

रान्जने िने वरुड

SAMYOGA

संयोगः

4th Annual Festival



13th and 14th February, 2016

ranjani fine arts

**Regd. office: 5081, Sobha Dahlia,
Off Sarjapur Outer Ring Road, Bellandur,
Bangalore - 560103.
Email: ranjanifineartsteam@gmail.com
Website: www.ranjanifinearts.org**

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).

© 2016 Ranjani Fine Arts All rights reserved

If you wish to reproduce or cite from any of the contents in this book, please contact Ranjani Fine Arts at ranjanifineartsteam@gmail.com

Opening Note

Throughout the year, we at Team Ranjani Fine Arts always have many great experiences to look forward to fine at our monthly concerts and special programmes, we get to experience fine music by great artistes. At our Utsavas - Guru Utsava and Vaggeyakara Utsava - we enjoy a true celebration of music, with our entire community of rasikas, music teachers and students coming together under one roof. The high point, undoubtedly, is Samyoga - our Annual Festival, and all the memorable experiences that we enjoy in the process of compiling our annual souvenir as we strive to create and present some unique and original content for our rasikas to read and enjoy.

This time, we had two fascinating conversations with Sangita Kala Acharya Vidushi Neela Ramgopal and Vidwan R.K.Shriramkumar, where they shared their thoughts and wealth of experience with us. RFA is indeed fortunate to share a special relationship with these two eminent musicians.

Indian classical music has deep roots in Bhakti, and in this souvenir, Arvind Brahmakal has penned a thought-provoking article urging the classical music community to introspect and return to these origins.

Bhakti in a different form – Sufi music – is introduced by Smita Bellur, as we at RFA recall and cherish the fascinating experience we had with our first Sufi music concert by Sri Mukhtiyar Ali this year. In a lucid essay, the therapeutic effects of Indian classical music are explored by Dr. Meenakshi Ravi.

We humbly feature tributes to two great legends – Sri Nedunuri Krishnamurthy and Dr.N.Ramani, whose passing has left a void in the world of Carnatic music.

As a member of the Karnataka Fine Arts Council, RFA shares close ties with several leading sabhas in Bengaluru, and in this souvenir, we are pleased to feature conversations with Dr.Raghavendra of Ananya Trust and Mr.Ravishankar of Bharatiya Samagana Sabha, who are performing great service to the cause of classical music with their monthly publications.

And as always, it gives us great joy to look back upon yet another great year in pictures, which capture the various memorable experiences and events that we have enjoyed.

It is with much pleasure that we present Ranjani Fine Arts' 4th Annual Souvenir – we hope you enjoy reading it.

Team Ranjani Fine Arts

Featured Articles	Page
"Bhakti" - let us journey back to where we belong - <i>Arvind Brahmakal</i>	33
"Kurai Ondrumey Illai" - A conversation with Vidushi Neela Ramgopal - <i>P.Venkataraghavan and Santosh Narayanan</i>	37
Indian music with therapeutic perspective - <i>Dr. Meenakshi Ravi</i>	40
Ramani Samaanam Evaru - <i>Nandini Harish</i>	45
Bowing to Tradition - A conversation with Vidwan R.K. Shriramkumar - <i>Santosh Narayanan and P.Venkataraghavan</i>	49
To Gurugaaru with love - <i>Vinay Sharva</i>	54
Sufi music – A Gentle Introduction - <i>Smita Bellur</i>	57
Rich reading for classical music lovers	61

Thanks to our

Sponsors and Patrons

Ministry of culture, Govt. of India

Department of Kannada & Culture, Govt. of Karnataka

Artha Property

Advertisers

	Page
Kumar Organics	32
Jagadish Airsang	44
Artha Property	Back outer

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 four years we have seen with amazement the progress of our mission. On the eve of the Fourth Annual Festival, I present below a summary of 2015-16, yet another successful year.

RFA played a pivotal role in founding KFAC and the youth music competition – *Kalavanta*. Last year, RFA continued to drive this initiative and conducted *Kalavanta 2015*. Inspired by the Chennai music season, more than 20 music organisations in Bengaluru came together to launch "Bengaluru Vasanthotsava" a six week long cultural festival spanning several sabhas in Bangalore. Samyoga 2016 is also part of Bengaluru Vasanthotsava.

In another significant achievement, RFA was recognized yet again 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 for the second consecutive year. 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. Especially, infusing classical music into the younger generation has been something very dear to our heart. Last year, it was a proud moment to conduct two special programmes towards this end. On Independence day, we had the fortune of organizing a very special workshop for children *Sadhana* by Vidwan R.K. Shriramkumar, who followed it up with another special workshop the next day for the music gurus. The other special program was on Childrens day, where we conducted a day long musical extravaganza. We featured very unique programs like a Talavadya ensemble using pots & pans, Prince Rama Varma's workshop, a grand kutcheri by Sangita Kalanidhi Sri T.V. Sankaranarayanan. It was very gratifying to see the overwhelming response from the audience for these special programs.

Every year, we had the privilege of introducing something novel to our rasikas, apart from the regular concerts. This year, we introduced our rasikas to a soulful rendition of Sufi music by Mukhtiyar Ali. Also, we introduced a 4 hour Carnatic concert last April by Vidushi Sumitra Vasudev, perhaps very rare in Bangalore sabhas.

We conducted *Vaggayekara Utsava and Guru Utsava*, with the participation of 22 music schools and music teachers from the community. These two *Utsavas* have become events which unite the music loving community in our region, and all music teachers, students and rasikas look forward to these.

We continued with our primary objective of providing Access to the community for high quality Carnatic and Hindustani concerts. In 2015, our

annual festival *Samyoga* was the confluence of 2 top-class concerts each of the Carnatic and Hindustani genres. One of these was a special thematic concert - "*Music Majaa*" - by the violin maestros Vidwans Mysore Nagaraj and Manjunath, which was a particularly great hit with all children.

We now present to you "**Samyoga 2016**" – our Fourth Annual Festival with concerts in the Carnatic and Hindustani formats. This festival, we will be introducing Harikatha, by Vidushi Visakha Hari. We are also introducing the *jugalbandi* of Vidwan Mysore Dr. Manjunath and Pandit Pravin Godkhindi.

We will conclude the year 2015-16 with more than 20 events being conducted successfully under the RFA banner. In the coming year 2016-17, 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

- Ministry of culture, Govt. of India and 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
- sponsors 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 have been 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

B.S.Balasubramanyam

President - Ranjani Fine Arts

Our Team

President	:	Balasubramanyam B. S.
Secretary	:	Raghunath R.
Joint Secretary	:	Venkataramghavan P.
Treasurer	:	Santosh Shaastry

Trustees

Arvind Brahmakal	Shrinivasan V.
Balasubramanyam B. S.	Subramanian S.
Geetha Arvind	Venkataramghavan P.
Gopalakrishnan P.	Chandramouli Rao
Raghunath R.	Rohini Krishnamoorthy
Santosh Shaastry	Santosh Narayanan

Volunteers

Chandra Ganesh	Rajagopal
Chandramouli Srinivasan	Rajalakshmi
Ganesh Ramanathan	Rakshita K.L.
Ganesh Suryanarayanan	Ramdeo Choudhary
Girija Subramanian	Renuka Ganesh
Hemalatha	Rina Basu
Jagadish Airsang	Saru Tumuluri
Janakiraman V.	Satyavathi B.
Jayan K.P.	Shraddha Subramanian
Jayashree Vaitheeswaran	Shyamkrishnan K.G.
Kavitha Shrinivasan	Soumya Ramachandran
Lakshmi Raghunath	Sudarshan Ranganathan
Mahesh Narayanan	Sujatha Venkataramghavan
Muralidharan	Sushila J.
Narayanan Iyer	Thiagarajan V.
Prabha Sudarshan	Vibha Arvind
Priyadarshini B.	Vidhyashankar G.
Radha Thiagarajan	

Auditors : S. Raghavendra Rao & Co.

Donors

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

Smt. Shoma Bakre	Rs. 20,000.00
Smt. Rohini Rao	Rs. 10,000.00
Sri. Prasad	Rs. 10,000.00
Sri. K.P. Jayan	Rs. 8,000.00
Sri. Amshuman K.R.	Rs. 6,200.00
Sri. K.S.S. Raghavan	Rs. 5,000.00
Phoenix Forge Pvt Ltd	Rs. 5,000.00
Smt. Madhu Govindrajan	Rs. 3,000.00
Smt. K. Gomathi	Rs. 2,000.00
Ms. Leelavathi	Rs. 1,000.00
Sri. Ranjesh Hebbar	Rs. 1,000.00

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 benefit 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 (year runs from April-March)	Account details for online transfer
Individual : ₹ 1,200 / year Joint (2 Members) : ₹ 2,000 / year Monthly concerts are free for children below 18. 5-year membership Individual : ₹ 5,000 Joint (2 Members) : ₹ 10,000	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

Late Sri S. Krishnamoorthy

Sri N.S. Krishnamurthy

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, Bangalore Mirror and City Plus

Sound engineers

Stage Designers

Sobha Lakeview Club

New Horizon Engineering College

Contributors of souvenir articles and photographs

Our Members (as of Jan 17, 2016)

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

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Akhila Krishnamurthy | 33. Ganesh S |
| 2. Akila Krishnakumar | 34. Ganga Srinivasan |
| 3. Amshuman KR | 35. Gayathri Karthik |
| 4. Anand Rangamani | 36. Gayatri J |
| 5. Anantharamaiah KN | 37. Geetha Arvind |
| 6. Ananthi | 38. Giridhara Dongre |
| 7. Anitha Gopalakrishnan | 39. Girija Subramanian |
| 8. Anoop AP | 40. Gopalakrishnan P |
| 9. Anulekha Manjari E | 41. Govindarajan DS |
| 10. Anuradha K | 42. Gowrisankaran R |
| 11. Aparna Pai | 43. Guruprasad CK |
| 12. Aparna Ramamoorthy | 44. Gururaman Venkatesan |
| 13. Aparna Shivaswamy | 45. Hariharan N |
| 14. Archana Balasubramanian | 46. Harish Devarajan |
| 15. Arvind Brahmakal | 47. Hema Ravishankar |
| 16. Ashok Bramhakal | 48. Hema Thiagarajan |
| 17. Ashritha Thirumalai | 49. Jagan Ayyaswami |
| 18. Baaskaran Subramanian | 50. Janakiraman V |
| 19. Bagyalakshmi Chandrasekharan | 51. Jawahar Sabapathy |
| 20. Balasubramanyam BS | 52. Jayasankar N |
| 21. Bhaskar NS | 53. Jayashree |
| 22. Bhuvaneshwari L | 54. Jayashree Nagaraj |
| 23. Bindu Nair | 55. Jayashree Raman |
| 24. Bindu Rajesh | 56. Kalyani Dhandapani |
| 25. Chakrapani V | 57. Kamakhya Vikram |
| 26. Chandra Krishnamoorthy | 58. Kannan |
| 27. Chandramouli Rao | 59. Kavitha Shrinivasan |
| 28. Chandramouli Srinivasan | 60. Kousalya G |
| 29. Deepa Narasimhan | 61. Krishna RS |
| 30. Devika Jawahar | 62. Krishnamurthy MA |
| 31. Ekanath R | 63. Krishnan V |
| 32. Ganesh Ramanathan | 64. Lakshmi |

Our Members (as of Jan 17, 2016) contd.

