



रान्जनी फ़ाईन आर्ट्स

SAMYOGA

संयोगः

3rd Annual Festival



14th and 15th February, 2015

ranjani fine arts

Regd. office: 5081, Sobha Dahlia,
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Ranjani Fine Arts (RFA) is a registered public charitable trust and a community initiative to nurture and develop the cultural landscape. Ranjani Fine Arts' charter is to:

- Organize live fine-arts programs, such as classical music concerts
- Promote and encourage artistes by providing them a welcoming and rewarding platform to showcase their talent
- Create a real social network that perpetuates and strengthens the connection to our roots
- Expose children to a wholesome experience

Ranjani Fine Arts is a trustee of Karnataka Fine Arts Council (KFAC).

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Opening Note

Human beings are a strange species - the older they get, the younger they want to look. The huge cosmetic and anti-aging product market bears testament to this fact. And yet, no human has quite managed to pull this off. The one real "old-but-looks-young" example that readily comes to mind now is something which is centuries old, and transcends the human plane - Indian Classical Music. (Some critics may cite the counter-example of Rajnikanth, but the superstar's fans would perhaps readily point out that *He* transcends the human plane too)

A couple of decades ago, Indian classical music audiences typically consisted of only staid, serious adults, with many Cassandras foretelling the imminent decline and demise of the art. The concert stage mostly featured senior artistes who had trained in the art for several years, and opportunities for young-and-upcoming musicians were rare, if not impossible. Today, the scene is very different. Several youngsters take to classical music as more than just a hobby; some successfully manage dual careers while others reject lucrative white-collar jobs for a career in classical music. Concert opportunities are also more plentiful, and sabha audiences span over 3 generations, with a more equal mix of grey and black-haired rasikas (and it's not just due to the more widespread use of hair-dye).

Closer to home, we witnessed the huge success of Kalavanta 2014 – the national level Youth Carnatic music competition which saw widespread participation from young artistes as well as rasikas. And at Ranjani Fine Arts, we continue to witness the presence and participation of a number of children at all our events. This year's festival features a variety of concerts which appeal across generations, including a specially-themed children's concert.

So, in this souvenir, it is only appropriate that we also feature content that covers Indian classical music and its performers across generations:

- Sri G. Ravikiran pays tribute to his late Guru – the legendary Dr. R.K.Srikantan
- Smt. Deepa Ganesh traces the early years in the life of Hindustani music legend Gangubai Hangal
- Dr. S.Bhagyalekshmy explores an interesting topic - Maharaja Swathi Tirunal's contribution to dance
- Dr. N. Ramanathan describes American musicologist Harold Powers' tryst with Indian classical music, and his pioneering contributions to the to the study and understanding of the art
- In an interview with RFA, 'Abaswaram' Ramji recounts the journey of his Issai Mazhalai, India's first professional music troupe featuring children
- The distinguished judges of *Kalavanta 2014* share their experiences and views about the event

- Ashok Madhav writes about compositions on Tyagaraja

This year, we are singularly fortunate and extremely honoured to feature an article on how “Music Blossoms Happiness” by one of India’s greatest leaders today, an inspiring force for millions and a connoisseur of classical music, among many other things – our former President Dr.A.P.J.Abdul Kalam.

We are also happy to feature the voices of some of our members and rasikas who describe how RFA has touched their lives in different ways. We also take a look at the past year at RFA in pictures – a section of this book which brings back several good memories.

We thank the contributors of all the articles, photographs and other content in this souvenir, and all the distinguished people whom we had the honour of interviewing. In particular, our sincere thanks go to Dr. Abdul Kalam for his kind permission to publish his article, and the promptness with which we received an email response to our request – this was truly a memorable moment for us.

It is with great pleasure that we present Ranjani Fine Arts’ 3rd Annual souvenir – we quite enjoyed putting this together, and we hope that you enjoy reading it.

Team Ranjani Fine Arts

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President's Message

In 2012, Ranjani Fine Arts (RFA) started off as a group of rasikas, passionate about promoting the cause of Classical music. Over the last three years we have seen the systematic progression of this movement, just like a vocalist starts from the varnam and steadily gathers momentum! On the eve of the Third Annual Festival, I present below a summary of activities in 2014-15.

One of the most significant events in which RFA played a pivotal role this year was the formation of Karnataka Fine Arts Council (KFAC), an association of ten leading organizations in Bangalore, to promote fine arts. The tremendously successful *Kalavanta 2014* - a unique week-long national level music competition featuring youth Carnatic musicians, was conducted by the KFAC in May 2014. RFA is indeed proud to be a trustee of KFAC.

In another significant achievement, RFA was recognized with a grant by the Department of Kannada & Culture, Government of Karnataka. This is truly a moment to be both proud of and grateful for, as RFA received this grant in the very first year it became eligible for it. We sincerely thank the Government of Karnataka for their generous support and encouragement for our cause.

RFA's mission statement - "*Enable, Educate, Access*" - has received an overwhelming response from our community, and this has been the driving force for us.

The performance of any organization is measured by how well it is able to sustain its initiatives. In 2013, we initiated the *Vaggayekara Utsava and Guru Utsava*, as part of the *Enable* aspect. We were able to conduct both the events with 22 music schools and music teachers from the community. These two *Utsavas* have become events which unite the music loving community in our area, and all music teachers, students and rasikas look forward to these. This time, we expanded the scope of *Guru Utsava* to cover Hindustani music teachers as well. We also continued to provide opportunities for students of local music schools to perform every month prior to the main monthly concerts.

On the *Educate* front, we conducted a unique workshop on "Parent-Child Relationship through Classical Music" by Ganakalabhushana Vidwan R.K. Padmanabha. It was a workshop that provided several insights into how music can instill cultural values and parent-child bonding. A special lecture on Varnams – "Harnessing the Power of Varnams" by Vidushi Sumitra Nitin, was one that witnessed a packed audience of music learners and rasikas!



We continued with our primary objective of providing Access to the community for high quality Carnatic and Hindustani concerts. In February 2014, our annual festival *Samyoga* was the confluence of 2 top-class concerts each of the Carnatic and Hindustani genres

We now present to you another musical feast - "Samyoga 2015" – our Third Annual Festival with 2 concerts each in the Carnatic and Hindustani formats. In this festival, we are glad to feature 'Music Majaa' – a Childrens' special concert which has been created specially for RFA by Vidwans Mysore Nagaraj and Manjunath.

Last year, another notable first was our first live high-quality webcast of the March 2014 concert, which enabled rasikas worldwide to enjoy some excellent music in the comfort of their homes. In another major accomplishment, our webpage has been redesigned recently. A richer look and feel makes it all the more user friendly for participants and rasikas to access RFA information, photos, videos and event write-ups online. Our monthly newsletter "Nadavani", introduced in 2013, continues to see a good readership for the concert reviews and other articles that we feature.

We will conclude the year 2014-15 with more than 25 events being conducted successfully under the RFA banner. In the coming year 2015-16, we look forward to continuing our service to the music community. I request each of you to:

- join the RFA family as members and also encourage your friends and family to do the same
- actively participate in all the programs
- continually provide us with feedback to improve

Finally, our appreciation and gratitude to

- Department of Kannada & Culture, Government of Karnataka
- the set of volunteers (Trustees, Executive Committee members and others)
- artistes for treating our audiences to soulful music
- members of RFA, who as one family, have put in their diligent efforts
- all the music schools, teachers and rasikas who have participated in RFA's events
- our sponsors Sobha Ltd. and Prestige Constructions Ltd., for their generous support
- media houses for their timely coverage and publicity
- Sobha Lakeview Club for providing the venue for monthly concerts and all the improvements that they have done to improve the ambience of the hall
- New Horizon College of Engineering for providing their venue for the annual festival
- stage designers and sound technicians

V. Shrinivasan

President - Ranjani Fine Arts

Our Team

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Joint Secretary	:	Raghunath R.
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Auditors : S. Raghavendra Rao & Co.

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We are grateful to the following donors who have supported us in the third year of our journey to build a culturally vibrant community

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Sri. Ravikumar	Rs. 600
Sri. Sanjeevi N	Rs. 2,500

Special Program Sponsors

We are grateful to the following sponsors of our special programs in our the year 2014-15

Andhra Bank, Green Glen Layout Branch Rs.10,000

Programme Venue

Ranjani Fine Arts conducts its monthly programmes at the Sobha Lakeview Club, Off Sarjapur Outer Ring Road, Bellandur, Bangalore - 560103.

Support Us

Ranjani Fine Arts has received certification under Section 12A of the Income Tax Act. All donations to Ranjani Fine Arts are eligible for income tax deduction under Section 80(G) of the Income Tax Act. Our 12A / 80G Registration reference is: DIT(E)BLR/80G/AACTR0431L/ITO(E)-2/Vol 2013-2014

We request you to support us through generous donations, and join us in creating a culturally vibrant community.

Join Us

Here is a unique opportunity to create a discerning community and to bond together in the world of fine arts. Ranjani Fine Arts (RFA) provides a platform for everyone in the community to participate in building the cultural landscape and deepen the connect to our roots. With this objective, we invite you to join our family.

You can enroll online at www.ranjanifinearts.org or sign up at the front desk at any of our events.

Membership Fees (April-March)	Account details for online transfer
Individual : ₹ 1,200 Joint (2 Members) : ₹ 2,000. Monthly concerts are free for children below 18.	Name: Ranjani Fine Arts Bank: HDFC Bank Branch: Green Glen Layout, Bellandur, Bangalore Account No.: 25657620000012 Type of Account: Current IFSC: HDFC0002565

ranjani fine arts gratefully acknowledges

Dr. T.S. Sathyavathi

Pt. Vinayak Torvi

Vidushi Vani Sateesh

Vidwan Mysore Sateesh

All members and donors

All the artistes for stellar performances

All volunteers

Music schools and music teachers participating at RFA events

Press: The Hindu, Deccan Herald and Cityplus

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Stage Designers

Sobha Lakeview Club

New Horizon Engineering College

Contributors of souvenir articles



Our Members (as of Jan 17, 2015)

In its third year, Ranjani Fine Arts is proud to have the following rasikas as members and thanks them for their support

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2. Ajay Bakre
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24. Archana Balasubramanian
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49. Ganesh Sambasivam
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Congratulating Vidwan Bangalore S.Shankar



It is showering awards this year for well-known vocalist **Vidwan Bangalore S.Shankar**. Government of Karnataka has conferred the Rajyotsava award and The Bangalore Gayana Samaja has conferred the Sangeetha Kalarathna. Ranjani Fine Arts extends its heartiest congratulations to Vidwan Shankar on being felicitated with these prestigious awards.

Born in 1950, Vidwan Shankar is the disciple of his mother Smt.Rajamma Sastry , Smt.Nagarathna Bai and Smt. Vallabham Kalyana Sundaram. A performer for more than four decades, Vidwan Shankar is endowed with a sturdy voice and his rendering of raga is mellifluous and enthralling. His repertoire includes compositions of the Trinity, Swathi Thirunal, Patnam Subrahmanya iyer, Jayachamarajendra Wodeyar, Mysore Vasudevacharya, Mayuram Vishwanatha Sastry, Papanasam Sivan, D.V.Gundappa, Padmacharan and Haridasas. He has also performed jugalbandhi concerts with Hindustani vocalists.

An 'A Top' grade artiste of A.I.R and Doordarshan, Vidwan Shankar has performed all over India and at many places in the U.S. He has performed and conducted music workshops at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in London. He has also founded a Musical forum '*Shankarabharanam Kalamandira*' and has organized a year-long birth centenary celebration of his guru Smt. Vallabham Kalyanasundaram in the year 2012.

Numerous awards and honours have come his way. He won the first prize in A.I.R. competition in 1973, Best Musician Award by the Bangalore Gayana Samaja and the best young musician award by The Music Academy, Chennai. *Gana Kala Vathamsa, Nadachintamani, Gana Laya Samrat, Karnataka Kalashri, Sangeeta Vidyavidhi* are but a few of the titles that have been conferred upon him.

Vidwan Shankar has a number of cassettes and CDs to his credit. In addition to composing a few *kritis* and *thillanas*, he has directed music for musical features, documentaries and dramas on A.I.R and D.D. He has written articles in several dailies and souvenirs, and published two books, '*Sadashiva Brahmendra jeevana mattu kruthigalu*' and '*Sangraha kruthi maala*', containing rare compositions of old and contemporary compositions. He and his disciples have also presented many musical features on the life and compositions of Mysore Vasudevacharya, Sri Jayachamarajendra Wodeyar and other composers.

Vidwan Shankar will be performing at Ranjani Fine Arts on May 9, 2015. We warmly invite all rasikas to attend and enjoy his concert.

