioned by the composer comes through. Since Carnatic (and Hindustani too, for that matter) music is melodic, the stress is instead on the effect of a multitude of tunes sounded simultaneously. This means that the frequency of the base note is not that important and it is mostly the placement of the other notes about this is of consequence. In fact, this allows the main performer the freedom to place the base note wherever he or she pleases, as long as all the accompanying instruments (and the players, too) are able (and willing!) to accommodate it. The ever present tambura provides the players and the listeners with the base note (sruthi) so that the tune can be fixed with respect to that. This process of 'fixing the tune' then amounts to identifying the raga.

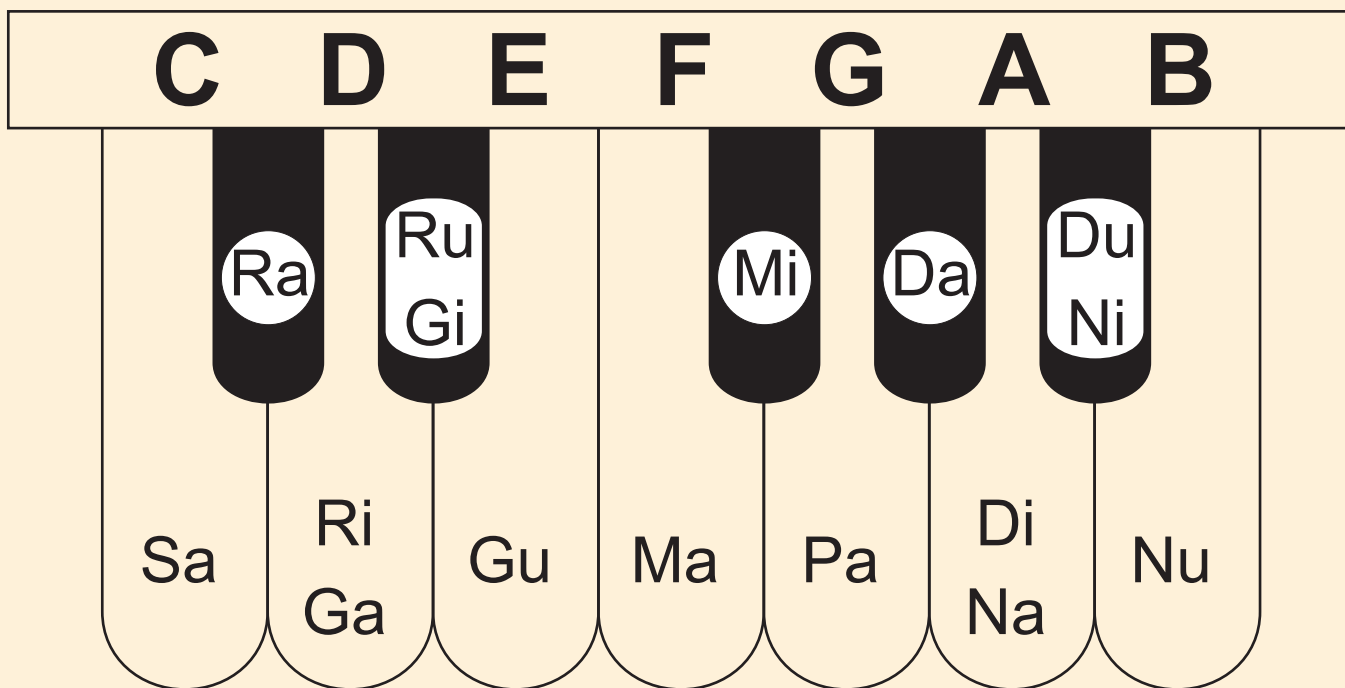
Getting back to harmonic and melodic music, we can say that for harmonic Western music, absolute fixation of the notes is essential since it fixes all the notes. This allows the various performers to tune their instruments to the same scale before the performance. It was agreed at the London International Conference of 1939 that the note C would be fixed at 261.6.Hz

providing the fixed notes. Thus, the note C is supposed to be 261.6 Hz on your Steinway baby grand as also on my Casio tone. About the only exception to this is in the case of ‘superior’ soloists who let their minds dictate some fine adjustments; well, that should serve as an eye opener to those who thought that only Indian music has manodharma! Getting back to the point, in melodic Carnatic music, one can get by with only relative fixation and since only a few performers comprise the entire ‘orchestra’, final tuning can be done on stage, just before the actual performance. Since the notes are not fixed in an absolute sense, your Sa might be at 400 Hz while I might choose to keep mine at 275 Hz (assuming, just for argument, that I was foolish enough to attempt to perform some music). Why, you can choose to set your Sa to 400 HZ today and move it to 275 Hz tomorrow, if that is what you want.

The natural range of adult male and female voices being different, it is only to be expected that women will choose to set their Sa’s to be of a higher pitch than most men. Typically, male singers place their Sa

around 230 - 300 Hz while female vocalists prefer something in the range 350 - 450 Hz. Interestingly, the usual colloquial way of indicating where the Sa has been placed is by using the Western scale of reference. The term kattai (Tamil, refers to a piece of wood; presumably referring to wooden keys) is the unit, with the count starting from C. Whole tones up the scale are reckoned as one step with semi-tones (black keys) assigned half steps. Thus, placing the Sa at C is referred to as using one kattai sruthi or pitch; C-sharp (or the inharmonic D flat, both referring to the black key just higher than the C) is the Sa for one and a half kattai sruthi, D is Sa for a sruthi of two kattais and so on. For placement of Sa below the C, one can either count up to the note an octave higher kattai, one quarter kattai etc.

In light of the above facts, it should be clear that the relationship between Sa and C is that of an analogy, not one of equivalence. Depending on the performer, Sa could be equal to C or D or even something in-between. It pointed out at this stage that the range for Sa of male and female singers given is only a rough



one and there are many exceptions. The aging of the voice usually forces the adoption of ever lower Sa placement. For example, the great G.N. Balasubramaniam is said to have performed with the Sa placed about G in his younger days, progressively stepping down over the years to somewhere near D. In vocal concerts, since accompanying instruments (eg. violin) follow the vocalist, they are tuned to the same pitch. If the main performer is playing an instrument rather than singing, he/she enjoys the vocalists' freedom of choosing a Sa to his/her convenience, within the limits imposed by the instrument.

Having provided some information on the topic, let me now share with you my motivation for writing this article. Being a regular CD buyer (no, I mean audio compact discs) provide detailed notes on the jacket to enlighten listeners about what is in the recording. Some among these tend to give 'equivalent' western (C-D-E type) scales for the ragas, without regard to the fact that C is simply not equal to Sa. For example, if we consider raga Mohanam with the symmetric Sa-Ri-Ga-Pa-Sa set of notes in both ascent and descent (arohanam and avarohanam), the 'equivalent' is bound to be C-D-E-G-A-C, without regard to whether the performer has

actually set the Sa to be C. If the performer has set the Sa to something other than C, the actual notes (in C-D-E- terminology) could be very different. For example, if the recording is of a female vocalist with a typical sruthi of five kattais (Sa at G), the same mohanam would be G-A-B-D-E-G which is obviously not the same. If the sruthi were at four and a half kattais, the same mohanam scale would become a complicated F sharp - G sharp - A - C sharp - D Sharp - F sharp (or the inharmonic flat scale). The point is simply that one cannot provide a description with the level of detail on the limited space of CD jacket - and thus the best thing to do may be to avoid the equivalent' scale (arohana - avarohana) if deemed appropriate. The whole idea is similar to the "perverse" usage of the term trinity to refer to the Thiruvavur trio and is better avoided

So, what do you think? Is C = Sa?

*Author also goes by the name of P. Sriram and enjoys listening to Carnatic music among the cows fields of Wichita, Kansas.

Dr. P.Sriram is the author of the Carnatic Music Primer published by CMANA; He makes his living by being an aerospace engineer. (...Editor)





SANGEETHAM



**Lakshman Ragde**

INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC

Music is universal. It transcends language barriers and international boundaries. Indian classical music is one of the oldest in the world. Its origin can be traced to the Vedic period and is extensively mentioned in the Samaveda where all the seven notes of the raga Kharaharapriya (kafi) is said to have been mentioned.

The earliest record on music is the treatise Natya Shastra by Bharata written in the 5th century AD. But it was only in the 13th century that a systematized format appeared in the Sangita Ratnakara of Sarangadeva.



We can justifiably be proud of the fact that we have two superb musical systems, Hindustani (northern) and Karnatak (southern) that exist in India. Indian music is generally associated with religion, philosophy, love and romance. Until recently aspiring musicians underwent a period of Gurukulavasa (literally living with the master) that required the strict adherence of the moral and spiritual codes of behavior laid out by their gurus.

Imbued with emotion and the spirit of improvisation, both systems also use a scientific approach in their presentation. Though strict rules regarding the framework of notes and beat cycles are observed, the music is innovative at the same time. The basis of classical music is a system of ragas (melodies) and talas (rhythmic cycles). There is no doubt that music appeals to our emotions. Jagadishchandra Bose's experiments with plants proved that music enhanced their growth. Recent studies at Annamalai University attest to this fact. Some ragas are identified with specific emotions, Khamaj (khamas) with sensual love, Nadanamakriya with gentleness, Mayamalavagaula (bhairav) with devotion and peace and Revati (bairagibhairav) with sorrow. Particular melodies rendered during certain times of the day are said to enhance human emotions.

Both Karnatak and Hindustani music have a number of styles of rendition providing us with varied listening pleasures.



HINDUSTANI: Dhrupad and Dhammar are old styles that were prevalent in the temples and royal courts until the 15th century. Khayal is the modern staple of the system. It evolved with a fusion of the dhrupad and Persian music brought to India by the Moguls. Slower speed khayal is called vilambit (slow movement) and the faster tempo that follows is known as drut. Thumri is the old dance oriented music that is generally associated with love and romance. Tarana (tillana in karnatak) involves singingsol-fa (sargam) note combinations at a fast pace. A ragmala (literally a garland of melodies) is a composition combining several ragas. Other varieties are the Tappa, Dadra, Hori, Kajri and the Dhun. In instrumental music the divisions are alap, jod, gat and the jhala. Jod is the slow speed playing of note combinations. In jhala the notes are played at a fast pace interspersed with the plucking of the sympathetic notes. Gat is a melodic composition that is performed with percussion accompaniment and may be played in vilambit and drut modes.