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 65. Lakshmi Chandrasekaran | 99. Purnima Bhaskar |
| 66. Lakshmi M | 100. Radha Thiagarajan |
| 67. Lakshmi Pradha | 101. Radha Srisailam |
| 68. Lakshmi Raghunath | 102. Raghunath R |
| 69. Lakshminarayana KR | 103. Raghunathan GR |
| 70. Latha Kalimani | 104. Rajagopal N |
| 71. Madhu Govindrajana | 105. Rajalakshmi Sivaramakrishnan |
| 72. Mahesh Narayanan | 106. Rajalekshmi S |
| 73. Mallaiah Setty KS | 107. Rajamani TK |
| 74. Manjula Kasim | 108. Rajashree |
| 75. Meenakshi PS | 109. Rajesh Madhavan |
| 76. Meenakshi Shenoy | 110. Rajesh P |
| 77. Meenakshi. Raghunathan | 111. Raji Venkataraman |
| 78. Mythili Madabhushi | 112. Rajiv KG |
| 79. Naga Ramadevi | 113. Ramakrishnan AK |
| 80. Nageswara Rao K | 114. Ramalal Mitra Saripalli |
| 81. Namakkal Murali Krishnan | 115. Ramamoorthy S |
| 82. Nandini Harish | 116. Ramani J |
| 83. Narasimhan B | 117. Ramesh Balasubramanian |
| 84. Narayanan Iyer | 118. Ramesh Krishnan |
| 85. Naresh Sadasivan | 119. Ramesh Pai |
| 86. Neelacantan B | 120. Ramesh Sistla |
| 87. Nirupama Guruprasad | 121. Ramya Ramprasad |
| 88. Padma Shrinivasan | 122. Ranganathan R |
| 89. Padma Srikanth | 123. Ravi Nagarajan |
| 90. Padma Venkateswaran | 124. Ravindra Balija |
| 91. Padmamalini | 125. Ravishankar Vellal |
| 92. Parvathy V | 126. Renuka N |
| 93. Poornima Rajagopalan | 127. Rohini K |
| 94. Prabha Sudarshan | 128. Rohini Rao |
| 95. Prabha Sunder | 129. Sailaja Baagavatula |
| 96. Pradeep N Rao | 130. Sandhya R |
| 97. Preethi Chandrasekaran | 131. Sangeetha Seetharaman |
| 98. Priyadarshini B | 132. Santosh Narayanan |

Our Members (as of Jan 17, 2016) contd.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 133. Santosh Shaastry | 166. Sumithra Ranganathan |
| 134. Sarma Ballamudi | 167. Sumitra Nitin |
| 135. Saroja Srinidhi | 168. Sundar Balasubramaniam |
| 136. Sathya Kalyanasundaram | 169. Sunder Chakravarti |
| 137. Satyavathi B | 170. Sunitha Parvathy A |
| 138. Savitha Ganesh | 171. Suresh Kalyanaraman |
| 139. Seethalakshmi R | 172. Suryanarayan S |
| 140. Seetharaman V | 173. Susheela J |
| 141. Shanthi Naresh | 174. Swarnagowri Nayak U |
| 142. Sheila Suryanarayan | 175. Swarnam |
| 143. Shrinivasan V | 176. Thankamani R |
| 144. Shubha Dongre | 177. Thiagarajan |
| 145. Shyam Krishnan KG | 178. Uma Hariharan |
| 146. Shylaja B Rajiv | 179. Usha Narasimhan |
| 147. Sirisha K | 180. Vaidehi Pandya |
| 148. Sivaramakrishnan | 181. Vaidyanath K |
| 149. Soumya Ramachandran | 182. Vaidyanathan VV |
| 150. Sridhar Muthrasanallur | 183. Vaitheeswaran S |
| 151. Srikanth Suryanarayanan | 184. Vardhani Sharma |
| 152. Srikanth T | 185. Vasudha Sriraam |
| 153. Srikar Rajamani | 186. Vatsala Rajamani |
| 154. Srinivasan NV | 187. Venkataraghavan P |
| 155. Sriraam G Vijayaraghavan | 188. Venkatesh Sundar |
| 156. Srirajalakshmi | 189. Vidhya Krishnan |
| 157. Sriram K | 190. Vidhyashankar G |
| 158. Subbalakshmi R | 191. Vijayalakshmi S |
| 159. Subhashini Sundar | 192. Viji Kannan |
| 160. Subramanian Sankaran | 193. Vikram Kolar |
| 161. Sudarshan Ranganathan | 194. Vinay Rao |
| 162. Sudha Sundaravaradan | 195. Vinod |
| 163. Sujatha R | 196. Visalakshi R |
| 164. Sujatha Venkataraghavan | 197. Viswajit Iyer |
| 165. Suma Ramamurthy | |

*Ranjani Fine Arts Expresses
its sincere thanks to*



**Ministry of Culture
Government of India**

ಕನ್ನಡ ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಸ್ಕೃತಿ ಇಲಾಖೆ,
ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ



**Dept. of Kannada & Culture
Govt. of Karnataka**

Bengaluru Vasanthotsava

- a grand festival of music and dance

20 organisations - 25 venues - 125 concerts - 500 artistes

14th January to 29th February, 2016



This is the time of the year when every bush and tree gives forth blooms and bursts of colour and fragrance, to the drone of the bees, the cooing of the Koel, and the myriad songs of other birds. No wonder that Lord Krishna, in the Bhagawad Gita, says that among all the seasons he is Vasantha

The air is full of the promise of new beginnings, and so it is with the arts. One with nature, one in spirit, their talent and creativity promises to enthrall one and all. This is an auspicious time, and coincides with both the Purandaradasa and Tyagaraja Aradhana.

Experience a feast of music and dance this spring in Bengaluru, as the city comes alive to celebrate the Spring season – "Bengaluru Vasanthotsava". Singers, instrumentalists and dancers from all over India, of international repute, will be performing in different venues across Bengaluru between January 14 and February 29, 2016

Around 20 organisations will feature over 125 concerts with 500+ artistes performing during this season in 25 different venues. Come, let us celebrate the spirit of music and dance in Bengaluru. And let us extend our hospitality to people outside the city to join us in this celebration. Ranjani Fine Arts is delighted to be part of Bengaluru Vasanthotsava.

Carnatic Music Teachers and Schools

No	Teacher/School	Location	Category	Contact
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, Veena	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	Soumya Ramachandran (Sampradhaya)	Sarjapur Road	Violin, Vocal	ramachna@gmail.com
14	Sumitra Nitin (Natyasruti)	Koramangala	Vocal	nitin.sumitra@gmail.com
15	S L Srimati	HSR Layout	Vocal	On request
16	Vasudevan	Marathahalli	Vocal	ragtal@gmail.com
17	Sai Geetha (Ninada)	HSR layout	Vocal	saigeethanarayanan@gmail. com
18	Hemalatha	HSR Layout	Vocal	camhema2006@yahoo.com
19	Chitra Srikanth (Dhwani)	Koramangala	Vocal	chitra9@yahoo.com
20	Vasudha Sriram (Naadamrutha)	Bellandur	Vocal	Email.vs@gmail.com
21	Radha Srisailam	Bellandur	Veena	srisailam.radha@gmail.com
22	Savita Narayanan & Narayana Iyer (Swaralakshmi)	Sarjapur road	Vocal	savinarayan@gmail.com

Carnatic Music Teachers and Schools

23	Ramya	HSR Layout	Vocal	Mail2ramyak@gmail.com
24	Kavitha	HSR Layout	Vocal	rkavitha67@gmail.com
25	Ramesh Pai	Challaghatta	Violin	pairamesh08@gmail.com
26	Muralidharan MS	HSR Layout	Mridangam	muralidharan.ms1@gmail.com
27	Narendran	Sarjapur Road	Mridangam	narenjn@gmail.com
28	Thankamani R.	Kanakapura Road	Vocal	thankamanyr@rediffmail.com
29	Tara Mohan	AECS Layout	Veena/Vocal	9739801045
30	Salimkumar	HSR Layout	Violin	upon request

Hindustani Music Teachers and Schools

No	Teacher/School	Location	Category	Contact
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
13	Kalaangana	Bellandur	All	kala.angana@gmail.com
14	Chitra Fine Arts	Sarjapur	All	chitra_finearts@yahoo.in
15	Jagadish Airsang	Sarjapur	Tabla	jagadishairsang712@gmail.com
16	Shruti Sharma		Vocal	shrutimusic1114@gmail.com

The year in pictures



Feb 14th, 2015. The Third Annual Festival is inaugurated. Vidwans Mysore Manjunath and Nagaraj light the lamp.



3rd Annual Festival Concert, "Music Majaa", Feb. 14, 2015

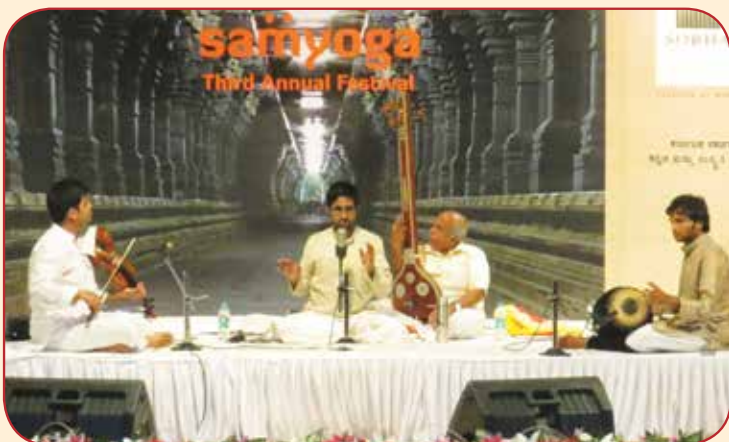
Violin	: Vidwans Mysore Dr. Manjunath and Nagaraj
Mridanga	: Vidwan K. U Jayachandra Rao
Ghata	: Vidwan Giridhar Udupa
Cajón & Morsing	: Vidwan Pramath Kiran

Photographs by S.Subramanian, Geetha Arvind, Shraddha Subramanian. & Raghunath R.