Carnatic Music Teachers and Schools

	Teacher/School	Location	Category	Email
1	Anjali Sudhir (Geethanjali School of Music)	Kundalahalli	Vocal	anjalisudhir08@gmail.com
2	Aparna Chander (Dvani)	Haralur Road	Vocal	aparna75@gmail.com
3	A P Rao (Sri Parimala Sangeetha Vidyalaya)	Koramangala	Vocal	aprao2001@yahoo.com
4	Bhagyalakshmi Chandrasekhar	Kanakapura Road	Veena	artist.veena@gmail.com
5	Bindu Nair (Sanskriti Academy)	Sarjapur Road	Vocal	bind_meno_nair@yahoo.co.in
6	Madhu Govindarajan (Shrutilaya)	Sarjapur Road	Vocal	madhugovindarajan@yahoo.co.in
7	Mythili Suresh	Sarjapur ORR	Veena	mythili_suresh2000@yahoo.com
8	Parvathy Vaidyanathan (Srijaya Vani Vidyalayam)	Sarjapur Road	Vocal	parvathy.vaidy@gmail.com
9	Dr. Priyashri Rao (Kalasampurna)	Marathahalli	Vocal, Violin	dr.priyashrirao@gmail.com
10	Rajalakshmi	Sarjapur Road	Vocal	sriraji.raju@gmail.com
11	Savitha Kartik (Parampara Centre for Carnatic Music)	Whitefield	Vocal	savitahh@gmail.com
12	Shobha Kukke (Kukke Sri School of Music)	HSR Layout	Vocal	gunabha@yahoo.com
13	Sobha Mokkalpati	HSR Layout	Veena, Vocal	sobhamokkalpati69@gmail.com
14	Soumya Ramachandran (Sampradhaya)	Sarjapur Road	Violin, Vocal	ramachna@gmail.com
15	Sumitra Nitin (Natyasruti)	Koramangala	Vocal	nitin.sumitra@gmail.com
16	S L Srimati	HSR Layout	Vocal	On request
17	Vasudevan	Marathahalli	Vocal	ragtal@gmail.com
18	Sai Geetha (Ninada)	HSR layout	Vocal	saigeethanarayanan@gmail.com
19	Hemalatha	HSR Layout	Vocal	camhema2006@yahoo.com

Carnatic Music Teachers and Schools

20	Chitra Srikanth (Dhwani)	Koramangala	Vocal	chitra9@yahoo.com
21	Vasudha Sriram (Naadamrutha)	Bellandur	Vocal	Email.vs@gmail.com
22	Radha Srisailam	Bellandur	Veena	Radha_srisailam@yahoo.com
23	Savita Narayanan & Narayana Iyer (Swaralakshmi)	Sarjapur road	Vocal	savinarayan@gmail.com
24	Usha Narasimhan	Bellandur	Vocal	cslnarasimhan@yahoo.com
25	Ramyra	HSR Layout	Vocal	Mail2ramyak@gmail.com
26	Kavitha	HSR Layout	Vocal	rkavitha67@gmail.com

Hindustani Music Teachers and Schools

No.	Teacher/School	Location	Category	Email ID
1	Prabir Bhattacharya	Whitefield	Sitar	prabir_sitar@yahoo.com
2	Chandramouli Rao (Swarsangeeth)	Adarsh Palm Retreat	Vocal/Violin	chandramouli.rao1@gmail.com
3	Murari Sharan Gupta (Samam)	Red Bridge, Bellandur	Tabla	murarisharangupta@gmail.com
4	Malancha Music school	Vidyarambh, Bellandur	Vocal	malancha1987@gmail.com
5	Rina Basu	Marathalli	Vocal	rinaatis.khayal@gmail.com
6	Nikhil Patwardhan (Sargam Sitar School)	Bellandur	Sitar	npatwardhan@gmail.com
7	Rahul Pophali	Whitefield	Tabla	tablarahul@gmail.com
8	Manjith Suman (Kalanjali)	Sarjapur	All	manjithsuman@yahoo.com
9	Manisha Mehta (Dancekala)	Sarjapur	All	manishasmehta@dancekala.com
10	Aparna Banerjee (Antara Arts)	Haralur	All	antaraarts@gmail.com
11	Ramdeo Choudhary	Ambalipura	Sitar	shreemarco@yahoo.com
12	Aparna Menon	Brookfields	Vocal	aparnapaliyath.menon@gmail.com
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The year in pictures



Feb 8th, 2014. The Second Annual Festival festival is inaugurated. Vidwans Malladi Brothers, eminent vocalists, light the lamp.



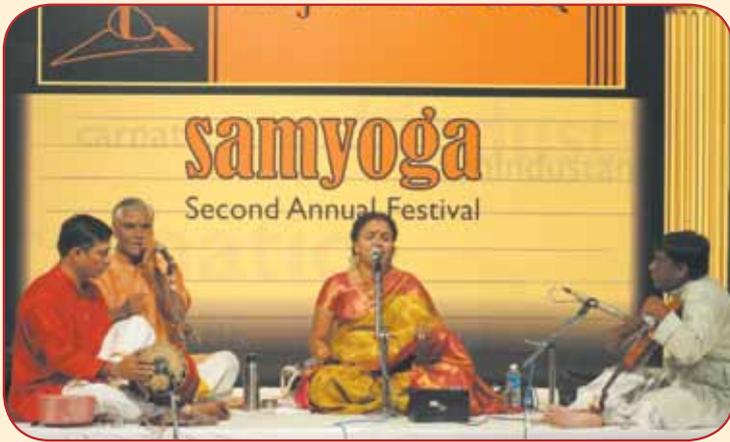
Malladi Brothers Vidwans Shriramprasad and Ravikumar release the RFA souvenir. Chief Guest Sri P.Gopalakrishnan of Sobha Developers and RFA President Sri.B.S.Balasubramanyam look on.

Photographs by S.Subramanian, Geetha Arvind, Rajagopal N. & Raghunath R.



2nd Annual Festival Concert, Feb 8, 2014

- | | | |
|----------|---|---|
| Vocal | : | Vidwans Malladi Ravikumar & Shriramprasad |
| Violin | : | Vidwan H K Venkatram |
| Mridanga | : | Vidwan M L N Raju |
| Ghata | : | Vidwan Srisaila |



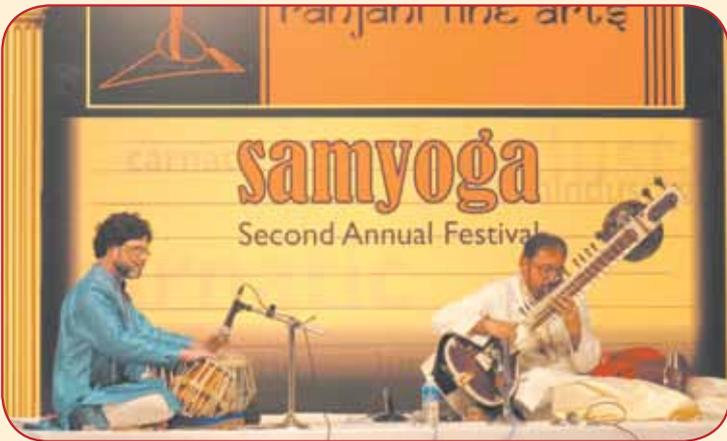
2nd Annual Festival Concert, Feb 9, 2014

- | | | |
|------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Vocal | : | Vidushi Dr Sudha Rangunathan |
| Violin | : | Vidwan B Raghavendra Rao |
| Mridanga | : | Vidwan Neyveli S Skandasubramanian |
| Moharsingh | : | Vidwan R Raman |



2nd Annual Festival Concert, Feb 15, 2014

Vocal : Vidushi Dr. Ashwini Bhide Deshpande
Harmonium : Pandit Vyasmurti Katti
Tabla : Pandit Ravindra Yavagal



2nd Annual Festival Concert, Feb 16, 2014

Sitar : Pandit Kushal Das
Tabla : Pandit Biplab Bhattacharya



March 2014

Vocal	:	Vidwan Shertallay Ranganatha Sharma
Violin	:	Vidushi H.M.Smitha
Mridanga	:	Vidwan Anoor Anathakrishna Sharma
Khanjira	:	Vidwan Nandagopal



April 2014

Vocal	:	Vidushi Bharathi Ramasubban
Violin	:	Vidwan Karaikkal Venkatasubramanian
Mridanga	:	Vidwan N C Bharadwaj
Tambura	:	Sri Sripada Rao



May 2014

Vocal : Vidwan Bharat Sundar
Violin : Vidushi H M Smitha
Mridanga : Vidwan N C Bharadwaj



June 2014

Vocal : Vidushi Kalavathy Avadhoot
Violin : Vidushi Nalina Mohan
Mridangam : Vidwan K U Jayachandra Rao
Khanjira : Vidwan Guruprasanna



August 2014

Flute : Vidwan Mysore Chandan Kumar
Violin : Vidushi H.M.Smitha
Mridangam : Vidwan K.V.Prasad



September 2014

Veena : Ramana Balachandran
Mridangam : Vidwan B.C.Manjunath
Ghatam : Vidwan S.N.Narayana Murthy



October 2014

Vocal : Vidwan Bellary Raghavendra
Violin : Vidwan Mattur Srinidhi
Mridangam : Vidwan Tumkur Ravishankar



November 2014 : Kalavanta winners concert

Violin : Apoorva Krishna
Mridangam : Sumesh Narayanan



November 2014 : Kalavanta winners concert

Flute duet : Hemantha and Heramba
 Violin : Vittal Rangan
 Mridangam : Akshay Anand



December 2014

Vocal : Vidwan Thrissur V.R.Dileep Kumar
 Violin : Vidwan Mattur Srinidhi
 Mridangam : Vidwan Vadagara P.V.Anil Kumar



June 2014

Lec-dem by Vidwan R.K.Padmanabha on
“Parent-Child Relationship through Classical Music”



September 2014

Lec-dem by Vidushi Sumitra Nitin on
“Harnessing the Power of the Varnam”



June 2014 Hindustani Concert

Vocal : Smt. Smita Bellur
Harmonium : Sri Bharat Hegde
Tabla : Sri Nissar Ahmed



September 2014 Hindustani Concert

Vocal : Sri Koushik Aithal
Harmonium : Sri Sameer Havaladar
Tabla : Sri Kedarnath Havaladar



December 2014 Hindustani Concert

Sitar : Ustad Hafiz Bale Khan
Tabla : Sri Shailesh Shenoy

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Vidwan MYSORE DR M MANJUNATH
Mridangam : Vidwan K U JAYACHANDRA RAO
Ghatam : Vidwan GIRIDHAR UDUPA
Rhythm Pad : Vidwan PRAMATH KIRAN



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Hindustani

VOCAL : Pandit SANJEEV ABHYANKAR
Harmonium : Pandit VYASMURTI KATTI
Tabla : Pandit RAVINDRA YAVAGAL



15 Feb 2015



04:00 PM

Carnatic

VOCAL : Vidwan ABHISHEK RAGHURAM
Violin : Vidwan MYSORE V SRIKANTH
Mridangam : Vidwan ANANTHA R KRISHNAN

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Vidushi NANDINI SHANKAR
Tabla : Pandit ADITYA KALYANPUR



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“We produce good musicians, not millionaires”

Ramjhi, the founder of Issai Mazhalai, India's first professional music troupe featuring children speaks to P. Venkataraghavan and Santosh Narayanan of Ranjani Fine Arts



If time travel to the 1990s or earlier were possible, we would encounter an era where most professional Carnatic music performances featured senior adult artistes performing for staid sabha audiences. Even in the 1990s – an age seemingly prehistoric to today's touchscreen-swiping, instant-messaging generation - one could safely flip through a dozen TV channels without encountering a “Super Singer” or “Idol” show anytime (or screens with a dozen heads talking simultaneously, amidst a dozen unrelated tickers). Barring exceptions like U.Srinivas or E.Gayathri, professional child



musicians were nonexistent, and stage opportunities for children performing Carnatic music were limited to school functions and the like. The new millennium slowly brought in significant change, though, with the birth of India's first professional music troupe featuring children - **Issai Mazhalai** (rough translation: Musical Baby-Talk), the brainchild and labour of love of its founder, **Ramjhi**.

Today, the passion in Ramjhi's voice is palpable, and unaffected by a recent heart surgery, as he recounts the Issai Mazhalai journey. In the year 2000, he was producing a music show for Jaya TV when he observed that the participants below 15 were much more involved in their work than the adults. During breaks, the children would either rehearse their songs in a corner, or ask someone about how to improve their singing, while the adults merely chatted and gossiped away. This observation was the first spark, he says, that led him to start a performing group featuring children.

“A performing children's group was simply unheard of then. People didn't even understand what I was talking about”

As with any new venture, the initial years were filled with struggle. “A performing children’s group was simply unheard of then. People didn’t even understand what I was talking about,” says Ramjhi. Undeterred, he went from school to school and identified 60 talented children. After 30 days of non-stop practice, Issai Mazhalai was launched on May 14, 2000, with 14 children in the 4 to 12 age group singing mostly film music, and a few devotional songs. Soon, it became a success, with children from the group singing in films for A.R.Rahman, Ilayaraja and other top music directors.