Both vocal and instrumental composition may be preceded with an alap which is a free improvisation of the melody sans the percussion.



Dikshitar

Thyagaraja

Shyama Sastri

KARNATAK: A varnais usually the opening piece of the concert and it makes use of a short textual composition and sol-fa passages rendered in three speeds. A kriti or kirtana involves a composition that is either devotional or

philosophical in nature. These two types form the mainstay of the concert. A number of them are rendered depending upon the artist's expertise, mood and creative imagination. These could be short or elaborate. Javalis are comparable to the thumris of hinduatani music. Padams are compositions used particularly for classical Bharatanatyam dance numbers. A ragamalika is similar to a ragmala. The tillana is also used in dance numbers. A ragam, tanam, pallavi (commonly referred to as an RTP) is an item that can last upto an hour where a single melody is explored in depth. The concluding part of an RTP uses a few ragas in the form of a ragamalika before reverting to the main raga.

The Karnatak and Hindustani systems utilize a variety of rhythmic cycles (talas). In Karnatak music Adi, rupaka, chapu, matya and eka talas are common. In Hindustani music tin, dadra, ek, matta and sulfakta are some of the varieties.

Both systems have a number of things in common. Many ragas have the same scales but have different names. Both systems are complicated and are highly creative (as compared to "created" western compositions which are performed exactly as the composers wrote them,) Both require years of study and practice to acquire proficiency.

As the world shrinks in terms of movement of ideas and information, there is freer exchange and intermixing of ragas from the south to the north and vice versa. Karnatak ragas like hamsadhvani, arabhi, kiravani, sarasvati, charukesi and simhendramadhyam have become popular in the north whereas the south has borrowed hamirkalyan, basant, jog, mand, jaijaivanti and bageshri from its northern neighbour.

One can say that Indian classical music is music that never wears away and that it will never die out.

**The Author is a CMANA member,
author and long-time supporter**

**Dr. V. Ramaswami**

DO WE STILL NEED CMANA?

The late Seventies when CMANA was formed was indeed quite a different time compared to today. The population of Indians in the USA was very small, the concentration in the East Coast being primarily in Queens, New York with even New Jersey sporting but a minuscule population of Indians. There were few teachers of Carnatic music among us, and only a handful below eighteen who could sing Carnatic music even at the level of a *varnam* or perform an instrument. There was no public, not-for-profit organization devoted mainly to Carnatic music. Over the years, in most of these respects, not only the East Coast of the USA but the entire USA has undergone a major transformation.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that CMANA was a primary factor in the growth of Carnatic music not only in the East Coast but all over the USA. Unlike some other organizations, which were very local in focus and conducted all their events across just a couple of days in a year, CMANA was there year round, and year after year, despite severe losses and many other hardships. Filling a major void, CMANA organized, on a regular basis, two tours to the US each year of a visiting troupe from India and made the artists available at near or below cost to many centers including both major cities like Atlanta, Philadelphia, Seattle, and Los Angeles and many small towns across USA, where only a few Indian families were present. It has helped the growth of many local Indian cultural organizations in the US.

CMANA provided a forum for many visiting artists, local teachers, and promising local musicians to perform. Through its 'Great Composers Day' and events like 'Teachers Day,' and programs honoring musicians and composers, CMANA raised the interest and awareness for Carnatic music among the diaspora and created a market for it. By holding various lecture demonstrations and the like (even at significant financial loss), the association has served to increase the level of music appreciation among the general audience and to provide opportunities for the young and the local musicians to hone their skills.

CMANA's contributions did not stop there, but went all the way back to the very citadel of Carnatic music and the community of Carnatic musicians back in India. In fact, a specific event that led to the formation of CMANA was the way two (well-known) musicians from India got stranded due to an unexpected funding crisis experienced by their (American) sponsor and forced them to take refuge with Dr. P. Rajagopalan, CMANA's founder, and Mr. SurySubban who has served CMANA in many capacities and is now an Honorary (and paid) Patron. That event heightened the need for a non-profit, public organization owned by the Indian community at large that could support Carnatic music and musicians. Dr. Rajagopalan initiated a call to friends in New York admitting that one more organization may be desired by people only "as much as a bullet in the head," but was indeed necessary. He received warm support from many



lovers of Carnatic music, and the rest is history.

Many of the now well-known musicians were introduced for the first time to the USA by CMANA, and to many of them, that invitation formed a major milestone catapulting them to greater fame even in music circles in India. The list of such musicians include some easily recognized names like Mandolin Srinivas, P.S. Narayanaswamy, the Rudrapatnam Brothers, K.S. Gopalakrishnan, and Sudha Ragunathan to list just a few. With no parochial or other vested interest, the Association worked for music without any favoritism based on any criteria other than musical excellence and service to music. With a carefully crafted award *Sangeethasaagara* that is unique in many respects such as a clear up-front listing of the criteria for the award and the requirement of a high level of multifarious achievement for a recipient besides being just a concert performer, it has honored artists of the highest caliber. Among the most memorable aspects of this award is the fact that it brought the venerable Semmangudi SrinivasaIyer out of a long period of hibernation back on the stage and got four generations of the Pattammal family to perform together. The Semmangudi award program was even more special in that after a long time, Professor T.N. Krishnan, another *Sangeethasaagara*, played as an accompanist after many decades. Thus, the Association's services do not stop at the shores of the USA. It has established several worthy endowments in India to encourage young musicians. I am indeed proud to have a long association with CMANA and am a staunch supporter of it.

While it is nice to see greater support for Carnatic music today, with a well-established 'market' for Carnatic music, the music scene and musicians have also become quite commercialized posing several hurdles for a public, not-for-profit

organization in conducting many activities it once pioneered even at significant loss and personal sacrifice of numerous volunteers and donors. In this backdrop, an inevitable question that arises is indeed the one forming our title, "Do we still need CMANA?" Outrageous as it may seem to some, this question has been raised even by some (younger activist) musicians and local teachers of music running their own shows. I would be lying if I did not admit that it even crosses my mind, although only rarely and only when I get too dismayed by the musicians' and listening public's inability to distinguish and discriminate among the different types of players. Thus, the question is indeed one that deserves to be answered at least once.

Consider Chennai as an example (although I could pick Mumbai, Bangalore, Trivandrum or many other places and other organizations). Imagine someone asking why, given the large number of music organizations, television and multimedia, and ongoing entrepreneurial efforts of individual musicians, an organization like the Music Academy or the Narada Gana Sabha should continue to exist. I am sure any sane person would consider the question as insane for many good reasons. Those reasons are precisely the ones that not only would obligate an affirmative answer to the question in our title, but will even provide the fundamental reasons for strengthening and supporting CMANA.

1. When it comes to Carnatic music and related fine arts, there are *institutions* and there are *organizations*. The latter concentrate primarily on entertainment and, oftentimes, on private profits or fame, but the former's goals go far beyond. Organizations like the Music Academy, Narada Gana Sabha, and Shanmukhananda Sabha are institutions that serve the art form in diverse ways.



Many slog in them voluntarily knowing fully well that they or their contributions may not be recognized or remembered by the vast majority of listeners. They celebrate the stalwarts while at the same time expending much effort to sustain the art form and to generate and support future talent. They have helped to raise the respect and stature of the very art form and its practitioners. Some have established schemes to support musicians and musicologists, who have not been fortunate, with pensions etc. They conduct scholarly discussions and events raising the art to higher and higher levels. CMANA certainly belongs in that elite class by its demonstrated focus, activities, and accomplishments that form an illustrious track record for a 100% volunteer organization.

2. Organizers come, and organizers go, and that has been the painful history of Indian music and dance in the USA. When an organization is by an individual or by a small oligarchy and run with a vested interest of profit or to promote a special subset of artists or students, its activities and operation are not only hostage to the whims of one or a small few, but the very continuity of the organization gets threatened when a main person can no longer perform a lead role. One reason Dr. Rajagopalan chose to make CMANA a public organization with elected trustees etc., despite recommendation from many founding members to keep it as a private entity, was to ensure continuity and to eliminate as much as possible the operation of vested interests or profit motives. Again, there are very few

organizations of the type of CMANA devoted to Carnatic music and related fine arts that fit these lofty criteria.

3. A Harvard Business Review article on non-profits has emphasized the importance of transparency and fiscal responsibility as two of the most important desiderata of a real non-profit. In its own words, this is to ensure that the obligation of the founders and trustees towards future generations – note not just their cohorts, but future generations – are met, and to assure continuity of operation over a very long future. They called this ‘inter-generational equity.’ CMANA shines as a (rare) beacon in these respects with successive teams of trustees sharing much of the financial information with CMANA members with a high level of transparency and running its affairs with utmost probity and fiscal responsibility. We not only need CMANA, but we need to put pressure on other organizations to step up to the highest levels that CMANA has maintained from its start in matters that characterize a true non-profit, public organization enjoying tax subsidies.
4. An unfortunate fact of the Indian diaspora is that it has carried with it the baggage of all forms of divisions that divide Indians. Though many organizations based on state, language, and other criteria may support Carnatic music and the arts, CMANA’s greatest strength is its non-sectarian character. Never in my long tenure of over twenty-five years with CMANA can I cite one instance where anything other than musical merit has played a role in the selection of a musician for a tour or even for a single concert. We,



as trustees, have differed and even quarreled sometimes, but never on the issue of maintaining a high level of impartiality. An event like the Great Composers Day, for example, is conducted with so much meticulous care to avoid even a semblance of a conflict of interest in the selection of judges for the competitions or in the opportunity to youngsters irrespective of who their *guru* is. Yes, we need organizations like CMANA for this reason too.

Not that I cannot cite more reasons to support my affirmative answer regarding the need for the continued presence of CMANA, but if the above four will not convince you to agree and to support CMANA strongly, then nothing more will. So, let me turn to what role CMANA should play in the future to continue to distinguish itself from the crowd of music organizers in the USA, a good many of whom may be motivated by a variety of motives not as lofty as CMANA's.

a. First and foremost, the Indian community in the US has come of age, and we now have a group of young Carnatic musicians born and brought up in America. CMANA should take it as an important objective to help them attain high visibility in India and around the world so that they have a level playing field that is well deserved by their hard work and effort. Similarly, there are many highly talented young musicians in India who lack visibility in the US, with most organizations here marked now by a competition for only name brand artists who make cash registers ring. CMANA should revive its pledge to young talent from India by making them visible to music lovers in the USA. I am pleased to see that CMANA has forged a major partnership with Narada Gana Sabha for this purpose. A similar effort with one other

major organization in India, I learn, may also bear fruit soon. The trustees of CMANA deserve high kudos for thinking up such a collaboration and working hard towards making that possible. It has indeed been my pleasure to help them in both those efforts.

