



Nadavani

The Newsletter of Ranjani Fine Arts, Bellandur, Bengaluru.
www.ranjanifinearts.org

JULY 2013

Introducing *Nadavani*

Over the first year of Ranjani Fine Arts' journey, we have enjoyed some excellent music and the privilege of interacting with great artistes. More importantly, we have had the immensely rewarding experience of witnessing the growth of a wonderful rasika community in our otherwise concrete-dominated neighbourhood of Bellandur, Bangalore. And now, we see that the RFA community is beginning to expand - to include rasikas not only in other areas of Bangalore, but also in other distant parts of the extremely connected world that we live in today.

Among our members, we have several knowledgeable rasikas who are music gurus, professional musicians, disciples and descendants of great artists. Plus others from diverse backgrounds who share the same passion for music and art. As we begin the next stage in our evolution, we'd like to keep our extended family of "rasikas-without-borders" informed of various happenings in RFA. And also create a medium for them to share their views, experiences and knowledge. This has led us to launch "*Nadavani*" - the e-newsletter of Ranjani Fine Arts.

Our very first issue presents a snapshot of all RFA events so far in the year 2013-14. We also feature a special article on the legendary musician and music Guru D.K.Jayaraman (DKJ). With Guru Poornima falling on DKJ's birthday (July 22nd) this year, we could not have asked for more appropriate content for our launch issue. Also included is a "Children's Corner", with a little contest for our young rasikas.

We view *Nadavani* as an inclusive medium that the RFA community can contribute to - so, if you have a topic that you'd like to write about, please drop us a line at ranjanifineartsteam@gmail.com. Content for children would be great. Content by children - even better.

We take pleasure in presenting the first issue of *Nadavani* - we hope you find it an interesting read, and request your feedback to make it even better!

UPCOMING EVENTS



Next Monthly Concert : Saturday, July 13, 2013 @ 5 PM

Vidwan Prasanna Venkatraman (vocal); **Vidwan M. Rajiv** (violin);
Vidwan R.Sankaranayananan (mridangam)

There will be a performance by Students of Geethanjali School of Music prior to the concert.
Venue : Sobha Lakeview Clubhouse, Bellandur, Bangalore.

Special Program : Guru Utsava July 27, 2013 (Saturday) @ 3 PM and Sunday, July 28, 2013 @ 9 AM

Ranjani Fine Arts will mark the occasion of Guru Poornima and pay tribute to all Gurus with a special program - "**Guru Utsava**". Featuring performances by 18 music gurus over a period of 2 days, the Utsava will provide a platform for music teachers and accompanying artists in the Bellandur/ORR area to come together to create some divine music.

Venue : Sobha Lakeview Clubhouse, Bellandur, Bangalore.

Membership Renewal

RFA thanks all members who have renewed their memberships, and welcomes all new members.

We request those who have not yet renewed their memberships to do so—it is your support which makes it possible for us to bring the monthly programs and all other RFA events to this neighbourhood. You may renew your membership online at www.ranjanifinearts.org or in person at the membership desk during the next RFA event. Please call Shri V. Shrinivasan at **9342582686** if you have any questions regarding membership.

CURRENT MEMBER COUNT **2 2 3**

Announcements

- **Change in office bearers** : For the year 2013-14, Shri.B.S.Balasubramanyam will serve as President, Smt. Geetha Arvind as Secretary, and Shri. R.Raghunath as Treasurer of Ranjani Fine Arts. They take over from Shri.V.Shrinivasan, Shri. Arvind Brahmakal and Smt. Nandini Harish respectively, who have played a tremendous role as office bearers of Ranjani Fine Arts during a very successful first year.
- **Expanded Excom and Focused Subgroups**: With a view to taking on new initiatives and more challenges in our second year, we have increased the strength of our Executive Committee from 10 to 18. We have organized ourselves into 6 subgroups which will focus on Monthly Programs, GenNext, Communications, Finance & Controls, Additional Programs and Research.