Two years later, Ramjhi started another search – this time focusing on children excelling in Carnatic music. After building a database of child Carnatic musicians, he roped in many eminent gurus and convinced them to give the children advanced training in Carnatic music, including *manodharma* development. However, Chennai’s Carnatic concert

Sabha organizers said : "How can we even imagine little children prattling on the holy concert platform sanctified by greats like Semmangudi Sreenivasa Iyer and Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar?"

platform was even tougher to crack. Ramjhi recalls the sabha organizers’ reaction in chaste Tamil: “*Semmangudi, Ariyakudi madhiri peryivaa paadina punidhamana medai-la chinna pasanga thathu-pithu nu paadaradhu avadhu!*” (loose translation: How can we even *imagine* little children prattling on the holy concert platform sanctified by greats like Semmangudi Sreenivasa Iyer and Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar?) Ramjhi finally convinced Jaya TV to conduct a one-day festival titled “Future Vidwans of Tamil Nadu”, featuring 15 concerts which were telecast later as a series “Bala Bruhmam”. The show was a great success, and the break came thereafter, with Mr. Yagnaraman of Krishna Gana Sabha and Mrs. Y.G.Parthasarathy of Bharat Kalachar giving the group concert opportunities. Since then, there has been no looking back, and Issai Mazhalai members now perform about 18 concerts a month on average, and over a hundred concerts in



Chennai’s December music season. The group has performed all over India as well as abroad, and has children living in other cities and countries, who travel regularly to Chennai to train and perform under its banner.

Being unconventional is nothing new for Ramjhi. In the 70s, he founded a light music band with the self-deprecating, but nevertheless catchy name

“Abaswaram” (off-key). The band was launched on All Fools Day, 1976, with ear plugs and aspirin being distributed to the audience. *Abaswaram* was a great success and went on to perform more than 2500 shows worldwide for over 23 years.

The selection process at Issai Mazhalai is simple. “The child has to impress me – that’s all,” says Ramjhi, who almost single-handedly manages the group. When asked how the children handle both academics and music in an increasingly competitive world, he has a simple explanation again.

“Carnatic music is much more difficult than school academics, so if a child is really good in Carnatic music, I have seen that he or she invariably excels in academics.” There is also a “retirement age” at Issai Mazhalai – children leave after they finish their 12th Grade, by which time they have had sufficient exposure and concert experience. Over 15 years, about 80 percent of Issai Mazhalai alumni have gone on to become full-time professional musicians – a high success rate indeed.

Ramjhi recalls his most memorable experience, one that he so evidently cherishes even today, when Issai Mazhalai was invited in 2004 by then Indian President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam to perform at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. “We had no funds to cover the travel. So I wrote a letter to the then Railway minister, Sri. Velu, requesting help. He was kind enough to arrange free train travel for me and all 17 participating children. At Rashtrapati Bhavan, we were initially allotted 20 minutes. But after the children rendered Tyagaraja’s *Endaro Mahanubhavulu* upon Dr. Kalam’s request, he was so impressed that he cancelled many of his appointments and spent 2 ½ hours with us. He then hosted a high tea for us, spoke with all the children and gave us gold-plated mementos, bearing the words “*With compliments from A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, the President of India*”.

“Carnatic music is much more difficult than school academics, so if a child is really good in Carnatic music, I have seen that he or she invariably excels in academics”

Despite Issai Mazhalai’s success and the recognition it has received over the years, some problems still remain. “Though our repertoire includes bhajans, Carnatic and film music, we receive money only if we perform film music. For Carnatic music concerts, the performers may get paid Rs. 100, which doesn’t even cover the transport costs,” says

Ramjhi. Another problem - which is perhaps more widespread in Carnatic music today – is the challenge in getting a good audience. “20 years ago, people were saying that Carnatic music is dying, but with so many talented youngsters taking to Carnatic music today, there is no shortage on the supply side. However, crowds tend to flock only to the concerts of a few celebrity artistes, while other excellent musicians get poor audiences. In Issai Mazhalai’s initial days, we would get an audience of 10. Now, even



though we have more than 150 *rasikas* who regularly attend our concerts, that number dwindles considerably if there are other artistes performing on the same day. The real challenge is to increase this listener base in Carnatic music and to get more people to attend concerts,” he adds.

Ramjhi is critical of the hype around today’s highly commercial TV shows featuring children, with the winners reaping huge rewards. “Children motivated by such rewards will not go on to become a Sanjay Subrahmanyam or a T.M.Krishna. You will not even hear about them after the season is over.” He continues, “At Issai Mazhalai, we don’t charge the children a single rupee for membership. But we fill them with good music,

Issai Mazhalai alumni speak

“Being in Issai Mazhalai was not only an opportunity to showcase our music, but also to learn a lot from the other talented children. Ramjhi sir has taken painstaking efforts in building a galaxy of budding artists. Thanks to him for giving us so many wonderful opportunities to perform in reputed platforms.”

- Vittal Rangan, Best Violinist Award winner at Kalavanta 2014

Ramjhi Sir spots talent among children ranging from five to eighteen years and encourages them in the best possible way to bring out their best. It was Ramjhi Sir who first offered a platform to children to perform in public to showcase their talents. I joined Issai Mazhalai at the age of twelve and performed in many concerts. I had great opportunities to perform in South India and even abroad. Issai Mazhalai has given me great exposure and I would say that Ramjhi Sir is the person who is responsible for what I am today.

- N.C.Bharadwaj, Best Mridangist Award winner at Kalavanta 2014

“The real challenge is to increase the listener base in Carnatic music and to get more people to attend concerts”

make sure that they get good training, and concert opportunities under the Issai Mazhalai banner so that they are ready to perform on their own when they leave the group. My main vision is that they should make it big in their career”. The group’s list of alumni and current members includes many youngsters who

have made it to senior performing slots as well as fast rising stars - Bharat Sundar, N.C.Bharadwaj (mridangam), M.Rajiv (violin), Vittal Rangan (violin), who have all performed at Ranjani Fine Arts, and others like Vidya Kalyanaraman, Brinda Manickavasagam, K.P.Nandini, S.Adityanarayanan, Abhilash – to name but a few.

Ramji sums it up in a nutshell: *“We produce good musicians, not millionaires!”*

(P.Venkataraman is a Trustee of Ranjani Fine Arts. Santosh Narayanan serves on the Executive Committee of Ranjani Fine Arts)

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A Life of Surrender to Nada Brahma*

G Ravi Kiran

In a straight-from-the-heart essay written on the eve of Ranjani Fine Arts' 3rd Annual Festival, Vidwan G.Ravikiran pays tribute to his Guru, the great Dr. R.K.Srikantan.



Dr. R. K. Srikantan (1920-2014)

It was on a hot summer day in 1998 that I had the courage to enter the hall in which he sat. Clad in a white vest and a dhoti – he was simplicity personified – but to even think of approaching him was intimidating!!! He could give you the jitters just by a glance of his eye. What began on that day lasted over a decade - where each moment spent with him would be cherished for the rest of a lifetime.

Sangeetha Kalanidhi Padma Bhushan Dr R.K. Srikantan – a legend, a life dedicated to Karnataka Sangeetham till the very last breath.

Sri R.K. Srikantan sir was born on Jan 14th, 1920 at Rudrapatna, Hassan in a family steeped in fine arts. His father Sri R.K. Venkatarama Shastry (who taught him his initial lessons) and his grandfather Sri Narayanaswamy were both eminent vidwans of their times. His eldest brother Sri R.K. Venkatarama Shastry was a eminent violin vidwan and was also his Guru. His brother would also take him to the senior vidwans of his era to learn some *kritis* directly from them as well.

By the time I started learning from Sri RKS Sir, he was a lot mellowed down as a teacher; I had heard much more terrifying accounts of his strictness from his senior students. I still remember the first krithi that he taught me – “*Enduku Peddala*” in Shankarabharana – each *sangathi* handled with such reverence to the composer, each word carefully explained so that we

**Written first on February 1st, 2015.*

understand its meaning and each musical phrase deconstructed so that we can grasp its nuances. By the time, I finished learning the *Pallavi*, I was convinced that this was what I was waiting to experience!!!

His repertoire was the stuff of legends – spanning across genres (*varnams* to *tillanas* and *Haridasa padams*), across composers (trinity, pre-trinity, post-trinity) and across ragas (from the time tested to the rare). Every composition from his repertoire would be neatly notated by him and filed and he had trunks filled with such files - each page of which was dear to him. He held the *kriti* as sacrosanct – to be learnt in the right *pathanthara*, to be practiced innumerable times and to be preserved intact!! He would not tolerate the slightest deviation from the *pathanthara* – a *swara* missed, a breath taken at the wrong point, a *sahitya* mangled or split unaesthetically – would be met with a firm reprimand.

He held the kriti as sacrosanct He would not tolerate the slightest deviation from the pathanthara – a swara missed, a breath taken at the wrong point, a sahitya mangled or split unaesthetically – would be met with a firm reprimand.

As the years progressed, our *guru-shishya* relationship also went from strength to strength. I used to eagerly look forward not only to the class but also for the post-class banter if he happened to be in a good mood!! His sense of humor was old school – told with a poker face, laced with sarcasm – his wit was caustic at its best. There would never be a class gone without

him reminiscing about his role models – Sri Musiri Subramanya Iyer, Sri. Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer, Sri Ariyakudi Ramanauja Iyengar and Sri Semmangudi Sreenivasa Iyer. He would often recollect the *kritis* that he had learnt directly from each of these veterans.

He was particularly fond of a few ragas – two that come to my mind especially are Darbar and Huseni. He has even set a few Haridasa Padams to tune in Darbar – such was his fascination with this raga. He fondly recollected once to me that in his debut concert at the Music Academy (sometime in early 50s), he had delineated Darbar in detail and Musiri Subramanya Iyer, who was one of his biggest role models, had appreciated him for it.

Sri RKS sir's advice to students and aspiring performers was to build a very strong foundation – a foundation rich in repertoire, strengthened by *sadhana* and fortified by *manodharma*. He would tell me that while practicing, one must try everything – be it rare ragas, fast prayogams, intricate 'kanakku', tricky eduppus, etc. as it helps one grow as a musician. However, in a concert, he emphasized that aesthetics came before everything and one should not sacrifice aesthetics at any cost. He would plan his concerts down to the last detail. His lecture-demonstrations were

a delight to students of music – not a moment wasted, not a word out of place. Once, I even saw him rehearse a small speech that he was asked to give – when I questioned him about it, he said, he wanted to ensure that he did not cross the time limit of 5 minutes allotted to him!!!

In a concert, he emphasized that aesthetics came before everything and one should not sacrifice aesthetics at any cost.

Despite being a staunch traditionalist, RKS Sir was also incredibly broad-minded when it came to musical matters. Back in 2002, when I expressed a desire to also learn from Sri T.M. Krishna, he said “Go ahead – learn and practice more and more...one lifetime is not sufficient!!”.

His contributions to the Carnatic firmament are plenty – the myriad Haridasa Padams set to tune by him (including the immortal “*Narayana Ninna Namada*” in Shudha Dhanyasi which was set to tune by him), the compositions of the Maharaja of Mysore which he systematically notated and sang in many of his concerts and above all his steadfast discipline.

One day in late January of 2014, I called him up on his cell phone and he was in Udupi for a concert. Incidentally, I had called him up to check whether he would be available to inaugurate Ranjani Fine Arts’ February 2014 festival. He checked his diary and he said “No, I am busy that day – my dates are booked in advance, Ravi!!!!” A few days after his return from Udupi, he took ill. On February 16th, in the hospital ward, he even sang Begada ragam for a few minutes to check whether his voice was affected – his voice was still the same.

The next day, on February 17th 2014, he breathed his last.

A life dedicated – nah, dedicated is too mild a word – a life of abject surrender to the Nada Brahma.

(Vidwan G. Ravikiran is an accomplished Carnatic vocalist, and the student of Carnatic music greets R.K. Srikantan and T.M.Krishna. He was an RJ for Shruti, the 24-hour classical music channel on Worldspace Satellite Radio. Passionate about Carnatic music, he is a founder of Guruguhamrta, a trust dedicated to the preservation of Muttuswami Dikshitar’s compositions. He balances his music with his other career as a software professional.)



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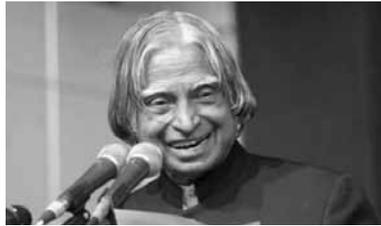
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Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

*It is a tremendous honour for Ranjani Fine Arts to publish the words of the former President of India, the great **Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam**. This is an extract from his inaugural address at the 1st Indian Music Academy Forum, Mumbai in August 2009, but Dr. Kalam's message continues to be of significance to the entire music community of India even today. Ranjani Fine Arts sincerely thanks Dr. Kalam for his kind permission to publish this edited extract from his speech, the full text of which can be found at www.abdulkalam.com*



When I see the music greats and the technologists together, one thought occurs to me. We have seen how music and fine arts had played a great motivating role during the independence struggle. The famous Tamil poet Bharathiyar, much before the attainment of independence, celebrated independence and sang, "*Aduvome pallu paduvome, ananda suthanthiram adainthuvittomentru*". This, and many nationalist songs were sung by musicians all over the country. Friends, we are now working on our second vision of making India developed by 2020. May I seek through your academy, an anticipation of developed India through the artists of India. Technology can enhance this effort greatly. You can bring in the sister organizations throughout the country, artistes from different parts of the country. I would like to talk on the topic "Music Blossoms Happiness".