- b. Carnatic music in the East Coast is still by and large an activity limited to the South Indian diaspora. The art form is highly rich in many ways, and it would be a travesty not to bring it to the attention of a wider audience – our North Indian fraternity and our American friends. “Man does not live on bread alone,” and certainly not we, the successful Indians in the US; Carnatic music is a cultural heritage that we need to display as proof of that. As a leading organization, CMANA should take it upon itself to elevate Carnatic music to higher levels by taking a variety of steps to draw support from a much larger community. In the old days, we used to have lunch hour demonstration programs in several NJ companies to popularize and inform about Carnatic music. These, and several other means of outreach should be considered in addition to running music programs, tours and children's competition aimed primarily at the Indian diaspora.
- c. It has become quite evident that a very narrow focus makes an organization not sustainable. Although CMANA needs to maintain its primary focus on Carnatic music, pragmatism requires it to support other Indian art forms so that the support base can be enlarged. This expansion should also form a priority for CMANA.
- d. Finally, a major regret of mine is that even after forty years of existence, CMANA has not assured its long-term existence through an adequate corpus of endowments. It does not

even have a permanent venue of its own to conduct its activities. For the perpetual continuity of CMANA, it is absolutely important that a careful plan is evolved to raise such an endowment and to lay down clearly the principles under which the funds will be used. CMANA cannot meet loftier goals like the ones mentioned above unless its trustees and officials are freed from the financial burden. I truly believe that for CMANA to rise to its due level, activities have to be supported by an endowment to a substantial degree.

Although I have stated some lofty goals for CMANA (and am doing my part to make some of them possible), it is for the community at large to step up to the plate and make it happen. This is a precious organization of the community and not of any individual or small group. We cannot just want our children to sustain an Indian connection and culture, but we need to make it easy for them to do that. We need to support CMANA much more than we do at present recognizing its uniqueness as an *institution* and as a great legacy for future

generations. For example, a sufficient number of us are at the stage of life when we are in the exercise of estate planning, and I would beseech every one of the senior members of CMANA (and senior citizens interested in Carnatic music and related fine arts) to step up to the plate and make it possible for CMANA to free itself from the fear of going bankrupt through some unanticipated major loss or competition from vested interests. Based on the support that has made CMANA to have survived and prospered this long, I have the confidence that you will not only agree with my analysis, but will join me in strengthening CMANA.

¹ Dr. V. Ramaswami is a former President and Honorary Patron of CMANA. With a keen interest in things Indian, he has authored many articles related to India and has also written recently a book titled, "innovation by India for India, the Need and the Challenge." He holds no official position in CMANA, and opinions expressed here are personal and do not represent those of CMANA as an organization.





Indian Hand Drumming on the Global Stage: An Interview with Dr. Rohan Krishnamurthy

By Craig Woodson

Dr. Rohan Krishnamurthy is a master of the mridangam, a double-headed, pitched hand drum that dates back over 2,000 years in the Carnatic tradition of South India. Described as a “musical ambassador” and “pride of India” by *The Times of India*, and “international mridangam player” by *USA Today*, Rohan has performed hundreds of concerts internationally since the age of nine and has become distinguished as a soloist, composer, and collaborator in a multitude of music and dance ensembles. Rohan recently shared stages with legendary Indian musicians such as M. Balamuralikrishna and L. Subramaniam, and collaborated with such award-winning artists as Glen Velez, Jamey Haddad, and Anoushka Shankar. He also had the “Rohan” concerto written for him by eminent percussionist and composer Dr. Payton MacDonald. Scored for mridangam and Western percussion ensemble, the piece was recently premiered on both coasts at Juilliard and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

I met Rohan at my Roots of Rhythm world

drumming workshop in Cleveland in 2006. Since I had briefly studied the mridangam and was aware of its complexity, and knew the value of the instrument’s music for classroom teachers, I invited him to visit as guest artist at one of my teacher workshops. Based in San Francisco, Rohan focuses on preserving the Indian rhythmic tradition and adapting it to contemporary global contexts. I had the pleasure to talk to him about his unique story and ideas on performance, education, and entrepreneurship.

CW: When I met you in 2006, you were pursuing a double major at Kalamazoo College in music and chemistry. How did you come to have this dual interest?

RK: I’ve had a passion for the arts and sciences since elementary school, and I pursued several science research projects in high school. I started learning Indian classical music when I was eight and started performing at nine, so music was always a big part of my life, too. A double major was an excellent way to continue both of

my passions, and Kalamazoo College, in my hometown of Kalamazoo, was a perfect place to pursue them. Thanks to the support of my professors, I was able to pursue an interdisciplinary thesis that explored the acoustics of my drum tuning system.

CW: You are an expert at playing the mridangam. First, tell us about that instrument. What does it look like, what are the basic techniques, and what is its history?

RK: The mridangam is one of the oldest, most complex, and versatile drums in the world. It is a double-sided, barrel-shaped hand drum that is played with the fingers and palms. The drumheads are entirely natural and consist of multiple layers of cow, goat, and buffalo leathers.

The *valanthalai* or tonal side of the instrument consists of three layers of leather with a circular loading in the middle. This loading, or *karani*, is made of 20 to 30 layers of an iron oxide and starch mixture. It’s this ingenious construction that allows us to create resonant pitches on the mridangam.

The *thoppi* or bass head of the mridangam is wetted in performance and uses a dough or, more recently, synthetic loading to achieve a low bass tone. Using the tonal and bass ends of the drum separately or together, there are over a dozen unique pitched, semi-pitched, and unpitched sounds available on the mridangam. It’s like a hand-drumset with such a rich sound palette.

The predecessor to the tabla, it has a history of over 2,000 years and is one of the most popular and sacred drums of India. It employs the advanced split-finger technique, which utilizes every finger like an independent drumstick. Coupled with the mathematically intricate and lightning-fast compositions and improvisations of Indian classical music, the mridangam truly represents one of the great rhythmic traditions, and a limitless source of rhythmic and compositional ideas for all styles of



PHOTO BY JULIE MICHELLE SPARENBURG



PHOTO BY EMILY SEVIN

West Coast premiere of the "Rohan Concerto" at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Bay Area visual artist Rasika Apte (far right) creates a real-time painting of the piece in the background.

music.

CW: How did you become interested in this instrument? Who influenced you to begin this study?

RK: Having grown up in Kalamazoo, it's very unlikely for someone to become a professional musician specializing in Indian classical music, but that's exactly what happened! My whole family is musical, although no one had the opportunity to pursue music as a profession. I benefited from my parents' huge Indian music collection, and we used to frequently attend concerts in Detroit and Chicago. My mom is a trained Indian classical singer, and my dad had a lifelong passion for the mridangam but never had the chance to study it when he grew up in India. We were extremely lucky to have Damodaran Srinivasan, a graduate student from India, in Kalamazoo in the early '90s. He received training in the mridangam when he grew up in India. My dad bought a custom-made mridangam from India and started learning from Damodaran. Although he stopped lessons after a few months, the circumstances were perfect for me to begin learning. One day when I was eight, I asked my parents if I could start learning the mridangam, and the rest is history! I'm forever thankful for my family's love and support, without which my life story could have ended up very different.

CW: You had an interesting experience learning how to play the mridangam when your first teacher moved away. How did your studies continue with him?

RK: I learned from Damodaran for a few months until he had to move to Massachusetts after graduating. In the

absence of a mridangam teacher within hundreds of miles of Kalamazoo, my Indian musical studies could have easily come to an end. Damodaran, however, suggested that we continue lessons over the speakerphone! This was before Skype and Google Hangout, so lessons were entirely audio-based with no video! Luckily, by that time, I had already learned the basic techniques on the mridangam and the *konnakol* vocal percussion that goes along with it. Damodaran would recite the lessons and I would recite them back and play them on my mridangam. This was an early example of long-distance music education, and it worked remarkably well thanks to the dedication of my *guru* and unwavering support of my family. I learned over the speakerphone from Damodaran for over a year.

In 1996, I had the chance to meet the mridangam legend Guruvayur Dorai when he came for a concert in Michigan. I met him backstage before the show and things just clicked. He asked me if I wanted to sit with him on stage for the concert, and I said sure, not really knowing what to expect. The concert lasted nearly five hours, and I think he was impressed that I could sit and observe him and the ensemble for that long. He said he'd be happy to teach me the next time I came to India. It was an opportunity of a lifetime, so my family and I made it to Chennai, India, where he's based, the next summer. I continued learning from him during annual visits to India, as well as whenever he visited the U.S. My two *gurus* are exemplary performers, teachers, and human beings, and I am forever grateful to them for their support and guidance.

CW: Your very successful college work at

Kalamazoo College gave you a choice of going into chemistry or music for your graduate work. Why did you choose music?

RK: As I was completing college, it became apparent that it would be very hard to pursue both music and chemistry at a professional level. By that point, my musical career was going very well and in many exciting new directions. I realized early on that I would be embarking on an international and inter-cultural artistic journey given my background and trajectory, and, and I wanted to learn as much as I could about the music of diverse world cultures—performance, history, theory, and cultural contexts. In an effort to diversify my knowledge, I ended up at Eastman for my doctoral studies in musicology and ethnomusicology. I was lucky to have studied so many musical traditions while I was there, including many styles of Western art music, pop, jazz, Indonesian gamelan, and Zimbabwean mbira, all the while improving and expanding my skills in Carnatic music.

CW: You have sought to preserve the tradition of mridangam performance as it exists in India, and you have also branched out to perform in other musical ensembles. You have also composed music. What are some of your motivations in seeking new musical expressions within this ancient tradition?