3rd Annual Festival Concert, Feb 14, 2015

Vocal : Pandit Sanjiv Abhyankar
 Harmonium : Pandit Vyasmurti Katti
 Tabla : Pandit Ravindra Yavagal



3rd Annual Festival Concert, Feb 15, 2015

Vocal : Vidwan Abhishek Raghuram
 Violin : Vidwan Mysore V. Srikanth
 Mridanga : Vidwan Anantha R Krishnan



3rd Annual Festival Concert, Feb 15, 2015

Three Generations of Violin

Violin : Vidushi Dr. N. Rajam
 Vidushi Dr. Sangeetha Shankar
 Vidushi Ragini Shankar
 Vidushi Nandini Shankar
 Tabla : Pandit Aditya Kalyanpur



3rd Annual Festival Concert, 2015

Vidwan Mysore Dr. Manjunath with the Gen Next



Vidwan Abhishek Raghuram with his young fans



Team Ranjani Fine Arts -
all smiles after a memorable 3rd Annual Festival



March 2015 : Anniversary Concert

Vocal : Rudrapatnam Brothers Vidwans
R.N.Thyagarajan & R.N.Tharanathan
Violin : Vidushi Nalina Mohan
Mridanga : Vidwan C. Cheluvaraju
Ghata : Vidushi Sukanya Ramgopal



April 2015 : Special 4-hour concert

Vocal : Vidushi Sumithra Vasudev
Violin : Vidushi Charulatha Ramanujam
Mridanga : Vidwan H S Sudhindra
Khanjira : Vidwan Omkar Rao



May 2015 : Mysore Vasudevachar special concert

Vocal	:	Vidwan Bangalore S Shankar
Vocal support:	:	Vidwan S. Ramani
Violin	:	Vidwan Vittal Rangan
Mridanga	:	Vidwan Bangalore V Praveen
Morsing	:	Vidwan Bharadwaj R Sathavalli



June 2015

Vocal	:	Vidushi Sriranjani Santhanagopalan
Violin	:	Vidwan Vittal Rangan
Mridanga	:	Vidwan K U Jayachandra Rao



Independence Day Special

"Sadhana" - A workshop for music students
by Vidwan R.K. Shriramkumar



August 2015

Violin	:	Vidwan R.K.Shriramkumar
Mridanga	:	Vidwan Arun Prakash
Khanjira	:	Vidwan B.S.Purushotham



September 2015

Vocal	:	Vidushis Mambalam Sisters R. Vijayalakshmi & R.Chithra
Violin	:	Vidushi Nalina Mohan
Mridanga	:	Vidwan H.S.Sudhindra
Ghata	:	Vidwan Omkar Rao



September 2015

Rohi Rang - the colour of the desert
Special Sufi Music Concert

Vocal	:	Ustad Mukhtiyar Ali
Dholak	:	Pandit Rakesh Kumar



October 2015

Chitravina	:	Vidwan Chitravina P Ganesh
Violin	:	Vidushi Aditi Krishnaprakash
Mridanga	:	Vidwan K V Prasad



November 2015

Vocal	:	Vidwan T.V. Sankaranarayanan
Violin	:	Vidwan T.H. Subramaniam
Mridanga	:	Vidwan Mannarkoil J. Balaji

Children's Day Special : Nov 14, 2015



A: Carnatic symphony led by Apoorva Krishna;

B,C: Prince Rama Varma and enthusiastic participants at his workshop;

D: Tala Vadya Kacheri choreographed by Vid. Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma

E: Children at magic show; F: Mr.Bean (Prince Rama Varma) performs at RFA



December 2015

Vocal	:	Vidwan Modumudi Sudhakar
Violin	:	Vidwan M. S. Govindaswamy
Mridanga	:	Vidwan R. S. R. Srikanth

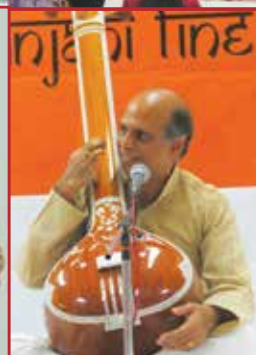


Imparting the Insights

- A workshop for music teachers by
Vidwan R.K. Shriram Kumar August 16, 2015

Utsavas and Memories





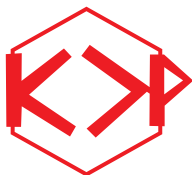
Our Rasikas



Lingering Moments



With Best Compliments from



Kumar Organic Products Limited

Ingredients for us

**INDIA - CORPORATE
HEADQUARTERS**

819/C, 13th Cross, 7th Block,
Near JSS College Circle,
Jayanagar, Bangalore, 560041.
Karnataka, India.

91 - 80 - 41425832/41525960
+ 91 - 80 - 26715688
kop@kumarorganic.net

EUROPE

41 King Street, Luton,
UK. Bedfordshire, LU1 2DW
0044 158 234 5334,
0044 158 272 4986
sales_europe@kumarorganic.net
0044 773 970 9174

USA

Suite M,
ITM corporate center 6 Kilmer Road,
Edison, NJ 08817
732 662 2654, 201 604 6727
sales_na@kumarorganic.net

SINGAPORE OFFICE

The Octagon 105,
Cecil Street, #07-01 -
Centennial Business Centre
Singapore 069534,
00 65 6223 1321, 00 65 6532 0198
kumar_singapore@kumarorganic.net

www.kumarorganic.net

"*Bhakti*" - let us journey back to where we belong

Arvind Brahmakal

Can each of us think of the last time we went into a trance after listening to a *Bharatiya Sangeetha* concert? A state of mind so meditative? A longing to go back to the same artiste's concert even if the same songs or *ragas* are rendered again. Well, such instances have become few and far between - for me.

This got me thinking whether it is a problem with me. With a fond hope that this would be the reason, I raised this question with several artistes, connoisseurs and listeners. The result was no different. With great dissatisfaction, the enquiry continued. Are there too many concerts these days? Yes - but, with our lifestyle and competing demands for our mind-space, the number of concerts per person might have reduced. Has the attention span reduced? Certainly. But, the concert duration has also reduced from several hours to 2 hours these days. Quality of concerts? Well, there is much variety being offered these days. Meticulous concert planning - no repeat of songs, various composers, rare and new *ragas*, range of *talas*, multiple composition types, massive emphasis on mathematical acumen... the list goes on.

So, what is the challenge?

We have heard learned people, of present and past, unequivocally say that *Bharatiya Sangeetha* is not mere entertainment. It is meant to elevate the consciousness - of the artiste and the audience alike. It is about attaining oneness with the form / the formless. It is meditation. The great saint composer, Tyagaraja has elucidated this in several of his compositions about *nadopasana*. He questions sharply in the *dhanyasi* raga masterpiece "*sangeetha gnanamu*" "Can music knowledge bereft of *bhakti* lead one into the right path?" If the learned people have said this consistently over time, could there be some truth in this? - a question for all of us to ponder upon.

Let us question what is *bhakti* and how does this manifest itself in a performance. *Bhakti* can be loosely translated as an intense longing or love for the divine. All concerts have songs that have been composed by great saints and which have lived through time. Think of this too - songs of the latest movie last only till the next catchy tune comes our way! It is incredible that songs composed by Tyagaraja, Purandara Dasa, Bhadrachala Ramadas, Sadashiva Brahmendra, Tulasidas, Kabir, Meera Bai and many others are still the most sought after even after many centuries. These saints looked at music beyond simple entertainment. There was, at the core, a fondness, a deep love for the divine. This love manifested through words that were sung.

Yes, there was lyrical and musical brilliance - but both these emanated from intense *bhakti*. The outcome was a melodious outpouring of nectar. Very similar to a fountain where water gushes out or simply when a flower opens its petals. The fullness of the devotion manifested into something beautiful and timeless. This can be amply seen in songs where these saints talk freely with their '*ishta devata*'. The various emotions of this *bhakti* are there for all to see and experience. A simple lifestyle, a yearning for the divine, excellence in poetry and music and single minded life pursuit were key attributes of the life they led - *nada aikya* !

A performer is duty-bound to do justice to the songs composed by such greats. Effort has to be made by the artiste to get a deep understanding of a) the mood of the composer b) the expression of this through words and c) how these words flowed musically. It is only with such a visualisation that a good artiste would succeed in providing a "lift" to his performance - to a level beyond entertainment. In the type of songs we are discussing, the focal point has been the Hindu gods. So, an artiste needs to have this connect with the God principle to appreciate the mood. What is essential for the artiste is a spiritual connect with a Higher Entity - which may or may not have form, something that fills the heart with love towards all. A good understanding of poetry, and not just meaning of the words, is key to the artiste's expression. Proficiency has to be achieved in music and finally, the performer has to develop the ability to comprehend the linkage between *bhava*, *sahitya* and *sangeetha*. A perfect combination of all of these significantly enhances the melody - remember Bharata Ratna M S Subbulakshmi !

Lately, we keep hearing our music is secular. It is interesting to watch this trend and observe certain patterns of intent. I think this concept is raising questions in the minds of young artistes whether rendering songs in praise of Hindu Gods is secular. There appears to be an orientation towards more of *raga* and *swara* rendition and usage of symbolic words to make our music perceivably appealable to people of various faiths - and worse still, to convince Hindus ! Like *yoga* and *ayurveda*, this music is there for humankind to take benefit from. Without the deep connect and love for the divine, how can an artiste appreciate the *bhava* of the composition ? Secularism is not a synonym for being an atheist or for being irreligious. It should not constrain one from following his faith in private and more importantly, as a social group, in public. This trend has been initiated by certain artistes because they are either non believers or they feel this is the way to take music to the masses ; and by Companies who do not consider *Bharatiya Sangeetha* as secular and hence, do not sponsor programs. Atheist artistes might introspect and decide to offer "art music" concerts where songs can probably be about social issues and the like - else, simply render *raga* and *swaras* with no compositions at all. *Bhakti* is without boundaries of caste - hence, an artiste probably needs to dive deeper into *bhakti* if he wants

to propagate this art form to the masses and not the other way around. We need to establish think tanks and pressure groups to impress upon Companies that preserving and promoting culture in the land where they earn profits is equally important as supporting education, healthcare, etc. It is time for us to move away from this hypocrisy and embrace the true essence of our music

There is an argument that this music form has to be more about *kalpana* (creativity) than *kalpita* (pre-written). It is important to note that *kalpana* has been hugely enhanced only because of *kalpita* - i.e. compositions of the great saints. When there are so many rich compositions, let us take this discussion to the other side. Reverse the trend ! In a concert, pack more number of such compositions and limit the *kalpana* element. The role of *kalpana* should be viewed as primarily to embellish the compositions and not for it to stand out as a solo piece. Is it not true that an artiste gets maximum applause when he renders the 'lighter' songs towards the end of the concert. For those *kalpana* fans, have 'art music' concerts ! "Popular music" is what our music was and along the way, we appear to have lost the direction. This principle was adequately demonstrated by these great saints who took this musical form to the masses and did not restrict it as a 'fine art' to be enjoyed by a limited elite.

Another trend that one can see today is the call for expanded repertoire by rendering songs that are not in that higher league and in *ragas* that are not *jana-ranjaka*. As audience, we should demand largely popular songs in often heard *ragas* to be performed. Liken this to 'hit songs' in a live show ! These songs and *ragas* have become popular for a reason - that great saints composed them and there is an inherent power in them. Such songs and *ragas* have had a natural connect with the artistes and the listeners, over time. This, however, should not be viewed as an attempt to constrain innovation or new compositions. A very strict filter needs to be applied by the artiste to bring on only compositions that truly are in that league. This will help raise the quality bar on the new age composers. As for exposition of rare *ragas*, yes, but in a limited measure. If a rare *raga* gets accepted by the audience over a period of time, it can then be brought to the mainstream. Quality over quantity should be the *mantra*.