Information technology

Over the years, we have seen, how information technology has combined with entertainment and has become Infotainment and has become a business proposition. Similarly, it is possible for music and technology to be combined as Musitech. This Musitech will bring together musical instruments and vocalist performance to the business

Music and Fine Arts played a great motivating role during the independence struggle. I seek an anticipation of developed India through the artists of India

fore-front and also it will also facilitate noticing of talent by the musical world, wherever it be. Also, technology can lead to creation of new instruments

or old instruments modified and shaped as new instruments with new musical characteristics. Human melody, musical instrument combined with technology can generate best type of musical performance leading to business advancements in the world of music.

Music has Universal Appeal

As a music lover, I can feel that good music elevates the mind, its appeal is universal and from ages its impact on human behaviour has been perceptible. Just the other day I was reading a publication on "Music Perception, Cognition and Behaviour" by Norman Weinberger and I was pleased to learn that all over the world the impact of music on human behaviour is being studied with so much of interest. The study also indicated how music

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can promote physiological and behavioral relaxation hence is being used in many hospitals as a positive treatment therapy. Music touches the heart and mind and evolves good human beings and society. Music indeed reinforces creativity and talents of personnel.

Nurturing the Performing Art

With the advent of the electronic media and its strong hold on the masses, the performing arts have to penetrate through competitive performance. When I was in School, we used to look forward to dramas being enacted in Schools and even outside and through them I can recollect many of our traditional folklores which have got embedded in my mind. Our artists and musicians should make special efforts to encourage the young minds to participate in innovative classical presentation. Two years back, I inaugurated a musical programme "Parampara - the Generation Next?", which was a seminar on endangered musical instruments organized by Madhumurchana. I felt it was a great service being done by the organization to the Indian Culture by preserving and promoting unique art forms. This has to be done in a much larger scale through country wide participation of multiple institutions.

Sponsoring by Organizations

Today organizations are making sports personalities their brand ambassadors. In the similar fashion, great musicians and those who have performed using unique instruments like vichitra veena, surbahar, santoor, tabla tarang can be sponsored as brand Ambassadors by organizations. Such sponsorships will enable the artists to undertake training of youngsters who have an aptitude to learn a particular instrument even though they may not have adequate finances to take it up as a profession. The sponsorship will also help to create certain amount of scholarships to musically inclined students as a full time professional training activity.

Music with a Social Responsibility

Our country has talented artists and today I am happy to be in the midst of those who have rendered sustained, meritorious service and have given happiness to the hearts of our people and the nation. I am fully convinced that art, music, dance, drama gives connectivity to the multiple variants in the society. Music can reduce the mental pressures and heaviness in the heart.

I had a discussion with Pandit Jasrajji. He gave a very happy news to me. Pandit Jasrajji mentioned that he gave a special performance on 26th January 2007 to the inmates of the Alipore Correctional Home at Kolkata on the invitation of Shri Sharma, Inspector General of Police. Pandit Jasrajji performed for two hours Hindustani classical music commencing with Rag Madhuvanathi. The highlight of the event was singing of bhajans like "Om Namo Baghavate Vasudevaya" and "Allah Om". I came to know that the music gave peace and cheered the minds of the inmates and gave hope.

Similarly, when Nadaswaram Vidwans Sheikh Mahboob Subhani and Smt Subhani gave a beautiful Nadaswaram recital at Rashtrapati Bhavan. On my request, both the artists gave an exclusive performance to the mentally challenged at an institute in southern part of

Whenever I think about one billion people of our country and how to connect them, one thing always come to my mind. The various dance forms, Hindustani and Carnatic classical music and various theatre art forms are great integrators.

India. This has given a lot of happiness to the inmates. The type of social mission should be spread by performing artists in all parts of the country for removing the pain of the people. On my request Villu pattu Arumugam has given a performance to the inmates of Central Prison Chennai. Villu pattu is a popular folk music of Tamil Nadu, which illustrates various social messages and also speaks out on mythological themes. He did it to the inmates' delight.

Can I request all, the great musicians, theater artists, dancers who are present here today, that you will take upon yourselves a mission? A mission of using your performing art for achieving the unity of minds. I am fully convinced that if this happens, the disturbing acts like conflicts and terrorism, etc could be reduced. May be one day all of you present here will become successful in forming a peace teams of performing artists who will offer an alternative solution to the military and judicial approach normally applied to the problems like terrorism etc.

Performing Art has no Boundaries

Whenever I visit any State in India or when I go on visits abroad, be it South Africa, Korea, Philippines, Myanmar, Mauritius, I have been noticing

that wherever there is music, wherever there is dance, there is no need for any language. We need not follow the exact word; it is simply the rhythm and artistic expressions that captivate the minds. The communication is set up automatically and the barriers are broken. I was very happy to see a performance in "Singapore India Fine Arts Society" where many teams from multiple races performed Bharatanatyam. In spite of having different mother tongues, they were all speaking the same language of dance and music, which united them so easily and seamlessly. Same was the case when a fusion dance was organized in South Africa.

Encouraging Young Artists

On one hand, there is an onus to kindle the interest of the younger generation towards classical art forms. On the other hand, many young artists from all over the country, especially from small villages and towns, who in spite of the interest in art are finding it difficult to enter and pursue the performing art forms. I understand that there are many entry barriers, which they are faced with. I think I am in the right forum today and so I urge all the artists present and the Indian Music Academy to encourage the young and budding artists and get them early recognition, so that they can enter into the rich art culture of our country which indeed needs nourishment in the form of young performers. Technology can help reaching the unreached.

Conclusion

Whenever I think about one billion people of our country and how to connect them, one thing always come to my mind. Our civilization has given us certain unique binding and integrating factors like the performing arts. The various dance forms, the Hindustani and Carnatic classical music and various theatre art forms are great integrators. We have experienced how music events in different parts of the country and performance of Indian musicians abroad elevate the minds. At the same time we have to continuously work on ways and means of ensuring a quality of life of performing artists, like that being done for the sports persons. When musicians speak to me they express concerns on piracy, getting their dues on royalty, medical insurance, etc. It is the collective responsibility of the artists, music lovers, music companies, media, government and sponsoring agencies to work together using the technology for the overall benefit of every one of the stakeholders.

May God bless you.

Kalavanta 2014 : The Judges Speak



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In May 2014, history was made when ten leading organizations in Bangalore came together to form the Karnataka Fine Arts Council (KFAC) with the intent of promoting Indian Fine Arts on a larger scale. The ten organizations are Ananya GML Cultural Academy, Bharatiya Samagana Sabha, BTM Cultural Academy, M A Narasimhachar Music Foundation, Nadasurabhi Cultural Association, Ranjani Fine Arts, SGBS Trust, Sri Rama Lalitha Kala Mandira, The Bangalore Gayana Samaja and Vishesh Fine Arts. We at Ranjani Fine Arts are truly proud to be a member of the KFAC.

Between May 18th and May 25th, 2014, the KFAC conducted its first event, and a grand one at that. *Kalavanta 2014* was a week-long National level Carnatic youth music festival and competition featuring over 60 extremely talented young musicians. Prizes were awarded for different categories, with the *Kalavanta* title going to the best main artiste. Four eminent personalities from the world of Carnatic music – Sri. Malladi Suribabu, Smt. M.S.Sheela, Sri. N.S.Krishnamurthy and Sri. A.V.Anand - served on the panel of judges. In a conversation with Ranjani Fine Arts, they shared their views and experiences.

Missed Kalavanta 2014 or want to relive the concerts? Full video recordings of all concerts are available for free viewing at youtube.com/kalavanta



Sri. N.S. Krishnamurthy, Former Director, All India Radio: “Kalavanta 2014 was a very interesting assignment. All the artistes were chosen by the sabhas themselves, and had some prior concert experience. This pre-screening ensured that there was a minimum standard which all the participants met – this was very good thing. However, it also proved to be a great challenge for the judges. We were all struck by the uniformly high quality and the highly traditional values that the youngsters displayed. They were not trying to be over-enthusiastic in displaying their talent and going off track, but stuck to the concert pattern which has evolved over time. The ragas they chose and the way they executed their chosen items showed that they had solid grounding before ascending the concert stage.

The event itself was so meticulously organized – every concert started on time, and introductions were kept brief and to the point. The artistes were made comfortable on stage, and there was no sign of nervousness because this was a competition. It was also very heartening to see that all concerts were very well attended. Another unique aspect was the audience participation, and the weightage given to the audience’s opinion of each artiste and concert. At the end of the event, we were quite happy to note that the audience’s opinion closely matched that of the judges.

One suggestion we made was to have separate prizes for vocalists and instrumentalist main performers. This time, all main performers were clubbed together, and the competition was so close that it was really difficult for us to choose the winner.

To have ten leading institutions come together to form the KFAC and conduct such an event is very unique indeed. I wish more institutions would also come forth to join the KFAC, which would truly enrich the overall experience and help youngsters showcase their talent. During Kalavanta, there were some youngsters who impressed us very much, even though they did not win a prize, and we suggested that the member sabhas give these youngsters an opportunity in their monthly concerts. We are very glad that several sabhas took up our suggestion and invited these youngsters to perform.”

Sri. Malladi Suribabu, well-known vocalist, Guru and father of the Malladi Brothers: “In general, it is a fact that any two sabhas have different opinions and perspectives. It is quite unbelievable that several sabhas could come together and conduct such an event so smoothly. This Kalavanta event is the first of its kind, this is the first time I am seeing such an excellent collaboration among sangeetha sabhas in my musical career.

We find very good Carnatic music talent in South India. Unfortunately,



the lure of film music has been a hurdle. Popularity and money are not the primary focus of serious music. Often, it is too late before the youth realize the greatness of Carnatic music and return to it. However, there is 30-40% of talented youth these days, who have taken to Carnatic music with dedication. This is a sizeable number!

We judges had a challenging task, with vocalists and instrumentalists clubbed together. The ideal thing could have been to have separate prizes for instrumental and vocal. Most of the participants were vocalists. It turned out that one of the instrumentalists really outperformed the vocalists. We analyzed all the aspects of the music, and the instrumentalist came out first. However, it is better that separate prizes are instituted for instrumental and vocal.

All the artistes should be given an opportunity to sing together at the end of event. The idea is to bring the different styles/"baanis" of music together. It could be the "Pancharathna kritis" or the "Panchlinga kritis" or some other theme. It could also be looked at as an opportunity to popularize some kritis which are not well known here. They could be given time for rehearsal. If we experiment this idea next year, I may ask for an opportunity to teach them!

Aspirants to an event like Kalavanta should approach music with a sense of utmost dedication and devotion. This is not film music to have a casual approach. Music should be a penance. The more intense the penance, the greater is the benefit. Practice is most important. Nothing is perhaps more important than hours and hours of practice. Whether it is raga alapana, neraval or swarakalpana, the more the practice the better it is. They should be immersed in music, they should listen to various eminent artistes and note down the brilliant aspects of their rendering. They should have the ability to notate music, when they listen to a rendering, if they are able to write down the same with proper notation, it will help them."

Smt. M. S. Sheela, eminent vocalist :

"Firstly, it is praiseworthy that 10 leading sabhas of Bengaluru came together to form Karnataka Fine Arts Council. Never before has such a thing happened and all these sabhas have been serving the cause of fine arts for a long time. It is so difficult to manage one organisation - in this backdrop, 10 sabhas coming together is momentous.

The framework - concert competition invited both the rasikas and brought in a competitive



element to Kalavanta. Organised at the Bangalore Gayana Samaja, the oldest Institution in Bengaluru, this 8 day event was a challenging assignment. The strict selection criteria adopted ensured that we had to be on our toes to spot every single sound or beat. There was a detailed parametrisation done that was employed with sincerity by all the judges. The parameters included raga delineation, kriti rendition, nereval and swara creativity and the overall concert experience. The overall quality of music was excellent - I personally enjoyed all the 14 concerts.

My request to KFAC is that for the next edition, there should be separate prizes for vocal and instrumental main artistes. To have awarded the best main artiste prize to a violinist (deservedly so..), we felt one prize to best main artiste for vocal would have made it complete. I wish KFAC the best in future endeavours.”

Sri A.V.Anand, eminent mridangist says “The concept of 10 leading sabhas joining together to host Kalavanta was an excellent experiment. I am personally very happy that it was such a coordinated effort with every sabha contributing its bit. For percussion, it was very stiff competition. There were artistes from various states and different styles of playing mridanga came to the fore. The overall quality was very good with each youngster trying to give his / her best. The young artistes were under no pressure though they were performing on a big stage and the event was being webcast live as well.