RK: As a second-generation Indian-American, I have always had to balance expressions and expectations of both cultures, in music and otherwise. Cross-musical and cross-genre performance and composition are a powerful way to bridge cultures and people through music, and to appreciate the similarities and differences of the world's great musical traditions. I've had the honor to work on new collaborations with orchestras, jazz ensembles, and amazing musicians from around the World. Recently, I received a grant from the San Francisco Arts Commission to compose a new, three-movement work for solo mridangam that is inspired by the changing rhythms of San Francisco. I'll be premiering the work next April at the San Francisco Community Music Center, and also starting a new Hand Drumming and Indian Rhythm Institute there with support from the grant. The Bay Area was the original home of Indian art in America, so many influential movements sprung from the creative community here. It continues to have such an amazing diversity of artistic communities, and an especially multifaceted South Asian arts scene. It's inspiring to see how the next generation of artists is working together to carry forward tradition and creatively innovate with so many changes at every level. I'm also interested in adaptations of the split-finger technique and Indian rhythmic ideas to



other drums—doubec, djembe, bongos, cajon, drumset, etc.—to organically blend the Indian sound world with other styles and ensembles. A hand or hybrid drumset, for example, can be a versatile way to perform in contemporary jazz and world music bands while drawing from the core content of the tradition. It's encouraging to see artists around the world learning multiple musical languages and having fresh, deep conversations like never before. It really is a process of musical ambassadorship when you are translating between different musical languages and cultural contexts. In our ever-shrinking global village, I believe this intercultural dialogue and understanding will be increasingly important in music and every other field.

CW: You have designed and patented a new tuning system for the mridangam's complex drumhead. Why was this a needed change, and what are your plans to bring this to other performers?

RK: The mridangam is a notoriously difficult instrument to tune and maintain. With its complex iron oxide and starch loading on the tonal head, drumhead replacement is usually the restricted work of skilled artisans who live in just a few cities in India. My new design was the result of many years of independent research that started with my dad. User-friendly and durable, my new design combines the traditional strapping with a nut-and-bolt system of tuning. Now, the heads are independently tuneable and can be replaced in a matter of minutes by the practitioner; it's no longer artisan-dependent. The pitch range is also much



Rohan's patented tension system for the Mridangam



Teaching Indian hand drumming at Dr. Woodson's Roots of Rhythm Workshop in Cleveland in 2006.

wider, whereas the traditional instrument has a range of barely a whole step. This design can be applied to any drum that needs to be fine-tuned, including tabla, dholak, bongos, djembe, and timpani. I'm happy to partner with the instrument retailer Mid-East in manufacturing and distributing this new line of drums.

CW: You have started the RohanRhythm Percussion Studio for teaching Indian music and cross-cultural musicianship, which has attracted dozens of students internationally, both in-person and online. And you are in the process of making the mridangam available to a much wider market. How do you see these two avenues, education and industry, evolving in your work over the next five or ten years?

RK: It's amazing how Indian rhythm has globalized and is being incorporated in so many facets of performance, research, and education. Musicians seem to be more interested than ever in seriously learning the tradition and moving beyond superficial fusion. The Internet has made many kinds of information much more accessible. My Ph.D. thesis explores the social, cultural, and musical impact of real-time online music education, especially in the context of Carnatic percussion.

The students in our studio have been inspirational in so many ways. Musicians and non-musicians of all ages and backgrounds have joined to enrich their lives. With the online platform, students across four continents have been able to learn and contribute to our community. While I emphasize traditional methodology, I also introduce notation, audio/video recordings, and online media to complement the learning process. Since students are joining based on their interest, they've been so sincere and dedicated. It's wonderful to see how students apply the creative and critical thinking skills to many other genres and art forms, interdisciplinary projects, community outreach, and other pursuits that they're passionate about.

I've always viewed performing, teaching,

composing, research, and entrepreneurship as different facets of the same musical essence. In spite of the labels that might make them seem distinct or even mutually exclusive, I think they're inextricably intertwined and mutually beneficial. In most generations, being a successful musician meant doing all of these things and living musically. I aspire to live musically now and in the future. How exactly all of my pursuits will unfold is the great unknown that keeps a musical and entrepreneurial career so exciting!

For more information on Dr. Rohan Krishnamurthy visit www.rohanrhythm.com.

Craig Woodson earned his doctorate in music from the University of California at Los Angeles, with specializations in music education, ethnomusicology, and ethnic musical instrument technology. He has been a percussion teacher, a performing and recording musician, college lecturer, a teaching artist in schools, and a music consultant for over 45 years. He has written articles and performed in videos on musical instruments, drumming, and the making of simple musical instruments from around the world.

He has performed children's concerts at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Los Angeles Music Center, and the Kennedy Center. Woodson has worked for organizations including Walt Disney Enterprises and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum. He owns 12 patents on instrument technology through his company Ethnomusic, Inc., which he started in 1976. His mridangam studies were with Tanjore Ranganathan at UCLA. He is author of *Roots of Rhythm*, a free online world drumming teacher's guide for K-12 classrooms, sponsored by the Percussion Marketing Council and the NAMM Foundation. For more information, visit www.ethnomusicinc.com.

PN



Yeshwant Prabhu

Indo-American Festival in Chennai

Editor's Note: Below is a rasika review of the concerts at The Indo-American Carnatic Festival on January 2 and January 3, 2017, at The Narada Gana Sabha, Chennai.

In January I went to the Narada Gana Sabha, to attend the two day Indo-American Carnatic Festival arranged jointly by CMANA and the Narada Gana Sabha. The three concerts on Jan 2 were sponsored by the Narada Gana Sabha, and the two concerts on Jan 3 were sponsored by CMANA. Here is a review of the concerts based on the elaborate notes I took.

Sri T Kalaimagan, vocal; Sri Durai Srinivasan, violin; Sri N C Bharadhwaj, mridangam.

Sri Kalaimagan started with Sri Papanasam Sivan's kriti on Saraswati, VaaniArulpurivai, in Dhanyasi raga. This is the first time I heard him; he has a high pitched, pleasant voice. He seems to be fond of Sri GopalakrishnaBharati's compositions: He sang two of them: First the PoorviKalyani raga kritiKaaranamkettuvaadi, with a pretty good alapana, and then, later, a kriti in the rare raga Vandanadharini: Manameunnakithamai. Sri Thyagarajakriti in Bilahari raga, Kanugontini Sri Ramuninedu he sang nicely. Sri Ghanam Krishna Iyer's composition in Rathipriya raga, Jagajjananisukhavanikalyani he sang adequately. But what he sang next pleased me a lot: a very pleasant Mayamalavagowla alapana, followed by Sri Thyagaraja's soothing kriti Vidulakumrokkeda. It would have sounded even better had he slowed down a little bit and sung the kriti with more bhaava. Sri Deekshitar's kriti Jamboopathe mam paahi in Yamunakalyani raga he sang well also. The accompanying artists provided good support.

Akkarai sisters, vocal; Sri N Vittal Rangan, violin; Sri U Jayachandra Rao, mridangam; Sri Sree Sundarkumar, Kanjeera

They started the concert with the often heard varnam in Saveri raga: Sarasooda, a composition of Sri Kotthavasal Venkatrama Iyer. Like its parent raga, Mayamalavagowla, Saveri too is rich in sowkhyabhava. The sisters followed this with Sri PurandaraDasa's Jaya Jaya Jaya Janaki kaantain Naatta raga. A chaste Varali alapana led to Papanasam Sivan's KaaVaaVaa on Lord Muruga with the sisters and the violinist taking turns in delightful swara exchanges. Next was a brisk SarasaSaama Daana in Kapi Narayani with brief and interesting kalpanaswaras at the charanam line HitavuMaatalentho. The main was Swati Tirunal's PankajaLochana in Kalyani starting with an elaborate and explorative alapana showing Kalyani's nuances and beauty. The violinist's alapana response too was pleasing to listen. The explosive interchange between the two percussionists during the thani was a delight. The sisters nicely concluded with their grandfather Sri Sivasubramanian's composition on Lord Muruga in Shanmukapriya.

Sri Sandeep Narayanan, vocal; Sri B U Ganesh Prasad, violin; Sri Neyveli Venkatesh, mridangam; Sri Anirudh Athreya, Kanjira

Sri Narayanan started with Sri Thyagaraja's popular kriti Nada TanumanishamShankaram in Cittaranjani raga. He brought out the ragabhaava of the sensitive and delicate raga, a janya of Kharaharapriya raga, very beautifully. The next kriti, Sri Dikshitar's Shree RamamRavikulapthiSomam, in Narayanagowla raga impressed me deeply. What followed astonished me: An elaborate, well delineated alapana in Kannada



raga, followed by Sri Thyagaraja kriti Ninnadanelaneerajaksha. The violinist's Kannada raga alapana was excellent also. He chose Vagadheeswari raga for RTP, and sang both taanam and swaras in several raagas (Thodi, Kalyani). The tillana in Hameerkalyani, sung at a rather brisk speed was pleasant to hear. Here is a vocalist whom God has generously endowed with priceless gifts: a pleasant, robust, and great voice; excellent sangeetha jnana, and learning from great sangeethaaacharyas. The concert would have sounded even better, had he slowed down a bit and sung the kritis with more bhaava. But I liked the concert immensely, nevertheless.

Smt Kiranavali Vidyasankar, Vocal; Smt Usha Rajagopalan, Violin; Sri Trivandrum Balaji, Mridangam

Smt Vidyasankar started her concert with the soul-stirring kriti of the Saint Tirujnana Sambandar in Gambheera Nattai raga; what a wonderful way to start a concert! Smt Kiranavali's rendering of this kriti with bhakti and bhaava impressed me deeply. Next she sang Sri Papanasam Sivan's kriti Kaanavendaamo? in Sriranjani raga. A very pleasant Bahudari alapana, followed by Sri Thyagaraja's Brovabharama Raghurama, was sung very nicely also. Her very elaborate Thodi alapana came as a big surprise because, this year, for some inexplicable reason, almost every vocalist chose Thodi as one of the ragas, if not as the main raga of the concert. Maharaja Sri Swati Tirunal's popular kriti Bhogendra Sayinam in Kuntalavarali raga was sung very beautifully also. For RTP, she chose Kalyani raga, with a pallavi she herself composed specially for the occasion: "Rama Ramagunaseema, naahridayaabhi". She also explained that she composed this pallavi because the words "seemanaa-hridaya", when sung, sound like CMANA. It did, of course! She ended her very nice concert with Sri Swati Tirunal's Vishweshwardarshankara in Sindhubhairavi raga. An altogether pleasant and enjoyable concert. Credit must be given to the accompanying artists, Smt Usha Rajagopalan on the violin and Sri Trivandrum Balaji on the mridangam who mercifully, did not play the mridangam too loudly.