Music organisations have a key and active role to play in protecting and preserving this tradition. Create an aesthetic temple like ambience for concerts. Encourage the artistes to render popular compositions largely of great saints. Nudge the artistes to stick to core set of *jana-ranjaka ragas* for the most part. Have programs linked to Hindu festivals to enhance the devotional fervour. Develop 'outreach' programs to take this form to the people than passively waiting for people to show up at concerts. Take music to the masses. Encourage members / audiences to be more vocal about these topics in different media. Develop innovate formats to connect the GenNext to this art form. Convert passive listening to active participation by

the audience - example, the last 2 songs in the performance could have the audience repeat the lines in the song, permit claps through the song, etc

Government has been supporting artistes and music organisations in promotion of arts and culture. The parameters for approving grants needs to be re-looked. The aim has to be to fulfill Mahatma Gandhiji's dream of our society becoming a "*Rama Rajya*". The Government can orient maximum funds towards an ecosystem that promotes movement in this direction.

In conclusion, there is a need for something that helps us understand the larger purpose of life. Learned people have said our music is the easiest vehicle available for such attainment. To sustain and perpetuate this medium is our collective responsibility. We need to view "*Bharatiya Sangeetha*" as a means towards a purposeful end and not an end in itself. Let us move back to where we really belong - to the source i.e. "*Bhakti*".

(Arvind Brahmakal is a founder trustee of Ranjani Fine Arts.)

With Best Compliments from

**Swarsangeet School of
Hindustani Music**

Director : **Chandramouli Rao**

Villa 422, Adarsh Palm Retreat

Devarabeesanahalli, Bangalore - 560 103

Phone : 9880855635

Email : chandramouli.rao1@gmail.com

“Kurai Ondrumey Illai”

Vidushi Neela Ramgopal in conversation with **P.Venkataramahavan** and **Santosh Narayanan** of *Ranjani Fine Arts*

The first thing that strikes us when we enter Sangita Kala Acharya Vidushi Neela Ramgopal's home is the sheer energy and enthusiasm that she exudes, as she welcomes us in with a warm smile. It is a Sunday morning, and perhaps the only time of the week that the 80-year Neela mami, as she is affectionately known to all, is not busy teaching. Over the course of a fascinating hour-long conversation, she proceeds to share her views on teaching and learning music, as she looks back over a career spanning close to six decades.



Inaugurating Ranjani Fine Arts' first
Guru Utsava, August 2013

“I never thought of becoming a professional musician, let alone a teacher. I was just a housewife with two children and after formally learning music in my 20s, I used to sing a lot. When I was 35, an Iyengar *mami*, who was my neighbor, suggested that I also start teaching. Unlike today, it was rare to find children with a sense of music those days, and I started off with my first student – a girl who wasn't particularly good at music. But teaching was completely new for me too, and I persevered with it. Soon, the word spread, and there were many more students lining up for lessons. And here I am today, with classes from 8am to 9.30pm on weekdays, with breaks only for meals!”

Today, the tech-savvy Neela mami also has many students outside Bangalore learning over Skype sessions. However, she says “It is at most 80% of the real learning experience. Though there is so much access to music via Skype and recordings, it is impossible to capture the nuances of music through these media. There is nothing like live learning. You may learn from a recording and may even end up sounding exactly the same, but your music will have nothing in it. One of my students from London visited me recently, and after class, she said that Skype was not even close to the live experience.” Dismissive of aids borrowed from western music like the metronome, she says, “Our *taalam* may go a bit faster or slower in places, but there is a certain natural feel to it which gives us satisfaction. But if you sing with a metronome, you will end up sounding like a machine.”

At a recent panel discussion in Bengaluru where she was the eldest participant, Neela mami took the entire audience and even moderator T. M. Krishna by surprise when she broke the stereotype of the veteran musician lamenting the loss of the “good old days” by emphatically declaring that Carnatic music was in much better shape today than it was several decades ago. Very impressed with the younger generation of

“There was another student who showed great promise and could have perhaps become another Sanjay Subrahmanyam, but it’s a great pity that he stopped his music classes when he reached the 11th grade. Continuity of learning is extremely important.”

musicians today, particularly those in Chennai, she remarks “Look at the likes of Ramakrishnan Murthy, Sandeep Narayanan and Bharat Sundar – they not only know how to sing well, but are so well versed in theory and the art of performing a *kutcheri*. These young musicians don’t just study music – they simply immerse themselves in it. Sri P. S. Narayanaswamy has so many

excellent students who have gone on to win several awards.”

She continues, “In the days of *gurukula-vasam*, when students would live and learn with the guru, they would just sing whatever their guru had taught them. Yesteryear’s artistes were practical musicians, and not musicologists. In fact, when someone remarked to Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer that he detected a *nishadam* in his *Mohanam* rendition, he supposedly retorted ‘So what? Didn’t your ear find it pleasing?’ But today’s young musicians in Chennai are different - though they know theory and *kanakku* (mathematical patterns), they don’t let that come in the way of *bhaavam*. And the young teachers of today like T. M. Krishna and Sanjay Subrahmanyam don’t just teach music, but also emphasize the *sahityam* and its meaning.” She stresses that one needs to be full-time into music to really excel in it. “Unfortunately, many of my students take up a day job in Bangalore’s IT industry. Though many have become A-Grade artistes, Sumitra Nitin is perhaps my only student who has really given complete attention to music and won significant awards. There was another student who showed great promise and could have perhaps become another Sanjay Subrahmanyam, but it’s a great pity that he stopped his music classes when he reached the 11th grade. Continuity of learning is extremely important.”

“Take your children to as many concerts as possible, especially when they are young.”

The practice methodology which Neela mami recommends is simple and has remained unchanged over the years. “*Aakaarasadhanam* (singing with just vowels) in the morning. And sing the songs that you have learnt for a minimum of two to three hours a day. This is what I would do everyday after my children went to school.” Dismissive of any special meaning to the term



At Ranjani Fine Arts' workshop on Rare Kritis of Tyagaraja, August 2013

“voice culture”, she says, “there is no magic called voice culture – it is only practice and more practice. And you need to practice in three speeds since you need speed for a concert”. She adds with a chuckle, “Unless you can sing like M.D. Ramanathan, which no one can!”

Neela mami has some simple advice for parents: “Take your children to as many concerts as possible, especially when they are young.” She mentions a slogan “Bring your children”, which is doing the rounds in Chennai now. “Look at Ranjani-Gayatri and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, for example. They simply grew up in an atmosphere of music. So I tell parents – at least till your children reach 11th grade, take them to concerts. Even if they don’t become professional musicians, at least they will learn to enjoy the music,” she says.

“I firmly believe that in the end, we all get what we justly deserve – no more, no less.”

When asked what she considers her most significant achievement, she mentions her recording of the 72 *melakarta* ragas, complete with *alapana*, *kriti*, *neraval* and *swaras* for each raga. She also cherishes the title of *Sangita Kala Acharaya* which she received from the Madras Music Academy in 2012.

Neela mami has overcome many obstacles in life, but considers her battle with cancer to be the biggest of them all. “I was bedridden in the hospital, when I got a request to perform a National Programme on All India Radio and it was so painful to turn that request down,” she recalls. She went on to overcome cancer and subsequently perform at the National Programme.

A teacher of not just music but an overwhelmingly positive attitude to life, she concludes our conversation with a smile, and says “I firmly believe that in the end, we all get what we justly deserve – no more, no less. Looking back over all these years, I am very happy now. *Kurai ondrumey illai!* (I have no regrets)”

Indian music with therapeutic perspective

Dr. Meenakshi Ravi

Introduction

Human life is an evolution from birth to death where in the process of growth takes place at various stages of life with its own uniqueness and speciality. From each of these phases of childhood, adolescence, adulthood through middle age and old age, a human being performs his stipulated roles and finds meaning.

To lead a satisfying, useful and joyful life, varied components such as secured financial stability, healthy family ties, social relationships and interactions, spiritual thinking and practices are essential. Of course, a state of satisfaction is very much relative and varies from individual to individual. But there can be a limit in seeking joy and solace through material pursuits and turn inward seeking eternal joy. In order to augment the joy and happiness, make one's life more pleasing, interesting and blissful, there are various fine arts bestowed upon human beings among which music, dance, drawing, painting and sculpting are the well-known ones. Fine arts are the most beautiful flowers, which blossom from the creativity of a human being. They become the most powerful media to express emotions in a highly constructive and creative way.

Defining music

Among all fine arts, music occupies a predominant position. Melody embedded with words, harmony and rhythm that emanates joy is music. A comprehensive definition of music can be—music is melody which is universal and spiritual, bringing out total involvement of one's self with vibrations that lead to calmness. According to the great Carnatic musician Dr. R. K. Srikantan, "Music is a culmination of the arts. It is a more accurate and intimate mirror of the travails and victories of the lone human soul than any other fine art. Music is considered to be the highest because of its mystical property of elevating our emotions to a very high plane of being, purifying them and thereby recreating our nature". Music can also be defined as the actualization of the possibility of any sound a human being experiences in his body—that is to say, with his mind, feelings, senses, will and metabolism.

Special attributes of Indian music

Human life cannot be imagined without music. It is an integral part of not only human life but also other living creatures such as plants and animals too. In India, a human being's association with music starts right from the mother's womb. In all auspicious and inauspicious occasions, music is a very much a part. Indian music has two branches, Carnatic and Hindustani

forms (South Indian and North Indian). It has thousands of *ragas*/tunes which are based upon nine human emotions (*Navarasa*). All *ragas* are basically beautiful permutations and combinations of the seven notes (*swaras*). These combinations can evoke serenity of mind, joy, stimulate energy and bring inner silence and a blissful state. When a musician plays/sings a tune which complete involvement, it stirs the same feeling for the listener too. This experience is just wonderful where in both artists and the audience forget themselves completely and their level of joyful ecstasy is unexplainable. It is a meditative state. Basically, music excels the boundary of body, mind and intellect and directly reaches/touches the human soul. This is the most important reason for Indian music to be an excellent and powerful tool for the promotion and maintenance of the holistic self of an individual.