There could have been main artiste prize for vocal and instrumental. I request KFAC to take note of this one change.

Kalavanta will become an International festival in the years to come and I wish the best of luck to KFAC. My suggestion is to keep the standard of music high and have a wider search with every passing year. “

(Arvind Brahmakal, Santosh Narayanan and P.Venkataraughavan of Ranjani Fine Arts interviewed the judges of Kalavanta 2014 and contributed to this article)

There are numerous strings in my lute

Deepa Ganesh

Gangubai Hangal (1913-2009) was one of the greatest Hindustani vocalists. There is much to learn from her life and her music, both of which are inseparable and explored in depth by her biographer Deepa Ganesh in her book – “A Life in Three Octaves – The Musical Journey of Gangubai Hangal”, published by Three Essays Collective. Ranjani Fine Arts sincerely thanks Deepa Ganesh for her kind permission to reproduce an extract from the book.

No individual has ever begotten all her meanings: several forces shape her in ways tangible and intangible. Gangubai was no exception. In fact, by the time she was born in 1913, the country was already in the middle of a cultural renaissance, a powerful response to the projects of Empire. Even as she may have been oblivious to the great cultural and political churning of her time, she was nevertheless in the midst of it. A study of Gangubai's life and her music can never be two separate things. Neither of these could escape the forces of the times, and thereby largely determined each other. While it is true



she stood to alter the course of history, she was also its product. In the course of narrating her life, she would admit to the influence of her times in her subjective narration of her past. Her state of mind was a reminder of the Buddha's way—a creative withdrawal into the spirit. Throughout her career, she dwelt on and developed the consciousness of the past, living in a continued state of surrender to tradition, that allowed her to extinguish her musical personality in it. If this appears as a leitmotif in the entire narration, it is because Gangubai never spoke without referring to the past masters. If Gangubai Hangal the musician existed, it was only as part of a living tradition.

While trying to present a narrative about her life and music, I had to ask the following questions. How did cultural authorities fashion themselves in her time? How were they drafted into the historical projects of an emerging nation? What was its impact on the musician and on prevailing musical tastes? This slew of questions leads one to understand that neither her life nor her music can be studied in isolation. What does it mean to be a minor character in the flow of history? What kind of a relation does this minor character have to the grand course of history? How did Gangubai, someone who could easily have disappeared into the folds of history, move to a position from where she determined it? Gangubai can be understood only when these questions are addressed.



Gangubai was born in Dharwad on 5 March 1913. How could she possibly escape music?—it was something that she was born into, not only in her home but also in the world beyond her home. Little Gangu, in her long skirt and blouse and two tightly oiled plaits, would scamper on the homely streets of Shukravarampete, reverberating with music. The revolutionary gramophone dotted every street, with every teashop proudly displaying its shining, new acquisition. Hardly a few steps from her home, the harmonium-repair shop of Shreepadappa Tamhankar held great attraction for the young Gangu. For her, it was almost like a pilgrim centre. The gramophone

industry had been around for a little over a decade; some reigning musicians had already been recorded by the gramophone companies. When Gaisberg stepped on Indian soil, little did he know what he was doing. Music worked magic in the lives of people far and near, giving birth to many an artiste. He had initiated a quiet revolution in the lives of women who were confined to their homes; they could now pursue their passion without being subject to the male gaze—it was an artistic rebirth for them.

Zohrabai Agrewali was an influential late-nineteenth-century singer. She was a contemporary of Gauhar Jan, during the dying phase of the courtesan-singing tradition in Indian classical music. Despite the obdurate male order, Ustad Faiyyaz Khan and Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan had to admit that Zohrabai was an unparalleled musician. The two musicians have even admitted that she was a very inspiring force in their own music. On listening to the no-holds-barred singing of Zohrabai from the very few surviving rpms, one can only surmise the impact it might have had on the little Gangu. Her “*Allah Jane*” in Miya Ki Todi is a two-minute rendition, replete with the fluidity and magnetism of her full-bodied voice. Her improvisations sparkle with imagination. “*Aanbaan jiya...*” Gangubai had hummed in her shaky, gravelly voice, as she revisited her childhood. It was at Tamhankar’s shop that she had first heard her favourite “*Radhe Krishna Bol Mukhase*”, a thumri that Gauhar Jan had popularized and that Hirabai would also sing.

Most tea stalls had gramophone players. Men would drink endless cups of hot tea listening to the music spooling out from the enigmatic gadget. Women stood at

For Gangu, it was sheer joy to run from one tea stall to the other. She would invariably plead with the shopkeepers to play Zohrabai’s record. “What will you sing for us if we play the record for you?” they would fondly ask this little enthusiast.

windows or at the doorsteps of their homes on muddy streets, hoping that the wind would blow in their direction and shower them with some exquisite music too. For Gangu, it was sheer joy to run from one tea stall to the other. She would invariably plead with the shopkeepers to play Zohrabai's record. "What will you sing for us if we play the record for you?" they would fondly ask this little enthusiast. Gangu had learnt a few songs from her mother and she would instantly offer to sing for them. The shopkeepers were only too happy to oblige the endearing Gangu.

Between home and the world, Gangubai's life had a lot of music, but it was not necessarily filled with joy. They had more than their share of difficulties, but, always, music was an escape, a solace. Much later in her life, Gangubai did beg to differ; music was never an escape, she said. But even with her denial, it certainly was a springboard to higher realms.

She did not go to school till she was seven. It did not occur to Ambabai that it was time for the little one to be at school. When she did join, she stopped going after a few days. "Akkavru (teacher) beat my friend," she told her mother and refused to step out. Promptly at school time, she would curl up in a corner, and no one in the world could convince her to go. It was an every-morning ritual, Ambabai would plead with her and Gangu would doughtily refuse. A week passed. One day, the schoolmaster turned up at their house. "What happened to Gangu? Why isn't she coming to school?" he asked Ambabai. Gangubai hid behind her mother and went under her pallu. She just wouldn't talk. Finally, Ambabai explained the reason for her absence. "No Gangu, I promise that nobody will beat you... Please come to school, darling...*baaravva*..." the master, with great patience, convinced her. He was so kind and gentle that Gangu, who was adamant till then, meekly held his hand and walked to school.



The Rashtreeya Vidyalaya was just a furlong away from the house. The school had a huge backyard, where Gangu and her friends played happily before and after classes. "What's that game in which you say 'hu tu tutu'...?"—with a giggle, she recalled her kabaddi days. She and her friends had played kabaddi in the backyard so that no one would raise the objection that it was a boy's game. They would play "kho-kho" and "tug of war" as well. "Even with all the difficulties we lived through, what carefree days they were!" she would reminisce. "They wouldn't give us homework. We only had to fill the copy book, that's all."

Her memories of school days also included a conference of the Indian National Congress in Belgaum. She had been taken to Belgaum to sing

the welcome-song before the programme. The air was thick with patriotic fervour there, especially with Gandhiji chairing the Congress, and the children's feet wouldn't rest on the ground. She had arrived two days prior to the programme, and a teacher from Mysore taught them the welcome-song. "He taught us 'Swagaatavu swagaatavu sakala jana sankulake'. But he would pronounce 'sankulake' as 'sammkulake', and this was enough to make me laugh uncontrollably. I got shouted at for it. But tell me, that's not the way to pronounce it, no...?" she would ask mischievously, curling up her lips.

The pandal was huge, the stage mammoth. Belgaum was hosting thousands, not just from Karnataka, but from all over the country. All the dignitaries had arrived, and Gandhiji's presence had created magic. "I was so thrilled to see Gandhiji. When they asked us to go up the stage for our song, each one of us wanted to do her best and somehow catch Gandhiji's attention," Gangubai remembered. After the song was over, all the kids who sang had been lined up next to the stage. Gandhiji walked past, smiling at each one of them, and as a matter of pure chance, patted little Gangu on her back. She was elated.



"I was too young to listen to speeches. So soon after we finished singing, we were busy chattering away. But when the Mahatma spoke we listened to him with rapt attention." Lunch had been organized at the pandal for the gathering at the conference. People sat down in rows, young and old alike. But nobody had noticed the little Gangu standing quietly in a corner, shying away from the group that had proceeded to lunch. Gopal Rao Deshpande's keen eyes spotted Gangu. This freedom fighter of progressive views was the lunch supervisor. The caring, warm gentleman was on his rounds to check if everyone was comfortable, and had found a place to lunch. On seeing Gangu standing alone, he walked towards her. Noticing this from the corner of her eye, she tucked her head into her chest. "Why child, don't you want to eat?" he had asked, lifting her face. Gangu was on the verge of tears, and could hardly speak. When she was finally coaxed into speaking, with tears running down her cheeks, she had said: "First of all they will make me sit separately, since I'm of a lower caste. Then I will have to stay back and do the 'goma' (clean up the place after lunch)... So I'd rather be hungry."

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she was finally coaxed into speaking, with tears running down her cheeks, she had said: "First of all they will make me sit separately, since I'm of a lower caste. Then I will have to stay back and do the 'goma' (clean up the place after lunch)... So I'd rather be hungry." "Enankondiyavva (What do you think,

my dear child)? This is Gandhiji's durbar, all are equal here; there is no high and low. Come, I will sit with you..." he held Gangu's hand reassuringly and made sure she sat beside him for lunch.

"It was for the same reason that my mother would refuse to eat in any Brahmin's house." Ambabai got copious invitations for functions and pujas; they would want her to come and sing for every auspicious occasion. But when it was time for lunch, it was a different story. They would make her sit at a distance, wait till everyone ate, clean up the place, and then eat. "It was traumatic..." Gangubai would remember.

If Gangu wasn't at school, she was at Tamanna's shop. And Tamanna, wildly passionate about music himself, would enthusiastically play these plates any number of times for all those who had gathered at his humble shop. Gangu would run back home and promptly sing for her mother all that she had got to hear. And she sang the pieces rather well. Tamanna was himself excited by the manner in which the gramophone had infused their lives with so much music, and would often turn up at Ambabai's house with his leg harmonium. Gangu would sing and Tamanna would accompany her on the harmonium. Years ago in an interview, she related to me how every tea stall and paan shop would play gramophone records of classical music in her time, and even the ignorant shepherds would hum bandishes and thumris sung by great artistes like Abdul Karim Khan, Hirabai, Narayanrao Vyas, Sunderabai and others.

Music was never an escape. But even with her denial, it certainly was a springboard to higher realms

The gramophone was a major force in the life of both the common man and the musician; for women, it was a boon. The late D. K. Pattamal paid a tribute to the gramophone in a speech she made at the Madras Music Academy in 1970. "In the absence of a family connection to music, my success was due to the gramophone. As a Brahmin girl, I couldn't learn in the traditional gurukula method, which would mean living with a male, non-Brahmin teacher. To compensate for this misfortune of not being able to learn music systematically, I learnt from various teachers and listened to gramophone records." In the same speech, Pattamal had also mentioned how the gramophone had enabled her to perform without having to make a public appearance (which was taboo for women from conservative Brahmin homes); it provided her an opportunity to sing without being seen.

(Deepa Ganesh has a master's in English literature. After a brief stint as an English lecturer, she became a journalist, and is presently Senior Assistant Editor with 'The Hindu', Bangalore. She is passionate about translations and is a student of music, trained in both the Carnatic and Hindustani styles.)

Maharaja Swathi Thirunal's contribution to dance

Dr. S. Bhagyalekshmy



The Sanskrit sloka “*Geetham vaadyam thatha Nritham Trayam sangeetham uchyathe*” epitomizes the symbiosis and inseparability of music and dance. Vocal music forms the literature or *Vachika Abhinaya*, Sahitya the theme, and instrumental music embellishment and rhythm, for dance. In dance we can find the amalgamation of all the four aspects of Abhinaya like Angikam, Vachikam, Aaharyam and Satvikam.

*“Aangikam bhuvanam yasya vaachikam sarvavangmayam
Aaharyam chaarunaaraditham numa satvikam sivam”.*

Bharatanaytam and Mohiniattam are two classical dance forms of South India, which originated as temple art (Devadasi Nritham) and were patronized by the kings. These dance forms went through a period of decline in the early years of British India. The Travancore king Swathi Thirunal, who was a great patron of music and dance, played a pivotal role in reviving the lost glory of these dance forms.

Swathi Thirunal’s reign can be considered as the golden era in the history of Indian music and dance in the Travancore region. He invited experts from outside and created many compositions suited for dance, becoming perhaps the only composer who has contributed much to both Bharathanatyam and Carnatic Music.

He had a profound knowledge of Indian Music, Bharathanatyam and Mohiniattam. He was an exponent in the theoretical aspects of raga, tala and other aspects. This enabled him to create ideal compositions for

dance and music concerts. He was also able to clothe his literary themes in felicitous expressions and thereby provide charm and beauty to the compositions.