Sri Prasanna Venkatesh, vocal; Sri L Ramakrishnan, violin; Sri Neyveli Skanda Subramaniam, Mridangam; Sri Alathur Rajaganesh, Kanjira

Of the five concerts of this festival, the concert that surprised me the most, without a doubt, was the one by Sri Prasanna Venkatesh. I had heard him sing a few times before, especially at Sri Thyagaraja Day and the Trimurthy Day organised by CMANA, but nothing I had heard before had prepared me for this.

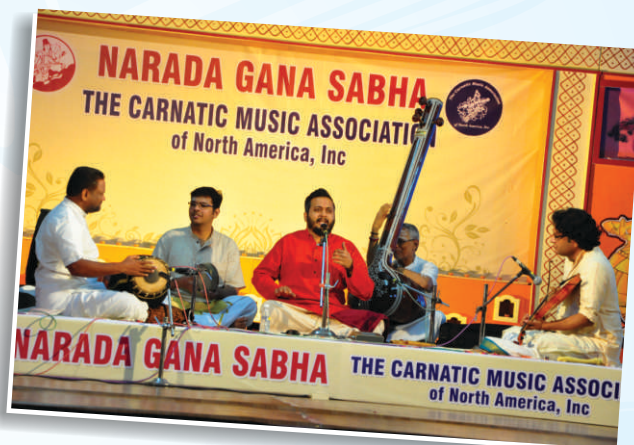
The first thing that impressed me the most about Sri Venkatesh's concert was his pleasant, well-modulated, and robust voice. He started the concert with Sri Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar's popular varnam Nera nammiti in Kaanada raga. Shree Dikshitar's kriti in Kedara raga: Gajavadanamaashrayesatatam followed, sung beautifully, with bhaavam. What I heard next truly astonished me: A long, very elaborate Hamsanandi alapana. He sounded so much like his Sangeetha aacharya, Sangeetha Kalanidhi Sri TNS, and that was incredulous. I felt quite elated when I heard this alapana. He sang Sri Muthiah Bhagavathar's very popular kriti Needumahimapogadanatarama. The kalpanaswaras were too long and excessive, I think; a sense of proportion, while singing kalpanaswaras, helps in creating good feeling, I believe. But I was quite impressed with the way he sang this kriti, nevertheless. I was breathless only listening to the torrential flow of swaras, and wondered where he gets all the energy it takes to sing like this? Next he sang Sri Thyagaraja's Jaganmohini raga kriti Sobhillusaptaswara at a very brisk pace. Oothukadu Venkata Subbaiyer's famous kriti Ethanai Kettalum, in Bhairavi raga was sung very well. I was deeply impressed by the Bhairavi alapana of the violinist Sri L Ramakrishnan. A disciple of Sangeetha kalanidhi Smt Kanyakumari, he is a very popular violinist, and a rising musician. Sri Venkatesh ended the concert with a fine rendering of a tillana in Hameerkalyani. An altogether delightful and surprising concert. I liked it very much indeed.

CMANA Coffee Table Book Release



Seen in Pictures are Sri Gopalakrishnan Gandhi, Chief Guest and Former Governor of West Bengal, Sri. R Krishnamurthy, President of Narada Gana Sabha, Sri Harisankar Krishnawami, Secretary- Narada Gana Sabha and Sri Som Sowmyan- President-CMANA

Pictures of Concerts in the First Indo American Carnatic Music Festival Jan 2 & 3 2017





Oceans of the Earth...

For millenniums, man has wondered with awe at the variety, wealth, and treasures of the oceans of the world. What we see and know of the ocean is a trifle of what it holds, and even deep sea explorations reveal but a minuscule. The countless joys of the ocean's puzzles, sights, sounds, and other gifts are open to all from the innocent child nibbling at the sandy beaches to the scientist oceanographer searching even beneath the deep sea floor. The oceans of the world are an almost endless resource. They are a living testimony of the wonders of Creation!

Oceans of Music...

The great men and women of the performing arts are akin to the ocean in many ways. Their wealth of knowledge, repertoire, imagination, and skills is bound-less. Deeper explorations into their contributions only reveal the greater enormity of their creativity that awaits further exploration. From the novice and casual listener to the ardent and expert connoisseur, their work offers immense enrichment and joy to all. They are an endless resource of inspiration and knowledge and represent Man's own immense creative capacities.

Award Criteria

The Sangeethasaagara award is a Lifetime Achievement Award of CMANA and is a major award of the Association. Awardees are recognized through the presentation of a plaque and a gold medal in a ceremony fitting the stature of the award.

To be the recipient of the award, a person should satisfy the following criteria:

- a The person should be a performer, composer, or scholar in Carnatic music or a closely related performing art who is deemed to have made lasting and archival contributions.
- b The person, in addition to being talented and accomplished, should have significant service to the larger community and demonstrated an exemplary level of professionalism.
- c The person should be deemed by the larger community to be worthy of being emulated as a Role Model.
- d The Person shall have been nominated for the award by following proper procedures
- e If a performing artist, then he/she has performed under the banner of CMANA at least once.
- f The person receives a favourable vote of at least 2/3 of the entire Board of Trustees in a secret ballot of all trustees of the Association.

A performing artist who has never performed under the banner of CMANA may be considered for the award only if the entire set of trustees unanimously waives the requirement of (e.)

- Excerpts from the Bylaws of CMANA

**** Sri. LALGUDI JAYARAMAN**

on November 14, 1993

The Carnatic Music Association
of North America, Inc.

Sangeethasaagara

presented to **PADMASHREE LALGUDI G. JAYARAMAN**
for lifetime achievements as a violinist, composer, and pedagogue.



Like oceans of the world wondered with awe for their infinite treasures and gifts, are great personalities of music admired for their unbounded talents, repertoire, and skills. As the ocean's splendor is a testimony to the grandeur of Creation, are their contributions a grand tribute to Man's own creative powers.

****Dr. SEMMANGUDI SRINIVASA IYER**

on August 20, 1994

The Carnatic Music Association
of North America, Inc.

the lifetime achievement award

Sangeethasaagara

to

Sangeetha Kalanidhi **SEMMANGUDI R. SRINIVASIER**



The contributions of a musical genius are testimony to Man's own creative capacities, just as the ocean's splendor is testimony to the grandeur of Creation. For this reason, such a musician is admired and likened to the ocean itself.

Professor T N KRISHNAN

on August 20, 1994

The Carnatic Music Association
of North America, Inc.

the lifetime achievement award

Sangeethasaagara

to

Sangeetha Kalanidhi **PROFESSOR T. N. KRISHNAN**



The contributions of a musical genius are testimony to Man's own creative capacities, just as the ocean's splendor is testimony to the grandeur of Creation. For this reason, such a musician is admired and likened to the ocean itself.

****Dr. M S SUBBULAKSHMI**

on December 16, 1999

The Carnatic Music Association
of North America, Inc.

the lifetime achievement award

Sangeethasaagara

to

Sangeetha Kalanidhi **Dr. M.S. SUBBALAKSHMI**



The contributions of a musical genius are testimony to Man's own creative capacities, just as the ocean's splendor is testimony to the grandeur of Creation. For this reason, such a musician is admired and likened to the ocean itself.

****Smt. D K PATTAMMAL**

on December 16, 1999

The Carnatic Music Association
of North America, Inc.

the lifetime achievement award

Sangeethasaagara

to

Sangeetha Kalanidhi **Smt. D.K. PATTAMMAL**



The contributions of a musical genius are testimony to Man's own creative capacities, just as the ocean's splendor is testimony to the grandeur of Creation. For this reason, such a musician is admired and likened to the ocean itself.

****Smt. KAMALA NARAYANAN**

on June 12, 2004

The Carnatic Music Association
of North America, Inc.

the lifetime achievement award

Sangeethasaagara

to **PADMABHUSHAN KAMALA NARAYAN**

in recognition of her seminal contributions to Indian classical dances
and her highly successful efforts in propagating them in the USA



The contributions of a musical genius are testimony to Man's own creative capacities, just as the ocean's splendor is testimony to the grandeur of Creation. For this reason, such a musician is admired and likened to the ocean itself.

****Dr. M BALAMURALI KRISHNA**

on June 4, 2006

Sangeethasaagara

Dr. M. BALAMURALI KRISHNA

Presented in recognition of your unparalleled talent and contributions as a
Carnatic vocalist, composer, and expert scholar
that have made you a living legend.



The contributions of a musical genius are testimony to Man's own creative capacities, just as the ocean's splendor is testimony to the grandeur of Creation. For this reason, such a musician is admired and likened to the ocean itself.

Sri. T N SESHAGOPALAN

on October 6, 2007

Sangeethasaagara

MADURAI T N SESHAGOPALAN

Presented in recognition of your unparalleled talent and contributions as a
Carnatic vocalist, Harikatha exponent, and expert scholar
that have made you a living legend.



The contributions of a musical genius are testimony to Man's own creative capacities, just as the ocean's splendor is testimony to the grandeur of Creation. For this reason, such a musician is admired and likened to the ocean itself.

**** Sri. R K SRIKANTAN**

on April 29, 2012

The Carnatic Music Association
of North America, Inc.

the lifetime achievement award

Sangeethasaagara

to

Padma Bhushan **Dr. R.K. SRIKANTAN**



In recognition of his outstanding contributions to Carnatic Music which include the promotion of Haridaasa Kritis, and the evergreen Geetharadhana program on All India Radio

The contributions of a musical genius are testimony to Man's own creative capacities, just as the ocean's splendor is testimony to the grandeur of Creation. For this reason, such a musician is admired and likened to the ocean itself.

Padmashri A. KANYAKUMARI

on September 25, 2016

The Carnatic Music Association
of North America, Inc.

the lifetime achievement award

Sangeethasaagara

to Padmashri **A. Kanyakumari**



In recognition of her long, distinguished and multi-faceted career in Carnatic music as a top-ranking soloist and accompanying violinist who has featured in multiple concert tours under the auspices of CMANA, as a teacher and trainer of many instruments to students around the world, and as a critically-acclaimed creator of many different innovations to this art form without compromise on classicism and tradition.

The contributions of a musical genius are testimony to Man's own creative capacities, just as the ocean's splendor is testimony to the grandeur of Creation. For this reason, such a musician is admired and likened to the ocean itself.