The depth of Indian music, with special reference to Carnatic music, explores the three dimensions of holistic health. (i) Music is a promoter of mental health and a curative tool (ii) It is a promoter of social and moral values (iii) It is an excellent medium for spiritual growth - *Nada Yoga*. The great composers of Indian music highlight these elements in their compositions:

“Those who desire perfection in Yoga may go for Nada Meditation, having abandoned all thoughts and with a calm mind”. (Shankaracharya-Yogataravali)

“*Shanthamuleka ... Saukhyamuledu*” (there is no peace without calmness of mind- Saint Thyagaraja)

“*Nadaloludaibrahmanandamondavemanasa*” (oh mind become one with *nada* and achieve salvation - Saint Thyagaraja)

“*Raga sudharasa panamu jesirajillavemanasa*”

“*Yaga yoga thyagabhogapalamosange*”

“*Nadonkaraswaravidulajeevanmuktulan*”

Yaga (sacred ritual), *Yoga* (yogic practices), *Thyaga* (sacrifice) are the channels to reach the Creator. The benefits that can be reaped by executing these spiritual practices can also be reaped by realizing the secrets of seven notes (*sapthaswaras*) which take its origin from ‘*omkara*’ or ‘*pranavanada*’. This is the easiest way to experience “liberation in life” (*jeevanmukthi*) or liberation when one is alive. The above excerpts are from the famous compositions of Saint Thyagaraja which highlight the therapeutic and spiritual essence of Carnatic Music.

What is music therapy?

Music therapy is a supplementary, non-invasive alternative therapy which caters to the needs of individuals with physical, psychological, social and behavioral problems and challenges. It can also be used to maintain and

enhance the psychological well-being of normal and healthy individuals. It is an interpersonal process in which a trained music therapist uses music and all of its facets- physical, emotional, mental, social, aesthetic and spiritual- to help his clients improve or maintain their health. It helps clients improve their health across various domains (e.g., cognitive functioning motor skills, emotional and affective development, behavioral and social skills and quality of life) by using music experiences (e.g., creative improvisation, singing, composing, listening to music, physical movements to music) to achieve treatment, goals and objectives.

Why music therapy is considered as a therapeutic tool/measure?

Music has an intense impact on the physical and psychological health process of an individual.

Music sprouts creative and constructive feelings and thoughts.

Sound travels faster than water and air, stimulates the cells in the body because of which immunity (resistance to endure ill health) in the body improves. A balance in the pulse rate, breathing and blood circulation evolves.

Music balances the right and left brain thereby bringing an equilibrium between an individual's feelings, spiritual thoughts, logical, analytical and scientific reasoning.

Music slows down the tempo of the fast thought-process thus bringing calmness and tranquility. Singing or listening to music increases the inner strength of the self.

Music therapy releases molecules called "endorphins" in the brain which produces happiness in the mind.

This process shifts the tensed, anxious mind to a completely restful/peaceful and calm state. This is called a shift from 'beta' to 'alpha' – state of mind. The ultimate state of mental relaxation is 'Delta' which can also experienced by Music therapy. The total relaxation increases the energy level of an individual (increase in pranic force)

Through music therapy, it is realized that an individual gains a very calm, peaceful state of mind. With this he or she becomes aware of the negative and unnecessary thoughts which disturb the mind. This awareness enables objectivity and drive towards constructive and positive feelings, thoughts and action. Improvement in physical and psychological health is invariably assured.

Who can avail music therapy?

Even though any person may avail music therapy, individuals who have problems pertaining to physical, psychological, social health domain are aimed at.

Benefits of music therapy

Since music has healing qualities, one can forget pain and learn to endure the pain. Long term music therapy improves resistance/ immunity in the body. There are no side effects in music therapy. Music therapy is highly effective in cases of hyperactivity, autism, cerebral palsy and such health challenges. Since music brings calmness, hyperactivity comes down and in turn, the reality focus and eye-to-eye contact improve. Improvement in memory power and social interactions are significant points to be noted.

Music therapy brings happiness and improves self esteem and confidence for patients who suffer from anxiety, depression, insomnia and schizophrenia. It clears the emotional blocks. It is also said that music functions on one plane to enhance self-awareness and on another to understand our relationships with others and perceive lacunae within our psyche. This promotes positive thinking and growth. Music affects the brain at different levels. Our moods change with different kinds of music and at a deeper level, its effect is similar to that of meditation. When we listen to soul-stirring music we feel good which is very much like what we feel during deep meditation. This is the principle of equivalence. For individuals with neurological muscular problems, music therapy through playing instruments (in accordance to their needs) brings coordination in neurological and muscular functioning.

When and where should music therapy treatment be taken?

Music therapy treatment can be viewed from two dimensions. Healthy individuals can avail music therapy services to maintain, protect and improve their physical, psychological, social and spiritual health. Specialized music therapy services for this purpose need to be made available. Also, a wide publicity should be given about the availability of such services. Individuals with health problems should avail music therapy services especially when the disease is at a primary stage. Along with other medical treatment, if music therapy is taken for a long time, a patient can definitely be cured or even at the least endure with increased immunity.

Music therapy treatment should be part of a team work which comprises of medical doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, neurologists, professional counselors/social workers and other experts. It has to be planned according to the needs of the client/patient. Unfortunately in India, even awareness about music therapy treatment is in an infant stage. The depth, diversity and richness of Indian music are incomparable. It needs exploration in depth to adapt to a treatment purpose. Music therapy should become an integral part of medical, psychiatric, neurological and social treatment services.

Scientific research should be conducted in music therapy, to bring about permanent, universally replicable treatment models. Emotional quotient of Indian tunes needs to be measured in a scientific way. In order to

conduct these experiments scientifically, certain medical equipment are highly essential. Electro encephalograms, positron emission tomography, centograph, kerlian camera, galvanic skin resistance are some of the equipments needed to conduct scientific research on music therapy. And the results obtained would be very useful with scientific validity and application.

(Dr. Meenakshi Ravi, M.A.(music) MsW, PhD, is a music therapist and Executive Director of Meera Center or music therapy, education and research, Bangalore.)

HINDUSTANI TALAVADYA TABLA COACHING

Jagdish Aairsang (Tabala Vidwat)

Tabla classes conducted at

Shriram Smrithi
CC-212, Central Block
Sarjapur-Attibele Road
Bangalore

Sobha Apartments
Green Glen Layout
Outer Ring Road, Bellandur
Bangalore



contact
9448604008
9483784008



Ranjani Fine Arts has created an atmosphere to encourage talent in and around Bellandur. It provides a wonderful platform for artistes and for Gurus and sishyas to connect, and has created a sense of belonging with the place and people around us.

- Jagdish Aairsang

Ramani Samaanam Evaru

Nandini Harish

This article was originally published in the October 2013 edition of Nadavani, Ranjani Fine Arts' newsletter, on the occasion of Dr. Ramani's 79th birthday. We reprint this unmodified, as a tribute to the late flute maestro and his legacy, which lives on.



It was a pleasant evening in the summer of 1983. Srinivasa Shastri hall in Mylapore, Madras was packed with musicians, music lovers, enthusiastic children and proud parents. Young boys and girls, each brandishing a bamboo flute in their hands, nervously awaited their turn to perform in front of an august audience. The teacher who had trained these youngsters waited even more anxiously to see his hard work attaining fruition. The atmosphere was charged with vibrant energy and nervous anticipation. When the budding musicians started playing, the hall was resonating with melodies from the bamboo and listeners were touched by the music and swayed by the magic in the air.

"Ramani's Academy of Flute" was born in the presence of well wishers and to the tumultuous applause of an appreciative audience. This was only the beginning of a very long, colourful and continuing journey... The man behind the vision was none other than the flute maestro Dr N. Ramani. His dream was to nurture musicians and music lovers and fill the world with soulful music that would transport one and all to divine heights.

Born in 1934 in Thiruvavarur, a town in South India where many a saint, poet and musician has derived inspiration to sing in praise of the deity, young Ramani grew up in an atmosphere steeped in rich musical tradition and was initiated into the art of playing the flute at the tender age of five. His

grandfather Sri Aazhiyur Narayanaswami Iyer, a well known flautist was his first Guru. Subsequently, he trained under his uncle Sri T.R.Mahalingam, the celebrated flautist. Raga bhava and control over laya seemed to come to him effortlessly. He gave his first concert at the age of eight in the holy shrine of Sikhil Singaravelan and from then on there has been no looking back.

Dr Ramani has done considerable research in the methodology of playing the bamboo flute and developed many an innovative blowing and fingering technique. He took the initiative to shift from the Shruthi 5 flute which was used traditionally for playing Carnatic music to playing on a 2.5 Sruthi flute. He was also the first flautist to introduce the long bass flute in a Carnatic music concert so as to enable better reach in the lower octaves. The first flute Jugalbandhi of Carnatic and Hindusthani music featured Shri N.Ramani and Shri Harisprasad Chaurasia. Many more Jugalbandhi concerts with other noted Hindusthani and Western music artistes too have come Dr Ramani's way . Another noteworthy milestone in his brilliant music career is the Venu - Veena - Violin concerts which he played alongside Shri R. Venkataraman on the Veena and Shri Lalgudi Jayaraman on the Violin. In spite of so many 'firsts' and innovations to his credit, the creative genius in him keeps craving more and more growth and fine tuning.

Shri Ramani's popularity as a flute artiste has grown far and wide . His fame has spread well beyond Indian shores. Laurels and felicitations continue to flow and yet, even prestigious titles like "Sangeetha Kalanidhi" and "Padmashree" sit lightly on his head and have not appeased his insatiable appetite for learning.

Ramani Sir's gigantic stature as an artiste of international repute however contrasts dramatically with his humility and simplicity as a person. His simple needs, tastes and contentment over acquisition of material wealth can be as overwhelming as his music. I recall an occasion when Ramani Sir was staying at my place in Bangalore. Since he is a connoisseur of food and also one who is very open to trying new recipes, I was all set to present my culinary skills in its fullest glory during his visit. Unfortunately, Ramani Sir had developed a throat infection at that time and requested for food in liquid form. Since I was given only ten minutes to put this meal together, my imagination did not stretch beyond Ragi porridge with buttermilk and chilli seasoning and had my own reservations about serving him such a simple meal. But Ramani Sir seemed to relish this meal very much, was supremely vocal in his appreciation and kept asking me why I hadn't introduced him to such a good recipe sooner. He also insisted on having Ragi porridge on the menu during every subsequent visit of his. However, only when Ramani Sir's wife Kamakshi mami called me the next day to ask for the recipe did I actually believe that his enjoyment of this simple meal had been genuine and not put on just to please me.

Another admirable trait of Ramani Sir's is his respect for every form of learning, skill or art. He truly stands out in his ability to appreciate all artists and every art form. Being passionate about both art and music myself, I have painted a few canvasses on music based themes and have had the privilege of having Ramani Sir provide insightful feedback on those art works. I have found him to be objective in his views, abundant in his praise and generous in sharing his own deep insights on music with me. Even as I would be trying hard to comprehend some of his profound thoughts on music, the humble person that he is, he will not hesitate to ask me for suggestions on clothes for him to wear to a concert since he believed that I had an eye for colour schemes and respected my views on the same.

'Ramani Sir' or 'Ramani mama' as he is affectionately called by his disciples is the most approachable Guru. Fortunate indeed are students of his, for they learn a lot more than only music or flute playing techniques from him. To him, the discipline of practise, commitment, passion, and the spirit of never giving up reign supreme. He gives his students the freedom to innovate and improvise and encourages them to develop their own style without compromising on the chastity of music.