Of his 394 compositions, 80 pieces are intended for Bharathanatyam and Mohiniattam. These include Pada Varnams, Padams, Javalis, Ragamalikas, Krithis, Bhajans and Thillanas. In composing these, he has modeled Jayadeva's Ashtapadis, Narayana Theertha's Tharangams, and Kshetrajna's Padams. His dance compositions were reviewed and refined by the Nattuvanars and Vadivelu (one of the Tanjore Quartet). Many eminent dancers in his court, like Pazhaniandi, Kalathodu Anandalekshmi, Tanjavor Neerajakshi, Sathyabhama, Ramanatha Manickyam, Kanakamala, Sugandavalli and others choreographed and performed these songs. Afterwards, they taught these to their students and popularized these by presenting them on various stages. It is interesting to analyze each category of Swati Thirunal's compositions for dance.

Pada Varnams

The 18 Pada Varnams of Swati Thirunal occupy the pride of place among his dance compositions. He was perhaps the first to compose a Pada Varnam in Manipravalam- a combination of Malayalam and Sanskrit. His emphasis was on the effective communication of the theme and aesthetic blend of the literary and musical aspects. His Pada Varnams are of two categories—*Sthava Varnams* in praise of the Lord, especially Lord Padmanabha and *Sringara Varnams*, which describe the glory and beauty of various deities.

Sringara Varnams are ideal dance pieces having full scope for *Abhinaya*. The three main characters in these compositions are the *Nayaka*, *Nayika* and the *Sakhi*, representing the Lord, Devotee, and Guru respectively. Lord Padmanabha is the *Nayaka*, Swathi Maharaja the composer himself is the *Nayika* and the *Sakhi the Guru*. These compositions depict the Divine love or *Madhura Bhakthi* between the Lord and the *Nayika* and fully portray the divine relationship between the *Jeevatma* and the *Paramatma*. *Sringara Varnams* have one of three themes:



- a. An address to the Lord by the *Nayika* pleading for His love and mercy.
- b. A *Sakhi* (comrade of the *Nayika*) describing the sad plight of her Mistress to the *Nayaka* and conveying the *Nayika*'s message.

- c. A *Nayika* confiding her mental anguish, agony and worry to her *Sakhi*.

The different types of *Nayikas* in these Varnams correspond to those mentioned in Bharatha Muni's *Natyasastra*. Each Varnam has its own distinctive features revealing different moods and shades of emotion, with unique musical, literary and rhythmic structures.

The Sahitya is replete with literary beauties such as *Yathi*, *Yamaka*, *Prasa* etc. The solfa passages suit the rhythmic movements of dance. Each Varnam contains passages ideal for dance movements belonging to Nritta, Nritya and Natya sequences. The Charana svaras and sahitya of all the varnams portray different Nadais and Gathis, enabling the dancer to perform Adavus, Jathi patterns and Theermanams. The *Sringara Varnams* portray the raga bhava to its full extent. The emotional expression is in relation with the raga bhava. The literary beauty of *svaraakshara* can be found in abundance. This is an artistic embellishment which stands unequalled. The beginning phrase of the Todi Varnam, '*Daani Saamajendra*' - *DA-NI-SA commences with the svara DA NI SA* that expresses the essence of Todi raga. In the chittasvara, the swinging movements of the svara passages reveal the gliding movement of Bharathanatya foot work and Mohiniattam movements. In the charana, the length of each charana svaras increases gradually. In the last Ettugada svaras, the tisra svara passages are exhilarating.

In Khamas raga Varnam '*Saavamaarusha*', we find a rare specimen of Khamas in which the earlier form of the raga svarupa is retained. The Varnam '*Saa Paramavivasa*' in Ghanta raga is the only Varnam in this raga. The Poornachandrika Varnam '*Paalayamaam*' is in praise of Lord Siva, and is set in Adi tala of Tisra Nadai.

'*Sumasaayaka*' in Suddha kapi is also a unique varnam. Even though it is a Sringara Varnam, it is not Pada Varnam. This Varnam does not have sahitya for Chittasvara, and Charana svaras. There is a Ragamalika svara passage for the last Ettugada svaras. However, this varnam possesses immense scope for dance movements. The Pallavi and Anupallavi have a great scope for Abhinaya. The Sangathis in the Pallavi and Anupallavi lend themselves to Bhaavaabhinaya in dance and Nerval in music. The last charanam is set in ragamalika comprising Kapi, Kalyani, Khamas, Vasantha, Mohanam and Suddha Kapi.

Padams

Swati Thirunal's padams stand on par with those of Kshetranja and are highly suitable for dance as well as singing. They are of two types - Sthuthi and Sringara. They number nearly 65 in different languages like Malayalam, Sanskrit, Manipravalam and Kannada. The Sankarabharanam padam 'Nrityathi Nrithyathi', whose theme is the cosmic dance of Lord Siva, is a dance piece as it contains Sollukattu passages to perform

Nritta movements. The Pallavi describes the Dance of Lord Siva while in Anupallavi, the Lord is described as the granter of boon to his Bhakthas. The descriptive Charana presents beautiful images of the Lord's dancing feet with the tinkling of anklets, the accompaniment by Indra on the flute, Nandi on the Mridangam, fanning with visaries (hand fans)etc. The song's tempo or rhythm is suggestive of the brisk movements of dance. The rhythmic phrase '*drikithom drikithom*', which is a prominent Nritta movement, gives the impression of the devout soul jumping in a thrill of joy and dancing in ecstasy.

Like the Varnas, the padas also depict the different varieties of Nayikas in the *NatyaSastr*. In most, the Sakhi is a prominent character. The typical themes include the Nayika addressing the Sakhi, the Nayika addressing the Lord, Sakhi addressing the Lord, Sakhi addressing the Nayika, lover talking with the Nayika or the lovelorn. Sringara, Veera, Karuna and Viraha rasa are predominant in the padas. Vipralambha or Vipralabdh Sringara or the love of separation is the main subject matter in most of the padas. The different types of Nayikas represented in the padas are 18 in number such as Anukoola, Dakshina, Drishta, Satha, Svaadhinabhatrika, Virahotkhanditha, Khanditha, Proshithabhatruka and many others. The most famous padams are 'Aliveni' in Kurinji, 'Alarsararithapam' in Surutti, 'Taranijnnaan' in Dvijavanthi, 'Kaanthanodu' in Neelamabari, 'Kinducheyvu' in Kalyani, 'Panimathi' in Ahiri, 'Ilamariman' in Behag , 'Kaanthathava' in Ataana. These padams are regularly presented in Mohiniattam and Bharathanatyam. It is believed that Mohiniattam retained its existence mainly through Swathi Maharaja's Padas and Pada varnas.

Keerthanams

Varnana keerthanams composed by Swathi Thirunal are descriptive songs depicting Lord Padmanabha in a beautiful manner. These pieces, with ample of scope for Abhinaya, are ideal for dance. His prominent 'Utsava prabandha' krithis are excellent Varnana keerthanams, which beautifully describe the ten-day festival culminating in the Aaraattu. Each song is preceded with a slokam followed by keerthanams with Pallavi and multiple charanas. The Ezhunellippu (procession) in each day's Vaahana(vehicle) and accompaniments, are portrayed in detail. These compositions are unmatched in devotional fervor and as pieces for both music concert and dance. For instance, in the famous Utsava prabandha 'Kanakamayamayidum' in Huseni, we find many similes and metaphors. In this, the heroine watches the procession of the Deity in the Kamala Vaahana. She wonders, '*is it Valamadhana or Devendra or the moon, is it Gaurinayaka, or Surya, or Kubera?*' Finally, ruling out everything, she concludes that it is none other than her Lord Padmanabha.

Jathiswarams and Swarajathis

The Jathiswarams and Swarajathis of His Highness are also presented in dance. He has composed a few Swarajathis, one or two with Sahitya having the angas Pallavi, Anupallavi and the charanas. The rhythmic structure of the Swarajathis in Sankarabharanam, Kalyani, Todi, Kamboji, Atana and Khamas helps the dancer to perform Adavus or Nritta sequences. He has also composed a Ragamalika Swarajathi in five ragas with Sahitya having ample of scope for Abhinaya. The wording begins 'Saarasabhavaadritha' in Kalyani, Kamboji, Atana, Surutti, and Todi, The vaggeyakara mudra figures in the last charana. This is in praise of Lord Padmanabha. Here in Todi, even though a mela, is devoid of Panchamasvara . There exists an opinion that His Highness composed only the svara portion and the sahitya was added later by Coimbatore Raghava Iyer, a musician in the court of Swathi Thirunal. This svarajathi can be presented in dance with each stanza interspersed with appropriate Adavus and Sollukattus.

Ragamalikas

SwathiThirunal Maharaja has composed three major Ragamalikas - 'Pannagendrasayana', 'Kamalajaasya', and 'Bhaavayami'. 'Bhaavayami' is a Ramayana padam which was first fully set in Saveri. Later, this was re-composed as a ragamalika in eight ragas - Saveri, Nattakurinji, Dhanyasi, Mohana, Mukhari, Purvikalyani and Madhyamavathi - with each khanda set to a different raga in praise of Lord Rama. Each stanza has a Makutasvara passage, leading to the Pallavi in Saveri. The last charana stanza has a viloma chittasvara as usually found in major Ragamalikas. This ragamalika is highly popular among musicians as well as dancers. 'Kamalajaasya' is set in the form of a Dasaavathara Ragamalika as the sahitya is on the ten incarnations of Lord Mahavishnu, with each incarnation set in a different raga. The ragas in this are Mohanam, Bilahari, Dhanyasi, Saranga, Madhyamavathi, Atana, Nattakurinji, Darbar, Anandabhairavi and lastly Saurashtram, which is considered as a Mangala raga. Each charana has a beautifully woven chittasvara and lastly a Makutasvara in Mohanam, leading to the Pallavi. The last stanza in Saurashtra also has a chittasvara followed by Viloma chittasvara in the ragas in the reverse order leading to the Pallavi .Usually, Ragamalikas are also presented as the main item of a dance performance interspersed with appropriate Jathis and Sollukattus instead of Pada Varnams.

Bhajans

His Highness is unparalleled in the realm of Bhajans, which are soaked in bhakthi. A few of his Bhajans in Hindustani ragas are also presented in dance performances. The famous Bhajan 'Sankara Srigiri' in Hamsanandi is a favorite of many dancers. Swathi Maharaja has composed excellent bhajans in Sindhubhairavi, Yamunakalyani , Vrindavanasaranga and Hindusthani Behag too. He has composed more than 10 Bhajans, among

which 'Visweswara Darsan', 'Aaj aye Syama Mohana', 'Aye Giridhar dware', 'Jamuna kinare', 'Krishana Chandra Radha' are quite famous.

Thillanas

Thillanas are important pieces in a dance repertoire. Swathi Thirunal has to his credit 6 Thillanas in Kalyani, Anandabhairavi, Bhoopala, Purvi, Dhanasri and Purvikalyani. The Dhanasri Thillana 'Geethadhuniku' is very popular and presented in both music and dance performances. The Kalyani and Purvi Thillanas do not possess Sahitya. In Thillanas, the pallavi is repeated many times so that the dancer can present a variety of Adavus and Jathis. Adavus are usually presented in three degrees of speed and in different Nadais. The synergy created by the singer, dancer, Nattuvanar and the Mridangist can be very unique, highly musical and pleasing.

We can conclude that all these compositions of Maharaja Swathi Thirunal are jewels that reveal his scholarship in music and dance. He was an *Utthama Vaggeyakara*, whose name will be remembered by posterity as long as Indian Music exists. The literary and musical excellence of his compositions has placed him at par with the Musical Trinity. The period of this Quartet is undoubtedly the Golden Era in the History of Indian Music.

I conclude with the famous Mangalam of Swathi Thirunal Maharaja in Yadukula Kamboji.

*Bhujagasayinom naama mangalam
Paramajaanatha peehakeerthitham
Dahathi Paapmanaam jaaalasanachaya
Bhuvisekhiya dadaaru sanchayam..*

Dr. Bhagyalekshmy is a music researcher, Carnatic musician and a prolific author of several books and publications in music. She has authored around 30 books and several journal publications. She is a B High grade artiste of AIR and approved singer of several major television channels. She has served the cause of music as a research guide and teacher. She has also functioned as Assistant Director, State Institute of Children's Literature, Trivandrum. She is the recipient of several awards from various institutions.

Harold S. Powers and India: A Westerner's Tryst with Indian Classical Music

Dr. N. Ramanathan

To many in India, the late Harold Powers and his widely-quoted, comprehensive definition of the term 'rāga' are both fairly unknown. Powers was an eminent American musicologist, polymath and professor of music at Princeton University who visited Chennai in the 1950s to study Karnataka music, before publishing his Ph.D. thesis on "The Background of the South Indian Rāga System". Over the years, he continued to visit India several times and made pioneering contributions to the study and understanding of both Karnataka and Hindustani music. Ranjani Fine Arts sincerely thanks Dr. N.Ramanathan for his kind permission to abridge and reproduce this article. The original, full article "Harold S. Powers and India" can be found at www.musicresearch.in



Harold S. Powers (1928-2007)

(Photo: R.P. Matthews, courtesy of Princeton University)

Harold S. Powers has come to be identified with 'Rāga' or to be precise, the 'definition of rāga'. In the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, he wrote, "A rāga is not a tune, nor is it a "modal" scale, but rather a continuum with scale and tune as its extremes. Many rāgas can share the same intervallic structure, that is, the same scale type (mela, thāt), at the same time, any number of compositions or improvisations can be in the same rāga." Most of the non-Indian scholars quote this definition while the Indian counterparts are, in general, unaware of it.