Memorial Concerts

Memorial concerts can now be held under the RFA banner. If you would like to hold a concert in memory of a loved one, Ranjani Fine Arts can help you arrange this. Please contact Shri B.S.Balasubramanyam at 9632682540 or Shri V. Shrinivasan at 9342582636 for more details.

RFA GenNext

GenNext is a new initiative from Ranjani Fine Arts whose key objective is to enrich RFA with the creative energy and idealism of the youth. GenNext will facilitate and provide a platform to give free rein to the youth in shaping the destiny of Ranjani Fine Arts. We have come up with an exciting list of possibilities, which include the following:

- Organise Coffee meets with artistes – post concert or special events like LecDems
- Mix and match concerts - Senior artistes accompanying junior artistes
- Finding ways to encourage NextGen to use Music as an empowering tool for the underprivileged
- Conducting surveys on music schools in the vicinity and providing a ready reckoner
- Conduct Sessions on Music for the technically challenged
- Organise a Donor bank for musical instruments that users have outgrown
- Encouraging instrument makers. Outings to their workshop etc.
- Conduct Quizzes, puzzles, elocution on works of great composers, etc.
- Provide a platform for the youth to create and organize their own concerts.
- Convene a Town hall with leading artistes
- Facilitate taking fine arts to schools and colleges
- Conduct Jam sessions for the youth to let their creative energies get free rein.
- Seek corporate sponsors and support marketing of events etc.
- Provide resource for research on music, dance and other art forms
- Organise and run the regular concerts and events of RFA
- Get involved in RFA's online presence, including the RFA website and social media.

We invite you all to participate in this exciting journey by encouraging GenNext. Membership is open to teenagers. For more details and ideas for GenNext, contact S. Subramanian on 9980133144

Inviting Volunteers

Ranjani Fine Arts is run entirely by volunteers. If you'd like to join our team, please write to us at ranjanifineartsteam@gmail.com to discuss possible volunteer opportunities.

A Captivating Performance: Vani Sateesh at RFA, June 2013



It was the second Saturday of June and it was time for another downpour of soulful music at Ranjani Fine Arts. Vidushi Vani Sateesh started her concert with the Navaragamalika varnam *Valachi Vachi*, rendered in the right traditional way. This was followed by a Mysore Vasudevachar's *Hamsadhwani* piece, *Vande anisham aham*. Vani did a well studied exposition of *Hamsadhwani* and proceeded with the kriti. Her melodious voice and singing style delineating all the characteristics of the raga, enchanted the listeners.

After a short *Sourashtram* piece, Vani took up a *bhava* laden *Mukhari*. The detailed exposition of *Mukhari* was an absolute treat, which portrayed all the subtle nuances of *Mukhari* with effortless ease. The alapana was followed by the kriti *Siva Kama Sundari*, at its poignant best. The popular Patnam Subramania Iyer kriti *Marivere* was one of the highlights of the evening. The raga *alapana* of Latangi was appealing to connoisseurs and laymen listeners alike. A brisk paced *Dasara pada* in *Vasantha (Rama Rama)* ensued, which added variety and vigour to the concert.

The main piece of the concert was Harikesanallur Mutthiah Bhagavata's *Ratna Kanchuka Dharini (Kambhoji)*. The rendition explored the length and breadth of *Kambhoji*, with *neraval* and *kalpana swarams*. The accompanying artistes excelled too, elevating the level of the concert. Vidwan Mysore Sateesh excelled on the violin and provided able support to the vocalist. Vidwan Jayachandra Rao on the mridangam and Vidwan Srishyla on the ghatam, created a scintillating display, in their *taniavarttanam*. The tukkadas section comprised of *Tarake Bindige (Tillang)*, the romantic Swati Thirunal padam *Kanthanodu Chennu Melle (Neelambari)*, a Viruttam and a composition (*Kula Kula Vendu*) in Desh. All of these renditions exuded melody and *bhava*.