"Naadha Jyothi"

M.L. Vasantakumari (1983)



"Vaadhya Jyothi"

A. Kanyakumari (2011)



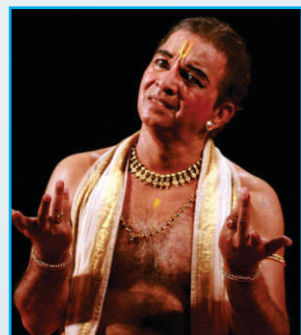
"Tala Vadya Prakasa"

Prof. Trichy Sankaran (1983)



"Life-time achievement"

Sri T.V. Gopalakrishnan (2014)



"Life-time achievement"

Padma Bhushan **Dhananjayan** (2009)



Dr. P. Swaminathan, Ph.D.

Remembering Sri T N Bala

Early years:

Education is nothing but music to the mind and exercise to the body, postulates, Plato, the pristine Greek philosopher. Shri T N Bala the musician par excellence and above all a wonderful human being bears out this postulate of Plato. He was born on April 16, 1927 in Thiruvaiyaru, India. Bala learnt music initially from his mother who was a talented singer before becoming a disciple of Sangeeta Kalanidi Sri. Madurai Mani Iyer. He served as professional broadcaster, artist and executive in All India Radio, American Broadcasting Agency “Voice of America” as director of Tamil programming division and manager in Peace Corps where he trained India bound volunteers in acclimatizing them with Indian culture and the way of life, and finally broadcasting division of American Radio and Television (ABC network) as evening news producer in the greater Philadelphia region before his retirement in 1983.

Community Leader:

Even with a busy work schedule with his day job, Bala found time to organize community events during festival times like Navarathri, Deepavali, Pongal etc. In those days, Bala was able to derive support from local schools and churches in renting a hall to present music concerts by artists passing through Philadelphia area. He attracted the support of the music lovers in the community. He was one of the founding members of CMANA. As a great devotee of Thyagaraja he arranged the Saint's annual *Aradana* until some years ago.

Teacher:

Bala had an innate ability in teaching even the most difficult krithis of the trinity and make it easy for the naïve student to grasp the musical intricacies. Thus the great Sanskrit poet Kalidasa declares:

श्लष्टाक्रियाकस्यचदितात्मसंस्थासङ्क्रान्तरिन्यस्यवशिषयुक्ता ।

यस्योभयंसाधुसशिक्षकाणांधुरपिरतष्टापयतिव्यएव ।

(Some are good at performing themselves, while others are good at communicating what they know lucidly. The best teacher is one who has both these traits conquer in him). Shri T N Bala exemplified what Kalidasa visualized. My wife Dr. Viji Swaminathan, son Dr. Sumanth Swaminathan and I learnt music from Bala. Bala has the ability to impart music to an instrumentalist as well. It was Bala who introduced my son to play Karnatic music on his saxophone before he went on to learn advanced lessons from Sri Kadri Gopalnath. Dr. Sumanth Swaminathan writes “.... as a teacher, Bala mama was a perfectionist. He often spent a great deal of time persuading his students to repeat lines until they sounded exactly the way he taught them. He was meticulous in preparing his musical script. These components of his teaching style were no doubt some of his fundamental strengths that made mama unique from other Karnatic music teachers. Bala mama used to teach behind his harmonium. Before we started any song, mama would sing various permutations and arrangements of the underlying swara (notes) behind a raga (scale/key), and he would ask us to repeat while he played his harmonium. In fact, I don't remember an occasion in which he ever started a song without asking us to sing various passages from the raga. Mama's habits helped to develop a lot of our ears and rhythmic reflexes early in life”. Dr. Yashwanth Prabhu writes “...I have learnt Karnatic vocal music from Sri. T.N. Bala for nearly thirty years. He has taught me five or six of his own compositions including the well-known composition *Maha Ganapathim Sada Smarami*, in *pantuvavaraliraga*. This was the



popular piece presented frequently during the Music season in Chennai for the past three years”.

Composer and a musicologist:

Bala was an accomplished composer of music. He kept many of his compositions private and never publicized. Only in the recent years he made effort in publishing his compositions in the form of a book. I have asked Bala what gave him the inspiration to compose krithis. The following is summary of his account – “As a practitioner and a traditional teacher, I have been attracted by the theme, musical value, and essence of the universal truths of life, eschewing the caste and language identification. In a humble way, I was driven by an urge to recreate the very appeal of these to those who have been missing the benefit of them. This time I have them created in another popular language of India and in praise of another Hindu deity, while the universal appeal stands untouched”. Bala has expressed from his own experience that music remains a source of comfort, motivation and intellectual fulfillment for all our lives. Inspired by the works of Thyagaraja and Syama Sastri Bala composed in Tamil, *Muruga Pancharathna* krithisset in the ragas *nattai*, *arabhi*, *gowla*, *varali* and *sri*, and *swarajathi* set in the ragas *todi*, *bhairavi* and *yadukulakambodhi*, all in praise of Lord *Muruga*.

Bala published two books on his compositions, both released in Chennai in 2003 and in 2006, at Mylapore Srinivasa Sastri hall. You can hear Bala rendering some of his compositions on *YouTube* under the keyword “tnbala”. His “*Muruga Pancharathanam*”, was staged in Chennai as well



as in the Cleveland Aradana in April 2008. The Tamil Nadu music college undertook to teach them to students in 2006.

Bala also had expertise in the areas of film making, videography and lately in electronic and digital music. He was well known for his Indian Radio program *Magazine India*, and a Bi-monthly TV Program, entitled “*Image India*”. Bala had a great sense of humor. He would make his audience burst with laughter with his jokes.

Awards

He was honored for his services to Karnatic music by many organizations in USA, including Council of Indian Associations of Greater Philadelphia, CMANA, SRUTI – India Music and Dance Association, and The Cleveland Thyagaraja Aradana Committee. He is the only Indian so far to receive the Philadelphia Chapter of American Composers Forum Award and a grant for producing his compositions.

In the final days

It has been said time and again by various experts that music helps increase one's concentration and attention span, facilitates relaxation and reduces mental tension. Because of music, he was able to withstand the biggest shock of his life due to the sudden demise of his beloved wife Susheela in 2003, who was a pillar to his musical activities. She was a great support for him in all his endeavors. I have witnessed this personally during the last few years of his lifetime. In fact I visited him the day before his passing away when he could sing with ease his popular compositions and his voice very clear and his mind was very sharp even though other parts of his body were frail with ailment. He rightfully recorded his compositions on the *YouTube* for the posterity to listen and enjoy.

Dr. P. Swaminathan is a life member of CMANA since 1980. He lives in Pennsylvania. He is a connoisseur of Karnatic music. He was past president of SRUTI, The India Music and Dance Society.


Rajesh Nathan

RETROSPECTIVE

Those who have known me over the past couple decades have perhaps realized that I have now become the first CMANA Junior Member to have graduated to a Life Member, then to a Trustee and most recently, to a second-term, second-generational Office Bearer on the Board, a progression quite unique and one I often think about and try not to take for granted. My initial involvement with CMANA can be traced back to the late 1980s - after attending just a concert or two and participating in its annual Great Composers' Day (GCD) and then Teachers' Day functions. I was quickly summoned to take on various roles as a routine volunteer for many of its programs, such as ticket handling and admitting attendees at the gate; ushering; setting up/breaking down, transporting and testing audio equipment, emceeing and performing other administrative duties (many of which, interestingly enough, I regularly perform even to this day!). More behind the scenes, following my father's (Mr. Swami Nathan's) appointment to the role of Treasurer in 1993, I learned about and was engaged in many of the day-to-day, operational activities of the organization from a financial standpoint as his assistant, and also assisted my family in the hosting and transport of artists. CMANA was gracious in recognizing my record of service as a JM on the occasion of my first mini-concert under the CMANA banner and when conferring me with the D.N. Visweswariah Prize (namesake of the father of past President, Dr. Uma Roy), which is

awarded on occasion to recognize JMs who have had exemplary contributions to the association.

Back in the day, CMANA was indeed one of the few of Indian cultural organizations in North America (and particularly in the NY/NJ metropolitan area); today, of course, the landscape is entirely different and marked by the proliferation of so many other cultural organizations and temples throughout the region (too many in fact to count). One commendable attribute, however, that was a pillar of CMANA's strength then and that continues to set it apart from so many competing organizations now lies in its recognition of and importance placed in the younger generation – its signature body of Junior Members. I was there to see this class of membership formally adopted into the Constitution and now delighted to see that JMs continue to be entitled to free admission for almost all concerts when accompanied by their parent member. Given my sustained interest in and ongoing instruction in Carnatic music at the time, I had to take full advantage of this benefit – I became an avid concertgoer for CMANA, often sitting in the front row(s) and maintaining a notepad in which I would record the full repertoire of compositions performed at each concert, which I would then use on occasion to submit concert reviews to be featured in *Juniors' Sangeetham* (the section of CMANA's then quarterly periodical, *Sangeetham*, directed exclusively to JMs); a few other contributions of mine were published in this medium over the years as well. The growing roster



of JMs and greater interest in conducting activities for and involving them over the next several years saw the development of special thematic productions such as the musical *Thyagaraja's Pilgrimage* (in which many fellow JMs and I were cast in narrating and performing roles).

It is mind-boggling at times to see the leaps and bounds in which technology has advanced for the average student of Carnatic music over the years. In my earlier years, if in-person classes were not possible or convenient, telephone was the only other option. In contrast, Skype, etc. has made it both possible and convenient for today's student to learn music from whomever, amateur or professional, anywhere in the world, with face interaction and without having to leave home. Class recordings were done on bulky audio cassette tapes, which posed two main challenges – they required actual physical storage and were much less convenient of a tool in using to replay and relearn lessons during practice sessions by today's standards (no instant navigation to certain recordings or sections of recordings, as is now possible with all the digital files we store on iPods,

iPhones, etc.). Additionally, with no internet, no YouTube, no apps, etc. there certainly was no immediate access to audio/video recordings of any kind at one's fingertips, something which we probably take for granted these days, though I was still a regular listener to the audio cassette recordings released after CMANA concerts back then.