First encounter

Powers first came to Chennai in 1952 as a Fulbright scholar. He learnt music from Raṅgarāmānuja Ayyaṅgār, a Viṅā performer, teacher and author of the 'Śrī kṛti-maṇi mālai' series containing notation of compositions in

Karnataka music, whom he referred to as “the central figure in my musical learning in those years”. During those days, Powers stayed at the Loyola College hostel. One of his hostelmates, retired Post Master General, Viṇā performer and computer-music scholar M.Subramanian recalls:

“Powers was given a special room in the Loyola College hostel where I was staying. He also had a radio. Perhaps this drew me and some of my friends to him as we were interested in Karnataka music and were not allowed (or could not afford) to keep a radio in our rooms. We were regular visitors to his room to listen to Karnataka concerts on the radio.

When I asked Powers to tell us about gamakam, he sang some phrases with exaggerated up and down movements, shaking his head up and down and said 'that is your gamakam!'

As it was his first 'encounter' with Karnataka music, his approach was that of a westerner. Once in his room we were listening to the radio and an artist was singing kalpana swaram 'Ga Ri sa ni da - Ri Sa ni da pa ...' etc. Powers immediately asked "does it not sound?" (an unprintable word!). When we questioned him what was wrong, he said that the artist did not sing the tārasthāyi-Ga at all (I think it was Ṣaṅmukhapriya). We tried to explain that the overall bhāva was important and not the exact alignment to the note's steady pitch but I think he was not convinced. Once when I tried to sing Rañjanī, he said "You are saying 'ma' but singing pa!" while I thought that I was singing only 'ma' but with a gamakam which touched 'pa' momentarily. In later years, I think he saw our point of view that in Karnataka music, the names of the notes are symbolic and the shape of the phrase is more important.

In those days we did not fully understand the talk about gamakam-s. When I asked Powers to tell us about gamakam, he sang some phrases with exaggerated up and down movements shaking his head up and down and said 'that is your gamakam!'"

M.Subramanian also recalls several other viewpoints of Powers', like “Dēvagāndhāri was simply Ārabhi sung slowly”, his liking for Rītigaula, his critique of the gamakam-laden Ṣaṅkarābharaṇam, his disapproval of some techniques of Carnatic violinists and his mischievous idea of coming up with a new raga combining Rītigaula, Ānandabhairavī and Husēni. M.Subramanian also remembers Powers' concert at 'Minerva Hall' in Egmore (around 1953-54), where he sang his favourite Rītigaula piece 'Janani ninnuvina' beautifully. Prof. Sambamoorthy, who was present at the concert, spoke highly of Powers' grasp and intricate analysis, and rated him higher than even many of his Indian students.

Powers had learnt Tamizh, Telugu and Dēvanāgarī scripts - perhaps he could read Malayalam also. He was meticulous in work and would get very

upset when something went wrong. Subramanian remembers an incident where Powers was morose for a couple of days because some recordings which he had made turned out to be poor in quality. During this stay, Powers also seems to have sung at the Tiruvaiyāru Tyagaraja Ārādhana, becoming the first foreigner to do so.

Turning point and the Varanasi years

"A rāga is not a tune, nor is it a "modal" scale, but rather a continuum with scale and tune as its extremes. Many rāgas can share the same intervallic structure, that is, the same scale type (mela, thāt), at the same time, any number of compositions or improvisations can be in the same raga."

- Harold Powers

Powers' Ph.D. dissertation was a pioneering musicological study of the Karnataka melodic system. He came back to Chennai in 1960. During that year's conference of the Madras Music Academy, he listened to a paper presentation on "The Ancient Grāma System and its Distortion in the Medieval Times" by Prem Lata Sharma and that proved to be a turning point in his musicological life. For the first time, he heard someone explain in a scholarly manner the contemporary scale system on the background of the historical

development. That did it. He left Chennai and moved to Varanasi where Prem Lata Sharma was the Principal of the Music College. In 1967-68, he joined the Banaras Hindu University as a student, and learnt singing in the Hindustani system from Balwanta Rai Bhatt, a faculty member and the principal disciple of Pandit Onkarnath Thakur, the famous Hindustani artist. He also got introduced to the Samskr̥ta texts in music and the song texts in Hindi with Prem Lata Sharma. He developed an affectionate relationship with everyone and they used to address him as 'Hari-bhāi'! He did an extensive study of the Hindustani system. During his return to USA, it is said that, he had to change aircraft at Moscow. There, during transfer, he discovered that the spool tapes in which he had recorded invaluable music and interviews were missing. He did not proceed further and returned to India and re-did all the work!

In the 1967 Annual conference of the Madras Music Academy, Powers read a paper on 'Tyāgarāja and Ādi tāla'. He had "... analysed the rhythmic structure of Tyagaraja kritis from the point of view of prosody as well as tala." I had attended the talk and found the paper very intricately worked out and quite a bit above my head. He had tried to identify the Dēśī chanda-s of Telugu poetry underlying the text construction of Tyāgarāja's kīrtana-s.

In the early 1970s, Powers was appointed to the Board of Editors of 'The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians'. He wrote the long articles on (a) "India I - The region, its music and music history" (b) "India II - Theory

and practice of classical music”, besides one on ‘Mode’. The articles were pioneering ones since it was for the first time that a cogent, coherent and scholarly account of the history of the development of music in India was being presented. In the course of his preparation for the articles, he had visited India. He was also working for the first time in area of ‘Rāgamālā paintings’. It was when he was discussing this subject with Prem Lata Sharma in Banaras Hindu University that I, as a student there, met him for the first time. At the Music school in the University premises, he presented a music recital, first half devoted to Karnataka and the second to Hindustani.

It was for the first time that a cogent, coherent and scholarly account of the history of the development of music in India was being presented.

As an advisor, Powers was academically demanding and it was difficult to get thesis drafts easily approved by him. In 1979, I had submitted my Ph.D. dissertation on the subject, ‘A Critical Study of the Treatment of Saṅgītaratnākara of Śārṅgadēva’, to the Banaras Hindu University. Powers had been one of the adjudicators and I recall that while referring to the discussion of a particular point, he described the work as ‘exhaustive and exhausting’ (the dissertation had run to 800 pages).

Later years: the theory-practice relationship

At the annual conference of the Madras Music Academy, 1978, Powers presented a paper on ‘Hindustani and Carnatic Ragas’, in which he had compared the rāga-s of Hindustani and Karnataka that bore the same name but appeared to differ, at least in terms of scale. He found that the Kānaḍā, Darbār, Nāyakī, Aṭhāṇā and Sahānā of Karnataka corresponded to rāga-s of the Hindustani Kānaḍā group in terms of svara movements. In his Music Academy lecture (at which I was present), he demonstrated Hindōlam and Hiṇḍōla of the two systems and another pair, Śīrāga and Śī. Although the rāga-s in a pair had opposite varieties of svarasthāna-s, they took the same melodic contours. The change in the svara varieties had been a historical development. The paper of Powers is certainly a model for research method and analysis.

Powers, as it is the case with most of the music scholars from the West, was never interested in merely what the texts said but tried his best to relate it to practice of the time. He used his knowledge of the study of old Samskrta texts for understanding the music practice of the country and rarely spoke about the texts themselves. And it is not surprising that we find the terms ‘śāstra and prayōga’ and ‘śāstrīya-saṅgīta and saṅgīta-śāstra’ recurring in his writings. In fact, he makes this point clear in the Keynote address at the seminar on ‘Saṅgītaratnākara’ at Varanasi in 1994, where he said:

"I can truly say that the intellectual and musical capital gradually accumulated in India has informed not only my studies in Indic musicology but also most of whatever I have been able to contribute to Western musicology."

- Harold Powers

".... I came to India first from 1952 to 1954, to study music in Madras. The late Sri Musiri Subramania Iyer, a wise and generous musician if ever I knew one, was good enough to start me on my way, with varṇams in Ābhōgī, Tōḍī, and Śaṅkarābharaṇam. For most of those two years, however, I worked with the late Sri Rangaramanuja Ayyangar, taking full advantage of

his monumental compilation of South Indian repertory.

In December 1960, Dr. Prem Lata Sharma read a paper on rāga relationships in Hindustani music at the Music Academy meetings in Madras. For me it was electrifying, the opening of a door; Hindustani music had been a complete mystery to me before that moment. I went to Varanasi as soon as I could thereafter.

During my first years of study in Madras in 1952-54, I had picked up a vague impression of Saṅgīta-śāstra from another generous mentor, the late Professor P. Sambamoorthy of the University of Madras; and I got a nodding acquaintance with some of the Sanskrit literature belonging to the later South Indian tradition. But it was only in my second and third long tours, and especially in Varanasi in my year with Pandit Bhatt and Dr. Sharma in 1967-68, that I got caught up in the network of relationships between musical theory and musical practice, between śāstra and prayōga, which has become a lifelong cross-cultural preoccupation. Since the late 1960s, I have been pursuing studies in Western musicology from this point of view as well, and I can truly say that the intellectual and musical capital gradually accumulated in India has informed not only my studies in Indic musicology but also most of whatever I have been able to contribute to Western musicology."

After 1995, Powers made it a point to be in Chennai during the December Music season, every other year, if not every year. He enjoyed his stay, Idli, Dosa, and coffee at 'The Hotel Woodlands', and seriously listened to music concerts throughout the day with a copy of Dakṣiṇarāga-ratnākaram of K.Ramachandran and the palm-sized song-index book on his lap.

(Dr. N. Ramanathan is one of the leading musicologists in India. He holds a Bachelor's degree in violin from Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati and Master's and Ph.D. degrees in Musicology from the Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. He has taught and guided research at the Department of Indian Music at the University of Madras from 1978 till his retirement in 2004, and has a number of publications to his credit.)

The Indelible Impact of Tyagaraja on Carnatic Music

Ashok Madhav

We have all heard about the compositions of Tyagaraja, but a lesser known fact is that there are several compositions on Tyagaraja himself.



The great philosopher and former President of India Dr. S. Radhakrishnan once said, “*We have had a few great spirits in the last century who emphasized the ideals of the race and demonstrated their vitality and power of survival and one of the most notable of these saint singers was Tyagaraja*”.

The life and works of Tyagaraja have had a profound impact on Carnatic music and South Indian culture. The musical quality, literary charm and philosophical import of his compositions continue to intrigue the layman as well as the musical scholar alike. Such was his influence on the Carnatic music that he inspired several musicians and composers. Many of Tyagaraja’s disciples and their disciples were so enchanted by his music and his personality, that this has led them to compose songs eulogizing him

Many of Tyagaraja’s disciples and their disciples were so enchanted by his music and his personality, that this has led them to compose songs eulogizing him and his musical genius

and his musical genius. Tyagaraja’s influence as a model composer and a pioneer is very evident in their compositions. He has been hailed as a pioneer and a model composer for others to follow. The article is not exhaustive, but is a compilation of information derived from various sources.

Walajapet Venkataramana Bhagavatar, one of the prominent disciples of Tyagaraja, has composed several shlokams and compositions praising

his guru. He composed the Sisa Padya beginning with the words 'E Kala Kalithundu' in which he mentions that the saint has been enshrined in his house in the form of a portrait. His kritis include 'Sri Ramabrahmam' in Begada in praise of Tyagaraja's father and three kritis on Tyagaraja - 'Guru Charanam' in Sankarabharanam (Sanskrit), 'Guruvara Mahimala' (Telugu) in Anandabhairavi and 'Vada rasene' (Sanskrit) in Purvi Kalyani. Some of his other compositions on Tyagaraja include *Sri Guru Stotra-ashtakam* in Sanskrit, *Sri Guru Managalashtakam* in Telugu, *Adi Guru Stotra panchangam* in Telugu and Manipravalam poetry -in Sanskrit, Telugu and Sourashtra

Manambu chavadi Venkatasubbayya, a disciple and cousin of Tyagaraja wrote this kriti - *Swamiki sariyerana vacchu* in Devagandhari. **Tummu Narasimha Dasa**, a contemporary of Tyagaraja from Bhadrachalam, was captivated by Tyagaraja 's *bhakti* oriented music. He came all the way to meet Tyagaraja in Tiruvaiyaru. He composed sisa padyams and a few keerthanas. Two of his keerthanas, *Bhajana chese vidamu* -in Sourashtra ragam and *Rama namamrutame neeku* in Madhyamavati can be mentioned.

The story goes that GNB once woke up in the early hours of morning, and had an inspiration to compose a song in praise of Tyagaraja.