The highlight of Vidushi Vani's performance was her melodious voice and scholarly rendering of all the *kritis*. She paid a lot of attention in bringing out all the subtle characteristics in her raga *alapanas*. The vocalization and emotional appeal were very pleasing to the ears. One interesting aspect of the *kutcheri* was that there was not a single *kriti* by the Trinity. There was a great deal of creativity, without deviating from tradition.

- Santosh Narayanan

Children's Corner

For all rasikas young in age, or at heart

Unscramble these jumbles, one letter to each square, to form something musical

AJAR INN

HAIL A RIB

A LAY INK

A OHM MAN

MLA DHONI

A LOW G

Now, rearrange the circled letters from above, to answer the question:

What do you get when you string these together ?

Email your answers to ranjanifineartsteam@gmail.com. Prizes for first 3 correct entries from rasikas below 14

Earlier this year

RFA and Gayana Samaja host April 2013 Program



Our second year started in April 2013 with a unique Violin-Venu-Veena concert featuring Vidwans H.K.Venkatram, Ashwin Anand and G.Ravikiran. The program was co-hosted by The Bangalore Gayana Samaja—the oldest Sabha in Bangalore—and this recognition is a great honour for RFA. The concert featured a special 3-Ranjani (*Ranjani, Sriranjani and Manoranjani*) Ragam-Thanam-Pallavi which the artistes had created for the occasion.

Students of Vishesha Fine Arts @ RFA : April 2013



With Rama Navami round the corner, Vishesha Fine Arts students treated RFA rasikas to a specially themed presentation of compositions on Lord Rama in lilting ragas like *Khamas, Hindolam, Harikambhoji* and *Charukesi*. The budding musicians did their Guru Bellary Sri Raghavendra proud with their perfect adherence to *shruthi* and *laya*.

Sankaran Namboothiri at RFA : May 2013



Vidwan Sankaran Namboothiri and party treated rasikas to a delightful 3-hour concert in RFA's May 2013 Program. Highlights of the concert were the main piece in *Madhyamavati (Palinchi Kamakshi)* and the generous serving of *thukkadas* at the end, which the audience particularly enjoyed.

Students of Kukke Sri School of Music : June 2013



Students of Kukke Sri School of Music put up an enthusiastic performance prior to the June 2013 concert, with a good rendering of the kritis *Ninne Nammithi Nayya (Simhendra Madhyamam)*, *Paripaalaya (Reetigowlai)*, and *Sarasaksha (Pantuvrali)*. The kalpana swarams for *Sarasaksha* showed a lot of promise. The little mridangist was the cynosure of everyone in the audience. The talent and dedication of all these students was praiseworthy.

Voice of the Artiste

"I highly appreciate the efforts that you and your team have taken in arranging the concert at Ranjani Fine Arts. Everything was remarkable—a good audience, mike arrangements, and good accommodation.. Thank you so much for your high involvement and support. I am personally thankful to you and your team and highly appreciate your arranging and conducting this good music event."

- Vidwan Sankaran Namboothiri

"We had great pleasure in performing at Ranjani Fine Arts. I owe you guys an Abhang.... next time, guaranteed!"

- Vidushi Vani Sateesh

"Thanks for this. It was an evening well spent, and the concert reviews and photos are well captured. Wishing your Sabha a great future."

- Vidwan S.Raghavendra Prakash

DKJ - A Guru par excellence

D.K.Jayaraman's disciple and RFA member **Savitha Kartikeyan** recalls her years under his tutelage, and pays tribute to her legendary Guru.



D.K. Jayaraman (1928-1991)

God gave him a physical time of only 62 years, but he continues to be alive in our hearts today when he would have turned 85 in the physical world. This legend will remain immortal with the music he has left behind in our hearts.

What I experienced -

Kritis that he taught have been etched in my memory and am sure this will be echoed by any of his other disciples. There was some magical way in which these kritis got deeply deposited in us for years to come.