At "Ramani's Academy of Flute", he creates opportunities for students to ascend the concert platform. These concerts help students develop confidence in themselves and also to work as teams. To motivate students further, he requests senior artistes who share his passion for encouraging budding talent to be co-artistes in the RAF concerts. While some of these experiences can seem intimidating to a young student, it is such opportunities created by Ramani Sir which help his students hone their musical skills and raise the bar for themselves. An experience which is vividly etched in my memory is one when Ramani Sir asked me to share the stage with him in a 'Five Flutes' concert. I was thoroughly intimidated by the very idea and remained speechless for a while. To bring me out of shock and evoke a response from me, Ramani Sir told me that I didn't have to worry this much since he wasn't such a bad flautist after all. His ready wit, spontaneity and sense of humour however brought only a smile to my lips and didn't help me much in tiding over my intimidation. Till today, the Five flutes concert with Ramani Sir remains for me a sacred experience that I will cherish for life.

For all the practise discipline, hard work, sincerity, passion and commitment that Ramani Sir inspired and instilled in his students, he would never chastise anyone in the presence of others. While he would openly take pride in their achievements, he will gently point out their shortcomings in private only.

I recall an occasion when I had been to a concert of his following which Ramani Sir and the co-artistes were to come to my place for dinner. When some of the organisers and co-artistes realised that I would be driving

the car, they offered to drive Ramani Sir to my place since I was not an experienced driver and did not obviously inspire enough confidence in them! Ramani Sir however refused their offer, claimed that he knew that I was a safe driver and got into my car rather valiantly. I was very grateful to him for the confidence reposed in me. On the drive home which fortunately turned out to be a smooth one, I asked Ramani Sir how come he had confidence in my driving even before experiencing it. His response was that while he did not know much about my driving skills, what he did know for sure was that I would never put him at risk. I was indeed very touched on hearing this and just as I was swelling with pride over his trust in me, he smoothly added that since he also knew that I had not been dedicating much time to my music practise lately, he reckoned that I must have been focusing on practising driving. Ramani Sir had hit the nail on the head and driven the point home very beautifully indeed !

One other endearing facet of Ramani Sir's personality is his inclusive nature. He makes his students feel like an integral part of his family. Built on this foundation of a nurturing culture, "Ramani's Academy of flute" has strengthened its roots, spread its branches and carries with it the spirit of the maestro. This teacher's thirst for knowledge, need for perfection and continuous drive for improvement is infectious. His strength of purpose, dedication and whole hearted commitment to the cause has not only given form and shape to his vision but also helped it blossom and bear fruit. The Guru has lit the torch, kindled the spirit of learning and nurtured many a torch bearer who will help the music flow on...

(Nandini Harish is a former Trustee of Ranjani Fine Arts. She is also the co-founder of 'Amogh', an NGO that enables deserving individuals in society fulfil their aspirations. She works from her studio 'Artma' and also plays Carnatic classical music on the flute. She can be reached at nandinharish@gmail.com)

Bowing to Tradition

A Conversation with Vidwan R.K.Shriramkumar

Over the past four years, Ranjani Fine Arts has had the privilege of hosting and listening to eminent violinist and scholar **Vidwan R.K. Shriramkumar** in multiple roles – as accompanist, soloist and Guru. Despite his busy schedule at the January 2016 Tiruvaikyaru Tyagarajasvami Aradhana, he graciously spared time for a phone interview with **Santosh Narayanan** and **P. Venkataraghavan** of RFA. Excerpts from the conversation:



Let's start with a basic question. Was there typically instrumental accompaniment to Carnatic vocal concerts in the past? How did violin get established as the accompaniment for Carnatic music?

Early on, the vina or sometimes the flute was used as accompaniment for Carnatic vocal music. When the Dikshitar family moved to Manali, Balusvami Dikshitar, who was the brother of Sri Muttusvami Dikshitar, learnt to play the violin after listening to the British East India Company band there. He probably changed the tuning of the violin and adapted the instrument to suit the *gamakas* of Carnatic music. Vadivelu (of the Tanjore Quartet, in Maharaja Svati Tirunal's court) and Walajapet Krishnasvami Bhagavatar, the son of Walajapet Venkataramana Bhagavatar and the disciple of Sri Tyagarajasvami were the other pioneers who played the violin and were instrumental in bringing it on to the carnatic concert stage. Due to the continuity of its tone, the violin was able to produce long *karvais*, and adapt well to the tone of a vocalist's voice. And it soon established itself as the mainstay in Carnatic concerts.

Carnatic music is predominantly vocal based. Unless a listener has previously heard a particular composition sung by a vocalist, it is difficult for him or her to relate to the same when it is played on an instrument. How do you overcome this challenge when you perform as a violin soloist?

That's right - in Carnatic music, unlike Western music, we don't have separate pieces for instruments. There exists two schools of thought in instrumental music – one is an instrumental oriented *bani* that highlights the possibilities of exploring the instrument to its full extent. The other is a vocal oriented *bani* that primarily is focused to replicate a *gayaki* or vocalized version on the instrument.



My personal choice has always been the vocal *bani*, in which we play a composition exactly the way it is sung. All my gurus have groomed me to reproduce music on the violin as we sing. I have formally learnt vocal music and thus in my solo concerts, when I play a song on the violin, I always sing along with it internally so as to try bringing about an experience of hearing the composition as it is sung. Since Carnatic

music is predominantly vocal based, I strongly feel all Carnatic music instrumentalists must learn vocal music, at least to appreciate the nuances of *raga*, *sahitya* and *bhava*. Only then can the different shades of any composition can be brought out, otherwise it will be quite monotonous. This approach is very essential for all violin accompanists. For instance, the vocalist can have a particular *gamaka* contour, which the violinist needs to replicate exactly, else the whole listening experience is marred.

Yes, it is indeed a challenge to play new or unknown compositions in a violin solo concert. I feel that the instrumentalist can announce a brief detail about the composition and take utmost care to play it in an authentic manner, as is the case with any other composition. The audience also has a responsibility to be open to listening to unheard compositions. They can perhaps follow this up by finding out more by listening to the vocal version later.

What other challenges do you face as an accompanist?

Most often, vocalists do not plan a concert and are quite extemporaneous, so one must be ready for anything on stage while accompanying them. As an accompanist, one should have very good anticipation and intuition, especially while playing uncommon ragas or compositions, pay attention to the various details like the *gamaka* patterns, *niraval*, *svara* developments etc. Often, each *sangati* is sung twice, so that it is registered in the minds of the listener, and this also helps the violin accompanist to replicate the same. There are also some vocalists who plan a concert in advance, and in this case, there needs to be perfect communication between the vocalist and accompanists. As an accompanist we have to put in all our efforts to observe, embellish and go along with the music of the vocalist, thus enabling an enjoyable experience of the concert.

Violin accompaniment provides the challenge and opportunity to reinvent oneself on stage, learn from and adapt to different vocalists' *banis* and creativity. There is not a moment of respite on stage - active listening and reproduction of music is a must!

In your workshops, you often talk about the “accompanist’s dharma”...

The accompanist’s *dharma*, or duty, is to offer complete and sincere involvement to the wholesome experience of a concert. While being in sync with the vocalist, the accompanist should also showcase his creativity as well. The accompanists and the vocalist should not travel in different directions. There should be a happy sharing of music with all the artists on stage, good sense of proportion in every aspect, excellent camaraderie with each artiste shedding his or her ego. Only then will the concert will be a heartwarming experience.

In today’s concerts, we typically have the vocalist’s alapana, followed by the violin alapana. Is there any significant value add in the same? Can this be done differently - what’s your opinion?

I am perfectly fine with this format. For example, if the vocalist sings an *alapana* in *Shankarabharanam*, and this is followed by the violinist’s version of the same, we are perfectly conditioned to listen to it and enjoy it. Also, the aural experience of listening to the same raga in two different sound bytes – vocal and violin is different and enjoyable. Sometimes, the phrases the violinist plays can kindle new ideas in the vocalist’s mind too. There are very many possibilities of presenting a raga *alapana* between a vocalist and a violinist. One such way is where they can share different facets, themes and phrasings of the *alapana* between them, one after the other, instead of two separate *alapanas*. But it is undeniably essential that the integrity of the music is always preserved and held high in whatever is being presented.

You are known for your strict adherence to tradition, yet you are open to changes in the concert format too. What changes do you think are possible – by performers, teachers or organizers?

I am a strong traditionalist, and I do not find anything wrong or uninteresting in what has been handed down by great musicians over the years. That said, however, every musician should go through a lot of introspection. But this has to be done standing on a firm tradition, with respect to *parampara*. Every change or innovation must be well thought through, and one’s ego should take a backseat. We have to question and scrutinize, but this has to be done with integrity, humility and respect to tradition.

The concert format that has come to stay is undoubtedly successful and enjoyable. Nevertheless, an objective inquiry leads us to multiple questions. For instance, the grand *Viriboni varnam* or the *Kamas varnam* of Subbarama Dikshitar are long and elaborate compositions and cannot be written off as mere warm-up pieces. Thus it leads to a question – Do such compositions trigger the musician to explore them with *manodharma* and present them as a central piece in a concert? The answer is surely a yes. But only if presented with keeping aloft the integrity of the raga, composition and the elements of *manodharma*. Otherwise, however novel it might appear, it is still a futile exercise.

You can choose to sing *niraval* or *kalpana svaras* at lines in a composition which are different from the commonly heard ones. For instance, in “*Ninneneranamminanura*”, the usual *niraval* line is “*Veda shastrapurana*”. Getting to know the composition even better, it reveals another beautiful line “*Rajillarani Tyagarajavandya Raghava*” which is perfectly suited for *niraval* singing. There are so many such unexplored areas in the compositions, which can be taken up, while still adhering to tradition. The same is the case with *svara* singing or *pallavi* singing. The artist has to internalize the composition more deeply, understand the raga more deeply for which a lifetime is not enough.

Teachers also have the responsibility of imparting values that are rooted in tradition and must allow their students to think deeper and introspect. By such healthy discussions the teacher also get to realize many hidden beauties of our music.

It is sad to witness poor attendance of instrumental performances compared to vocal performances. Why is this so? Can anything be done to address this imbalance?

I feel this has more to do with the psyche of the organizers and the audience. The organizers should promote and project the instrumental performances well and provide opportunities in a regular manner. The audience also has to have an open mind to listen to instrumental music and support such concerts. This is happening, but there is much improvement needed.

It is now the 250th year since Sri Tyagarajasvami's birth. Your family has a very special relationship with Tiruvaissyaru and the Tyagarajasvami Aradhana. Can you please tell us more about this?