There is no doubt the Carnatic music curriculum has evolved significantly and become much more sophisticated in comparison to what it was back in the day, owing to the availability of more experienced teachers and musicians in the area, the exponential growth of South Indian-Americans in our community and much interest among teachers and parents to have students exposed to a greater depth and breadth of this art. The sheer growth in number and complexity of CMANA's GCD categories/competitions alone and flexibility in allowing multiple competition registrations over the past 5-10 years is largely in response to these trends. Consider that 20-30 years ago, GCD competitors only had the opportunity to present a 4-5 minute krithi or in the

BALAMBAL NATARAJAN TRIBUTE

Back in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, teachers of Carnatic Music in the New York/New Jersey area were certainly present but not nearly in prevalence as they are today. Mrs. Balambal Natarajan was not only a long-term teacher of mine during my childhood years, the one under whom I had the most instruction and who groomed me into a junior musician, but was regarded by many as a local doyen of Carnatic music. Her deep interest and passion in the field spanned more than 50 years and was marked by service both in India and in the U.S. as a musician, musicologist, teacher and composer. Her multi-faceted musical career and prolific work (original compositions which even I performed alongside her and other students on occasion) received much respect, praise and recognition by her peers and by CMANA in December 1994 when she was conferred with the title of Honorary Patron. A scholar in her own right, Balambal Mami possessed a vast repertoire of theoretical knowledge in the field, especially of krithis, as evident by the number of lecture-demonstrations she has presented to CMANA and other audiences and by her frequent contributions of articles to CMANA's *Sangeetham* periodical. In spite of facing minor health challenges, Mami amazingly possessed the vocal talents and physical stamina to continue taking classes in person and over the phone and performing in public well into her 70s. Balambal Mami passed away at the age of 92 more than a couple years ago in Maryland and is survived by a large family presence both here and abroad.

- Rajesh Nathan

case of the advanced competition, were only expected to present a previously fixed combination of alapana, krithi, neraval and/or kalpanaswarams of their choosing. Plus, those who had multiple talents were still allowed to perform only once on stage. In the recent past, however, GCD participants with multi-faceted training have had the opportunity to enroll in multiple competition types, express more of their creativity and imaginative side and exhibit their skills and talents in many other areas of Carnatic music by taking part in varnam, alapana, neraval, swaram, bhajan, viruttam and/or pallavi competitions. And advanced competitors must not only come prepared to present all aspects of 3 different competitions but are evaluated much more critically by a panel of judges who take the liberty to ask questions, make requests and pose challenges on the competitors. In the midst of all these changes, one thing is certain from having closely observed these performances as one of the organizers for the past several years – in general, today's competitors show greater depth, quality and maturity in their performances with each passing year and gracefully rise to the occasion.

Sadly, there is a paucity in the number of JMs who are actively contributing to the organization and more importantly, in the number of JMs who retain close ties with the organization after fulfilling their academic obligations and aspirations and embarking on career and family life - of course, not as much can be expected of

those who inevitably end up relocating to other parts of the country, for example. My appeal to the current generation of JMs is that they not limit their involvement in CMANA to just annual participation in GCD, but that they make the most of their Junior Membership by attending all of CMANA's programs (which can only augment the classes they are taking to further their knowledge and development in music) and by contacting the Board members to find ways in which they can volunteer their time and talents. My hope is that they will be inspired and follow in my example of giving back to the organization once as adult life member through continued volunteer efforts and by taking on a leadership role as a member of the Board of Trustees or other committee, if possible. We all undoubtedly face increasing commitments and challenges as we progress into various stages of life, but I assure you that if I can contribute some of my time, in spite of the many demands from work and family (which include 2 young children) that I must face, so too can many others. After all, those of us born/raised in this country and who are fortunate to grow up with an organization like CMANA, are the ones that will continue to constitute more of the CMANA family of members and to whom the elder generation will have to rely upon more over the years to become the future torch-bearers.

**The Author is the vice president
of the Board of CMANA**



Honor Roll of musicians who toured under CMANA sponsorship



1976

Dr. M. L. Vasanthakumari - Vocal
A. Kanyakumari - Violin
Karaikudi Krishnamurthy - Mridangam



1977

D. K. Pattammal - Vocal
A. Ananthakrishnan - Violin
E. Shivakumar - Mridangam



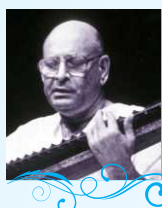
1977

Parween Sultana - Vocal



1978

Tanjore S. Kalyanaraman - Vocal
T. Rukmini - Violin
Srimushnam Raja Rao - Mridangam



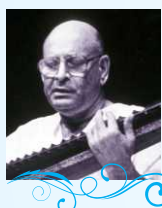
1978

Dr. S. Balachander - Veena
Guruvayoor Dorai - Mridangam



1979

Mani Krishnaswamy - Vocal
A. Kanyakumari - Violin
Manargudi A. Easwaran - Mridangam



1980

Dr. S. Balachander - Veena



1981

Maharajapuram Santhanam - Vocal
Nagai Muralidaran - Violin
Vellore Ramabadrana - Mridangam



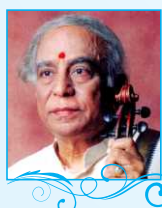
1981

Gowri Kuppuswami - Vocal



1982

B.N. Suresh - Flute
Mysore M. Nagaraj - Violin
Bangalore Venkataraman - Mridangam
V. Praveen - Kanjira



1983

Lalgudi G. Jayaraman - Violin
Trichy Sankaran - Mridangam



1984

P. S. Narayanaswamy - Vocal
Khandadevi Alagiriswamy - Violin
T. Bhaktavatsalam - Mridangam



1984

U. Srinivas - Mandolin
T. Parthasarathy - Violin
Srimushnam Raja Rao - Mridangam



1985

Sikkil Sisters: Neela and
Kunjumani - Flute
A. Ananthakrishnan - Violin
K.R. Ganesh - Mridangam



1985

E. Gayathri - Veena



1986

D. K. Jayaraman - Vocal
T. Rukmini - Violin
J. Vaidyanathan - Mridangam


1987

Kadri Gopalnath - Saxophone
T.T. Srinivasan - Violin
T.K. Ramakrishnan - Mridangam


1988

T. R. Subramanyam - Vocal
Vasanth Kannan - Violin
Trichur R. Mohan - Mridangam


1988

N. Ravikiran - Chitraveena
V. Thyagarajan - Violin
Palghat Krishna Mani - Mridangam


1989

Bombay Sisters - Vocal
Mysore H.K. Narasimha Murthy - Violin
Trichur C. Narendran - Mridangam
Madras N. Govindarajan - Ghatam


1989

Seetha Doraiswamy - Jalatarangam
K.T. Sivaganesan - Violin
D. Ramasubramanian - Mridangam


1990

T. V. Sankaranarayanan - Vocal
Mysore M. Nagaraj - Violin
T. Bhaktavatsalam - Mridangam


1990

Lalgudi Krishnan and
Vijayalakshmi - Violin Duet
R. Ramesh - Mridangam


1991

Rudrapatnam Brothers (R.N. Thyagarajan
and R.N. Tharanathan) - Vocal
Mysore M. Nagaraj - Violin
V. Praveen - Mridangam


1991

A. Kanyakumari - Violin
Srimushnam Raja Rao - Mridangam
V. Nagarajan - Kanjira


1992

T. N. Seshagopalan - Vocal
G. Chandramouli - Violin
Neyveli Narayanan - Mridangam


1992

Sudha Raghunadhan - Vocal
V.V. Ravi - Violin
Tiruvarur Vaidyanathan - Mridangam


1993

O. S. Thyagarajan - Vocal
Mysore M. Manjunath - Violin
R. Ramesh - Mridangam


1993

K. S. Gopalakrishnan - Flute
A. Kanyakumari - Violin
Guruvayur Dorai - Mridangam


1994

T. N. Krishnan - Violin
Guruvayur Dorai - Mridangam
Vaikom Gopalakrishnan - Ghatam


1994

Neyveli Santhanagopalan - Vocal
V.V. Ravi - Violin
T.K. Murthy - Mridangam


1995

P. Unnikrishnan - Vocal
M.A. Sundareswaran - Violin
Manargudi Easwaran - Mridangam


1995

Kadri Gopalnath - Saxophone
A. Kanyakumari - Violin
Guruvayur Dorai - Mridangam


1996

K. S. Gopalakrishnan - Flute
M. Chandrasekaran - Violin
Guruvayur Dorai - Mridangam


1996

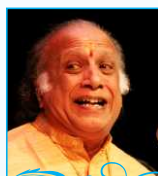
M. S. Sheela - Vocal
Nalini Mohan - Violin
A. Ananthakrishna Sharma - Mridangam
Sukanya Ramagopal - Ghatam


1997

Balaji Shankar - Vocal
B.U. Ganesh Prasad - Violin
Poongulam Subramaniam - Mridangam


1997

N. Ravikiran - Chitraveena
R.K. Sriram Kumar - Violin
Arun Prakash - Mridangam


1998

Trichur V. Ramachandran - Vocal
Mullaivasal G Chandramouli - Violin
Umayalpuram J Mali - Mridangam


1999

Charumathi Ramachandran - Vocal
Embar Kannan - Violin
Kalladaikuricji Sivakumar - Mridangam


1999

Sikkil Mala Chandrasekhar - Flute
H N Baskar - Violin
Madipakkam Suresh - Mridangam


2000

Rudrapatnam Brothers (R.N. Thyagarajan
& R.N. Tharanathan) - Vocal
R K Shriram Kumar - Violin
Bombay N Balaji - Mridangam


2002

Rama Ravi - Vocal
Raghavendar Rao - Violin
Manoj Siva - Mridangam



2002

T M Krishna - Vocal
B.U. Ganesh Prasad - Violin
J Vaidyanathan - Mridangam



2003

Chinmaya Sisters Uma & Radhika - Vocal
Raghavendar Rao - Violin
Melakavery Balaji - Mridangam



2006

Sanjay Subramaniam - Vocal
Nagai Muralidaran - Violin
Guruvayoor Dorai - Mridangam
Neyveli Venkatesh - Kanjira



2006

Sangeetha Sivakumar - Vocal
R K Shriram Kumar - Violin
Melakavery Balaji - Mridangam



2008

Sikkil Gurucharan - Vocal
Nagai Sriram - Violin
Neyveli Skandasubramanian -
Mridangam



2009

Nisha Rajagopal - Vocal
Mysore Srikanth - Violin
Trivandrum Balaji - Mridangam



2011

A Kanyakumari - Vocal
Embar Kannan - Violin
J Vaidyanathan - Mridangam



2012

Sanjay Subramanian, - Vocal
S Varadarajan - Violin
Neyveli Venkatesh - Mridangam



2012

Mala Ramadorai - Hindustani - Vocal
Joshi Anant Shrikrishna - Harmonium
Datar Abhay Prabhakar - Tabla



2013

Ramakrishnan Murthy - Vocal
V V S Murari - Violin
Arun Prakash - Mridangam



2016

A Kanyakumari - Violin Solo



2016

Smt Ranjani & Gayathri - Vocal
Smt Charumathi Raguraman - Violin
Delhi Sairam - Mridangam



40TH ANNIVERSARY MESSAGES FROM ARTISTS AND DIGNITARIES



CMANA is one of the foremost organizations in the United States that has been passionately working to promote the cause of Carnatic music. Started with a great vision, this organization has contributed significantly to the awareness and propagation of this beautiful art form in this part of the world. CMANA has the exclusive honor of most of the doyens of Carnatic music performing under their banner, an honor that many other organizations were not fortunate to have.