A perfectionist, who gave plenty of space in class for spontaneous humour, yet kept us vigilant every moment, he was light hearted yet uncompromising. He had the uncanny ability of singling out whoever sang a *sangathi* even mildly incorrect in as big a group as 20. Such was his astute alertness till his last breath. An unmistakable combination of pure diction, adherence to classicism combined with precision and passion defines the DKP, DKJ *paddhati*. There was never a dull moment in his class or in his concerts. Every

composition that was rendered would have been practised a million times and taught to his students before presenting it on the concert stage. Such was the respect given to the concert platform!

The aura he carried came from the sense of discipline and depth his demeanour and his music conveyed. His students never had to be told about punctuality. It was intrinsically understood. For a class at 5 PM the students would all assemble almost from nowhere at 4.58 PM at his gate. It may have equally been because nobody wished to miss even a single minute of his precious class.

Vijayadasami was always a memorable occasion where his multitude of disciples would keep trooping in with their offering of fruits and flowers to take his blessings. The privileged walls of #22, SS Iyengar Rd at Alwarpet, Madras would echo divine music through the day. On one such day, a young little student walked in wearing a bright yellow long skirt and DKJ Sir in the midst of the festivity broke into an unexpected tune “ *en jodi manja kuruvi*” (a super hit song then from the Tamil film *Vikram*) to receive the little girl sending everyone into a peal of laughter. After a light moment, it was soon back to serious work and he was teaching the chaste *Mahaganapathe* in *Natanarayani*!

The respect and affection he drew from his children and students were alike. His body bore multiple health issues but his spirit was undying. In his zest for life, he chose to belittle his health problems and carry on with immense positivism. I recall one of my most precious classes with him where he taught me *Maname ganamum*, a song that carries poignant questions about life and death. He must have got in touch with something so deep that the class turned into a spiritual discourse that brought tears to my eyes even at an age when I had hardly had a chance to experience life or appreciate the depth of what the song conveyed. That song remains one of my favourites for the same reason.

DKJ had the openness and humility to genuinely appreciate good music however junior the singer was. He had heard the then up-and-coming Sanjay Subrahmanyam's *Begada* in a Music Academy afternoon concert and wondered aloud if even senior *vidwans* could sing such a splendid and evocative *Begada*! He never stopped short of praising his students openly or being protective of them when required. He equally gave himself the liberty to reprimand openly thus keeping us all very aware and watchful all the time.

The most memorable phase for me was the time when about 15 of us were taught *Muthuswami Dikshitar's Kamalamba navavarnams* and *Panchalinga kshetra kritis* and Dr. V.V.Srivatsa's compositions (many of the latter were set to tune by him). For weeks together, classes would go on for as long as 4 hours at a stretch, keenly perfecting the nuances of each of the gems. Ably supported by R.K.Shriramkumar and Vijay Siva, his senior disciples, DKJ Sir taught us all the intricate pieces with finesse, labouring enjoyably along with each of us.. We sang the *Kamalamba navavarnams* at many sabhas in various cities, including The Music Academy and Narada Gana Sabha and polished them more and more every time. The introductory speech that DKJ gave at NGS is a must listen where he shares an anecdote from his college days and connects old with contemporary intertwined with his amazing sense of humour. This has been released as a commercial CD and is a priceless collectible for any *rasika* of Carnatic music. A musician who could have as well kept all these treasures just to himself and maybe made commercial CDs, but in DKJ we found the most inspiring and untiring Guru who had the earnestness to pass on these treasures in their authentic form to all his disciples! The evening before his demise, all of us had sung Shyama Sastri's *swarajathis* in unison, as if designed to be his farewell prayer!

Kritis such as *Vinatha suthava (Jayanthasena)*, *Rakshabettare (Bhairavi)*, *Muruga Thirumal maruga (Harikambhoji)*, *Gangadeeswaram*, *Karunai Deivame (Sindhubhairavi)*, *Shree Raghuvara (Kambhodhi)*, *Mahadeva siva shambo (Revathi)*, *Neelayathakshi (Paras)*, *Geetha vadhya (Natakapriya)*, *Nannu vidachi (Reetigowlai)*, *Naati maata (Devakriya)*, *Kapali (Mohanam)*, *Nekkurugi (Abhogi)* (the list is unending) bring resounding memories of his voice and none others'!