Yes, indeed. My grandfather Sri R K Venkatarama Shastri was a great devotee of Sri Tyagaraja svami and he was blessed to perform the Aradhana for over 50 years. He has inculcated in all of us, in our family, the greatness and of Sri Tyagaraja svami and devotion unto him. Sri Tyagarajasvami's Aradhana, that falls on the bahula panchami (the fifth lunar day of the darker half) of the month of Pushya, comprises of the Abhisheka that happens at his Samadhi at Tiruvaissyaru, the rendering of the Pancaratna krtis by musicians in tandem and the Vedic ritual that takes place at Tyagarajasvami's house. In those days, when my grandfather used to perform the Aradhana at Tyagarajasvami's house at Tiruvaiyyaru, all the great musicians like Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Maharajapuram Vishwanatha Iyer, Musiri Subrahmanyalyer, Papa Venkataramayya, Palghat Mani Iyer, the Alathur brothers and many others used to attend the ceremony. Recently I have been blessed to perform the Aradhana that has come in the tradition of Sri Tyagarajasvami's Tillaisthanam *shishya parampara*. This Aradhana has been blessed and supported by the Jagadgurus of the Sringeri Sharada Peetham. This occasion has always been very special to our entire family, for we owe so much to the great saint.



Vid. R.K.Shriramkumar with music teachers at RFA, August 16, 2015

To mention another anniversary and special relationship ... this year is the birth centenary of the legendary Smt. M.S. Subbulakshmi, with whom you and your family had a special association. Are there any memorable moments or cherished experiences that you can share?

There are so many that we probably need another conversation exclusively for this! I grew up with MS Amma's music when I was still in my mother's womb - she sang at my mother's *simantam* ceremony!! She was like a member of our family and an inspiring force for all of us. I have grown up listening to her music from a very young age. Her blissful music and her endearing personality serves as the ideal role model that I always look up to. From her, I was fortunate to absorb not just music, but nuances of how to lead life. To have been associated with her is such a great blessing that I will cherish for life.

To Gurugaaru with love

Vinay Sharva

Nedunuri Krishnamurthy's disciple pays homage to the late maestro. This article was first published in Ananya Kalasinchana and is reprinted with the kind permission of Ananya Trust



The first time I saw 'Gurugaaru' Nedunuri Krishnamurthy sir was when I was 14, and had already missed two days of the Annamacharya workshop that he was conducting in Bangalore. As I entered the Ananya Hall, I saw before me a very pious looking person....his face, his eyes and his whole bearing radiating divinity.

I can never forget that workshop where Gurugaaru, in my eyes, went from being a great musician about whom I had heard of, to one who embodied music.

It was during my final semester of engineering, with the blessings of my guru Sri. S Shankar sir, that I approached Gurugaaru to accept me as his student. A few months later, he called me to Vizag for an audition. I was nervous both about what he would ask me to sing and also to sing in front of a musician of his stature. With his very first request he surprised me as he would do so many a times in the course of our acquaintance. He asked me to sing a varnam. I thought to myself why is he asking me to sing a varnam and not a krithi. I sang the well known varnam in Sahana raaga. Next he asked me to sing the alapana of Sahana raga, with further instructions to sing the swaras of each sangati that I sang in the alapana. This was to test my *swara jnanam*, which to him, was extremely critical and important.

My *gurukulashikshana* started in August 2010. I went to Vizag and rented a house. The first two weeks I would cook my food and shuttle between my house and his, following which he told me not to bother about cooking anymore. Thus, I would get to spend the entire day with him and this would continue for the rest of my tenure where it would be just the two of us from morning to evening. I would go home only to sleep at night.

Extremely disciplined and a stickler for tradition, he would do his 'sandhyavandanam' and 'pooja' for nearly an hour and a half following which I would have my morning session of music class for about two hours. In the afternoon I would serve him his lunch. He would always eat in two silver plates, one for the main dish and other for the curries. I vividly remember getting scolded on the first day for having served plain rice first on the empty plate. He made me take the rice off, wash the plate, dry it and serve him again, this time properly. It was *always* after serving him lunch that I would have mine.

He was 83 and I was 22, an age difference of more than six decades. But gradually our bonding grew stronger and he started treating me more like a friend despite this age difference. Lunch became a time for discussions. He used to talk at length about music, philosophy, his childhood days, his career etc. We agreed and also disagreed upon many issues with the latter leading to healthy yet high pitched debates. On such occasions, with twinkle in his eyes, he used to tease me, calling me *Lakshmana* for I wouldn't agree unless convinced.

Having only heard about the Gurukula *paddhati* of education, I started to experience it in its true sense. Just before his afternoon nap he would relax a bit, and let me massage his feet with oil mixed with a bit of camphor. Evenings were dedicated completely for music.

Music for Gurugaaru was all about its aesthetic appeal within the framework of its technicalities. He would give great attention to even the smallest details. As my training progressed, I started focussing more on these aspects. He insisted I have an identity of my own. Otherwise, he said, people would rather listen to him than a copy of his. He often said whatever one sings should always sound pleasing to the listeners and should not be forced into the ears.

I long to touch that beautiful space of musical bliss to which his involvement would transcend him every time. His music reflected the simplicity of his life, the purity of his persona and the divinity of his thoughts.

During my stay with him, we toured a lot. On one such occasion, we were delayed in Mumbai traffic and were late for the check-in at the airport. One of the airport officials recognised him and helped us board the plane just two minutes before its take-off. Even at home he would walk daily for an hour. But that day, Gurugaaru, at the age of 84, *ran* across the tarmac,

anxious not to miss the flight to Tirupathi. I was behind him carrying our bags. From the time of take off to the time we landed, for nearly an hour and a half, he kept chanting the Govinda nama. To him, the airport official had been sent by Lord Venkateshwara himself....that was just the way he was.

I can never forget the unconditional love and affection he showered upon me. My training under him was not just about music but also about the perception of life, for he believed, the thoughts and actions of a person reflected in one's music. Those two years of my stay with him is the most cherished and memorable period of my life. The void can never be filled.

The last time I saw him was in October this year. After my MTech exams I went to Vizag for 10 days. My birthday was on October 8th, and incidentally it was his birthday too, according to Hindu calendar. It was a joint celebration.

For those 10 days, I sang only for my Gurugaaru from morning to night, for it was only music that he wanted. Although physically very weak, he was still musically very alert and the teacher in him would keep correcting me wherever required.

That was the first time that he expressed his feelings for my music. He kept saying *malli padu*, (sing again), *inka paadu* (sing more), *baaga vasthu undra* (it is coming out well). In an emotional moment, with tears in his eyes, he told me, 'I feel like singing again, but unfortunately I can't. I want to give more to the music field.....'

We cut a cake on our birthday, He fed me and I fed him, the first time we ate *together*.....and sadly the last.

Sufi music – A Gentle Introduction

Smita Bellur

With the kind of popularity it enjoys today, every melodious soulful number gets branded as a “Sufi song”! This is regardless of whether it talks of ethereal love or the hormonal kind. The latest singing sensations of Bollywood like Arijit Singh, Rahat Fateh Ali, Javed Ali, Mohit Chauhan, Kavita Seth are commonly associated with Sufi songs, needless to mention independent music stars like Kailash Kher. Besides these, there are a whole crop of singers claiming to sing ‘Sufi’ songs, who have in common the ‘sufi type *aalap*’ (characterised by a complicated, sketchy *aalap* spanning across octaves, mixed with intricate *murkis* and *pukars*) and who have/strive to have a ‘sufi-voice’ (open-throated, base, female voice or a high-pitched *Qawwali* styled male voice).

The word Sufi comes from the Arabic word *Tasawuf* – for ‘being immersed in Divine Love’. A few associate it with *Safwa* (pure) or *suf* (wool). While it is largely believed to have originated from companions of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him - PBUH), some say the mystic tradition dates back to the age of Abraham – the patriarch of the Semitic religions - Christians, Jews and Muslims.

Sufism today, is the accepted name for Islamic mystic tradition. It preaches peace, tolerance and pluralism, while using music as away of connecting to the Creator.

The Sufi ideology has spanned across continents and cultures: from the deserts of Africa, the shores of the Atlantic Ocean to the mountains of Pakistan and Iran. The diversity of Sufi music is enriched by cultures of Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Turkey/Anatolia, Persia, Uzbekistan and India. Arabic, then Persian, Turkish, and later a dozen other languages have been used as vehicles for Sufi thoughts that have found expression through myriad poetic forms and diverse musical genres.

Sound and music being the most important aspect of Sufism, the acts of listening, chanting and whirling to music is common to most Sufi orders. In Morocco, the mystic chants accompany the *Gnawa* or *Gnaoua* ritual to bring in the night of trance (*Derdeba*), just before the holy month of Ramadan. The African diasporas in Brazil, Cuba and Haiti also follow this tradition. The *Mourides* from Senegal seek communion with God through the *Njang* chanting. The great Sufi master Mevlana Rumi introduced the tradition of whirling *darvaishes*. Here, in our sub-continent, Hazrat Amir Khusro popularised the ‘**Sama Mehfil**’ – in which spiritual music compositions for ‘**Sufi Darsan**’ were presented.

'**Zikr**' or chanting God's name, the pain of separation from the Divine Beloved/the Creator, are at the core of Sufi poetry/music. The intense longing to dissolve the physical realm and transcend into the spiritual universe with **Sama'a** is through listening to music, chanting and whirling, and finally culminating in spiritual ecstasy (*wajd*) - the core experience of Sufism, and is treated no less than a form of *ibaadat* (worship) by the Sufis.

Spiritual messages from the scriptures (usually Quran, Hadeeth - utterances the Holy Prophets uttered called **Qoul** - where the soul (*Qalb*) is in submission to the Divine are presented in Sama - Mehfils. The word 'Qawwali' was coined way back in the times of Amir Khusro; to mean, 'process of presenting Qoul'.

Qawwali as a genre, arouses mystical love and divine ecstasy with its powerful poetry and rhythm. Although *Qawwali* has been in place since the time of Gareeb Nawab Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti (13th century), it was given focus during Amir Khusro's time. Sufi music in the sub-continent is synonymous with *Qawwali*, although singing without music – *Kafi*, and other forms such as ghazal, folk forms from Rajasthan, Sindh & Punjab, and Kashmir are also well-known. The poetic idiom, rich in image and metaphor have been used by generations of Sufi poets, who have effused into it, a wealth of symbolic content as well. As a result, few words drawn from the Sufi metaphor, convey a lot; the impact of such a communication is both instant and universal.

The Chistiya order of Sufis mainly, propagated the Qawwali. The pioneer 'Qawwals' – called Qawwal Bache (formed later into a gharana) are believed to have sung with *Duff* initially, but later, back-up vocals initially *tabla*, *dholak*, *tanpura* and *sitar* were added. Of late, *sarangi* and harmonium are common accompaniments. Based on Hindustani Classical raga-raaginis as well as folk tunes, Qawwali presentation employs a number of Hindustani classical elements like *aalap*, *taan*, *palta*, *bol-baant*, *sargam* set for improvisation and elaboration. Rendered in a fluid style by alternating solo and group passages, the typical Qawwali is characterized by repetition, singing **ashaar** (couplets) in between, and then singing the *misre/antara* (lines). The *Talas* used are: *Qawwali taal*, *Dadra*, *Deepchandi*, *Keherwa* etc, played vigorously on percussion instruments like the Indian barrel-shaped dholak and tabla (invented by Amir Khusro), reinforced by hand clapping.