The energetic team of its organizers have great fervor for the art and have presented concerts by renowned front ranking artists. Performing for CMANA has always been great moments of happiness and honor. Memorable moments amongst many include a triad Bhairavi selection by Sri KVN mama - Viriboni varnam, Upacaramu and Balagopala - all in the same concert, back to back, a delightful concert of vintage rare treasures, aptly named 'Apurva' by the Rudrapatnam Brothers, a delectable Sarasa sama dana by Sanjay Subrahmanyam, a splendid Surati Pallavi by Sri Vijay Siva, a soul stirring Bhairavi svarajati by Sri T M Krishna, an emotional Sarvam Brahmamayam by Smt Bombay Jayashree and a six hour power packed concert by Smt Sudha Ragunathan.

My prayers to the Almighty for CMANA to scale greater heights and one wishes that it continues to preserve and propagate the lofty values of the classical arts for many more years to come.

R K Shriramkumar



Many thanks for your warm invitation.

My very best wishes for the event and kind regards to all whom I have interacted with at CMANA.

Sangita Kalanidhi Sudha Ragunathan



Nice to know that CMANA is celebrating 40th year. Congratulations for the wonderful service and keep doing more to keep our culture growing.

Neyveli Venkatesh



I am very pleased to know that CMANA is celebrating its 40 anniversary a milestone indeed in the annals of a cultural Organization's history, especially in a foreign land.

CMANA's yeomen service to the preservation, promotion and popularization of Carnatic Music is very laudable. They have pioneered in establishing the credibility and solidarity of Dakshina Bhaarat's performing arts in USA and the artistes, especially Carnatic musicians owe a great deal to CMANA for opening up the door for them to serve the Bhaarateeyas settled in a foreign land and also helping them to have a lucrative career in the music profession. 40 years of dedicated service to art and artistes is not a mean achievement, kudos, to those hands behind the great endeavor.

Wish you CMANA a happy 40th birthday and many more years of continuous service to humanity through our great performing arts -THE SANGEETAM!! (geetam vaadyam thathaa nrityam, thrayam Sangeeta muchyathe-- singing, playing instrument & dancing, these three jointly constitute the word "Sangeetam")

Naatyaachaarya V.P. Dhananjayan



My hearty congratulations
Mannargudi A. Easwaran



It is a well-deserved honor to all the recipients of that evening and a great gesture on the part of CMANA.
My best wishes to all.
Mani (Dr. Yegnasubramaniam) - Chairman Sringeri Vidya Bharathi Foundation



I very glad that CMANA is going to celebrate its 40 years, in service to music.
Very big congratulations to all the trustees and board members. I am very happy that I also participated in some of the concerts and GCD competitions as a judge.
Melakaveri Balaji



Hearty congratulations to CMANA on completing successfully 40 years of service to Carnatic Music in North America.
CMANA being a pioneer institution has been doing yeomen service to the field of Carnatic music in North America.
It has been my pleasure to perform at CMANA several times especially my first concert for CMANA accompanying Sri K.V. Narayanaswamy in 1997 will always be special to my heart.
My best wishes to CMANA.
Manoj Siva



CMANA has held the strong position of being a premier and pioneering organization in the United States and has an assured place in the history of Carnatic music. I am delighted to have been associated with your organization for many years now, and have seen at close quarters the sincerity and commitment with which things are run by your passionate board. CMANA is under very able hands even today with fresher ideas and clear goals. It is indeed testimony to your sustained and excellent leadership that you are now celebrating forty glorious years of service! My compliments to you on this wonderful milestone and wishes for many more to come!
Kiranaivali Vidyasankar



We are indeed proud to note the milestone that CMANA has reached this year. It has blazed a unique trail in unifying the vast continent that USA is, through the binding influence of the "saptaswaras", not to mention the waves it has created internationally.
We wish it many more years of service to our rich tradition of classical Indian music and that it will, with the support of rasikas and music enthusiasts, surge on to celebrate its golden jubilee and Centenary.
Rama Ravi, Dr. Nanditha Ravi, Vinod.



Very very happy that CMANA is celebrating 40th anniversary. What a milestone considering the fact that the organization was conceived, established, and being operated in USA and still going strong.

CMANA is truly one of a very few South Indian organizations which has done yeoman service to the cause of great Classical Carnatic music and has indeed left an indelible impact on the cultural map of USA.

It is hence a matter of great pride to be associated with CMANA. Especially so because my father Padmabhushana Sangeethakalanidhi Dr.R.K.Srikantan was honored with SangeethaSaagara title at the ripe old age of 93 during the annual festival in 2012. "What an occasion to be cherished"- so commented my father after the function.

I take this opportunity to convey my sincere appreciation to the past and present office bearers who have sweated it out in preserving, and propagating the great South Indian Carnatic music tradition in US. I pray for summons from the Almighty to shower his blessings on the organization for a continued, vigorous, dynamic, and productive existence for years to come.

Rudrapatnam S.Ramakant



I wish and congratulate CMANA, You-as past President and the Past and Present office bearers/personnel on the 40th Anniversary Celebrations.

Gayatri Devi



All the very best

Gowri Ramnarayan



My heartiest congratulations to CMANA on completing 40 glorious years of promoting and enriching our arts in the USA. Like many other artistes, I am also proud to say that my first full -fledged tour was organized by CMANA - what a start it was! Thanks to their highly organized and professional way of facilitating concerts, we got to experience the bright prospects of singing in North America.

Thank you, CMANA and here is wishing all of your members, the very best to carry on this noble service of spreading our art form and making it truly global.

Sikkil Gurucharan



It was a very pleasant experience to have been hosted by CMANA 2 years ago for my concert tour. Want to wish you and the organization the very best for continued success.

Mala Ramadorai



Greetings!

Arunaji has asked me to convey her best wishes to you on this momentous occasion of CMANA turning forty. She cherishes the relationship she shares with you and CMANA and would like to express her appreciation and admiration for CMANA and the work that it is doing.

Aruna Sairam



I am very happy to be associated with your organization and cannot forget the wonderful tour that I did with you in 2006.

Please convey my wishes to all the office-bearers (both present and past) and others who are part of this organization.

Hope you have a grand show!

Sangeetha Sivakumar



I thank you for your invitation to the 40th Anniversary celebrations of CMANA and also for your intention to honor the Temple Management on the occasion. I am sorry I will not be able to attend due to prior commitments. I wish the function success and CMANA continues to serve the community for many more years to come.

Dr. Uma Mysorekar - Chairman Newyork Ganesh Temple



Very happy to note that CMANA is celebrating 40th anniversary celebrations.

Malladi Brothers

Thank you for your invitation for CMANA 40th Anniversary Celebration on September 24th and 25th.

The temple wishes CMANA to have nice and historic 40th anniversary celebration. Lord Sri Venkateswara may bless CMANA to grow and live long to keep Hindu traditions and culture.

Appala Naidu Bonthu - President Bridgewater Temple NJ



What is Carnatic Music

Carnatic music is one of the two systems of classical music of India. Practiced mainly in Southern India, it is quite distinct from its northern counterpart, the Hindusthani music.

This ancient and very advanced system of music is based on a rational division of the octave, and in this respect it resembles older Western music based on the natural scale. Unlike Western music in which the absolute pitch of each note is specified, the Carnatic system is based on a relative positioning of the notes, relative to a reference pitch provided by a drone instrument such as a tambura or an electronic sruthi box.

The music is based on melody. A specific set of notes in the ascending and descending scales are used to define a raagaa and the music is set to a rhythmic pattern called taalaa. Indeed, the raagaa system is much more complex in that a raagaa is specified not only by a set of notes but by precise gamakaas (shifting of the frequency of those notes) and specific phraseology (chains of notes for that raagaa) and emphasis of certain notes.

A typical concert piece consists of a lyric set to music in a specific raagaa and taalaa forming but a skeleton. The musicians embellish this with detailed improvisations done extempore depending on their own mood and that of the audience. (This explains why the musicians do not use a script). Before each main piece, the audience is given a portrait of the raagaa, which is followed by a rendering of the written lyric interspersed generously with imaginative improvisations. Such improvisations, though used as the main yardstick by which the musicians are judged, however, must be within the strict confines of the rules of the raagaa and taalaa system. Certainly, this is then a system of music that takes years of practice and one that has to be learned from a master and not from any book or recording!

Carnatic Instruments

Besides vocal concerts, Carnatic music concerts on instruments like violin, veena, (bamboo) flute, and more recently on saxophone, mandolin and guitar are popular. Rhythm is usually provided by the South Indian drum, mrudangam and a specially made clay pot called ghatam, both of which are played using the fingers and the palm. Some of the major instruments are shown below.



VEENA

A string instrument with frets resembling the Sitar.



VIOLIN

Adopted from western, used as main accompaniment and also as a solo concert instrument.



MRUDANGAM

South Indian drum made of wood and leather, played using the palm and fingers



KANJIRA

Circular frame made of the wood of the jackfruit tree, between 7 and 9 inches in width and 2 to 4 inches in depth.



GHATAM

A specially made clay pot providing percussion; played using palm and fingers



NAADASWARAM

A wind instrument resembling the oboe; played on all auspicious occasions



FLUTE

Made of bamboo; unlike the western counterpart has no keys and is played using fingers to regulate air flow



THAVIL

Thavil is a traditional musical instrument of the ancient city of Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu. It is an integral part of the Carnatic music in Thanjavur.



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