What I heard..

This was the boy who at the age of 12 cycled around to nearby villages to teach music!! At an age when one would expect children to spend all their time playing, he cycled around through 8 villages around Kancheepuram imparting musical knowledge, practising a *varnam* or *krithi* himself marking thalam count on the handlebar! "*Cycle Vidwan*" was the first of many titles he earned. Born as the sixth child to his parents Damal Krishnaswamy Dikshitar and Rajammal on July 22, 1928 he grew up to becoming the second *Sangeetha Kalanidhi* in the family!

But the most cherished of all his titles was the very first one "*Isai thambi*" that was lauded upon him by his hero T.N. Rajaratnam Pillai who after listening to his *Marubalga* at a wedding concert and being so impressed, wished him and conferred a shawl on him.

He owed all of what he was to his dear sister and Guru D.K.Pattammal. The story goes that DKJ observed with a very keen mind and absorbed a lot when *Vidwans* like Ambi Dikshitar, T.L.Venkatrama Iyer, N.S.Krishnaswamy Iyengar (disciple of Naina Pillai), and Papanasam Sivan came home to coach Pattammal. As a child, he once pestered DKP to write down the piece '*Balagopala (Bhairavi)*' for him.. He treasured that piece of writing as his prized possession and mastered the composition overnight and rendered it perfectly to an astonished DKP. Little wonder that she fostered her younger brother's musical talent from a very young age.

DKJ was just 9 when he gave his first public concert giving vocal support to his sister. The duo hit it off admirably, what with their blend of voices matched to splendid understanding and coordination. Ever since, they became inseparable as Mary and her lamb. The duo performed at The Music Academy in 1938, where 10 year old DKJ 'stole the show', making his sister proud.

In 1939, as an 11 year old, he played the role of *Prahlada* in a stage drama *Prahlada Bhakti Vijayam*, in the company of veterans Chowdiah, Palghat Mani Iyer and Ramanuja Iyengar. One senior *vidwan* took up *Sri Ganapathi* at a high pitch which he could not have carried on with in the higher scores. As a boy with courage and presence of mind DKJ saved the live show by taking charge and continuing the song effortlessly thus averting disaster! Kalki apparently commended this and remarked jokingly "This was the first time I saw *Prahlada* as the saviour of *Lord Krishna*"!

DKJ's first concert at The Music Academy came in 1951 where he received adulation from Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar for his deft rendering of the complex *Thodi varnam* in 3 speeds. DKJ apparently felt quite nervous that day with his sister sitting in the audience although he was never known to have stage fright. The Music Academy always filled him with a sense of awe, he has said. From 1962, DKJ was a regular feature at The Academy until 1990 when he received the coveted title *Sangeetha Kalanidhi*. Destiny wouldn't allow him to enjoy the same beyond a measly 25 days after that.

What I learnt –

Dedication is the one striking word that comes to my mind when I think of my Guru. Whether towards his family/disciples/music he lived it out with dedication. He lived as a role model and never once preached about it. Endearing qualities of those we deeply respect we tend to imbibe as we grow in age and maturity. As a child, I learnt with sincerity the *kritis* he taught me. Little did I know then that along with music, an attitude to life of continuous learning and sharing goodness was happening simultaneously. His music left an indelible mark in me that I have committed to carry on in a modest way the *parampara*, by sharing the richness that he gifted, with children of this generation. He had an infectious drive and determination and love for music that overpowered any shortcomings in his health. DKJ did not make any claims on serving the cause of music etc. He just lived and conveyed something very special, leaving for his disciples to pick up threads from and carry forward if they so wished.

With my Guru's blessings,
Savitha Kartikeyan
Founder, *Parampara Centre for Carnatic Music, Bangalore*

Write to us

Ranjani Fine Arts would like to hear from you! If you have any comments about the newsletter, suggestions for improvement, or would like to contribute an article, please email us at ranjanifineartsteam@gmail.com.