When Tyagaraja visited Walajapet to meet his disciple, Venkataramana Bhagavata, **Mysore Sadashiva Rao**, who happened to be there, composed a kriti in Todi - *Tyagaraja Swamy vedalina*, extempore to commemorate Tyagaraja's visit.

Veena Kuppaiyer, already an established vidwan came to Tyagaraja to learn some kritis and later composed a kriti - *Tyagaraja guru* in Kharaharapriya. His son, **Tiruvottiyur Tyagayya** was also responsible for another Kharaharapriya kriti - *Tyagaraja swami guruniki*, in praise of the great composer.

Mysore Vasudevacharya was a great admirer of Tyagaraja. Vasudevacharya belonged to Tyagaraja's direct *sisya-parampara*. He used to eulogise Tyagaraja, acknowledge his influence, and say that his own prowess as singer-composer was "Tyagaraja's bhiksha" (grace). His admiration found expression in two laudatory lyrics on Tyagaraja — "*Shreeramachandra*," a ragamalika in Sankarabharanam, Bhairavi, Simhendramadhyamam, Khamas, Mohana and Madhyamavati. He has also composed a kriti "*Sreemadadi*" (Kalyani).

G. N. Balasubramaniam has composed a very beautiful kriti in Hindolam. The story goes that GNB once woke up in the early hours of the morning, and had an inspiration to compose a song in praise of Tyagaraja. This kriti - *Maanavakula bhushana* - set to Mishra Jhumpa talam, addresses Tyagaraja as a connoisseur in both music and literature.

Many other composers have been enamoured of Tyagaraja 's greatness and have composed kritis about him. A few of them are listed below.

- *Satguru Swamiki* -Ritigoula by **Ramnad (Poochi) Srinivasa Iyengar**
- *Ini namakkoru*-Bilahari -**Koteeswara Iyer**
- *Sri Tyagaraja Ashtottara Shata namavali* -**Bangalore Nagarathnamma**
- *Tyagaraja guruvani*- Hindolam-**Muthiah Bhagavatar**
- *Ehi Sarguro*-Khamas by **Mayuram Vishwanatha Sastrri**
- *Nadabrahmam*- in raga Nadabrahma & Sri sachidananda kandam-Vachaspathi by **Meechu Krishna Iyer**
- *Sri Tyagaraja Swami mahimanu* -Vachaspati (Manipravala kriti in Telugu and Tamil) by **P.Sambhamurthy**. Another composition by P.Sambhamurthy is *Ramachandra nannu* in Haridasapriya.
- Tyagaraja m gurum-Kedaram-**M.D. Ramanathan**
- **Papanasam Sivan's** kriti in Begada is in praise of Tyagaraja and his kriti in Kedaragaoula covers important aspects of the Sangeetha Trimurthis
- *Anandam tandaan*-Madhyamavathi-**V.V.Sadagopan**
- *Sri Rama chaitannname*-Saveri-**Shuddananda Bharathi**
- **Dr. M. Balamuralikrishna's** kriti *Tyagaraja gurum* in Thodi
- **D.K.Pattammal** has composed - a Navaraga malika with the beginning words-*Tyagabrahmam Kathamrutam*
- *Tyagaraja guruvai*-Bhushavali and *Nadagana Tyagarajam*-Athana -two kritis by **Padmavathi Ammal**
- *Tyagarajam bharaaje chitta* - Karpurabharani-**PK.Rajagopala Iyer**
- **Ambujam Krishna**- *Satguru Neeve* in Amrutavarshini
- **K.M.Soundaryavalli** has composed close to 30 kritis on Tyagaraja -all in Telugu
- Two examples of her kritis are mentioned. *Ganasudha rasa panamu*-Bhairavi and *Dinakara kulambudhi*- Hamsadhvani
- *Tyagaraja satguru*-Bilahari-**Andavan Picchu**
- *Ramane ninaivai*-Keeravani- **Ananda dasa**
- *Varaguna Sangita*-Ragamalika- and *Navaratna stotram* (Sri Rama nama japa) by **Tiruvalangadu Mahalinga Sastrri**
- **S.Mukund's** two kritis - *Tyagaraja nadabrahma*-Nama Narayani and *Nadabrahma swarupaya*-Bhupali
- Two kritis by the author of this article - *Tyagaraja swaminam* -Raghupriya and *Sangeeta guruniki mrokkeda* - Bilahari.

Ashok Madhav currently resides in Pittsburgh,PA, USA. He has composed kritis in Sanskrit, Telugu, Tamil, and Kannada in addition to tillanas, a varnam and ragamalikas. He has been active in the Carnatic music world, with many articles and compilations of works by great artists. This article is reproduced with his kind permission

RFA: Music and beyond

Over the past three years, it has been extremely gratifying to witness a true sense of community and the coming together of several people to participate and volunteer at RFA events, united across generations by a common love of music. Here, a few members of the Ranjani Fine Arts family describe what RFA means to them and how it has touched their lives.

"Coming into RFA about a year ago, I am extremely pleased and humbled that so many give so much personal time to the cause of classical music, besides all the other responsibilities that they have. RFA is a great organization to get associated with where one can meet truly dedicated and energized individuals with so much professionalism working in unison for the cause of spreading our heritage of Indian classical music."

- Chandramouli Rao

"For me, Ranjani Fine Arts has created an atmosphere of reconnecting with musicians, encouraging talent (my son has taken music more seriously after attending programs at RFA), and connecting with society. We live in a newly developed area of Bangalore and needed some common theme to connect us. RFA has provided that, along with the best music one can ask for."

- Chandramouli Srinivasan

"RFA has played a significant role in connecting us with people and helped immensely in creating a sense of belongingness with the place and people around us. It has increased the bonding within the family too and has truly extended our family from a few to many! RFA has increased the number of celebrations in our life. It has given us a wonderful platform to experience our Indian culture, as well as an opportunity to further promote being part of it.

RFA has contributed towards the "Education for Life" of our daughters in numerous ways – it has enabled them to directly experience seva, culture, belongingness, social connect, sharing, community building, celebrating life and much more. In short, RFA has added more meaning to our life!"

- Geetha Arvind

"To me personally, everything that RFA has offered has been music and beyond music! Every concert that I attended left me with divine everlasting vibrations which made me experience and live in the present. The lecture-demonstrations awakened the inquisitive child within me. The thematic seminars on the social relevance of classical music etc. gave me a chance to further analyze and explore the questions that had been haunting me for a while. And the writer within me got a chance too, through concert reviews, and here I am, writing here today about my

experiences. And well, I am just a sample of the population that RFA has touched, rather penetrated, musically and beyond music. "

- Narayanan Iyer

"RFA's events have enabled the young and old in a family to spend quality time together. In today's world, this is a humanistic chain we all need. Bonding with the younger generation and kids (who have enough pressures of their own) makes a big difference in people's lives. RFA has brought music and time together for music-starved Eastern Bangalore."

- Radha Thiagarajan & Thiagarajan V.

"It is a blessing that we have RFA - a wonderful Sabha with extremely motivated and dedicated volunteers who work tirelessly. Lecdem from eminent musicians give us a rare insight into classical music. RFA gives music students and teachers an opportunity to showcase their music and talent by hosting them every month before the professional concerts. It is amazing to see the enthusiasm shown by all music schools at the Vaggeyakara festival every year. I am thankful to all the people at RFA for the annual music festival - it gives us a chance to witness kutchcheris by seasoned artists right here, without having to commute to distant places and fighting Bangalore traffic."

- Ramya Ramprasad

"RFA seems to have changed the world personally for me. The opportunity to interact with like-minded people (serious rasikas) has fueled my interest in music and music-related activities. All of us at home look forward to the RFA concert on the second Saturday of each month, which has become the most cherished family outing!"

The best part of RFA has been the interest our daughter has developed in Carnatic music. She gets to meet other children who like Carnatic music and realizes that it is okay to be an ardent lover of this art form. It has helped reinforce the fact that to be 'cool', you need not necessarily know only western or Bollywood music. She now looks forward to her music class, and upcoming concerts at RFA and elsewhere. The spark kindled by the RFA environment has encouraged her and the rest of the family to attend other concerts as well, like the December Chennai season!"

- Rohini Krishnamoorthy

"What appeals most to me about RFA, is the conscious attempt to foster a culture of music appreciation in the community, especially among the younger generation. In urban areas, where we see a turbulent younger generation imbibing the bad aspects of western world, RFA opens a window to our rich cultural heritage through the medium of classical music."

- Santosh Narayanan

“The dictionary defines “beyond” as - farther than, more than, superior to. For all of us here today, Music itself is beyond anything we can attach ourselves to. Music is more than anything that one can ask for, farther than any milestones we are crossing, and definitely superior to any worldly possession.

If music itself is beyond everything, what RFA does for music is more than this “beyond”. At RFA, everyone - the trustees, committee members, office bearers - is a volunteer. They all have careers and families, which come with their commitments; yearly quarterly deadlines, functions, get-togethers, vacations, school programs, PTMs, doctor appointments ... The list can go on. But on the second Saturday of every month, for the past three years, they are all there, with a big smile from their heart, welcoming everyone warmly for the concerts, lec-dems, workshops or utsavas. Prasadam is served after every concert. They reach out diligently to all members to thank them. A concert writeup follows. A newsletter is circulated with upcoming concerts, not only from RFA but from other sabhas too.

All this is made possible not only by the sheer passion for music. There is a commitment in doing something for our culture, community. There is respect for everyone around them, be it even a student of music. They are genuine and humble. That's RFA.....beyond music.”

- Srirajalakshmi

“RFA helps rasikas indirectly in a couple of important ways. Apart from the core seva of organizing good concerts by both budding and established artists, RFA serves as a very valuable social connect platform by enabling numerous Gurus and sishyas to meet and know each other. For example, the Guru Utsava enables would-be students to find and connect with Gurus in their neighborhood, and keep the Guru-Sishya tradition vibrant. Though the VaageyekaraUtsava, RFA keeps the musical parampara well enshrined within the young students so that they are aware of all the great stalwarts of music and uphold their contributions by continually learning, practicing and rendering them.”

- Vasudha Sriram

“Many would have rightly raved about the quality of music, concert & the musicians and so on. To me, RFA means much more than just the concerts & musicians. It is a wonderful potpourri that includes Lec Dems, Vaggeyakara festivals, after-concert prasadam, a lovely evening get-together with like-minded folks, who gather primarily for the love of Carnatic music (if not for Prasadams) and the children's programs, that not only encourages young talent but also nurtures this art form. Thanks to RFA for bringing Carnatic music to this part of the town.”

- Vidhyashankar G.

RFA's younger members speak

"RFA has helped me develop a deep interest in Carnatic music. It has given me the opportunity to listen to, meet and learn (through the workshops) from great artists. I had the opportunity to learn 10 rare kritis of Tyagaraja, thanks to RFA's workshop. I have made good friends with other young members and I enjoy their company. With RFA influence, my interest in Carnatic music will never diminish in future. RFA has given me the inspiration to setup another fine arts society with the help of my RFA friends, in future."

- **Anagha Santosh (12)**

"At RFA, I get to meet many new and different kinds of people along with artists of different age groups when I attend the concerts. Volunteering for RFA and serving the community gives me pleasure. RFA really inspires me and I enjoy all the concerts."

- **Rajagopal R (13)**

"Thanks to RFA, I have made some great friends. I enjoy attending all RFA events, where I sit with my friends and we try to identify ragas together. RFA has also introduced me to several great artistes, new songs and ragas (and new varieties of prasadam). After each concert, my friends and I enjoy rushing to the stage to meet the artistes, getting their autographs and taking photographs with them. I also enjoy decorating the venue before concerts and collecting posters of RFA events. We also look forward to serving the prasadam, and helping out at all RFA events. In short, I have a lot of fun at RFA."

- **Varsha Venkataraghavan (10)**

"I enjoy so many things at RFA - meeting my friends, listening to new ragams, getting a close view of so many famous artistes and also speaking to them. I enjoy serving prasadam at the end of the concert (and also eating it, since I'm usually hungry by then!). The introduction and vote of thanks at each concert give me new ideas about how to use words to express my thoughts. I also enjoy setting up the hall, decorating the Ganesha idol, punching tickets at the annual festival concerts and talking to my friends about Global Fine Arts - an imaginary organization created by us kids!"

- **Vibha Arvind (13)**



APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

(April 2015 - March 2016)

Name of Applicant : _____

Age : _____

Name of Spouse (if joint application) : _____

Age : _____

Address : _____

Phone : _____ Mobile : _____

Email : _____

Kindly enroll me as a member of Ranjani Fine Arts. I consent to abide by all the rules and bye laws in force from time to time

Date :

Signature of the Applicant

Ranjani Fine Arts, 5081, Sobha Dahlia,
Off Sarjapur Outer Ring Road, Bellandur, Bangalore 560103
Email : ranjanifineartsteam@gmail.com.
Web: www.ranjanifinearts.org

FOR OFFICE USE

Receipt Number :

Date :

Amount Received :

Membership Number :

Authorised Signatory