Types of compositions

Based on the content of the poetry, Sufi music/Qawwali compositions can be classified as:

Hamd: Praise of the Almighty. Languages used: Arabic/Persian/Urdu/Punjabi or Hindi

Naat: Praise to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) or the other holy prophets; usually written in Arabic/Persian/Urdu/Punjabi or Hindi.

Manqabat: Praise to the *Wali-Allah* (friends of 'Allah') - who go by the titles '*Aulia*' (singular of *Wali*), '*Qalandar*' and others); usually written in Arabic/Persian/Urdu/Hindi or Punjabi

Arifanakalam: Philosophical poetry that speak about human values, teachings derived from the scriptures. Languages used: Arabic/Persian/Urdu/Punjabi or Hindi

Nisbatikalam: Love towards the Divine Beloved is expressed in emotional verses. Sometimes, love for the *Murshad* (guru) is also sung. Languages used: Arabic/Persian/Urdu/Punjabi or Hindi

Qoul: Spiritual guide or a narration from the *Quran Shareef* or *Hadith*. Has Persian/Arabic words sometimes and carries *Tarana-bol* (wordings) too.

Qalbana: It has Arabic/Hindi words carrying spiritual messages, but have any *Taranabol* in it. It could be presented in a *raga-mala* (where the composition is done in a series of ragas, going from one to the other, with every change in paragraph) or, *tala-sagar* (where the composition is done in a series of talas, going from one to the other, with change in paragraphs or so).

Tarana: Compositions with tabla/sitar bol (along with Arabic text sometimes) as the wordings. *Ta, Ra, Ri, Nu, De Re, Ta Na, Dir Thom, Yala li, Hayya* are some of the syllables used.

Trivat: This composition has tabla/sitarbols along with *sargam* and *bandishbol* (*Brijhasha/Avadhi* mostly).

Savan: Compositions describing the rainy season with more than one *antaras*; usually in *Purbi/Khadi Boli/Avadhi/brijhasha*

Other varieties include *Naqsh-nigaar, Naqsh-o-Gul, Gul, Basant, Rang, Dhamal, Khayal, Sadra, Savela, Hawa, Baseet, Geets* etc.

Based on poetry forms, Sufi music can be presented as a Ghazal: (4-12 verses with central theme expressed in the first verse – *Matla* and concluding with the *Maqta*- last couplet with the '*takhallus*' or poet's signature name/Mudra). *Rubai* or *quartain* is also used sometimes.

Many great Sufi saints from Persia to Indian sub-continent have penned down beautiful poetry that are usually sung in Sama Mehfils; they include Maulana Rumi, Hazrat Jami, Sheikh Saadi, Hazrat Ghaus-e-azam Abdul Qadir Jilani, Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia, Hazrat Amir Khusro, Baba Bulleh Shah, Baba Farid, Shah Waris, Sultan Bahu, Shah Niyaz, Kabir, Wali Dakhani, Mir Taqi Mir, Jigar Muradabadi, Barelvi and Allama Iqbal, etc

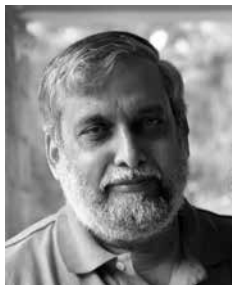
Note: There is a genre of music, popularly known in the current day as 'Qawwali' where the compositions speak endlessly about man-woman romance, through a sawal-jawab type verses (words made up impromptu too) and ranges from romantic to flirtatious to vulgar. This should not be confused as the traditional *darbari Qawwali* or *Naatiya* (religious) *Qawwali*, as it has nothing divine or spiritual about it.

Interesting links for further reading:

1. http://www.delhiheritagecity.org/pdf/intangible_papers/influence_of_sufi_thought_ustad_iqbal_ahmad_khan_paper.pdf
2. <http://qawwal.blogspot.in/>

(Smita Bellur is a versatile Indian classical vocalist who specializes in the field of Hindustani Classical Khayal and traditional Sufi music. She is also adept at other genres such as Ghazal/Thumri/Chaiti and other semi-classical varieties, does collaborative work with fusion bands, playback singing for movies, retro-hits from Indian film music. Smita's facebook page is <http://www.facebook.com/smitabellur>)

Rich reading for classical music lovers



Dr. R.R. Raghavendra of Ananya Trust, Malleswaram, has an extremely honest and down-to-earth narrative about how the Indian Postal Department contributed indirectly to the birth of **Ananya Kalasinchana** - his monthly magazine devoted to Indian fine arts. "In 1997, it used to cost 15 paise to post a magazine because it was subsidized by the postal department, where as it would cost Rs.4/- to post an envelope. We started *Abhivyakti* – a small 16-page magazine, with a few articles, to mainly communicate to our members about upcoming music programs at Ananya and other venues in Bangalore. I didn't make any claim then that I wanted to serve the art form or any such thing. We used to send it free to about 4000 people then. Later we changed the name to *Ananya Kalasinchana*"

In its 19th year today, *Ananya Kalasinchana* is a 40-plus page monthly publication with at least 8 pages of colour photographs, with a wide circulation across Karnataka, including 500 copies in rural areas. Each month's issue is a labour of love for him, and he personally takes care of the photography, layout and several other minute details. Over the years, not a single month's issue has been missed, even when he was unwell and hospitalized.

Ananya Kalasinchana's content caters to a wide range of people – from the lay reader to the music connoisseur, as well as scholars. Dr. Raghavendra takes care to balance the content to include concert reviews, interviews and articles of human interest as well as more academic ones. Classical music, dance and visual arts are covered, but the main focus is on classical music. There are no paid contributors – people ~~very~~ come forward to contribute articles for free. Since an annual subscription costs only Rs.200/- and there are no advertisements or sponsors, a balancing act is also needed to ensure that the magazine has good content, good visual appeal with colour photos and good quality art paper, while keeping the costs of publication manageable.

Dr. Raghavendra feels that magazines in any field should serve as a channel for thought processes which are present in that field. "Though classical music is a performing art, it also needs to be written about for people to understand it. Sharing in the field of art is something which we need – I freely share articles with other organizations and publications. Though we feature articles in Kannada and English, it is becoming harder to reach rural readers because of the increasingly dominant content in English."

Undeterred though, he brings out *Ananya Kalasinchana* unfailingly every month, to the delight of the steadfast group of music lovers who prefer the touch and feel of a real book, rather than reading it on a screen.

“Conversion is my mission – to convert non-enthusiasts of classical music into classical music lovers,” says **Mr. R.R. Ravishankar**, managing trustee of Bharatiya Samagana Sabha. Strongly feeling the need for a non-technical magazine to draw the attention of the lay person to classical music, in November 2014, he launched “**Saamagaana – The First Melody**”, a glossy monthly magazine devoted to Indian classical music.



Says Mr. Ravishankar, “It is very difficult to convert the common man into a classical music lover. Technical journals and elaborate *raga alapanas* will definitely not serve the purpose. We need to find a way through which the common man will subconsciously or indirectly get attracted to classical music. So the approach I take through “*Saamagaana*” is what I call ‘applied music’ – where we feature articles on topics related to music that will easily attract interest. For example, interviews with leading artistes, features on topics like yoga, music therapy, a *guru-sishya parampara*, family trees of classical music etc. We also use lots of beautiful, glossy pictures. This provides a rich visual experience to draw the attention of a reader. I tell people who ask me that this is necessary in order to attract lay people, particularly youngsters. Once they are attracted to classical music this way, their natural curiosity will be kindled, and unconsciously, they will end up becoming classical music lovers.”

Good quality of writing is the single most important thing in a magazine, he says. “I hire good professional writers, even though they may not have background in music, because they know how to capture people’s attention. I have them interview great musicians and musicologists to get their inputs and then write this up. This ensures both quality of content as well as good writing.”

The extremely small number of classical music lovers is the main cause of the issues that the art form and the classical music community faces today, says Mr. Ravishankar. “All organizations face the common issue of poor attendance at many classical music concerts. Always, a certain percentage of this small base of classical music lovers will face multiple conflicting demands on their time. The only way to solve the problem of dwindling concert attendance is to increase this base of classical music lovers. And that is precisely what I am trying to do, via *Saamagana* – to use rich, attractive content to draw the lay person to classical music without his even being aware of it, and then slowly transform him or her into a connoisseur of classical music”

Children's Corner

For all rasikas young in age, or at heart

Unscramble each of the 'raga' jumbles below, one letter to each square. And arrange the circled letters to come up with the final answer.



BANANA HARM A SHARK

S _ _ _ _ _ H _ _ _ _ _

A NAY ILK

_ _ _ _ _

AIR SEV

_ _ _ _ _

HOT ID

_ _ _ _ _

HA VIA BAR

_ _ _ _ _

A VIRTUAL NAP

P _ _ _ _ _

A SHADED VIRUS

S _ _ _ _ _

IN A NUT JAR KIT

N _ _ _ _ K _ _ _ _

HI A BAR

_ _ _ _ _

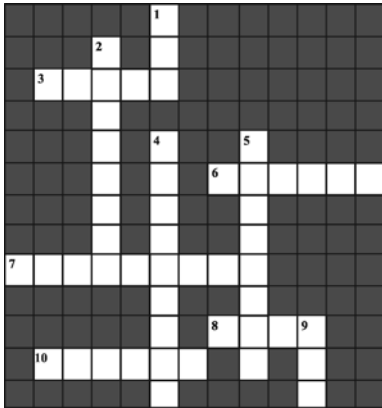
Maharaja Swathi Thirunal of Travancore was a great musician, composer and patron of music who lived in the 19th century. Learn more about him at: www.swathithirunal.in

A set of 9 compositions by Swathi Thirunal in the above ragas. (very special during Dussehra!)

1. SHANKARABHARANAM 2. KALYANI 3. SAVERI 4. THODI
5. BHAIRAVI 6. PANTUVARALI 7. SUDHA SAVERI
8. NATYAKKURINJI 9. ARABHI. NAVARATRI KRITIS

Answers :

"Carnatic Crossword"



Across

3. You can use a tambura, a Radel box or an iPhone app to maintain this (5)

6. Ninnukori, Vanajakshiro, Sami Ninne are examples of this type of composition which you usually hear at the beginning of a concert (6)

7. What we call the 72 janaka (parent) ragas (9)

8. Tyagaraja's lord (4)

10. Clay companion of 4 Down (6)

Down

1. Raga of Endaro Mahanubhavulu (3)

2. You hear this word in every Dikshitar kriti (8)

4. Concerts would be dull without this percussion instrument's "sogasuga" talam (9)

5. Auspicious ending to a concert (no, it's not the prasadam!) (8)

9. A popular 8-beat talam (3)

Down : 1. SRI 2. GURUGUHA 4. MRIDANGAM 5. MANGALAM 9. ADI
Across : 3. SRUTI 6. VARANAM 7. MELAKARTI 8. RAMA 10. GHATAM

Answers



APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

(April 2016 - March 2017)

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